

fields with over 5,000 entries, 724 marginal drawings, and 182 photos.

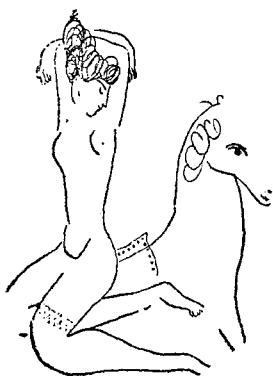
"**The Turn of the Century**" (Doubleday, \$3.95) is the first attempt at a yearbook by the magazine *Arts*. There are five articles on artists of the turn of the century and the arts that influenced them.



NATURE

THE amateur poultry raiser is aware (even though he may be unable to give it a name) of what is called the peck order. This Christmas roundup of books at hand is not offered in the peck order—a ahead of b, and b ahead of c—but in the order of stratification: birds on top, animals in the middle, and fishes underneath. Below the animal kingdom is the vegetable.

Long a bird-watcher's watcher, I take particular delight in Roger Tory Peterson's "**The Bird Watcher's Anthology**" (Harcourt, Brace, \$7.50). I can think of no higher praise than to say that it has in its own way something of the magic of de la Mare's "Come Hither": in other words, it is a creative work controlled and informed by the editor. It has vitality and excitement, not simply because the eighty-four selections from the work of nearly that many experts and advanced amateurs are for the most part vital and exciting, but because Mr. Peterson has related them by intimation and has introduced them one by one in a fresh and personal way. It is a beautiful book. It is also a big book, and unless you are a Paul Bunyan, it will not slip into the pocket or the pack; but to the novice it is worth fifty binoculars.



... and Futurism.

"**Chagall**," by Walter Erben (Praeger, \$7.50) is yet another book on the famous Russian-born painter, this time by a German scholar, who gives him a thorough biographical and critical treatment. Of the seventy-six plates, twelve are in color.

—L. R. SANDER.

as a pogo-stick, and the giant eel swimming on his side may yet explain the curious surface activity on Loch Ness. Indeed, this is so excellent and absorbing a study that it will inevitably call for revision and amplification. I trust when that time comes the author will weed out some annoying repetition and rely less on the lecture room method of "As we have seen" or "Up to this point."

Two writers that influenced a small boy gathering newts in the Poconos early in the present century were Charles G. D. Roberts and William J. Long. I recall in particular Dr. Long's "Northern Trails" (1905); but I do not remember it with the delight I now take in his posthumous volume "**Wings of the Forest**," (Doubleday, \$4), which was discovered in manuscript after his death in 1952 by his daughter Lois Long. It used to irk me somewhat that Dr. Long endowed his birds and animals with Indian names. Roberts did nothing of the sort: a fox was a fox and a dragon fly was at most a wolf of the air. To Dr. Long the blue jay is still Teedeeuk, the loon is Hukweem, and the wild goose is Waptonk. So be it. Dr. Long is a tireless and rapturous observer. To discover at this late date that Dr. Long had fished the Miramichi puts him on the side of the black-spruce angels.

One of my friends once caught a young wood duck in his hat as it jumped from a lofty elm tree along the main street in Deerfield, Mass.

THE NATIONAL BIRD: The United States of America has a king. . . . He is a king of the air, the undisputed ruler of high American sky, the American or white-headed eagle. Congress chose well when they picked this species for the national emblem. . . . Honest old Ben Franklin, who wanted to make the strutting and stupid turkey gobbler our national bird, charged the American eagle with being a coward, a bully, and a verminous thief. He did not know, apparently, that this bird of our choice is more attached to its home, is more faithful to its mate, and spends more care in the education of its young than any other in the skies. . . .

The eagle has many dangerous enemies—all of them human. Since Congress gave it the kiss of death in 1782 by publicizing it as the national bird without giving it legal protection, the eagle has had to fly through a barrage of lead to raise its young in the midst of its ill-wishers. . . . Only in the past few years did Congress get around to passing legislation to protect the symbol of our proud freedom. . . .

In spite of all that Americans have done to exterminate their grandest bird, it is still not uncommon wherever the fishing is good. It is most abundant in Alaska and Florida, around the Great Lakes, along the Mississippi River system, and off the coasts of the two oceans. Wherever you saw it, you never forget your first American eagle. He may be sitting in motionless, unblinking majesty upon the highest limb of the tallest tree in all the countryside, keeping guard over mate and nest, over wood and water. Or you may first have seen him taking a power dive from the skies, uttering his war cry as he stoops to pounce upon the shapes that stir beneath the water. Or perhaps you have watched, as I have, a flock of eagles soaring, circling, rising around one another until they become specks against the blue. Then it is not the dark spread of wings that vanishes last, but the flash of the proud crest, like the twinkle of snow on distant mountains.

—From "Parade With Banners," by Donald Culross Peattie (*World*).

How the mother happened to nest there, I do not know; and I do not know how Dillon Ripley, associate professor of zoology at Yale, has learned so much about ducks. But like Peter Scott on wild geese, Mr. Ripley is enormously informed in his specialty, and "*A Paddling of Ducks*" (Harcourt, Brace, \$6), superbly illustrated in black and white by Francis Lee Jaques, will delight all lovers of waterfowl. His chapter called "Oil on the Sea" should be framed page by page on the bridge of every tanker.

