

stand? Does one answer an enquirer in words he cannot comprehend without the help of an interpreter? Does one perform a play in speech that is unintelligible to those who are present?

SAINT-SULPICE, Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas, Notre-Dame-du-Raincy and Notre-Dame de Mantes, are the latest titles in the attractive *Nefs et Clochers* series (obtainable from Blackfriars Publications, 2s. each volume). An interesting text and brilliant photographs give fresh evidence of the contemporary French genius for communicating the joy of the Church.

PRAEGLUSTATOR

LA MAISON-DIEU, Cahier II (Blackfriars Publications, 5s. 0d.) has 250 pages of detailed consideration of the problem of language and liturgical traditions. Articles on the past and present discipline of the Church are supplemented by an ample documentation on contemporary difficulties. The Abbé Martinort summarises an enquiry made by *Témoignage Chrétien* on the use of the vernacular in the liturgy. Hundreds of replies are analysed, from 'This is a wave of modernism' to 'The words of the Mass were not intended to be magic incantations'. The serious interest of priests and laity alike in the recovery of a living liturgy cannot be ignored. But knowledge must precede the hope of action, and the temperate and informed essays in this number of *Maison-Dieu* range from the practice of sub-apostolic times to modern German methods of translation. Père Roguet, O.P., has a most original and useful article on the terminology used in popular eucharistic sermons. 'The prisoner of the tabernacle', 'Jesus comes down on the altar', 'Bread of angels', and many more: these expressions must be 'animated by a living thought . . . must be fortified by the ever fresh resources of the Scriptures and the Liturgy, so that the preacher may be what he should always be—a prophet of the living God'.

## C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

To The Editor, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT:

Sir,—In your current issue (October) you publish an article by Sister Mary Frances, O.P., on Blessed Emily Bicchiere in which it is stated that 'girls prepared in such schools as hers went to the universities not only to learn but to become professors'. Mention is made of women professors at Alcalá and Salamanca and of women at the medical schools of Salerno, also that after the 'unfortunate incident' of Abelard and Heloise 'Paris closed her doors to women and Oxford followed her example'. I should be extremely interested to know the exact authority for these statements since they stand in direct contradiction to all that I have previously read concerning medieval universities.

That the celebrated women doctors of Salerno were mythical has

long been established: see *History*, October 1925 (vol. X, pp. 244-5), also Powicke and Emden's revised edition of *Rashdall's Medieval Universities* (O.U.P., 1955). This last contains very few references to the presence of women at the universities in any academic capacity: Alcalá is not mentioned at all in this connection, and Salamanca only on account of one learned woman some two centuries later than the period with which your article deals. The only specific mention of a woman engaged in teaching is in the section dealing with Florence, where a certain Clementia is named as 'doctrix puerorum', who taught the rudiments of Latin in 1304. Had there been any great number of women professors such as your article suggests it is well-nigh impossible that they should have escaped mention in this standard work on the universities of medieval Europe.

In regard to Paris closing her doors to women early in the 12th century and Oxford's following suit, it is surely impossible to maintain that Paris at the time of Abelard was a 'university' in any but the most embryonic conditions? and it is certain that Oxford did not become recognisable as a university until at least the time of Giraldus Cambrensis. That either admitted women at any time seems untenable, and I should be grateful to know on what authority these statements are based.

Yours faithfully,

EDNA MONTER

Sir,—In answer to your correspondent with reference to my article on Bl. Emily Bicchiere, I can only say that I welcome the corrections due to her greater knowledge on the subject of women's place in medieval universities. I am no student of medieval history but merely a lover of the history of the Order of Preachers. My statements about women students and professors in the middle ages are taken from *The Thirteenth, Greatest of the Centuries*, by J. J. Walsh, M.D., Ph.D., LL.D., Litt.D. (Georgetown). Sc.D. (Notre Dame); New York; Catholic Summer School Press, 1913.

I believe I am correct when I say that girls educated by Bl. Emily and other Third Order sisters, with a view to their future life in the world, were given a different standard of education from that of the girl-novices in Dominican Contemplative monasteries, where the emphasis was laid on the spiritual rather than the intellectual; not that the latter was neglected. Well on in the 15th century there was a marked change, as the chronicles of monasteries and decrees of General Chapters clearly show.

Yours truly,

S. M. FRANCES, O.P.