

The Family Circle

WHAT CAN A LITTLE CHAP DO?

What can a little chap do
For his country and for you?
What can a little chap do?
He can play a straight game all through;
That's one thing he can do.

He can fight like a knight
For the truth and the right;
That's another good thing he can do.

He can shun all that's mean,
He can keep himself clean,
Both without and within;
That's a very fine thing he can do.

His soul he can brace
Against everything base,
And the trace will be seen
All his life in his face;
That's an excellent thing he can do.

He can look to the light,
He can keep his thoughts white,
He can fight the great fight,
He can do with his might
What is good in God's sight;
Those truly great things he can do.
Though his years are but few,

If he keeps himself true,
He can march in the queue
Of the good and the great,
Who battled with fate
And won through;
That's a wonderful thing he can do.

And in each little thing
He can follow the King—
Yes, in each smallest thing
He can follow the King—
He can follow the Christ, the King.
—JOHN OXENHAM.

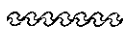


LYING.

Lying is a sin against society and an offence against God. It attacks the very foundations of society. Men can live together and make progress only so long as they can trust one another. Civilisation is based on mutual dependence, and mutual dependence without mutual confidence is unthinkable. The more flagrant violations of this trust—the criminal class—society puts behind bars. Nor does society fail to punish the liar. He who is forever making lying excuses, who is ever ready with a denial or a plausible explanation when detected in or accused of wrong-doing, soon finds himself charged with things of which he is innocent, and his denials and excuses rejected. He has destroyed the confidence which his fellows should be able to place in his word. The "romancer" and the chronic exaggerator soon find even their lightest word, their most moderate statement disregarded and themselves treated with contempt more or less lightly veiled. He who pretends to virtue or to cleverness which he does not possess, receives no credit.

THE BLESSED MOTHER OF GOD.

The Blessed Mother of God is, naturally, most dear to Christ; and to love Him is to love her. But she is also a part of the environment of the Incarnation. That God should have had a Mother, according to the flesh, is one of the most striking and astounding circumstances of His coming. It is also a circumstance which gives rise to far the greater number of those touching details which make the Incarnation so well fitted to captivate human attention and affection.—Bishop Hedley.



THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

(From the Writings of the late
BISHOP HEDLEY.)

The late Holy Father Pope Leo XIII told us a few years ago that he was convinced that nothing will tend more to check the spirit of worldliness and of licentiousness, to make men contented with their lot and to bring back Christian faith and charity than the contemplation of that Holy Family of Nazareth, which was divinely established to be the model and example of all families. And, on the other hand, a pious and tender devotion to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph could not fail, he said, to draw down on every family which consecrates itself to them, that help and those graces which will make them worthy of such glorious patrons and protectors.

All pastors know and feel what the Sovereign Pontiff so emphatically says is true. If you sanctify the family, you sanctify the community; whilst, if family life becomes corrupt, you may despair of the life of the nation.

The father and mother and the children make up that divine and sacred institution of God which is called the Christian family. In the family we have the most primary of human relationships, arising out of primitive nature itself; a "society" on which all society rests, a society and relationship which God has sanctioned and blessed in a thousand ways, and which ought to be the strongest, the sweetest, and the holiest on earth.

In the fear of God the young man and the young woman join their hands before the altar of God, promising each other perpetual trust and truth. They henceforth belong to one another and to God. They have their home apart—their bed and board, a door to shut out the world, a fireside to call their own. The father shares his earnings with his wife and children; the wife labors for all; the children look at the hand of the father and the mother for all their wants and all their enjoyments. If prosperity blesses them, all rejoice alike and equally partake of it; if bad times come and adversity visits the home, they meet it together and bear one another's burdens.

As the years go on, they do their best to keep all together, facing the world in unity and affection, knowing one another, trusting one another, standing each by the other.

The husband and father has to toil with his head or his hands; it is the thought of his wife and children at home that makes him brave and patient, and it is his best reward to be welcomed back by those to whom he is more than all the world beside.

The wife, the mother, with all her troubles and striving, never forgets who it is to whom she gave her heart in the early days, and she is ready to sacrifice herself for him, to believe in him to the last.

Together they watch their children grow in body and develop in mind—happy yet anxious; thanking God for the wonders of life and intelligence, yet fearing for themselves in the responsibility which it laid upon them. Thus the little community lives through a generation, till the years as they pass on bow the father's back and dim the mother's eyes, and the children whom God gave them are fathers and mothers themselves, with a roof-tree of their own, and God's dispensation to carry out in their turn as their parents before them.

The beauty—and we may add the sanctity—of the Christian home, which ought to beautify and sanctify the whole world and every generation of the world's history, are too often marred and spoilt. This we all know too well. But we are at no loss to understand what is the reason why sometimes the family is so noble and worthy a sight for men and angels, and at other times so lamentable and miserable a failure.

No home can stand unless it is built on a solid foundation. No family can be worthy of God and of Jesus Christ unless it stands upon religion. Religion must be first and foremost, or else there is no order, no fidelity, no dignity, no success. The family of an unbeliever may be successful in the world's eyes and outwardly prosperous. But the day is coming when the tide must ebb, and the souls who lived for earth and for time will realise their loss, when time is no more and earth has passed away.



MY ANGEL GUIDE.

He walks beside me all the day,
And tells me what to do and say,
And when my wicked thoughts arise,
He gently points up to the skies—
My angel guide.

When tempted off to go astray,
Rebellious temper has its sway,
He kneels with sweet, uplifted eyes—
An angel robed in human guise—
My angel guide.

He holds me from the path of sin;
He purifies my soul within,
And tho' my heart may ache with pain,
Tells me no cross, no crown I gain—
My angel guide.

He's ever whispering at my side;
He does my every footstep guide,
And leads me with a hand of love
To realms of peace—to God above—
My angel guide.

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