OUR THREE-FOLD CORD.

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I. THE HOUSE OF EDUCATION BADGE.

We read in the Purgatorio, Canto I., how Virgil was directed to prepare Dante for his difficult ascent:

> "Go, then, and see thou gird this one about
> With a smooth rush, and that thou wash his face,
> So that thou cleanse away all stain therefrom.
> . . . . . .
> This little island round about its base,
> Below there, yonder where the billow beats it,
> Doth rushes bear upon its washy ooze;
> No other plant that putteth forth the leaf,
> Or that doth indurate, can there have life,
> Because it yieldeth not unto the shocks.
> . . . . . .
> Then came we down upon the desert shore.
> . . . . . .
> There he begirt me as the other pleased;
> O marvellous! for even as he culled
> The humble plant, such it sprang up again
> Suddenly there where he uprooted it."
> (Longfellow's Translation).

Here we get the idea of the yielding rush incapable alike of selfassertion and of receiving the wounds and scars of mortification. The waves that beat upon the desert shore are the waves of our badge, and remind us of the "waves of this troublesome world." We look for the scriptural origins of Dante's thought—how St. Peter says, in his First Epistle, "Yea, all of you, gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another;" and we recollect that St. Peter had seen the pattern of the Divine Humility girding Himself for lowest service on the last night of His human life. Let us read the Divine Law about humility (St. Luke xxii., 24–29); together with the saying of William Law, "There never was nor ever will be but one humility in the whole world, and that is the one humility of Christ." In St. Matthew xviii., 1–7, we read how our Lord Himself recognises the little children as also "humble" (because of His own indwelling); perhaps the offence against children, of which such terrible condemnation is spoken, is to offend against their humility in such a way as to make them lose this Christ-like quality. Consider what humility is; it is not relative but absolute: it does not mean that we shall think small things of ourselves compared with

this one and that, but that we shall have eyes so steadfastly fixed upon our Master, our duty, our sphere of service, that we shall have no moment left in which to think of ourselves at all—a

most blessed way to escape all wounds, and wrongs, and injuries, and bitter mortifications. We consider that the Rush is our most appropriate badge, because, though humility is binding upon every Christian person, it is most especially so upon those who are called to feed His lambs, the lambs whom He has Himself declared to be "humble," like unto Him.

We see, too, how well our motto—"For the children's sake"—a chance phrase in a letter from our Lady Visitor—expresses the sentiment of our Badge. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself," said our Master.

II. THE EDUCATIONAL CREED OF "THE HOUSE."

Mr. RUSKIN has done a great service to modern thought in interpreting for us the harmonious and ennobling scheme of education and philosophy recorded upon one quarter of what he calls the "Vaulted Book,"[1] i.e., the Spanish Chapel attached to the Church of Sta. Maria Novella, in Florence.

"The descent of the Holy Ghost[2] is on the left hand (of the roof) as you enter. The Madonna and Disciples are gathered in an upper chamber: underneath are the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc., who hear them speak in their own tongues. Three dogs are in the foreground—their mythic purpose, to mark the share of the lower animals in the gentleness given by the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ. . . . . On this and the opposite side of the Chapel are represented by Simon Memmi's hand, the teaching power of the Spirit of God and the saving power of the Christ of God in the world, according to the understanding of Florence in his time.

"We will take the side of intellect first. Beneath the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit in the point of the arch beneath are the three Evangelical Virtues. Without these, says Florence, you can have no science. Without Love, Faith, and Hope—no intelligence. Under these are the four Cardinal Virtues . . . . Temperance, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude. Under these are the great Prophets and Apostles . . . . . Under the line of Prophets, as powers summoned by their voices are the mythic figures of the seven theological or spiritual and the seven geological or natural
[third page unnumbered]
sciences; and under the feet of each of them the figure of its Captain-teacher to the world."

