



IMAGE

THE JOURNAL OF THE GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

NUMBER 1 • MARCH 1960

him . . . Largely because of his devotion to pure art, Ishimoto has received few material awards for his achievements, and it is therefore particularly gratifying that the Geibi Shuppansha has seen fit to present this superb résumé of his camera work to date. The occasion is indeed one for rejoicing.”

W. C.

THIS IS THE AMERICAN EARTH by Ansel Adams and Nancy Newhall; San Francisco, The Sierra Club, 1960; 89 pages, 82 photographs; \$15.00.

THE SIERRA CLUB'S PROSPECTUS of this book caused us to expect much and to hope for even more, so that the day on which the much anticipated volume arrived still remains as a stimulating memory. We have returned to this collection of pictures again and again. Each return has been like a first encounter and we feel the experience is far from exhausted. The book seems to rejuvenate itself, for the high and discriminating standards of those who composed it have given it a vitality peculiarly its own. It stands as an impressive reminder of what the photographic book should be and no doubt it will exert a beneficial influence on many publications to come.

The inception of the book was an exhibition of the same name which Ansel Adams and Nancy Newhall organized for the Sierra Club and which became internationally famous. Of course the first attraction of the present publication is the photographs reproduced, but the aim of the entire project is the Sierra Club's admirable purpose to awaken an appreciative support of American national parks, wilderness and wild life preserves. This has been done by means of a moving combination of images and words, so that one is convinced without a consciousness of being persuaded. If this book is approached without expecting it to be a comprehensive anthology of contemporary photography or a synopsis of photography's history (which seem to be the gauges too many apply to collections of photographs and exhibitions), it is difficult to believe it could ever fail to be a notable experience. A treasury of great pictures is here; thirty sources are represented in the eighty-two photographs, the theme of the work has been unswervingly kept in mind and the editors have looked far and wide for examples to state and enrich it. We repeatedly encounter the unexpected: Francis Frith's *Colossi, Nubia*, James Robertson's *The Acropolis*, Clarence Kennedy's *Renaissance Man* (a welcome recognition of this great and too often neglected photographer of works of art), Jacob Riis' *Bandits' Roost* (at last in a worthy reproduction — who will forget, after this, the hitherto unsuspected impressionism of the clotheslines?) — these are a few of the specimens which recall traditional backgrounds of photography and join hands in a kind of shock of recognition with the noble modern compositions which dominate these pages. After closing this book for the first time the most edifying and reassuring impression one has from it is that here is proof artists have not disappeared from the face of the earth and that there are still great ones living in this contradictory age with us.

Ansel Adams has long been much concerned with the various ways of reproducing photographs and has done much to encourage their improvement. It is worth buying this book just to see what can be done with mass production picture processes. Here the photogravure plates are worthy of the individually printed photographic originals: the paper has been chosen with an artist's understanding regard for its reflectance qualities and the excellence of reproduction brings the photogravure close to the classic printmaking media. Some of these photographs would seem impossible to reproduce (after all, what is more difficult to equal than the mutative subtleties of light in a fine photographic print?) and all have been sympathetically received and satisfactorily returned to us by a mechanical medium. We have come to demand so much of mechanical reproduction that sometimes its critics seem to expect the reproduction to outdo the original. In the illustrations for this book we are shown how near the reproduction can approach its object and how important is the understanding between the engraver and the artist whose work he is interpreting.

In *This is the American Earth*, Nancy Newhall has written a poem to set off the illustrations, much as a discerning composer would provide a musical score for a film, using it to deepen and point out the truths and wonders of visual material. The poem has beauty that is full and quiet and a cumulative movement which progresses steadily through the pages to a climax of both power and serenity. Anyone who looks at the pictures alone and does not read the lines which accompany them has wasted half of the satisfaction to be derived from this book.

The spirit which animates the entire accomplishment of *This is the American Earth* gave life to the work of Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, Thomas Wolfe. There is danger that it may disappear in our time but here it has returned to us in the visual language of the camera. It is hoped this book will penetrate to every corner of America and travel far abroad, for it does great honor to the larger values of America which still remain free of the shallow, unrewarding horrors of "togetherness."

HUGH EDWARDS
The Art Institute, of Chicago

TV AND FILM PRODUCTION DATA BOOK, by Ernest M. Pittaro. New York, Morgan and Morgan Inc., 1959. 448 pp. 132 illustrations. \$6.95.

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AT LAST, SOMEONE HAS WRITTEN IT. And because of its unique quality, this sorely needed technical book will probably have the success for which it vies. Mr. Pittaro's *TV and Film Production Data Book* is a must. For television and motion picture technicians, directors and producers, it gathers together in a single volume information hitherto available only from a fantastically scattered miasma of pamphlets, articles, brochures, speeches, and vague memories.