

solitary cottage in what had been the Cornwall of Katharine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence. Here she began to work with her hands, write and keep a door ajar for the supernatural.

She left Reading for the life that is outwardly portrayed in her books. This book, although it goes over the same ground, is another story, in which criticism of herself is offset by criticism of the world which affords so little help towards the discovery of the one thing needful. In this light it should be read and re-read.

HELEN PARRY EDEN

DE LA SALLE: *LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS*. Edited by W. J. Battersby, PH.D. (Longmans, Green; 25s.)

Dr Battersby now supplements his two volumes on St John Baptist De la Salle, as an educational pioneer and as saint and spiritual writer, with a third, containing all the extant letters and other papers of De la Salle: for the most part the translations are accompanied by the original French text, and the whole collection is most ably annotated by the editor in the light of his researches.

The collection is not a large one: ninety-five letters, and six documents of no great length, are all that have survived from what must have been, as Dr Battersby says, an 'enormous mass'. Nor can we comfort ourselves with the thought that we have all that was most important. On the contrary: the letters, for example, 'reflecting the Jansenist controversy . . . have all disappeared', though J. B. Blain in his biography of De la Salle has preserved the text of the one in which the saint protests against the Dean of Calais having put his name on the list of Appellants. And the nearest thing there is to a complete series are twenty letters addressed to Brother Gabriel Drolin in Rome between 1702 and 1716; but these are of special interest and value.

In addition to the light they throw on the personality and methods of De la Salle and the early history of the institute he founded, these letters are interesting to the general reader as plain straightforward glimpses into another age and another country, even though from the specialised angle of a religious superior writing to his subjects. Apart from Drolin, the Brothers 'who have most letters to their credit were not high-calibre souls, and the saint is reduced to giving advice on the most elementary points'. He was strict and outspoken in rebuke, but always out of solicitude for his brethren. He writes to Brother Matthias: 'It appears that Brother Sebastian's shoes were too small for him, but that they fit you. Take them, and do not wait to be told twice. We shall have to have a pair of breeches made for you if you need them. I shall take care that you are provided with what is necessary.' On the personal side, that last sentence, in a wide sense, is the keynote of this correspondence. D.A.