On the surface, "*The Wild Hunters*," by Gene Caesar (Putnam, \$3.75), might appear to be no more than good two-fisted reporting of man against the wolves, bears, and the big cats of North America. Mr. Caesar writes starkly but with sympathy and a fine sense of drama. His case histories are relieved by first-rate fiction which would have pleased Roberts and would please Sally Carrighar:

polar bear vs. walrus, killer-whale take all. But the book is far deeper than fiction or reporting: it is a passionate plea for preservation of predators, retention of the biotic checks and balances in nature, for an understanding by man of his powers and inclination to extinguish. The chapter called "The Exterminators," if it was not written to help the passage of legislation which will save Admiralty Island and the Alaskan brown bear, is full of the slower-burning language of a DeVoto. It ought to help.

All that anyone could want, wish, or hope to know about "*Living Reptiles of the World*" may be found in a book of that title by Karl P. Schmidt and Robert F. Inger (Doubleday, \$10). The illustrations—a great many of them in color—are as frightening as they are magnificent. The text is exhaustive. For anyone concerned with or interested in turtles, alligators, crocodiles, lizards, or snakes, Schmidt's

and Inger's book is an absolute must.

"*Strange Wonders of the Sea*" (Hanover, \$4.95), translated by H. Gwynne Vevers from J. Forest's "*Beautés du fond des mers*," costs half as much as "*Living Reptiles of the World*" and deals largely with sea life and sea forms of great beauty. Many of its illustrations are in color. Text is held down to a minimum. It is a selective rather than an inclusive volume. On the other hand, "*Fishes of the World*" (Countryman Press, \$12.50), by Edouard Le Danois and his collaborators, is, for one layman at least, a fairly comprehensive book of photographs and adequate text concerning life, beautiful and otherwise, under the rolling deep. It has not—in its very different way—the impact of the reptile volume.

The typography in these last three books is not the equal of the photographs. Better balanced in this respect is "*Tropical Plants and Their Cultivation*," by L. Bruggeman (Crowell, \$12). This book was printed in Holland. As A. P. Herbert said when he first stood for Parliament: "I know nothing about agriculture." I know nothing about tropical plants. I do know, however, that this is not as distinguished a book in appearance as, for example, "*The Art of Botanical Illustration*" by Wilfrid Blunt, printed in England in 1950. "*Tropical Plants*" is nevertheless a handsome volume; the color neither rich nor bold, the delicate illustrations tastefully arranged.

Last, but not least, John Kieran's "*Treasury of Great Nature Writing*" (Hanover House, \$4.95) is not categorized (but it does not suffer from the lack). Its sixty selections range from a discussion of the platypus to the likelihood of life on other worlds. Characteristic Kieranesque comments precede each entry, and there is poetry, which Mr. Kieran "managed to get in over the dead bodies of several publishing executives."

—DAVID McCORD.

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE COLOSSEUM: Rome, August 16, 1827—The Colosseum can be seen from three or four wholly different points of view. The finest perhaps is that which is offered to the spectator when he is in the arena where the gladiators fought, and he sees those immense ruins rise all about him. What impresses me most about it is that pure blue sky that one perceives through the upper openings of the building toward the north.

One climbs to the passageways of the upper stories by stairs that are in a fair state of repair. But if you are without a guide (and in Rome any cicerone is bound to spoil your pleasure) you run the risk of passing over vaults worn thin by rain, that may collapse. On reaching the highest story of the ruins, still on the north side, you view, across from where you are standing, behind tall trees and almost at the same height, San Pietro in Vincoli, a church famous for the tomb of Julius II and Michelangelo's "Moses."

To the south you look over the ruins of the amphitheatre which, on that side, are much lower and your eye comes to rest, in the distant plain, on the sublime basilica of St. Paul's, that burned on the night of July 15 to 16, 1823. It is half hidden by long rows of cypresses. This church was built on the very spot where, after his martyrdom, was buried the man whose words have created that immense river which is still today, under the name of the Christian religion, so much a part of our affections. . . .

From the bright ruins of the Colosseum one lives simultaneously with Vespasian who built it, with St. Paul, with Michelangelo. Here, closer by, is the Arch of Constantine; but it was built by architects who were already barbarians; decadence was beginning for Rome and for the West.

I feel only too keenly that such sensations can be indicated, but cannot be communicated. Elsewhere these memories could be commonplace; for the traveler standing on these ruins, they are immense and full of emotion. The stretches of wall, blackened by time, affect the soul in the same way as the music of Cimarosa, who can make the vulgar words of a libretto sublime and moving. The man with the greatest aptitude for the arts, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, reading in Paris the most sincere description of the Colosseum, could not help finding the author ridiculous because of his exaggeration, even though the latter might have gone to great pains to scale down his impressions.

