

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

CERTAIN FAMILY SAFEGUARDS.

Anything which unifies a family and promotes the family feeling is a safeguard. Too many households are practically carried on as though they were merely lodging-houses and restaurants. The individuals composing them have their separate interests, and go on their differing ways as though there were no common tie to bind them closely, and as though kinship were a rope of sand, convenient for some purposes, but easily broken at will. Now, this is all wrong. God has set men, women and children in families, and by help of the family relation we come to a better comprehension of His love in providence, His wisdom in discretion, and His right to our obedience. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named," is one of the sweetest and most suggestive texts in Holy Writ, reminding us that the Church below and the Church above are one, bound in the same fealty, worshipping the same Saviour, inheritors of the same divine promises, though part have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now. When father and mother have their life and friends quite apart from those of their children, when the boys are in a hurry to scatter in every direction after tea, and the girls prefer any place to their home, the home is in a dangerous state. It should be more than four walls, more than a roof, a shelter from the storm, and a place to eat and sleep in; and if it be only these and nothing more, it has failed in its mission. Sometimes people have so hard a time just to get on from day to day, that they think they are excusable if they sacrifice the amenities of life to its grim necessities. But poverty need be no bar to love. Sometimes people are so intent on laying up money for their children that they neglect their children's souls, and worldly advancement becomes the golden prize to which their energies are bent. Sordid ambition is inevitably a foe to domestic affection. It is a gross form of selfishness, and love withers when selfishness scorches its tender roots. Sometimes father and mother are so absorbed in society, or politics, or fashion, that they neglect their little children, and think they have done their whole duty when they have provided nurses and preceptors for them in their juvenile years. And the swift hours pass, and the weeks and months and years roll on, and after a while the unnatural spectacle is presented of young men and women who are heartless, irresponsible, fast, lovers of pleasure and devotees of their own wills. The artificial excitements of our day and generation are many. Temptations environ the path of the young. The family should be a bulwark, a defence, a representative of the most sacred principles of human nature, and a place of retreat to the sorrowful, the merry, the tired and the ardent alike. The very fact that so many ages, from the venerable grandparents to the toddler of two or three summers, may be gathered about a single hearthstone, shews that the mingling of experiences, temperaments and dispositions is meant to be beneficial all round.

There is one safeguard which it is not possible for every family to have in our migratory American life. We mean love of the birthplace. We are nomadic in our customs. The Bedouins of the desert do not shift their tents more easily than we our habitations. In most of our towns, moving-day is an institution. On the farm, too, often the one idea of the sons and daughters is to leave it when they can. It is sterile, it is lonely, it is slow, and the fledged birds cannot abide it. Anywhere to try their wings out of the old cradle nest. Now, love of the birthplace, and next to that love of some one homestead, is a potent force in character building. The home gathers to itself associations as the children grow up, and it has its memories of nuptial joy, of home-comings of the absent, of college friends brought thither for a vacation—yes, and sickness and death, and bereavement, sad but sacred reminiscences. Every man who can should aim to possess a bit of ground and a house, that he may give his children this advantage of steadiness, and that the features of nature may impress themselves on their hearts.

Family worship rightly conducted is a safeguard. It should not be perfunctory, and it should not be tedious, nor yet personal. Never take the family prayer time for reproof, for praying at somebody who has made a mistake. Never let the service be long

and wearisome to the flesh. Put heart in it. Let the reading of Scripture be serious, but let it be vivid and interesting. If there are children, let each have a Bible and read verse about. Let the petitions be sweet with thankfulness, and go trustfully to God with the family wants.

Confidence and intimate friendship between parents and children are safeguards. There must be authority. There must be good order and obedience. These are consistent with candour, with honesty, with open and undisguised affection. As the wee ones grow older, the son should be to his mother as a lover, the daughter to her father as a ministering angel.

Family song is a safeguard. Cultivate music, instrumental and vocal. Let the house be glad and gay. Do not frown on fun. Do not think a long face and a solemn demeanor especially pleasing to God. Imitate the birds, who have neither store-house nor barn, yet are fed from His hand, and who sing and sing in the day dawn and the dusk.—*Christian at Work.*

THRESCORE AND TEN.

Threescore and ten! How the tide rolls on,
Nearing the limitless sea;

Bearing the voyager over life's flood
To boundless eternity.

On, through the childhood's sunny hours,
On, through youth with its golden flowers,
On, through manhood's ripened powers,
Till age appears,

With its crown of years,
And the time-worn mariner, sighing for rest,
Anchors at last in the port of the blest.

Threescore and ten! How the rolling years
Are checkered with sunshine and shade!

The calm chased away by the pitiless storm.
Earth's joy into sorrow must fade,

Spring with its bloom and perfume sped,
Fruit-laden Summer quickly fled,
Autumn come with weary tread,
Bent with the load

Of treasured food,
And then stern Winter, with frosty breath,
Throws over the fields the pall of death.

Threescore and ten! And if we shall reach
The bound to life that here is set,

How few of the comrades of early years
Around us will linger yet!

