

and unwillingness of the Allies to begin a second front is astonishingly similar to the mood that prevailed in Russia during World War I. Similarly, the patriotism of the common people in the war against Hitler has parallels in earlier struggles—against the Poles in 1612, and against Napoleon in 1812.

Any history rests on the quality of its sources. Florinsky's are listed in an impressive bibliography which, in itself, is a testimonial to the author's industry and scholarship. One surprising omission, however, is that nowhere, either in his interpretation of Peter or in his list of principal sources, does the author mention B. H. Sumner's little classic "Peter the Great and the Emergence of Russia", one of the few biographies available in English and one of the most recent (1950). Indexes in both volumes are well done and useful, while the glossary of selected Russian and other unfamiliar terms is valuable, especially to those encountering such terms for the first time.

Whatever one's interests, this history can be read with profit by expert and layman alike. In this day of high prices and indifferent workmanship, the cost of the two books is not out of line, and the printing and binding better than average.

W.R.

THE HEART OF A PEACOCK, by Emily Carr. Edited by Ira Dilworth. The Oxford University Press, Toronto, Canada. Pp. 234. \$3.50.

Emily Carr was a Canadian who achieved prominence in two separate fields of art—painting and writing—comparatively late in life. Her first exhibition of paintings in the east in 1927, coincided with the period in her life when she began to write "seriously". But it was not until 1941 that her first book was published and three others followed before her death in 1945.

This volume is made up of a collection of Miss Carr's unpublished manuscripts and serves to support the conviction held by many that her ability as a writer at least equalled her more generally accepted talent as a painter. Most of these sketches are about her beloved pets—usually birds—her childhood and her life on the west coast and among Indian friends.

Miss Carr's gift as a writer has been said to have been "the art of eliminating all but the essentials". In that sense it might be said that her writing was much like her

painting. These sketches offer striking examples of her ability to create mingled moods, to portray the beauties of nature in words and while there is evidence available that shows Emily Carr worked hard at her writing, the easy fluent style that was hers indicates the natural talent of the true artist.

THE OVERLOADED ARK, by Gerald M. Durrell. Faber & Faber Ltd., London, England and British Book Service (Canada) Ltd., Toronto, Canada. Drawings by Sabine Baur. Indexed. Pp. 238. \$3.50.

"One of the chief charms of collecting is its uncertainty." So writes Gerald Durrell in this completely captivating book on his experiences in the British Cameroons, West Africa. And those of us who have sought for nothing more rare or exotic than a particularly choice stamp or old coin, or have added to our collections nothing more deadly than some Indian arrow-heads or a rusty muzzle-loader, will readily agree with him. But there is another uncertainty deprived us who do our collecting out of catalogues from the depths of a cozy arm-chair—the uncertainty of stalking through the ghostly reaches of a moonlit jungle after a rare specimen of fauna, of wading into unknown streams after crocodiles, of searching the bat infested depths of caves for a particular type of that obnoxious mammal, of handling the writhing power of an 18-foot python or risking the deadly venom of a Gaboon viper. These are experiences denied to most of us, but to read of them with Mr. Durrell is to avail yourself of a few hours of real enjoyment.

The author's "bring-'em-back-alive" expedition was not for the benefit of circuses. He and a companion planned the excursion to provide British museums and zoos with specimens of rare tropical wild life, chiefly for study purposes. Both men wanted to see Africa too—"... not the white man's Africa with its macadam roads, its cocktail bars, its express trains. . ."—and they selected the great forests of the Cameroons because it was "... one of those few remaining parts of the continent that . . . remained more or less as it was when Africa was first discovered."

Mr. Durrell writes vividly and with humor of his experiences—most of the time the two collectors were separated—whether of hunting with his motley retinue of