

A CENTURY OF BRITISH PAINTING. By Antony Bertram. (The Studio; 12s. 6d.)

This is an excellent book about a strange period of painting by a compelling writer. The period it reviews is from 1851 to 1951 and it is essentially an informative book, almost a text-book. Mr Bertram however has certainly not a text-book mind. He is independent in his judgment, humorous, informed and informal. Above all he is interested in this period without a name and this art without a face. Is it, the casual observer must wonder, an art with a hundred faces or a hundred different kinds of art? A cut, say, from 1451 to 1551 in Italian art would reveal a similar variety of aims and styles, but time has blurred the picture. Artists knowing one another, subject to one another's influence, yet differing in aim and interest, had we feel, a common language whereby to grasp, if not like one another's purpose. But who will get the idea of Henry Moore across to Frederick Lord Leighton who—yes, even he, as a glance at his lectures will reveal—already like Landseer's Sheep Dog uncomprehendingly knew things were not and never would be the same? Leighton is dead, but there were artists whose lives have felt the two influences.

Those bewildered by the last fifty years of art would be more bewildered by the fifty years that went before, were Mr Bertram not their guide. Those with the blood of this strange century in their veins, who, whether they like or dislike individual members of the family, yet understand them, will welcome Mr Bertram as an old friend of the family. His tales of the previous generation will be strange yet familiar, for the history of nineteenth-century art is as exhilarating as our own.

The book is well illustrated, well indexed, rounded off with impressive time charts and synoptic tables of unbelievable comprehension, and, lastly, is supplied with a wide reading list for the uninitiated.

PAUL HARRIS

TUDOR RENAISSANCE. By James Lees-Milne. (Batsford; 21s.)

The massive vulgarity of Tudor art has at last received the scholarly treatment it deserves; for it is impressive, it derives from obscure sources, it is the surviving material expression of one of the formative eras of our history. The opulence of the men who profited from the raw new deal of Henry VIII, the Protectors and Elizabeth, found an outlet in vast buildings; and though there were some extraneous forms, such as miniatures and jewellery, it was in the buildings and their adjuncts that the Tudor Renaissance found its chief expression, in fireplaces and furniture, ceilings and windows, chimney-pots and gatehouses.

Over this field Mr Lees-Milne moves with sure tread, detailing the