

NOTICES

A RETREAT WITH OUR LADY. By C. Polloi. (Sands; 5s.)

The sub-title is 'A Study in the Theological and Cardinal Virtues' and this describes the book better than the title. It is familiar, attractive, theologically-flavoured spiritual direction for pious souls. The virtues are considered one by one, not from the point of view of our Lady all the time (which one rather expected) but each virtue on its own merits. The last 38 pages (out of 178) are a development of the idea of Mary's *Fiat*. This is perhaps the most useful part of the book. But every page contains something both useful and practical and the uninspired, somewhat un-English style and presentation are fully compensated by the frequent little shafts of light which shoot from the most unpretentious paragraphs. A good little book for side-reading during an eight-day retreat or even for a chief source of a retreat's meditations.

G.M.C.

Père Paul Philippe's *La très sainte Vierge et le Sacerdoce* has gone into a second edition. This is good news for students of Marian doctrine who wish to complete their store of source books on the subject and who missed it in 1945. It has not been revised, as far as one can see, glancing through, in the light of subsequent work (Laurentin, Neubert, Gallay) but perhaps in the nature of things that was not desirable. It is about the way our Lady influences the daily life of the priest and is therefore a good devotional work with a theological foundation. It is better in French than in the English translation (*The Blessed Virgin and the Priesthood*, Mercier, 1952).

FILS DE L'ÉGLISE (Editions du Cerf; n.p.), is a recent addition to the series 'Problèmes Modernes d'Apostolat', in which Louis Lochet devotes 257 pages to an exhaustive analysis of various aspects of the Christian apostolate in the contemporary world. Most of the chapters were published in *La Vie Spirituelle* between 1949 and 1954. The author insists that his book contains nothing original: that it is merely 'a series of reflections grafted on to everyday life and based upon common experience'. He hopes that, just because he writes from the point of view of the average Catholic, his books will be helpful to others who work and suffer in the service of Christ among their brethren in the world. The first chapter, devoted to the sort of intellectual and spiritual temptations which must at one time or another come to almost every Catholic in these days, is well worth careful reading. In fact, there is a great deal on almost every page that helps to strengthen the faith and hope of the disillusioned worker for Catholic Action, who—to use the

current expressions—is 'fed-up' and 'browned-off'. The final chapter, entitled 'Contemplations', stresses that the so-called 'Contemplative Life' is not reserved to enclosed monks and nuns, and that unless lay apostles realise this fact, their work for souls will be almost useless.

THE PICTORIAL STORY OF WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL (Burns Oates; n.p.) is a pleasantly produced brochure with many striking photographs intended primarily as a guide to visitors. But the letter-press by the Administrator, the Very Rev. Mgr Gordon Wheeler, as well as the illustrations are instructive for anyone interested in the recent development of Catholicism in England. We miss, however, any clear picture of Eric Gill's Stations, the romanesque character of which seem to fit so admirably into the total structure; and many would like to see a criticism of the final plans, the marble and mosaic *versus* the beauty of the unfinished brick. His Eminence Cardinal Griffin contributes the Foreword, pointing authoritatively to the main function of the building—'a powerhouse of prayer where the Divine Liturgy is celebrated with true devotion in all its rightful splendour'.

EXTRACTS

IN CROSS AND CROWN (Chicago) for September Father Bandera, editor of the Spanish *Vida Sobrenatural*, suggests that one of the dangers of modern piety is 'naturalistic spirituality'. It is based, he says, on a reversal of the order of grace and nature.

One readily recognizes that it is entirely necessary and proper for man to exercise every capacity of human nature in the practice of virtue. Human nature has found its most redoubtable champion in the Catholic doctrine that grace does not destroy nature but rather heals and perfects it. Naturalism proposes a revision of that principle. It is now suggested that human nature does not serve grace but, on the contrary, grace should be at the service of human nature. It is nature which is the queen and mistress of the Christian highway. His phraseology (or is it the translator's?) is not clear; but the point he makes is important since often in our desire to rescue human nature from destruction by the puritan or manichee we are inclined to forget its mortal wounds inflicted by original sin. The pendulum of doctrine will forever swing. But the remarks of Father Bandera serve as a defence to the attack on religious life on the plea that marriage is more in accord with nature. The Pope, here quoted with effect, has several times pointed to the danger of the modern attack on religious life from this angle. Naturalism, however, might also appear in the over-emphasis of