the technical processes of production—drawing, engraving (copper, steel, and stone), coloring, and photography.

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As systematics came to figure ever more largely, the naturalist gave way to the zoologist, the field to the laboratory. Though the tradition of the artist-naturalist would survive for a century and more in popular natural history, the transition was early viewed with alarm and some resentment. For natural history was assumed to have an "improving social influence" (p. 116), and, Americans believed (and a hostile world agreed), it was America's pristine nature that defined them as a people.

As the professional scientist (rather fastidiously) drew apart from the amateur, the specialist from the naturalist, the magnificent plates of an earlier day, whether engraved or lithographed, hand-colored or chromos, gave way to line drawings. The natural environment, landscape, drama (the rattlesnake charming Audubon's mockingbird), the animal entire with a page to itself, all had begun to disappear by mid-century. In their place a composite animal was depicted on a composite page, anatomy awaiting assembly.

"What then, if anything, distinguished American zoological illustration as American?" (p. 345)—or, for that matter, distinguished American science? (Recall that among the pioneers of American ornithography Wilson, Audubon, and Catesby were none of them American-born.) Success in winning European recognition for American scientific achievement rendered the question irrelevant. Success came through adoption of British and European styles of illustration, and adoption of European lithographers as well. But how came an equalitarian society committed to utility to possess science of a quality to win recognition from the European scientific community? That, as this book shows, is a very interesting question.

Picturing Nature is an impressive book, thorough in research and documentation. The illustrations, including 74 color plates, lend a touch of magnificence.

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Books Received

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Vignette: A Letter from Nobel

Nowadays, when I have to associate with people, I cannot fail to notice how enormously the lack of social intercourse these last few years has damaged me. . . I will probably never again in my life recapture my spiritual sprightliness.

I am not blaming you, my dear sweet little one, for things turning out this way. When all is said and done, it is my own fault, and you cannot be held responsible. Our views of life—on the need for constant mental improvement, on our duties as human beings with a higher education—are so hugely different that we should never even attempt to understand each other in these matters. It is with great pain that I draw the conclusion that my own nobility of soul has withered away and, my head bowed with shame, I am stepping out of the circle of educated persons.

Actually, it is totally senseless for me to write this to you. You will never be able to understand me on a deeper level. . . . You are not capable of grasping that for many years I have sacrificed my time, my reputation, all my associations with the educated world and finally my business—all for a self-indulgent child who is not even capable of discerning the selflessness of those acts.

Alfred Nobel, letter to Sofie Hess, 5 December 1880, as quoted by Kenne Fant in Alfred Nobel: A Biography (Arcade)

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