

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 over-stressing 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

lovely pictures to be found anywhere in the country. Salisbury has yet another claim to distinction as being the home of the liturgical Use of Sarum which, first compiled by St Osmund at the end of the eleventh century, was eventually adopted throughout the province of Canterbury and spread even to Ireland and Scotland.

It was in 1219 that Bishop Poore, authorised by a Papal Bull, removed the seat of the diocese from the cramped and unsuitable setting or Old Sarum to a meadow near the Avon and the following year laid the foundation stone of the present cathedral which was consecrated in 1258. In the fourteenth century the tower and spire were added.

Though the actual fabric suffered comparatively little from reformers and puritans it was far otherwise at the end of the eighteenth century when James Wyatt was let loose on the building under the guise of effecting 'improvements'. This vandal architect destroyed the detached bell-tower, the chantries flanking the Lady Chapel and the beautiful thirteenth-century pulpitum. Sir Gilbert Scott's restoration in the sixties was decidedly drastic and most people nowadays will consider that Wyatt's screen made up of mediaeval bits and pieces was more pleasing than the metal horror which took its place.

It is gratifying to note that the author emphasises the true purpose of the cathedral—as indeed of all Christian cathedrals—when he says (p. 45):—'The supreme act of worship in the cathedral was the celebration of High Mass which took place every morning at 9 or 10 at the altar of the Assumption of the Blessed Mary in the sanctuary'. There are three plans, one of which shows the position of the various mediaeval altars from which we learn that the high altar stood considerably further west than does the present holy table.

E. T. LONG

THE CHRISTIAN IN PHILOSOPHY. By J. V. Langmead Casserley. (Faber 18s.)

Philosophy has been defined as the science of reality in terms of ultimate causes gained by the light of natural reason. The word 'ultimate' is important since it indicates that the conclusions reached by philosophers in their investigation of reality should be final and not provisional. Wisdom demands a definitive solution of the problems of experienced reality—a philosopher should not be content with suggestions as to how things may have been caused or about possible ends for which they may conceivably exist; rather he needs to know the actual causes, both final and efficient, which explain adequately the universe in which he lives. For a philosopher, then, the supernatural constitutes something of a problem, partly because it involves the