

THE MARTYRDOM OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS. By Kieran Mulvey, O.P.
(Blackfriars Publications; 2s. 6d.)

Most people are familiar with the main facts in the life of Mary Stuart, but unfortunately these facts lend themselves very easily to a false interpretation, as Mary's enemies realized to their advantage when they wished to find a reason to rid themselves of this unwelcome menace to the new religion in Scotland. There is no doubt that the Scottish queen has suffered at the hands of historians, and she has come down through history 'obscured by the dark accusation of adultery and the murder of a husband'. There is however another aspect of Mary's life (impossible to ignore if she is to be given the place in history which is rightfully hers), viz. the years of her imprisonment, and especially the few days preceding her death. We are grateful that Fr Mulvey has devoted his little study to precisely this point. He refers to Mary's martyrdom, for it is his opinion and it was Mary's firm conviction that she died for her faith. There were indeed strong political reasons which made it desirable that Mary should be removed, for she had a strong claim to the English throne, but an equally strong reason was the fact that she was considered dangerous to the continued survival of the religion of the Reform. This is made clear in the sentence of death, quoted on page 29. Fr Mulvey describes her preparations for her death; the writing out of her confession (she was refused a chaplain), her joy at her coming martyrdom, and her final prayers and meditation. On the way to the scaffold the Queen consoled her weeping attendants, telling them she was ready to die for her faith, refused the services of the Protestant Dean of Peterborough, and died commending herself to God. This recalls so many of the martyrs who died under Henry. Fr Mulvey's final chapter notices the contemporary Catholic reaction to Mary's death, and their recognition of her martyrdom.

The evidence brought forward by Fr Mulvey is convincing, and it is to be hoped that this little book is but the first of a series of writings by Catholic scholars which could do much to remove the damaging legends which have surrounded Mary Stuart for four hundred years.

F.P.

PRIÈRE PURE ET PURETÉ DU COEUR. By Dom Georges Lefebvre.
(Desclée de Brouwer; n.p.)

In this charming little book Dom Lefebvre wishes to place before us two traditional notions: originating from our Lord's own teaching on prayer, a monastic tradition ranging from the Fathers of the desert through Cassian to St Benedict has understood by *oratio pura* a very