

EDITORIAL

THE FAMILY' is perhaps too precise a title for this number. But most of its articles are definitely concerned with domestic matters; it is a number more for the hearth than the cloister. To preserve the sanctity of marriage and the home is perhaps the most pressing concern of the Church today. Few other topics are so often the subject of ecclesiastical pronouncements. There is just one point that we would like to make here, and that is that holiness is not something which is tacked onto marriage and the family from the outside, as though domestic institutions were things naturally profane, which God has permitted to partake of Christian holiness as a concession, so to speak, to the weaker brethren. No, marriage is a religious thing of its very nature, and on the other hand the Christian religion is of its nature a family, domestic, religion. Monastic life is only a specialized extension of family life, and the priestly function a similar extension of the paternal. We can only formulate the most central doctrines of our religion in family language, and we have never found truer or nobler names for God himself than Father and Son. The Son of God became man in order to be the 'firstborn of many brethren', and a woman by becoming the Mother of God became the mother of us all. In November our thoughts begin to turn to the last things, to the object of our Christian hope. And what is it we hope for in heaven? It is domestic bliss, the enjoyment of the marriage feast of the Lamb, a family reunion in the heavenly Jerusalem which is our mother, eating and drinking at the table of Christ, not his guests so much as the members of his family gathered at the eternal Father's hearth.