

Needless to say the book is interesting, containing many of the surprises for which Fr Thurston was noted. Let us take one example, *The Our Father in English*, which forms the second paper. Here we are told that the 'Our Father' as daily used by English Catholics is the version first published by Henry VIII in 1541, some years after he had severed himself and the nation from the Church, and it cannot be doubted that up to that date the 'only official form of the Pater Noster was in Latin and this was used on all public occasions'. Fr Thurston shows quite clearly that although there are many extant translations in old manuscripts and early printed books, these all differed, and not infrequently more than one translation appeared in the same manuscript. When Mary brought back the Catholic liturgy she left the new English Pater Noster as published by her father, and it was not until the seventeenth century that English Catholics discarded the 'which art' and 'in earth' as archaic.

W.G.

THREE CHILDREN, Our Lady's Three Messengers of Fatima. By Canon C. Barthas, translated by Sister M. Dominic, o.ss.s. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 15s.)

THE SHEPHERDS OF FATIMA. By Father de Marchi, retold in English by Elisabeth Cobb. (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.)

Canon Barthas' book is a popular account, with a good deal of imaginary detail, of the lives of the three children who saw our Lady at Fatima, and of their marvellous experiences. Yet even in a popular account one would like to have an accurate statement of the central facts. Why not frankly admit, for example, as Father Martindale pointed out in *The Month* (October 1953, p. 220), that not all present at the Cova da Iria saw the solar phenomena on October 13th? In a translator's note Sister Mary Dominic explains that 'some words and exhortations intended for French readers have been omitted'. This might have been done even more thoroughly. English and American readers—and, we believe, French ones as well—could dispense with remarks such as 'Our Lady did not choose as her messenger one of the girls of today with permanent waves and skirts unduly short'. The translation is unfortunately very much a translation and abounds in pious clichés. Francisco's face is not only 'lit up with angelic brightness', but he is 'a humble mountain flower . . . uprooted by heaven', and Lucia's perpetual vows must needs be 'mystical nuptials'.

In pleasant contrast, Father de Marchi's *The Shepherds of Fatima*, a delightful children's book, is really 'retold in English', and a very lively and idiomatic English it is. We have unhappily to rely largely on imported literature for our 'spiritual books'; but it would be a boon if

publishers would at least secure really good translators. Even the finest thought can be robbed of most of its effect if presented in totally unfitting dress. Miss Cobb's translation is worthy of Fr de Marchi's story.

H. C. GRAEF

**CORPUS CHRISTI: Essays on the Church and the Eucharist.** By E. L. Mascall. (Longmans; 15s.)

Dr Mascall is one of those Anglican writers for whom the inferiority of Catholic thought is not axiomatic; he treats impartially Anglican and Catholic alike, and it would be churlish to complain of his stimulating and friendly criticism even when it is directed at St Thomas. Though a treatment of the visible unity of the Mystical Body which fails to take account of the unique position of St Peter can hardly be considered adequate, interesting contributions are made to eucharistic theology which forms the main theme; and for those unacquainted with this complex subject the book will provide a useful introduction.

R.L.B.

**A WRITER'S DIARY.** By Virginia Woolf. (Hogarth Press; 18s.)

The technical problems of a writer are, like those of any craftsman, a mystery to the uninitiated. 'How is it done?' one wonders, and perhaps goes on to envy the flair that makes the difficult achievement seem so simple. Few writers in fact would admit their job to be an easy one, and an honest account of how a professional writer works is usually a record of grim concentration and a constant sense of failure. For the discipline of words is an unending battle with complacency; nothing is easier than to write fairly well, nothing is harder than the final triumph over the intractable jungle of speech.

Virginia Woolf was the most professional of writers, and her husband's selections from the diary she kept for twenty-five years reveal a woman who was wholly dedicated to her chosen work. Day after day we read of her meticulous regard for the words that are the writer's world: the constant re-writing, the mornings when only fifty words would emerge from all the struggling effort, the sense of futility that so much labour should bring so uncertain a reward. And, like most writers, she was always in need of understanding, if not of praise. ('Well, Morgan [E. M. Forster] admires. This is a weight off my mind.') The closed society of those who shared her ideas was everything for her. Her incursions into the vulgar world beyond it are often venomous and quite without the capacity of pity. There are, indeed, brilliant parentheses—her portrait of Thomas Hardy, her account of the London blitz—but her only happy territory is that of the writer