

THE TESTAMENT OF MARY: THE GAELIC VERSION OF THE *Dormitio Mariae*. Edited by C. Donahue, Ph.D. (Fordham University Press; \$1.50.)

While Julia Domna, Syrian wife of Septimus Severus, was inspiring Philostratus to write an edifying account of the life of Apollonius of Tyana, Christians were busy with similar accounts of the wonderful visions and deeds of the saints and apostles. From the second century onwards, there circulated a large number of these Christian novels, written in Syriac, Bohairic, Sahidic, Greek, and Latin, besides many other languages. Among these novels is a group dealing with the death and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. The four main groups of texts are written in Coptic, Greek, Latin, and Syriac, each group being again subdivided into texts which vary considerably.

The Gaelic version published by C. Donahue for the first time is based on Ms Laud Misc. 610 ff. 34-38 of the Bodleian, written about 1450, and therefore slightly later than the text in the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*, Vol. II, f. 48 (99), though both are considered by the editor to be variants of a single redaction. St. John Seymour (*J.T.S.*, XXIII, 1921-22, pp. 36-43) gave reasons for supposing that the text of the *Liber Flavus* was directly dependent on the Syriac *Obsequies of the Holy Virgin* (ed. Wright, *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature of the N.T.*, 1865, pp. 42-51), and the present publication of the Gaelic text together with an Irish Latin version should throw further light on this relationship. C. Donahue has not dealt in detail with the question, but has edited the *Testament of Mary* in the hope that scholars who may be unacquainted with Gaelic will pursue the subject further. The popularity of the legend, and the fact that it may have been introduced into Ireland as early as the eighth century, make this text important for those who are interested in the possibility of direct Syriac influence on the early Christian thought and literature in Ireland.

VALENTINE WOOD, O.P.

OUR LIVING FAITH. By the Rev. S. M. Shaw. (Burns Oates; 7s. 6d.)

It is to be hoped that the depressing dust-wrapper of this book, with its unusually stupid 'blurb,' does not prevent its being read. Father Shaw's point is that there is small danger at the moment of the things that are Caesar's not being rendered to him, but considerable danger that Catholics will in practice lose touch with the reality of their Faith. The remedy is a proper apprehension of dogma. He therefore presents the classical theology of the Church in such a way that its bearing upon practical living may emerge, in essays upon the Trinity, the Church, Our Lady, the Sacraments and other subjects. The work, which is theologically adequate without being recondite, is well done. Long familiarity with Biblical and