A description of the Colosseum can only be attempted through the spoken word—after midnight, for example, at the home of a charming woman, amid pleasant company, when she and the women around her are in a wholly receptive mood. The narrator requires a rare kind of attention before he dares give way to his own emotions; images crowd in upon him, which the listeners can glimpse with the eyes of the soul. Speaking of which, how alive still is the soul of the greatest people on earth! Against the Romans one can hold the same objections as against Napoleon. They were sometimes criminal, but never has man been greater.

—From "*A Roman Journal*," by Stendhal, newly edited and translated by Haakon Chevalier (Orion Press-Crown).



—From "*Living Reptiles of the World*."

"Frightening . . . magnificent."



USUALLY as breezy as a travel folder, sometimes as substantial as the art historian's pictorial essay, the ornaments of the publishers' lists have made their traditional and bright appearance for Christmas. These are the big picture travel books and when the season was just a red and green speck far up on the calendar for most of us, the members of the book-producing fraternity were making ready to dazzle the shopper with their most opulent creations.

Perhaps the purest form of vicarious travel, these big and handsome volumes range in subject matter from a Tiepolo façade to a temple in Cambodia. Some few have real artistic merit in themselves, most stick to the scenes that have always lured the traveler back to his favorite places. As gifts, they belong frankly in the prestige class. They are ideal for the reader of difficult tastes, and impressive for the aunt who always complains of the lack of taste of the younger generation. The sight of any of these books under a Christmas tree labels the giver as generous and, at the same time, flatters the receiver as sophisticated.

In many ways these volumes belong particularly to a prosperous decade. They are being bought and enjoyed by a nation of people with the means and leisure to travel. They are reminders that faraway lands have become places where Americans have been or will go and whatever the height of sophistication of the reader's brow, have a place at Christmas.

Three of the books that appear on this season's list are about Germany and two of them are described as pre-

sending the entire country, with its pre-war boundaries. That covers a lot of castles. Of the three, certainly the most impressive is Martin Hürliemann's "Germany" (Studio Publication, \$10). To those who like to browse through showcase books and who therefore must be familiar with Dr. Hürliemann's other volumes, it has always been something of a mystery just what kind of enchanted camera he carries about, for the detail and clarity of his photographs are remarkable. We ought to mention however, that about one-third of the pictures were contributed by a variety of others and are not quite up to his standards. But on the whole it's a very handsome book and conveys a good impression of the vast forests, great rivers and massive architecture of Germany.

A MORE varied book, sprinkled with people and paintings, and by numerous photographers is "Germany" (Hastings House, \$8.50). The photographs of a few of the absurdly splendid baroque interiors are delightful and there are sixteen color plates. "Bavaria" is a slimmer volume of 160 pictures by almost as many photographers. There are many snowscapes and light-opera backdrops, the reproduction is only fair and the book costs \$6. It is published by Studio Publications, as is "Vienna" (\$5.50), a small but extremely attractive book with a short text by Anton Macku. The photographs are from a number of sources and all together they succeed in capturing Vienna quite accurately.

Those who are attracted by the

real unreality of Venice—and few have resisted—will be delighted by the appearance of two more outstanding books among those recently published on that city. The first, "The Venice I Love" (Tudor, \$7.95) is distinguished as much for its preface by Jean Cocteau and lucid text by André Fraigneau as for its 100 extraordinary photographs of which twelve are in color, by Jean Imbert. But the essence of Venice is best caught in the lyrical captions which are free of the usual matter-of-factness of picture captions. They were written by Michel Déon.

It is a pity that the photographs for such a distinguished collaboration suffer from inferior reproduction. In this respect, "Venice," (Studio, \$12.50) by Heinrich Decker is a successful book. The 230 plates are compelling in their attention to sculptural detail and a certain unity is achieved by the fact that the notes and text are by the photographer. The books differ too in that the second is less concerned with the texture and mood of Venice than the first and relies more on a conventional esthetic approach. On the other hand, "The Venice I Love" rarely loses sight of the aging coquette never without her jewels that Venice is.

It is often difficult to distinguish clearly between art books and picture travel books. A case in point are two extravagant volumes on Egypt, and any traveler to the Nile Valley, where thousands of years of Pharaonic civilization are continually in evidence, would be hard put to make the distinction. "Egypt: Architecture, Sculpture and Painting" (Phaidon, \$12.50) is a meticulous chronological study, including 116 pages of text by Kurt Lange. The superb new photographs are by Max Hilmer and there are gorgeous color plates of the wall paintings, some especially charming ones of ladies at their toilet. Much of the study is put into perspective in "Egypt" (Studio, \$10), which, though less ambitious, makes the drama of its pages more accessible to the non-



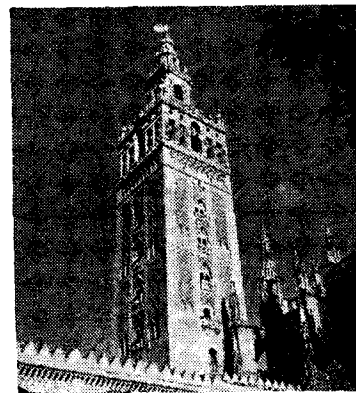
—From "Cote d'Azur."

The Villeneuve-Loubet Castle.



—From "Paris."

The Pantheon.



—From "Spain."

Seville's "Giralda."