

sance," "spirit of the age," and "modern." But the thesis that links these treatments is by Culler's admission at best a very general one: that "the great Victorian debate about science, religion, art, and culture always had a historical dimension, always was concerned with the relation of the present to the past" (p. viii). More specific parallels among different uses of history are of limited usefulness. For as Culler also admits, the past was not always a mirror, reflecting back the face of the Victorian present; often it offered contrasts designed to oppose and to correct the present, as did Carlyle's Middle Ages. The discussion of Ruskin's and Browning's use of history reveals more a search for timeless ideals than an investigation of models for the present. Some writers, like Mill and, in a different way, Pater, are concerned with a perpetual process of historical change; others,

like Newman and Matthew Arnold, with salvaging permanent truths from that process. Change means for some a perpetual recurrence, for others an ascending spiral, for still others, a linear progression. Because this study aims at being more eclectic than comprehensive, both in its choice of specific authors and in its consideration of them, it will probably be of more use to the reader with a general interest in the subject than to scholars of the individual writers examined. Notwithstanding these limitations, *The Victorian Mirror of History* stands as an impressive tribute to a rich and fascinating subject, and it is to be hoped that other scholars will take up Professor Culler's invitation to build on the substantial groundwork he has laid.

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The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites. An exhibition held at the Brooklyn Museum, New York, March 29-June 10, 1985 and at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, July 3-September 8, 1985. Catalogue (Schocken Books, 1985). 288 pp. \$29.95

For years we have heard about the American Pre-Raphaelites, mainly in connection with William Trost Richards (1833-1905), whose prolific output and well-documented life have been thoroughly researched by Linda Ferber. Art historians have also included Aaron Draper Shattuck among a group of lesser names who practiced the Pre-Raphaelite style in the United States, but details of an actual Pre-Raphaelite movement in this country have remained unchronicled and forgotten by all but a few specialists.

Last year's *The New Path* exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Linda S. Ferber and William H. Gerds, Co-Curators, has dramatically rectified a century's neglect. Unlike 1981's similar exhibition, *American Light*, which popularized the term "luminism," (applied

to describe an unrelated group of mid-nineteenth century artists whose style shared a concern for serene light effects in transcendental land and seascape views), *The New Path* revealed the existence of a small but influential Pre-Raphaelite movement in the United States. Although the exhibit has not received the attention it deserved, it should permanently alter our ideas of nineteenth century American art. It also provides a fascinating example of aesthetic cross-fertilization.

American Pre-Raphaelitism derived its inspiration as much from John Ruskin as from the PRB itself, and the publication of the American edition of *Modern Painters*, Volume One, in 1847 aroused great excitement. Two years later William James Stillman, who was later to marry Marie Spartali, visited England where he met Turner and Ruskin and saw Pre-Raphaelite work. Returning to the United States, his exhibited work quickly earned him the title of the "American Pre-Raphaelite." In 1855 Stillman founded *The Crayon*, the first ma-