CHIMNEY-POT PAPERS. By Charles S. Brooks. 184 pages. Yale Univ. Press. New Haven.

Mr. Brooks dons his carpet slippers with an undisguised relish that is disarming, and carries the reader over discoursive pages with such a fund of good humor that the first impulse, which is to brand him old-fashioned, yields place to the enjoyment which comes with recognition of the companionable quality in his essays. Chimney-Pot Papers might be termed essays in relaxation, written quietly and gracefully. The very titles give a cue to the mood, for Mr. Brooks can wax pleasantly digressive over such topics as On Going Afoot, On Turning into Forty, and On Going to a Party. The author splinters no lance in defense of these familiar excursions, nor does he apologize for his obvious liking for those things which the majority have overlooked in their mad haste to be modern. After all, no one is so modern that he will not someday "turn into forty"—unless the violence of his haste shatters his span—so why not write about it, especially if it can be done with grace and good humor? But when it comes to discoursing upon the difference between wit and humor, as Mr. Brooks has the temerity to do, it is to be feared that the essayist has pilfered his point of view from a forgotten freshman theme.

IN THE ALASKAN WILDERNESS. By George Byron Gordon. 247 pages. Winston; Philadelphia.

Narrative charm in a book of exploration is a quality which appeals to the average reader when geographical exactitude and recondite scientific deductions are lost on him. This book has much of the former to commend it, though the author's observations indicate that he is capable of profundity. Dr. Gordon and his brother crossed nearly the entire width of Alaska in a canoe. Their craft was launched at Fairbanks on the Tanana River, a point which they evidently reached by steamers from White Horse by way of the Yukon and the Tanana. They floated down this stream a distance of some two hundred miles to where it is joined by the Kantishna River, and thence poled against the current another hundred miles or more to Lake Minchumina, in which the Kantishna has its beginning. A ten-mile portage brought them to the Kuskokwim, and it was on this river that they traveled to the sea. So far as geographical information is concerned, the book gains little importance from the fact that no white men had ever followed this route before; it gains much, however, from the author's unorthodox point of view. His sense of humor is unfailing. He looks upon adventure as mainly a spiritual matter, and what is to the orthodox explorer merely a means to an end becomes to him a noteworthy incident. The book is interesting for its minutiae quite as much as for its travel data. Thus a hungry lost dog that, failing to hear the call of the wild, joined their party, is the basis of several good pages. Further parentheses are reasons for retaining the Indian name "Denali" for what is called Mount McKinley on the maps, and some excellent remarks concerning the inaptitude of missionaries in discouraging tribal ceremonies and dances among the Kuskwogamiut Indians. An anthropologist of some note, Dr. Gordon's chief concern on this trip was the study of the Indians, and he gives some enlightening views of their arts, customs, and languages.