Our immediate concern is with the seven mythic figures representing the natural sciences, and with the figure of the Captain-teacher of each. First we have Grammar, a gracious figure teaching three Florentine children; and, beneath, Priscian. Next, Rhetoric, strong, calm, and cool; and below the figure of Cicero with a quiet beautiful face. Next, Logic, with perfect pose of figure and lovely face; and beneath her, Aristotle—intense keenness of search in his half closed eyes. Next, Music, with head inclined in intent listening to the sweet and solemn strains she is producing from her antique instrument; and underneath, Tubal Cain, not Jubal, as the inventor of harmony—perhaps the most marvellous record that Art has produced of the impact of a great idea upon the soul of a man but semi-civilised. Astronomy succeeds, with majestic brow and upraised hand, and below her, Zoroaster, exceedingly beautiful—"the delicate Persian head made softer still by the elaborately wreathed silken hair." Next, Geometry, looking down, considering some practical problem, with her carpenter's square in her hand, and below her, Euclid. And lastly, Arithmetic, holding two fingers up in the act of calculating, and under her, Pythagoras wrapped in the science of number.

The Florentine mind of the middle ages believed not only that the seven Liberal Arts were fully under the direct outpouring of the Holy Ghost, but that every fruitful idea, every original conception, whether in Euclid, or grammar, or music, was a direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit, without any thought at all as to whether the person so inspired named himself by the name of God, or recognised whence his inspiration came.

And what subjects are under the direction of this Divine Teacher? The child's faith and hope and charity—that we already knew; his temperance, justice, prudence, and fortitude—that we might have guessed; his grammar, rhetoric, logic, music, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic—this we might have forgotten, if these Florentine teachers had not reminded us; his practical skill in the use of tools and instruments, from a knife and fork to a microscope, and in the sensible management of all the affairs of life—these also come from the Lord, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. His God doth instruct him and doth teach him. Recognising that "his God" doth co-operate with us in the act of giving knowledge to a child, we approach the work of teaching with simplicity, sincerity and reverence.

[fourth page unnumbered]

III. THE HOUSE OF EDUCATION CERTIFICATE.

Students are usually anxious to correct their own impressions by some words from the artist as to the meaning of his work. The following is the reply of H. Wilson, Esq., the artist who designed the beautiful certificate (Mrs. Dallas Yorke's generous gift to the House of Education), to the numerous students who have asked for an explanation of the design:—

"The subject is, of course, that of Education The stream figures the stream of knowledge, the river of mental life flowing from beneath the foundations of the temple of the spirit in the middle distance. The temple is circular, symbolizing completeness and enduringness; above its altar is a lamp typifying the sun, the source of physical life; the dome symbolizes the heavens, and round the frieze are signs of the Zodiac. Behind the temple rugged mountains thrust their peaks into the sky, the top of the tallest passes beyond the picture to suggest that the highest peak is the unattainable—the ideal, and moreover, that the ends of knowledge are hidden—that while we may grasp a few threads, the end of the skein is beyond our reach. In the foreground Psyche clothed with knowledge and winged is seated. She is just embracing one of a group of children, to suggest that love is the inspiring and all-important agency in Education, only at its touch does the birth of the soul begin. This inspiring, inspiriting, inbreathing of the conscious soul is shadowed forth by the butterflies hovering round the children's heads. The figures themselves are seated on a little eminence; beneath it is a little beach on which the children are playing, some with shells, others with insects, with plants and flowers, or with animals, to suggest that in play each child follows its own natural bent, and gives not only a clue to its character, but valuable indices of the right way of treating and educing the best side of that character. The border shows the tree of knowledge, with children playing in the branches: above, in the initial letter, is seated the mistress instructing her pupils; below are shown the roots of the tree of knowledge among the rocks, with flowers growing everywhere; on the left are the battlements of the city which endures."

The chief danger, in designing such a certificate, is to keep down a natural tendency to allegorize to excess, and to make, instead, as much as possible of the opportunity for a piece of pleasant decoration. In the contriving of this the various ideas summarised above arose, and I

attempted to give them fitting expression.

H. W.

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[1] *Mornings in Florence* (Allen, 10d.).

[2] Photographs (Nos. 6722 and 4077) to be obtained (½ lire each) from Mr. George Cole, 17, Via Torna Buoni, Florence.