

these be constantly in her hands. Inspire her with an ardent thirst for the Acts of the Apostles, and for their Epistles. Make her learn by heart the prophecies, the seven first books of the Scriptures, those of Kings, and the Chronicles, along with those of Esdras and Esther. Last of all, and when the thing can be done without danger, let her read the Canticle of Canticles. This precaution is necessary, lest, reading it too early, she might not, under its carnal expressions, comprehend the mystery of the spiritual nuptials with the sacred spouse, and the tenderness of her innocence might thus possibly be wounded."

"In thus laying down the above plan of education, St. Jerom does not pretend to violate the established discipline of the church at that time. On the contrary, he but followed the general practice which then prevailed in the method of instructing young Christian females. Now, if the saint thus required that a child so young as Læta should not only know, but even learn by heart, so many portions of the Scriptures, what ought we not to infer with regard to men of mature age, and to women of tried discretion and distinguished piety?"

(To be continued.)

ST. CHAD'S, BIRMINGHAM.

To the Editor of the Tablet.

SIR—The interest which you have always taken in the institution of religious confraternities for the service of the poor induces me to address you on the subject of one which has now existed in our town for twelve months. It is called the "Confraternity of St. Vincent of St. Paul;" but for reasons which it is unnecessary to enlarge upon at present, while it agrees in principle with congregations which go by the same name in other places, it differs materially from them in the manner in which its machinery is constructed and worked. Its objects are, next to the sanctification and mutual edification of its members, the temporal relief of the poor, and the burial of the dead.—Any one who chooses may become a member by making an offering of at least *one shilling*, and promising to say daily a *Pater, Ave, and Gloria Patri*, for the soul's health of his brethren who are alive, and a *De profundis* or *Fidelium animæ* for those who are deceased. These offerings are laid out in the purchase of requisites for funerals and other such purposes of the Confraternity. The members admitted during this first year of our existence amount to one thousand one hundred and forty-one; and their offerings, with some additional ones made by the surviving friends of

Brothers or Sisters who have been buried by the Society, amount to nearly £150. With this we have bought a hearse, fifty or sixty funeral cloaks for men, women and children, palls, biers, &c. &c. There is a balance of nearly £20 in hand. For the relief of the poor, collections are made monthly among the members from house to house, by ladies styled *Almoners*, who correspond with the "Brothers" in the ordinary Confraternities of this kind. No one is obliged to give, and, as the donation is dropped into a sealed box, no one, who does give, is obliged to make known the amount of his donation. By this means we have collected, and since distributed, partly through the Clergy, and the remainder through the Almoners, the sum of £135 6s. 10d. Another very important branch of our institution is for the burial of the dead. The miserable expedient to which the poor had been driven in order to secure a decent funeral for their deceased relatives, and the horrible abuses to which these expedients had led, induced us to give this part of the charity a very especial attention. I am happy to say that our endeavors have been blessed with singular success. During the twelve months of our existence we have given not only a decent, but a most respectable funeral to *one hundred and thirty-nine* persons, without any charge; not more than ten out of the whole number having friends who could have stood the cost of a very ordinary interment. Our plan is very simple, and is as follows: On some one Monday in every month we have an office (usually the stations of the Cross) in the Cathedral, and at the close of the devotion we collect the voluntary offerings of the faithful. The average amount is about 30s.—With this, borrowing a little occasionally from the first fund of which I spoke, we defray the expenses of the several funerals; that is to say, for each funeral of a poor person we give 6s., namely, 2s. 6d. to the Sacristan of the Confraternity for ordering the funeral and taking care of the cloaks, &c.; and 3s. 6d. to make up the sum required for the ground; *four shillings* being allowed for the purpose by the parish, and also a sufficient coffin. The *hundred and thirty nine* funerals have cost the Confraternity in this way £32 14s. 6d., leaving also a balance of £6 15s. in hand. I do not speak of the spiritual advantages which may have occurred from the establishment of this Confraternity; they, if any, are known to God, and in due time will be rewarded also. But I have been led to send you this account of the temporal success of our society, that you, and your readers (if you think proper to publish this) may see how much we Catholics may do for one another, if we only set about it with good will, and in a Catholic way. What has been done here may be done, and I have no doubt much more efficiently, in almost every