

## Book Reviews

(Many Christians, alas, care nothing for Church history.) They will find in Mr. Rayner's book a pleasant illumination that should dispense the darkness of this regrettable ignorance.

J.C.

**GYPSY DOWN THE LANE.** By Thomas Williamson. (Crosby Lockwood; 7/6).

Why has 'Morse' done a picture suggesting footlights and a Spanish revue-scene, for this book? It is attractive, but wrong. *Gypsy Down the Lane* tells of a tribe of Romanies wandering in New England from the end of one winter to the threat of the next. It is a story of their loves and hates, their bravery, their adversities and pleasures, their magnificence and failings, a story of delightful descriptions cleverly subordinated to vivid action, splendidly told and splendid in the telling.

Mr. Williamson writes excellent prose and draws his characters with humour and deep sympathy, and how well he draws them!—the kindly tinker, Liubo, the debonair tumbler, *Milanko*, the magnificent Chief, the beautiful and distracting *Panna*, and, perhaps best of all, the 'mixed-blood' *Yurka*.

There is a freshness, a beauty, above all a sincerity about *Gypsy Down the Lane* that in these days of dreary sex novels is very gratifying. It would be unfair to describe it further; besides the book is so good that I want a lot of people not to read it!

R.R.

**GHOST HOUSE.** By Condé B. Pallen. (Harding and Rose; 5/-.)

Dr. Pallen, relaxing from his more scholarly work as an editor of *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, has written a ghost story on an intriguing new theme, but it is amateurish and very disappointing. The narrative is so free as to be slangy, yet conversations are stilted and unreal, and much is said that is irrelevant, particularly about Hawkins and the Pettigrews, and feminism. There are minor annoyances like slight Americanisms, the intrusion of the first person, and misprints (the worst of which is 'eyes set deep over heavy brows') and there is not much conviction about the character-drawing, except in the case of the dreadful detective; but what is serious is the awful obviousness of everything and the incredibly facile way of explaining the sleuth's discoveries. Dr. Pallen has mishandled a good idea.

R.R.