

The fighting against British soldiers is described as if it were a dance, which changes to a blood lust and a barbaric joy. Death is felt, like the abstract idea of liberty, as a sensual passion. The story is limited to a small band of the insurgents, and is told without any stridency and without bitterness, but with compassion. "What sort of race are we at all?" a woman cries. And her husband replies, "Heroes and saints are always crucified, but they rise again to be worshipped by those that crucified them." In the smoke of battle the characters are stripped of their small human weaknesses and eccentricities and stand revealed as symbols of Ireland—Madden, the ox-like hero, as a primitive, virile, soil-heavy creature, Stapleton, the half-lunatic youth, as a poet and dreamer, and Kinsella, the leader, as a tragic but adored and god-like figure.

In the jungle of Assam Murray Coombe sets up his camp for a reunion with four friends who used to hunt with him before the war—Philip and Alice Tallent, Eric Cathcart, and Kay Trench. But they have changed: Philip suspects his wife is in love with Eric, although she also flirts with Kay; Eric takes her seriously, and commits suicide when he discovers her insincerity. The book takes time to get going, because the conflict of personalities is set off by Dr. Coombe's meditations on the balance of constructive and destructive forces in nature. The brilliant-plumaged peacock which the hunters encounter from time to time attains a symbolic power, and when it is killed by Philip the harmony of man and nature is destroyed.

There are many didactic passages on the best way to pitch a camp, how to behave when hunting, the habits of birds, animals and fishes. *The Peacock* isn't quite rounded off, but it is good exciting stuff, with tiger hunts, elephant hunts, and fishing expeditions, rather like *The Green Hills of Africa*. The descriptions are excellent.

Roy MacNair works a territory assigned to him by the government in the Musk-o-gee area of the Canadian backwoods. The region is almost exhausted and he can make a living only by trapping illegal fur and leading a semi-fugitive life trying to outwit the game warden. When officials of the Wild-life and Fisheries Department arrive Roy helps them make the investigations he knows will deprive him of his livelihood. He is faced with the choice of going north to new lands or making a risky fortune by trapping the Silver Dollar game preserve. James Aldridge, who is Australian-born, has written this novel with a swing, and his descriptions of Canadian forest life, and his discussions of the law of the wild, are vivid and enjoyable. He has romanticised his trappers, however, and their behaviour, or rather the motives attributed to them, though admirable, do not always ring true.

—P.J.W.

TURKS AT HOME

PORTAIT OF A TURKISH FAMILY, by Irfan Orga; Victor Gollancz. English price, 16/-.

THIS is not so much a portrait of a family as a tribute to the author's mother, a lady whose misfortunes

brought her to die in a madhouse. Irfan Orga's father and uncle both died in the 1914-18 War. A fire (apparently a commonplace of Turkish urban life) destroyed nearly all the family property. His mother struggled heroically to earn the family's living. After her two sons (one of them the author of this book) had been accepted by the military academy, the family again reached a position of comparative ease, but the strain of the hard years had been too much for the charming sensitive Sevkiye.

The book bridges the crucial years of the development of modern Turkey, but although it throws some incidental light on Turkish social life, the great changes of the times do not take as large a place in it as might have been expected. It is essentially a personal book, its central tragedy often relieved by laughter and the small triumphs and disasters of family life; Turkey proves after all not so very different from New Zealand.

—David Hall

THE SIMPLE LIFE

A WIND FROM THE SEA, by Gertrude Dempsey; A. H. and A. W. Reed; 12/6.

THIS is a quiet and very restful book mostly about Paraparaumu beach from the days before it became a popular and crowded summer holiday-place. The author and her family used to picnic there in the days of the vehicle known as the buggy. Later the cottage they had dreamed about became a reality and they used to visit it for week-ends and holidays in a car called Minnie. With this background the book naturally has the air of freshness and charm belonging to a story about a loved childhood home—on every page there are signs of the inimitable enthusiasm of the discoverer and the pioneer. Miss Dempsey is an unpretentious writer, but she manages unobtrusively to pack away a great deal of information about the natural life of the region—from snails to birds or jelly-fish or seaweeds—in her accounts of holiday walks and pleasures. Some of her photographs are excellent; others might be better without the dating addition of a human figure. Anyone who has ever spent a happy summer holiday on any beach from Paekakariki to Waikanae, or anyone who still has a heart for the simple joy of beach-walking, is recommended to read *A Wind from the Sea*.

—J.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

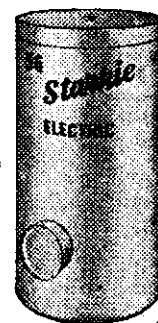
RUSSIA AND THE UNITED STATES, by Pitirim A. Sorokin (Stevens and Sons Ltd., English price 12/6), is the second edition of a book included in a Library of World Affairs. It is written by a Russian now living in the United States. The tone is objective, and there is much information about the Soviet background and political system.

IN Thunder Reef (Hodder and Stoughton, English price 8/6), Adrian Seligman follows his *The Voyage of the Cap Pilar* and *No Stars to Guide*. It is his first attempt at fiction, and concerns some children whose interest in boats and boating off the coast of Brittany leads them to the trail of a smuggling gang. There is a map as well as a couple of dozen illustrations for good measure.



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