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## BOOK REVIEWS (Cont'd.)

(continued from previous page)

Simply and rather discursively he describes the very arduous breaking in of backblock land, with the swift and treacherous river, worked for many years in canoes and taking its toll of life, running like a thread through the narrative. Behind these people were Mt. Arthur and the Tableland, and we read here of the first man to go into this country.

Much of the book is about life in the depression of the 'seventies and 'eighties. The impression is strengthened that country people were not so hard hit as in the depression of the 'thirties, partly because they had fewer wants. This is another picture of a poor and isolated but happy society, where families were large (Colonel Brereton says ten children were considered "about the proper number"), men and women worked astonishingly hard, and all had to make their own amusements, which they did cheerfully and successfully. As in other books of the kind, the pioneers are somewhat idealised. Personal domestic shortcomings are seldom permitted to intrude into such records. But though they marched to no drum, these Motueka folk were fine soldiers in colonial development, and Colonel Brereton has done well to write the history of this corner of the campaign. Because the subjects are exceptional, we may single out for mention the description of cattle-mustering on the Tableland, which should delight the boy looking for cowboy stories, and the chapter (all too short) on the long droving of sheep from Motueka by way of Tophouse and the high country in the middle of the island to Hanmer on to the Christchurch market. It is curious how little has been written about New Zealand droving, and this little contribution is welcome. There are good illustrations and a locality map.

—A.M.

### OF PILATE

*THE MEMOIRS OF PONTIUS PILATE.* By C. M. Franzero. Allen and Unwin.

THESE "memoirs" are not merely fictitious—the reader is meant to understand that—but somewhat blatantly so. They contain, for example, many details of Roman and Jewish history and life which the real Pontius Pilate would certainly not have bothered to record. His creator, or resuscitator, also strains the probabilities by giving him all sorts of personal contacts with people in whom 20th Century readers are likely to be interested (the Nicodemus of the Gospels is made one of his friends, and the emperor Tiberius a fellow-student). Perhaps, however, this crudity in the devices by which Mr. Franzero has enabled himself to deliver a history lesson in the form of gossip, does not greatly matter. He succeeds in holding the reader's interest, and in showing us Roman despotism on the one hand and Jewish fanaticism on the other through the eyes of an intelligent and well-intentioned though not heroic civil servant. The part played by Pilate in the Christian story is, of course, duly set down, and reviewed afterwards in a conversation with Nicodemus; but such topical appeal as the book possesses derives less from this

than from the resemblance between Pilate's perplexities as a governor over Jews in Palestine and those of modern Englishmen in the same position.

—A.N.P.

### HORSE SENSE

*THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER.* By Major P. R. Goldingham. Allen and Unwin.

HERE is a book that could usefully be put into the library of every pony club in New Zealand. It is reasonably priced—11/3—simply and clearly written, and very copiously illustrated. A first glance may suggest that the standard of the illustrations is far below that of the text; but a closer look reveals all sorts of charms: here is a girl dressed neatly in hacking jacket and jodhpurs, collar and tie, black bowler; she is demonstrating how to lead and how not to lead a pony. The girl—perhaps minus the bowler—could easily be a member of any of New Zealand's 20 pony clubs; the pony, with its crooked blaze and its winter coat, could just as easily be the Toby or Robin or Nigger living on a New Zealand farm. And so with most of the dozens of photographs throughout the book, they show horses and riders with a welcome air of familiarity and a comforting look of ordinariness not usually found in the magnificent pictures in the high-priced manuals on the horse.

And the tone of the illustrations is the tone of the whole book—simple, friendly, sensible. Major Goldingham hardly uses words like equitation; but "riding for the fun of it" means, in his book, fun for the horses as well as fun for the rider. In a perfectly offhand way he will drop a hint I have never seen mentioned in any other book: the first and last mile on a journey will be walked "the last by you on foot, with loosened girths, if your horse is at all hot." Everyone has the glib rule "walk the first mile and the last"; but who else tells you to use your own feet? He suggests that the most important grooming tools are a bundle of hay and a bent nail—which should remind all young riders that they do not examine feet often enough, and perhaps introduce to others the old army cleaning device of the hay wisp. (But perhaps I should mention here that the hay wisp is a good deal more warming for the groom than a body brush or a dandy brush.)

Major Goldingham does not belong to the group of writers who tell the reader to stand by to see that the groom is doing his work properly, he takes it for granted that he is writing for young people who do their own hard work—for the love of it. Patience is his watchword with the horse; balance is his watchword for a rider. In a book full of good sound horse-sense, the only misfortune seems to me to be the lack of an index.

—J.

### GREEK MYTHOLOGY

*GODS AND MEN.* By Albert Dasnoy, translated by Marjorie Villiers. Harvill Press, London.

SENSITIVE people who lived under the German occupation in Europe found it natural to look backwards for sources of comfort. French writers, not