

AUDUBON'S AMERICAN BIRDS. (Batsford; 6s. 6d.)

Colour reproduction, from the point of fidelity to the original is always a questionable venture, there is the ever present danger of overstressing the brilliance, or the contrary error of nebulous and sentimental colouring; and it is here that the publishers are to be congratulated. In these reproductions of the famous nineteenth-century ornithologist's aquatints, they have succeeded in conveying the freshness and exotic mystery of the birds in all their glorious array, (at the same time preserving the structural integrity of the draughtsmanship) without descending to the crudity that only too often destroys the validity of colour illustration. Selection of the plates themselves from the extraordinary wealth of material is a triumph, when the difficulty of deciding which can be best calculated to inform the general reader and at the same moment show to advantage the genius of Audubon, is considered. The choice is happily varied including the majestic, richly coloured Wild Turkey of the frontispiece, or the Carolina Paroquet instinct with a vitality that almost sends it darting from the page into the air, or again the less prepossessing White Crowned Pigeon with his more sombre greys contrasted against the bright orange flowers about him.

Sacheverell Sitwell, who is the general editor of the new series of Batsford Colour Books, is responsible for the text and notes on the plates in the present volume. The brief introduction complements the vivid illustrations; rich in style, his allusions are as varied as the birds themselves and make delightful reading. Lamenting the irresponsible extermination of the Passenger Pigeon he also puts in a powerful plea for the English gaming cock, enumerating the different refinements of the species and providing ample material for another study. Without wishing to impugn the author's enthusiasm for the bird it did seem a rather lengthy digression from the principle theme, or are we to infer that he is seeking an author for yet another volume in this excellent series?

M. SHIRLEY

PORTRAIT OF SALISBURY CATHEDRAL. By G. H. Cook. (Phoenix House; 12s. 6d.)

This is a worthy successor to the author's previous studies of Canterbury and Durham, both text and illustrations maintaining the high standard set in those volumes. Salisbury has some claim to be considered unique among the ancient cathedrals of England since it alone belongs almost exclusively to one style and period, the early English of the thirteenth century. The beautiful symmetry of the vast pile and its exquisite setting in a spacious close with spreading lawns fringed by ancient houses of many periods combine to produce one of the most