

# News, Notes and Views About BOOKS

BY WINNIFRED REEVE  
(Onoto Watanna)

I did not like the title, "Tillicums on the Trail." It sounded like Tiddle-dewinks and Tweedledumdee, and I thought "here is one of those hopeless tickle-me-books." Then I read the brief foreword and learned that the author had been chaplain in the field with the Cameron Highlanders of Canada and that he had also been a "sourdough Padre" in the Klondike. At the present time the Rev. George F. Pringle is in charge of the Presbyterian coast mission which takes care of the loggers, settlers and fishermen in camps and small settlements along the B.C. Coast. In 1899 he went to the Atlin gold camp. From 1901 to 1910 his home was a "small cabin back in the mountains of the Klondike creek district." He ministered to men over a radius of 250 miles.

All this was revealing and refreshing. The author was a real man. However, real men are not always good authors.

I was not half way through the first chapter, when I realized that I was going to have a good time

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reading this book. It is an unconscious human document, a straightforward, fine narrative of a sky pilot in the Klondike, told by said sky pilot after he had become the chaplain of the Cameron Highlanders, and searching his wits for means to divert his men in the trenches with other matters than prayer and song, he stumbled upon this absorbing means of entertainment. The stories were told to the boys in all sorts of places, under fire, and out of fire; after service and in hospitals; while

the guns were thundering; when each day thinned their ranks. They are rough stories of adventure, and concern strong and brave men. They must have quickened the pulse and warmed the hearts of those Canadian soldiers.

"Tillicums on the Trail" is peculiarly written and without much regard for the usual form of story writing. Each chapter is a story or an incident in itself. Each chapter starts in France, with a description of the place where

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the tale is being told to them, of the action that is going on about the narrator, of the comments of the men, etc. Then the tale drifts off to Klondike. Graphically, swiftly, it is narrated as it was told to the boys at the front.

Some of the types are as clearly drawn as if photographed. We can literally see them. And the author himself, he is very much alive and near us, whether in the Klondike plugging along, lost in a blizzard while en route to a Christmas celebration, or when he first donned his kilts near Lens in France. He describes himself as of the greyhound type, built for speed, not beauty. His major advised him not to go out in his kilts, as "the police might arrest you for having no visible means of support." His blushes and exquisite embarrassment over his pipestem bare legs as two pretty French girls came in sight, are things to chuckle over.

The book abounds in humorous as well as adventurous incidents. Scarcely a skirt flutters through the pages. It is a book about men, and evidently written chiefly for men; but we are given a glimpse of the few women in the Klondike, and the incident of the marriage of one of them, at which the author officiated, in one of the funniest chapters in the book.

The bride was a cook in one of the camps, and in a country where women were scarce, she has many suitors. The two, however, whom she especially favored were named respectively Archie and Tweet. While concerned over which to accept, a little bird alighted on her window sill, and sang: "Tweet, tweet." The bird's chirrup settled it. She married Tweet.

At another wedding the chattering of the false teeth of the agitated groom, caused explosive gurgles of laughter from the highly delighted miners, and all but lost the minister himself his dignity.

"Tillicums on the Trail" is a fine, clean, splendid book, full of the tang of the out of doors and with that element of appeal that grips the imagination, and makes us pause in our own hasty career through life, to observe the life and work of better men than ourselves. It is packed full of information, both of the war and of the Klondike. I don't know when I've read a book I like better.

Of humorous stories in this season's budget of books, the two that have the laughter splitting qualities in them Stewart, author of "A Parody Outline of Etiquette," by Donald Ogden Stewart, author of "A Paradox Outline of History," which deserves a column of notice in itself, and "Over 'ere and Back 'ome Again," by P. O'D. The latter volume is made up of whimsical sketches on the humorous side of English and Canadian everyday life. They concern the adventures of a Canadian "innocent abroad." The description of "our" attempt to uplift the morals of pigdom, the wild gallop across country and the score-keeping in golf are particularly funny. The use made of the editorial "We" increases the amusing effect not a little.

"The Timber Pirate," by Charles Christopher Jenkins is full of thrills, and concerns the pulp and paper makers of Lake Superior.