

modern Naples; in spite of page 18 it is not really tenable that the Emperor Julian showed himself coldly and uselessly cruel. Such a list could be extended to the end, but it would be rather like breaking a butterfly upon the wheel.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

LA LUMIÈRE DANS LES TÉNÉBRES. (Desclée de Brouwer; n.p.)

This is the tenth *Cahier de la Pierre-qui-vire*—the attractive name of the Abbey at Yonne. And it is certainly rock-like in its staunch adherence to the French school of piety and prayer. The 'light in the darkness' is private individual prayer, and the *Cahier* is an anthology of the post-Reformation French teaching on prayer and meditation set out in three sections—Perfection, Progress, and Purification. It will make a useful spring-board for meditation. But it is surprising to find this highly specialized and somewhat outmoded form of spirituality coming from a modern abbey. The well-produced photographs seem to suggest the barrenness of the theme for modern times. They begin with charming nature studies of trees and reflections in water and conclude with a beautiful but bare abbey church which strikes the viewer as being as cold and empty as a Protestant cathedral. Surely the revival in liturgical prayer and *lectio divina* has brought us back now to realize that the light that shines in the darkness is our Lord himself, to be found today as always in his body the Church, and radiating from his eucharistic body in the sacrifice of the altar. Prayer catches this light from the altar and is constantly fed by the sacramental life of the Church. Meditation, *lectio divina*, contemplation rise from this foundation—and the church no longer remains cold and empty.

This is not to decry the great work of Bossuet in particular, of Bérulle, Olier, Lallement and the others. But little seems to be gained by repeating their teaching *verbatim*. What they revealed in the nature and life of private prayer has now to be introduced into the wider and deeper ocean of the prayer of Christ. The light shining in the darkness can enlighten this teaching as well. One would have expected a work of this kind of rehabilitation to issue from a modern abbey rather than the rehashing of the old material. It will however provide a book for meditation for those brought up in the French school of spirituality.
C.P.

THE HERMIT OF CAT ISLAND. By Peter F. Anson. (Burns and Oates; 21s.)

The Hermit of Cat Island in the Bahamas was J. C. Hawes—architect, parson, priest, *monsignor*, hermit and always architect. Peter Anson's very readable account of his life is based on documents

and diaries left by Fra Jerome, the name he adopted as a hermit, quotes from them frequently and is illustrated with the hermit's own vivid and amusing sketches as well as a number of photographs of churches he designed and built. The tang of the hermit's personality is borne across strongly; three glimpses will show what I mean—the young Anglo-Catholic parson wandering as a tramp to satisfy his longing for Franciscan poverty—the parish priest in Western Australia breeding horses, riding them and even winning once in the local races to the great delight of his parishioners—the old hermit dragging himself out despite sickness to build churches and even a monastery elsewhere in the Bahamas, but still longing for the ascetic solitude which his own innocent flamboyance and his obedience seemed to prevent him achieving. These are all the same man. But this is more than a story of physical adventure: in the chapter 'Soliloquies of a Solitary' we see something of his spirit and his plan for the eremitical life and it is enough to fill one with admiration.

B.W.

NATURE INTO HISTORY. By Leslie Paul. (Faber and Faber, 21s.)

Mr Paul's autobiography, with its first-hand understanding of the intellectual and spiritual values of the urban poor earlier in the century, gave an account of the growth and testing of his very humane principles and convictions. The upbringing which he there describes explains why he came to be, in these Brains Trust days, an unusual kind of popular philosopher and moralist—unacademic in the best sense, critical of much that passes as scientific humanism, and dissatisfied with the view of man's nature which scientific humanists have made so widely acceptable. *Nature into History* is an attempt to clear the way for a more traditional, religious view of human nature by a reassessment of evolutionary philosophy, and an examination of evidence from anthropology, archaeology and psychology.

It should be said at once that this is not one of those contentious intrusions into the purely scientific work of zoologists, biologists and others, which have always tended to discredit the religious views they have been intended to support. Mr Paul has clearly gone to some trouble to acquaint himself, as far as a non-specialist can, with the nature of that scientific work, but only in order to see whether it *must* carry the implication that 'man is just a beast writ large', and that human history is only a continuation of an universal evolutionary process. His conclusion is that so many great differences of degree are found between the characteristic activities of man and of other animals that man, while having his part in their natural world, has entered, or at