

A FAMILY CALLED FIELD. By George Bruce. (Evans Brothers; 18s.)

This is the story of an adventure, an adventure in family living. Paul Field and his wife, Ruby, worked in a Children's Home, run under the auspices of the Church of England Children's Society. Here he found that many of the boys who came under his care had been in several previous establishments and would, on their fifteenth birthday, move on to lodgings, so that these children, who had been so unhappily uprooted from their families, never had time to put down roots anywhere again. Paul Field realized that there is no time limit to a child's need and the need of these boys was to belong to a family with all its stability, uncritical acceptance and enduring affection.

The Field Family Trust was set up in 1945. Like many pioneers, Paul Field started off with very little money, a few good friends, and a tremendous belief in what he hoped to do. A house was found and the Fields moved in; Paul and Ruby, Paul's mother, a devoted assistant, Jess Prior, the Fields' own children and what looked like twelve problem boys between the ages of seven and ten. Paul had very little to offer the boys materially, the house was starkly furnished, Ruby must often have wondered where the next meal would come from, the old-fashioned range burnt money, and often they lived on the edge of poverty; but to the boys none of these things was important. What counted was that no child was ever refused admission if there was a vacancy; no child was ever sent away as 'Failed'. They enjoyed Paul's boundless enthusiasm for all their interests, his effortless discipline which never nagged, and above all his certainty that only religion and love could weld these waifs into a family. In a world where Children's Homes become glossier and glossier in an effort to compensate for lack of love but where no one has yet solved the problem of constantly changing house-parents and children who are moved like pawns in a game of chess played by radar, the story of the Field family is a courageous challenge.

HILARY HALPIN

THE FALL OF PARNELL. 1890-91. By F. S. L. Lyons. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 42s.)

This masterly account of the last year of Parnell's life should hold the field for a long while. On the plane of scholarship its defects, if any, are not visible to the present reviewer. The sorting out of the facts could not be improved on in the present state of the available information. Nor are the most controversial issues, such as Chamberlain's alleged connection with the divorce case, likely to be further illuminated in the foreseeable future. Dr Lyons is sometimes over-cautious to a fault in declining to pronounce ahead of the evidence. But in this particular case he is surely right to treat the existing material as quite insufficient for a conviction of Chamberlain.

Everything, however, that is written seriously about Parnell starts new versions of old arguments. Dr Lyons in his final chapter concludes truly enough that 'Parnell was to a great extent responsible for his own ruin' and that the first step towards disaster was taken at the moment 'he allowed