

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