

## NOBEL WINNER

**D**UBLIN playwright, novelist and poet Samuel Beckett was yesterday awarded the 1969 Nobel Prize for literature. Beckett, who is regarded as one of the greatest living playwrights, is the third Irishman to win a Nobel Literature Prize. W. B. Yeats and George Bernard Shaw were the others. Today Yeats's stature and influence in the world of poetry, though frequently assailed, seems assured for at least another 50 years. Shaw, out of fashion for the past decade, has recently been rediscovered.

In the field of literature, cults are as prevalent as blackberries in October. The cult of Beckett, however, is unique in that it reflects, not a literary, but a human preoccupation. Ours is the Age of Dilemma. (The word *problem* permeates discussion on all activities from business management to religion, from art to politics). Modern man—despite what the admen think—is not preoccupied with *having* but with *being*. And Beckett is the high priest of this preoccupation.

Every hobo and tramp, beatnik or hippie, harassed wife or lonely politician is part of the unofficial cast of "Waiting for Godot", Beckett's masterpiece which took Paris by storm in 1953 and, thanks to Mr. Alan Simpson, reached Dublin in 1955.

Beckett has written a dozen other plays and some half-dozen novels. Like Godot they are all characterised by the apparent emptiness of life. But his work is far from being a by-product of hopeless misery. Words by Beckett are the chief ingredients of the dilemma of failure ("All men talk, when talk they must, the same tripe"). But Beckett is also a part-innocent, part-crafty, academic clown. One Irish critic has dismissed him as "an old cod". It is more likely, however, that he will emerge in time as the artist who made our tortured times tolerable by seeing death and suffering as a beginning, not an end.