

the heights of the mystic way. It is as spiritual yet as practical and practicable as anyone could wish. A similar volume in English would fill a great need.

It is a pity the print of the text is poor and that of the introduction so small as to deter any reader whose eyesight is not of the best.

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.

DE LA SALLE. By W. J. Battersby. (Longmans; 12s. 6d.)

It is with St John Baptist De La Salle as an educational reformer and pioneer, rather than as a saint, that this book deals. English writers on education have hitherto largely neglected the importance of De La Salle's work and influence, yet the Order which he founded is now the largest teaching order in the world. He was the first to organise the education of poor children in an efficient manner, realising as he did the need for a supply of trained teachers. The author fully vindicates the saint's claim to be the founder of the first teachers' training establishment. He was also the pioneer in France of vernacular instruction, of milder disciplinary methods, and of that supposedly modern institution, school meals.

Poverty, humility and determination were the qualities which, in spite of early difficulties—the opposition of ecclesiastical superiors and of vested interests, such as the Writing Masters' guild—ensured the ultimate success of the Brothers of the Christian Schools; and the author makes an interesting comparison between Mme de Maintenon's richly endowed academy at St-Cyr and the humble beginnings of De La Salle's Order. For the saint's historical background is emphasised throughout the book: his lifetime coincided with the Grand Siècle of Louis XIV, with its triumphs, military and literary, and its swarms of starving poor. It was in the service of the latter that De La Salle renounced wealth and position, devoting his fortune to their spiritual and material welfare.

This book cannot fail to be of interest to all students of education as well as to a wider public who will find therein a fascinating account of a great personality in a great age.

Mr A. C. F. Beales has contributed an eloquent Foreword in which he shows how far in advance of educational reformers in this country St John Baptist De La Salle was.

S. A. H. WEETMAN.

SAINTS AND THEIR EMBLEMS IN ENGLISH CHURCHES. By R. L. P. Milburn. (Oxford University Press; 12s. 6d.)

Mr Milburn gives brief biographies of some hundred-and-fifty saints with notes on their representations in medieval carvings and windows in England. The vagaries of popular taste—in saints as in other matters—is unaccountable, so that Gildard and Uncumber earn places while others more authentic remain outside or are said to lack pictorial record. A useful introduction expounds the idea

of sanctity in Christian tradition (not without occasional donnish disapproval of medieval exuberance), and appendices give lists of emblems and notes on the representation of such categories as bishops, monks, deacons and popes. Occasional sketches illustrate the biographies, and a convenient format ensures the usefulness of an agreeable addition to the guidebook literature on English churches. It should be added that Mr Milburn confines himself to English churches, which in this context includes Cornwall, where, as he rightly says, the local saints are more naturally linked with Wales or Ireland than with England.

I.E.

THE IMITATION OF MARY. By Thomas à Kempis, edited by Dr Albin de Cigala. (Mercier Press; 10s. 6d.)

The term 'Marian age' like that other 'age of enlightenment' is so used and abused today as to have become a mere cliché. Yet as far as either term can be truthfully applied to the world of the first half of our present century it has been the reverse of 'Marian' in as far as real understanding of the place of Mary in the divine scheme of redemption and the practical devotion which necessarily follows, is concerned; and as far as 'enlightenment' is concerned, it can pretty well be said that it is the age in which the greatest quantity of education (?) has produced the smallest returns of enlightenment, i.e. of real culture. Here, thank God, the parallel ends. For while in the former case, the dark period having been reached the dawn is already breaking, in the latter, we seem from all mere human indications to be on the verge of the darkest age of anarchy and ignorance in regard to the basic principles of justice, law, order, truth and beauty. We might well give way to despair unless as true believers we knew that the now dawning of the 'age of Mary' will in the next half of this century reach the splendour of full daylight, and that by this light from above alone will the gathering darkness of the material world be dispersed.

Yes, Mary, who had become a mere devotional appendage to our 'following of Christ' has now taken, at least with the most up-to-the-age Catholic thinkers, her proper place as the indispensable link between fallen mankind and his divine Redeemer. Most fitting then and surely another unmistakable herald of the 'dayspring from on high' that the world should now be given, as companion to that spiritual classic the 'Imitation of Christ', an 'Imitation of Mary'. Who ever dreamt that amidst the writings of the illustrious Thomas à Kempis there lay such treasures of Marian spirituality as Dr Albin de Cigala has so ably gathered and arranged for us? We have here again the same noble prose 'poetic and rhythmic' as we very early learnt to love in the 'Imitation', yet with its own special quality, best described perhaps by the word *chaste*, and so perfectly appropriate to the sublimity, sweetness and purity of the subject. One feels compelled to compliment most highly the Dominican