

and the book ends with a bold challenge to the existing order. That order is a world of two sorts of film-makers: features, and shorts. 'I feel it might be wise', he says, 'to consider establishing a third category of film-makers for the very special needs of the educational world—a pocket-size branch of the industry', serving halls but not cinemas, winning its spurs through merit, and standing in the same relation to the film industry as the pocket edition does to the publishing industry. The conclusion can be stated thus briefly. The case for it is the 240 pages of the book.

A. C. F. BEALES

THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF ART. By Arnold Hauser. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 42s., 2 vols.)

EARLY MEDIEVAL ILLUMINATION. Introduction by Hanns Swarzenski. (Batsford; 30s.)

The study of art history in England has been transformed by the influx of central European scholars during the years that immediately preceded the last war. Before that, English art history had been to a great extent the prerogative of the great museums. It had developed out of archaeology and the techniques used were still largely archaeological; the study of art object precisely as object. It had not established itself as any part of the elaborate faculty system which formed the skeleton of all English universities. The art history publications of that period suggest that there was then only a limited demand in any section of the English public. Since 1935 the study of art history has developed in all the major English universities, and a perpetually increasing number of publications suggest a wide untechnical interest. This new approach to the history of art has branched partly from the study of changing aesthetic theories and partly from the study of the social and cultural transitions that these reflect.

Two recent publications illustrate the new methods; it is significant that both are continental in their ultimate provenance. Dr Hauser has composed an analysis in two volumes which may prove equal in its influence to Dr Spengler's *Decline of the West*. The first seventy pages consist of a most ingenious and stimulating survey of the possible influence of social factors on prehistoric art-forms and on the art of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Crete. The next 880 pages contain a detailed account of all the changing forms of West-European art and literature studied in terms of sociology. An attempt is made to restate the significance of each movement in art or literature in the terms of the particular social context in which and from which it developed. No scholar can be a specialist in so many fields. Inevitably both volumes contain a great number of blunt statements on which the only possible

comment to be made is that they are not correct. Four such may be chosen as examples, each from a different section. On page 86 Dr Hauser writes: 'Participation in the Olympic Games was a preserve of the nobles'. On page 140 he writes: 'The dominion of the Emperor over the Church was based on the doctrine of Divine Right developed by the Fathers of the Church'. Page 407 contains the phrase 'the end of the comparative liberal government of Elizabeth and the new feudalistic tendency under James I'. On page 540 there is the phrase 'the liberal policy and secular outlook of the High Church'. Yet a longer, more serious list could have been constructed from the generalisations in the *Decline of the West*, while Dr Hauser retains throughout a high standard of factual accuracy, both in dates and in details of patronage, which is in itself an outstanding achievement in so vast a field. The 145 half-tone illustrations are admirably selected and well reproduced. Few recent studies have been so stimulating; none have opened so many new perspectives.

The Batsford publication on Early Medieval Illumination represents the second trend in modern art history. It is a study of illuminated manuscripts from the ninth to the twelfth century. It is illustrated exclusively from MSS. in Germany, primarily from the University of Wurzburg and the State Library at Munich. It centres round the analyses of the schools of Reichenau and of Echternach, and Dr Hanns Swarzenski has provided a careful and perceptive preface on the aesthetic ideal which they seemed to presuppose. One statement challenges disagreement: he writes on page 12: 'In so far as an Ottonian renaissance may properly be spoken of, the movement is almost exclusively a revival of the Carolingian Renaissance'. A Byzantinist might be inclined to state that the Ottonian Renaissance was primarily an adaptation of the art movements in contemporary Constantinople. But even here Dr Swarzenski carefully qualifies his statement in the pages that follow. Twenty-nine illustrations are characteristic of the methods of reproduction that have come to be associated with the great Swiss firms; twenty-one of them are in colour. Sometimes they are superbly rendered as in plate 15; the Crucifixion with personifications of life, death, church and synagogue, from the eleventh-century Uota MS. in Munich. Sometimes the colour-tones are very accurately conveyed, as in plates 4, 6 and 19; at times the gold, pale red and purple are all too vivid, as in plate 9 and plate 17.

Different as the two volumes are, representing two distinct currents in contemporary art history, it is an achievement common to them both that they should be sold at so moderate a price.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.