

that development. Of the poetry of 'The Waste Land', Mr Speaight says, 'It is far more dramatic—I am tempted to say far more theatrical—than anything he has written for the stage.' And Mr Speaight concludes: 'T. S. Eliot has arrived in Shaftesbury Avenue and the English actor owes him much. But if he had chosen to go elsewhere, I think that gratitude might have been even greater.' By implication, Mr Speaight naturally intends, not only the actor but all of us—now and henceforth.

This book has interesting essays by Mr W. F. Jackson Knight ('T. S. Eliot as a Classical Scholar') and Mr J. M. Cameron ('T. S. Eliot as a Political Writer'). On the whole let us be generous and say Mr Braybrooke has managed pretty well—but it is clearly on the issue raised between Mr Browne and Mr Speaight that discussion can be—will be—pursued for years to come.

FRANCIS BERRY

WILLIAM BLAKE: A SELECTION OF POEMS AND LETTERS. Edited with an Introduction by J. Bronowski. (Penguin Books; 3s. 6d.)

The time had come for a 'Penguin Blake' and Dr Bronowski has now produced one; a selection from Geoffrey Keynes's *Complete Writings of William Blake* for the Nonesuch series. His choice has been guided by a sound principle; to show as many aspects of this many-sided mind as possible, to present Blake as 'a single person who did different things and did everything in his own way'. Any selection from Blake is tantalizing. One cannot help being aware of what is left out. But the purpose of such a volume should be to draw the reader on to the complete Blake and Dr Bronowski's book will probably have that effect.

His introduction, however, gives the same rather misleading picture of Blake's situation as appeared in his earlier *William Blake, A Man Without A Mask* (though in the meantime Dr Bronowski has developed much more sympathy for Blake's prophetic poetry). It is simply not true to say 'his work was not liked' and to describe his way of combining text and illustrations by illuminated printing with the comment, 'and no one cared for either'. Blake had his period of prosperity. While living at Lambeth he was the victim of robbery, and from the accounts of what was taken, was evidently worth stealing from. Isaac D'Israeli, Benjamin's father, seems to have built up quite a collection of Blake's prophetic poems in the original. Butts, the Muster-Master General, bought so many pictures that in the end he had no more room in his house for a single extra one. (Collecting was in Butts' blood. He was descended from Sir William Butts, Holbein's patron.) Also Blake *did* receive commissions from people like the Countess of Egremont. We must not forget too, that his poetry was

admired in his own life-time both by Charles Lamb and William Wordsworth and that the accounts of his meeting with Coleridge are ecstatic. Granted Blake's work appealed only to 'fit minds, though few'. But it *did* appeal.

Dr Bronowski is quite right to point out that 'Blake's form of Christianity was heretical'. But again one must be accurate. His heresy consisted in an impatience with the natural world, so eager was he for the spirit. When Dr Bronowski states that Blake 'identified Christ the Son with all spiritual goodness and made God the Father a symbol of terror and tyranny' he is forgetting the magnificent close to the epic *Jerusalem* where the soul is re-united with the Father in joy; still more the pencil sketch of the Trinity in his notebook which shows the Son clasped in the Father's arms overshadowed by a great soaring bird. As a follower of Jacob Boehme, William Blake knew that wrath was necessary and in some ways he was the supreme interpreter of terror. Blake's extremes usually balance one another off. And if Blake rebelled, his rebellion was, like Christ's, against the Pharisee. But even here he has the sanity to see the other side.

'Anytus, Melitus and Lycon thought Socrates a Very Pernicious Man.
So Caiphas thought Jesus.' DÉSIRÉE HIRST

THE PELICAN GUIDE TO ENGLISH LITERATURE, 6: FROM DICKENS TO HARDY. Edited by Boris Ford. (Penguin Books; 5s.)

It is difficult to write literary history which is at once factually informative and profitably critical, especially when space and cost are strictly limited. In this volume, as in its predecessors, the informative matter of names, dates and titles is relegated to its true place in the bibliography, and the body of the book devoted to critical assessments of nineteenth-century literary achievement.

Mr Klingopulos has contributed with admirable economy a chapter on the Victorian Scene and an excellent survey of the Literary Scene. Among other things, he discusses the debt of Victorian poetry to the Romantics; the fact that 'the age produced no unquestionably major poet, but only a number of technically accomplished poets who look major but remain essentially minor'; the discovery of inspiration by such untypical poets as Hopkins and Emily Brontë not in 'the spirit of the age' but in the stress of personal experience; and the development of the novel, which 'presented, with wonderful inwardness, different kinds of moral possibility and the actuality of choice; it formed an extension of consciousness and gave life to life'. His frequent references to Lawrence, however, as an oracle for quotation or as part of a creative trinity (with Yeats and Eliot) are not likely to go unchallenged.

It is unfortunate that Mr R. C. Churchill should have attempted so much in a single chapter on Dickens. In adopting, as he says, 'a