

keeps Life off the premises.

Victorian Voices is something of a hodgepodge. But what Thwaite has to say about the relations between Art and Life often commands our interest; indeed, poignantly so.

Nathan Cervo

BRIEFLY NOTICED

Italian Drawings 1780-1890, ed. Roberta J. M. Olson. 247 pp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980. \$29.95.

Mrs. Olson's book offers a good cross-section of 19th century Italian draughtsmanship, a period of lively achievement which, outside the country of origin, has never been adequately explored. In a long preface she discusses the volume's scope and gives an arresting account of the various circles and geographical locations where drawing as an independent art form was chiefly practised and prized.

The examples are well chosen on the whole and the reader may look forward to a fair number of pleasant surprises. Italian draughtsmanship during the period in question maintains a high level of distinction, despite its obvious eclecticism and sometimes rather excessive battenning on the glories of the past. An insular art, to be sure, yet its practitioners, at their best, wear their rue with a difference. The lessons of Baroque and Rococo in the use of line and wash have been fully digested, and there is frequent recurrence to late Renaissance and Mannerist models as well. Only a few of the artists represented show any sign of foreign influence, either British (Fuseli, Wright of Derby and, in the solitary case of Previati, Pre-Raphaelite art) or French (Ingres, Delacroix, Degas). From the technical point of view, the special Italian penchant for bravura, near-caricature and somewhat theatrical chiaroscuro effects is very much in evidence throughout the volume.

A word about the selection of plates: the members of the Macchiaioli group are somewhat under-represented, while Fattori -- given his stature as a draughtsman and the extraordinary variety of his works on paper -- receives less than justice. Telemaco Signorini, too, might have been allowed more generous space, in view of the large and impressive corpus of his drawings (only a single plate is given, and that one neither especially distinguished nor highly characteristic). However, what more than offsets these omissions are a number of delight-