

OLIVER. By Rev. H. Gaffey, O.P. (Gill; 3s. 6d.)

This is a short life of Blessed Oliver Plunkett, the martyred Archbishop of Armagh. At first sight one is put off! The paper 'jacket' is truly terrible—part Roman purple, part black, with line drawings in white of a gallows, a bit of chain, a ship, a palm and a sprig of shamrock, ranged presumably as decorations round a medallion head of the Martyr. The portrait alone in its medallion on a plain background would have been more effective. The black-and-white illustrations in the book are good, though more than one little drawing of the same gallows seems unnecessary! The two coloured illustrations are poor.

The story itself is well told in straightforward, simple English. Especially good is the account of Oliver's return from the security of his life in Rome to the dangers and hardships of Ireland in those years of persecution. We have, too, a graphic description of his indefatigable work for souls, as Archbishop of Armagh, undertaken at the constant risk of his own life. The account of his capture, imprisonment and trial, and finally of his death at Tyburn, is all the more moving for being so briefly and simply written.

We read on the flyleaf that the book was written for boys and girls; yet it is not a 'child's book'. Rather is it a book for every age, and many will learn from its pages of a holy and heroic Martyr for the Faith, who had been but a name to them before.

FFLORENS ROCH

MOTHER F. A. FORBES. By G. L. Sheil. (Longmans; 8s. 6d.)

This is the life of a nun who entered a teaching order—the Society of the Sacred Heart—at the age of thirty-one. Except for the first chapters and the closing one, the book consists mainly of letters written by Mother Forbes herself to a friend. Through these letters we learn not only about her active and literary work, which had to be set aside during periods of painful and wearying illness, but we get to know the woman herself, her selflessness, her courage, her kindness, her whimsical humour that no suffering could altogether suppress. We have too in these letters little gems of descriptive writing. In a few words we are shown little bits of garden; budding trees; her bird friends; and that glimpse of the sea from her window that gave her such joy when she was ill at the Brighton convent. From Craiglockhart, where the Sacred Heart nuns have their Training College for teachers, she writes of the Craig, the hill close behind the house, clothed in springtime with masses of yellow flowering 'whins' (called 'gorse' by the unmusical English); of the sun shining upon it, 'and the whole garden flooded with the apricoty, aromatic smell of it'. Sometimes she uses the outdoor things to show a spiritual truth: 'How good God is', she writes. 'Did you ever detach a limpet from a rock? I did once. . . . The limpet became a shell—to hold Holy Water'.

Mother Forbes was an enthusiastic Highlander. During her years