

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

himself to drift into an impossible situation with Katharine O'Shea'. But he goes on to argue that the mistake which was *fatal* was his refusal to publicize his relationship with that lady in 1881 or 1882 with an indicated readiness, one gathers, to withdraw from the leadership for a time. In that way, Dr Lyons considers, and that only could the split have been avoided. But Parnell would have had some chance of returning to the leadership later.

I agree about the avoidance of the split on the lines suggested. But that could also have been achieved in 1890 if Parnell had been so minded. And I find it incredible that a man found guilty of adultery, whether exposed by himself in 1881 or by others in 1890, would have been allowed to lead a great party either in England or Ireland for any length of time.

There is no sign whatever that such a thing could occur today when divorce has become so much more popular in England, though still repudiated in Ireland. How much more inconceivable in those days when private morality may or may not have been better. But appearances in public were much more sedulously preserved and the blotting out of Dilke was entirely in keeping with what could reasonably be expected.

The surprising thing in the whole story is not the political destruction of Parnell as a result of the divorce, but the fact that there seemed for a moment a chance that his leadership might survive it. Even, however, apart from the presence of Gladstone and the Liberal Party this must always have been an illusion. It is true that the re-election of Parnell on November 25, 1890, a week or so after the divorce proceedings took place without any open protest from the Irish hierarchy. But they were already on the move behind the scenes. Archbishop Croke wrote to Archbishop Walsh: 'His bust, which for some time has held a prominent place in my hall, I kicked out yesterday'.

They were extraordinarily anxious—understandably perhaps—that the cry of clerical interference should not be raised against them. They were placed in the position of quietly encouraging the laity in the direction required without seeming to do so too obviously—an ungrateful task! But who can doubt that ultimately their own instincts and those of Catholic Ireland would have coalesced?

No doubt the loyalties that had gathered round Parnell by 1890 made his retirement much more painful, and, as he resisted it, vastly more bitter than if it had occurred in 1881. The fact—to some extent accidental—that the onus of intervention fell on Gladstone and the English Liberals lightened in one sense the burden of the Irish Hierarchy but in another increased their 'guilt by association' in the eyes of the inflexible Parnellites.

Nothing is brought out more interestingly by Dr Lyons than the moral plight of a man like Redmond, loyal Catholic, but also loyal Parnellite. He struggled desperately to justify his refusal to accept episcopal guidance concerning the leadership.

'God forbid', he said, 'I should deny to the prelates of my Church the most plenary powers in matters of faith and morals. . . . I am entitled (however) when the Bishops in a political question advocate a course which my intelligence and my conscience tell me is a wrong one to perfect freedom

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from dissent from them.' But can the moral character of the Leader of a Catholic country be regarded as a purely political question as distinct from a moral one? If he is alleged to have failed in prudence, justice, fortitude or temperance, yes, perhaps? But in the matter under consideration few Catholics in a calm moment could think so. There was little calm to be found amid the agonies of Ireland in 1890-91. Nothing, however, could be more balanced or tranquil, or in all the main ways more satisfying than Dr Lyons' treatment of this ever-fascinating phase of Irish and Anglo-Irish history, this endlessly pathetic drama of licit and illicit devotion.

PAKENHAM

PRUDENCE: *The First Cardinal Virtue*. By Josef Pieper. (Faber and Faber; 12s. 6d.)

Of all the virtues, after charity, prudence has most come down in the world, so that now it signifies a timorous and small-minded concern for safety. Since the German moral philosophers are largely responsible for the lofty scorn of *klugheit*, it is well that a fellow-countryman should restore to the place of primacy it held for St Thomas Aquinas. He never thought it was more important to be nice than to be real. For as what is precedes what is true, so what is true precedes what is good. If we are not right we cannot be righteous—not the doctrine of our preceptors who tell us that all we can do is to mean well and act with love in our hearts, forgetting that the devil we don't know is worse than the devil we know, the first being the error in our vices, the second the faults we are aware of committing. Prudence is truth as put into human practice. Dr Pieper's short essay gracefully conceals its technical equipment, and communicates a warmth and light of feeling and reason to the text: 'If thine eye be single the whole of thy body shall be lit up'.

T.G.

### NOTICES

IN THE STEPS OF JESUS (Constable, 45s.) is a volume of photographs by F. Duran, with an accompanying text and archaeological notes by Canon Leconte of Lille, which traces the Palestine our Lord knew. It is a handsome book, in which the quality of the sensitive photographs is matched by an informed commentary which links the Holy Land of history to the sites the tourist sees today.

THE IDEA OF CATHOLICISM (Burns and Oates, 50s.) claims to provide 'the answer to anybody seeking a straightforward presentation of the belief of Catholics in theory and in action'. Its two American editors have drawn their net wide to include Newman and Karl Adam, Fathers Congar and Vann, and the arrangement of the book certainly covers a large field. But it is difficult to envisage the readers for whom it is intended. Those able to appreciate a fairly stiff extract from Father D'Arcy on the sacrifice of the Mass are scarcely likely to be content with the bits and pieces that inevitably make up an anthology of this sort, however well-intentioned.