

to make a terrible ingredient of contemporary life susceptible to rational explanation. But science . . . give me Weissberg every time!

A HOME FOR ULYSSES

THE SICILIAN ORIGIN OF THE ODYSSEY,
a study of Topographical Evidence, by L.
G. Pocock; New Zealand University Press,
Wellington.

THIS booklet is fresh proof of how much the *Odyssey*, which has been called the world's first novel, and still perhaps the best, belongs, like the *Iliad*, to mankind. It also shows that, however much the classics may be on the defensive in new lands, such societies can contribute to classical scholarship. New Zealand was still in the pioneering stage when she began to send classical scholars to win distinction overseas. Now Professor L. G. Pocock, born in Cape Town, educated in England, and for many years Professor of Classics at Canterbury College, has published locally (another sign that we nourish the ancients) revolutionary theories about Homer. True, a German view that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not by the same poet, was widely accepted last century, but opinion swung round to what Andrew Lang called Homer's "indivisible supremacy." We have been brought up to accept without question the *Odyssey* as Homer, and the island of Ithaca, off the coast of Greece, as the Ithaca, Ulysses' home, in the story. It is to this Ithaca that Ulysses returns after his wanderings.

Professor Pocock says "No." Following Samuel Butler, whose theory must have suffered with scholars by being joined to the idea of a woman poet, Professor Pocock places "Ithaca" where the town of Trapani stands today in north-west Sicily, 500 miles westward. He contends that the *Odyssey* is a Western Mediterranean story, and not an Eastern (he puts Ulysses' underworld in the Strait of Gibraltar), and that it was written late and not by Homer. He has, of course, to refer freely to the text, but he translates, and the reader should be able to follow step by step this fascinating piece of literary detection. Professor Pocock has done a great deal of research, including visits to places concerned. Landscape and seascape, islands, sea shores, palaces, caves, rivers, winds, maps, landfalls, farm production, customs, myths and history—all are cited to support his thesis. Firmly but modestly he accepts Butler's claim for the Sicilian Trapani, "the most important discovery in the whole history of Homeric scholarship."

New Zealand has her own stake in Butler. May he have been helped to his theory by the mixture of classical scholarship and mountain air in the Canterbury settlement? Professor Pocock plans to give us more of this informative and stimulating analysis. How the champions of orthodoxy will react remains to be seen. —A.M.

DEEP IN THE RED

THE SQUARE SUN, by Stefan Knapp;
Museum Press, English price 18/-.

STEFAN KNAPP is a young English painter, by one of those historic processes that can make a small crowded island a sanctuary. Born in Poland, he was still at school when the war broke out; and he graduated, via Soviet slave camps, into the Polish forces and the R.A.F. This book is an autobiography. It is full of terror, pity and quiet pride: a diary with a difference. Millions of young people have been lost in the shambles of modern Europe; but Knapp has found himself again. The book is part of a reconstruction of personality. Oddly enough, there are only oblique references to politics and war. Essen-



PROFESSOR POCOCK
Westward ho!

tially Knapp describes *la condition humaine* in the midst of these things, and I suspect that he writes even better than he paints. Examples of his art shown in the illustrations indicate a preoccupation with the bizarre. Conversely, the prose is clean and personal, when describing the intolerable.

The Square Sun emerges as the most gripping indictment of the Soviet regime that I have ever read. It is impossible not to believe the stories of the slave camps, and impossible to justify them. The monolithic state, with its beehive concept of man, is a negation of human dignity. But that Knapp (and others) can survive is a proof that it is not even efficient. The muddling he describes is quite British, and his sense of humour internationally human.

—Anton Vogt

WINE AND LEMONADE

THE WINE OF ILLUSION, by Ronald Fraser; Jonathan Cape, English price 13/6.
I, LIBERTINE, by Frederick R. Ewing; Michael Joseph, English price 10/6.
A NEST OF NIGHTINGALES, by Arlette Grebel, translated from the French by Barbara Bray; Victor Gollancz, English price 12/6.

IN spite of his sudden fall from the post of Minister of Agriculture and his subsequent poverty, Golden Phoenix never loses sight of his faith that all is good in mankind. Alongside his desire for peace and a cottage life is the urge to continue to serve his country, China, in the time of the T'ang dynasty. Golden Phoenix, the poet-philosopher with public service ambitions, finds that security and politics are irreconcilable unless he desists from speaking his mind. The book is charmingly written in the descriptive, mystical vein one might expect to find in the poems of Golden Phoenix.

The tale of how *I, Libertine*, came to be written deserves more attention than the novel itself. Although it sold 180,000 copies in New York immediately on publication, it is doubtful if that peak sale will be kept up. A disc-jockey who broadcast from New York from 1.30 a.m. to 5.30 a.m. welded his listeners into the "Night People," announced the publication of a non-existent book and left it to them to create the demand. Bookshops were flooded with orders so that *I, Libertine*—its name and author had been announced—had to be written. It is claimed the novel must be the first example of a hoax that became a book. The result is a peculiar and incomprehensible blend of the 20th and 18th centuries. A lawyer's clerk has ambitions to be a rake and an adventurer
(continued on next page)

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