Father and mother, their journey is o'er;
Brothers and sisters, we greet them no more;
Our loved ones stand, thronging the farther shore.
They beckon us on,

They point to the crown,
And with longing hearts they wait
To lead us through the pearly gate.

Threescore and ten! And the snows of years
Are resting upon that brow;

But, as backward we glance o'er the way we have trod,
Before God our father we bow,

And joyous we bring Him our song of praise,
His mercies have cheered us through all our days,
And we fervently pray that life's setting rays
Through love divine

May cloudless shine—
Melting away in purer light
That illumines the land which knows no night.

Threescore and ten! Stand firm in thy lot,
Faithful and true to the end;

Bending thine ear to catch every word
Of the message the Master doth send;

Wakeful thine eye, for far spent is the night;
Burnished thine armour, thou soldier of light;
Ready to march, for the day star is bright;
Hold in the fight!

For truth and right!
Thou a conqueror shalt stand
With the exulting blood-bought band.

Threescore and ten! And what shall we add
To measure the earthly strife?

How many sands are left in the glass,
Counting the years of life?

One by one they silently fall,
One by one till have fallen all,
One by one till thy God shall call:

"Thy race is run,
Servant, well done!
Faithful in the Lord's employ,
Enter now into His joy!"

—Independent.

POLITE LYING.

"You must come and see me very soon, my dear. I shall quite count upon a visit from you."

"Oh, certainly, I shall be delighted to do so; it will afford me a great pleasure."

"I can't bear to go to her home," said the latter speaker, as the visitor turned away; "and I never shall return her call if I can help it, but I suppose one must be polite."

"I hope that very disagreeable Miss Blank won't

come soon, she's so hard to entertain," said the former to herself. "I felt bound to invite her, but I hope she won't come."

"What a darling little love of a baby," said Miss Cerulia Cush; "how you must dote on every one of his golden curls! Dear little fellow! Never mind his sticky fingers, he shall have as much cake as he wants. Yes, Mrs. Dotting, I quite agree with you. your Jimmie is the most remarkably precocious child I ever met with, and as for beauty—why, he's an angel. I wonder," soliloquized the spinster, looking ruefully at her smeared silk as the baby was borne ignominiously away, kicking and screaming, "how women can be such fools. Why, that child is a perfect fright, and what a temper the stupid little owl has, but of course his mother thinks him perfection, and one must seem to think so too, for politeness sake, if for nothing else."

"Did you do that piece of work yourself? How charming! You have such taste, and you are a very pattern of industry," says Miss Admirari, and during the next call she compares notes with her other dearest friend on the odious contrast of colour exhibited in the last achievement of friend number one, and suggests that it would be much more to the credit of the latter did she devote some of the time so largely wasted in fancy work to assisting her mother in household duties, or the church in good works.

"How delicious your pies are, and you really must give me the recipe for that cake," said Mrs. Notable. "I wish I were as good a cook as you. This aloud, but inaudibly: "I think my husband and children would starve if I condemned them to such sour bread, underdone cake, and pasty pie-crust."

"What a charming hat!" says sprightly Mrs. French; "you will be the belle of the season. Do favour me with the name of your milliner;" but to her own modiste she privately describes the horrible combination of pale green and blue with which Mrs. Fashion has seen fit to surround her sallow countenance.

"How can I express the pleasure you have given me! I so dote on poetry, and yours is so exquisite," says young John Critic, whose nerves have been quivering for an hour under the infliction of the false quantities and bad rhymes which his friend Bore has been reading to him from his manuscript.

"Cigars don't affect me in the least; indeed, I am quite partial to the aroma," says the white-lipped girl to her "gentleman friend," who smokes unconsciously at her side; her suffering only equalled by those of the other girl who persists in riding with her back to the horses, and says that the motion does not affect her in the least, though knowing that many times before she has been reduced to a state of miserable seasickness by a similar proceeding.

"Not at home to-day, John;" and the footman receives and delivers the message to visitors as unconsciously as though there were no moral wrong involved in the transaction.

A few days ago the writer was present at a dreary "examination" of two boys in grammar, arithmetic, and other ordinary school studies. These things, not very interesting to a general audience at any time, became exceedingly tedious as hour after hour dragged by; and at length the young governess, having called for the verbatim repetition of nearly the whole of Guyot's geography, turned and said, "Don't let us weary you. Tell us when you have had enough; you're not tired yet, I hope," with an air which said, "I know you desire a great deal more."

As the speaker paused, evidently expecting an answer, the small audience looked puzzled, when one lady relieved the embarrassment, with infinite tact, by saying, "Pray do not interrupt your examination till you have fully satisfied yourself and your pupils." The answer was given so politely and pleasantly that no one could be offended; but the hint was taken, and the "examination" soon closed, to the great relief of both pupils and audience.

It was the discussion of this little occurrence with a young clergyman who chanced to be among the audience that gave rise to an animated conversation concerning the propriety and morality of polite lying. Several, including the minister, asserted that both politeness and kindness demand that we frequently say that which we do not mean, admire that which we do not like, assent to that with which we do not agree, and in many ways speak and act lies to avoid wounding the feelings of others. One lady, present, who immediately received the soubriquet of "Puritan,"