

at St. Cyr, and he possibly has other epithets in reserve. Now St. Cyr is a government school, perhaps not too unlike West Point, but this you would never learn from Mr. Herzog.

Yet in a sense a naïve reader might well rise from this confusing book quite unconfused about one thing: he would know that in France, at least since 1789, there have been two warring parties which together make up the whole nation—a relatively small number of aristocrats, priests, bankers, big businessmen, army officers, and kept intellectuals who are Bad, and a lot of common people and unkept intellectuals who are Good. Now were

this clear-cut division of France (almost the one clear-cut thing in Mr. Herzog's book) actually so, the world might well be a better place. But it is not so. However much truth there is in the theory of "the two Frances," the royalist, clerical France and the republican France, the two are not quite as neatly separable as Mr. Herzog makes them. And they are not, even when separable, quite as disparate in numbers as Mr. Herzog implies they are. We Americans will never understand the French if we think of them all (save a vicious few) as children of Voltaire and the Enlightenment.

foreign powers as China's vassals. He shows how the legitimate trade in tea was converted by the Chinese officials into a racket, designed to "milk the trade." He shows how the corrupt Chinese officialdom joined in the opium trade. (There is a delightful tale of the mandarin who boarded an opium runner to warn it against entering a Chinese port, and then, the official part of the visit over, negotiated for the purchase of the entire cargo.) And he uses Chinese sources to show the duplicity which underlay the dealings of three viceroys with the British, with their own people, and with the emperor.

This story is told with gusto and a great deal of detail, obtained not only from British and Chinese official sources, but also from the archives of Jardine and Matheson. Mr. Collis, thus, notes that the Canton "ghetto" to which the foreign traders were confined was a 1,000-foot-long strip of waterfront, and that the British lane was called by the Chinese, "Assured Tranquillity." He recalls that the Chinese bars in the Hog Lane, just outside of the "ghetto," served British sailors with a cocktail called "First Chop Rum Number One Curio," made of alcohol, tobacco juice, sugar, and arsenic. And he records in detail the scale and profits of the British opium trade—from 2,000 150-pound chests in 1800 to 26,000 chests thirty-six years later, each chest selling for \$500 to \$1,000. In 1832, he notes, one-sixth of the entire Indian revenue came from the sale of opium for the China trade.

"Foreign Mud" is poor fare for those who like their history served with a garnish of sex and blood. But to a reader fond of adult, witty, colorful, and historically faithful writing, this is a magnificent dish.

## Sparring for the "Opium War"

FOREIGN MUD. By Maurice Collis.  
New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1947.  
300 pp. \$5.

Reviewed by MARK GAYN

IN A LITERARY era which has moved history from chancelleries to boudoirs, it is a pleasure to come across a book which applies to history the old-fashioned and nearly-forgotten technique of good writing, good wit, and an eye for color. The book is Maurice Collis's delightful account of the years of sparring which led to the notorious "Opium War" of 1840-42.

A literary craftsman as well as an historian, Mr. Collis places his orderly recital of events against a backdrop of colorful detail. He may have no courtesans, nor deeds of derring-do. But he has enlivened his record with an array of opium runners and soldiers of fortune; Chinese viceroys and boatwomen; speedy frigates with twenty cannon on the decks; a flock of ill-informed, ill-fated British envoys; Chinese officials who would, or would not, smuggle "foreign mud"; and, obscured by distance, the Son of Heaven, ruling the universe from the vast palaces of Peking.

The body of the book deals with Britain's steady, and seemingly inevitable, drift towards war with China. It opens with the activities of the famous East India Company in its role as a great merchant in opium, and concludes with Britain's surreptitious entry into war, not in the name of safeguarding the opium trade, but in the name of protecting the flag, despoiled by the Chinese barbarians.

Between the two comes the chronicle, sometimes exciting, sometimes pathetic, and always picturesque, of the opium trade of the 1830's, of the continuous, if futile, efforts to open China to Western commerce, and—above all—of the house of Jardine and



Matheson, which dominated the opium running, and which eventually prevailed on Lord Palmerston to wage war on China. (The book, incidentally, is dedicated to the present head of the firm, which remains one of Britain's economic pillars in China.)

Mr. Collis regards Jardine's questionable activities, Lord Palmerston's devious politicking, and the entire opium trade with an almost clinical detachment. He is equally detached in dealing with China's efforts to shut herself from the world, and, when that proved impossible, to treat the

## No Mortal Name Will Do

By David Morton

TOO BRIGHT . . . and too intense . . . and strange . . . and rare!  
How should it last, outlast the downward pull  
Of plumbed mortality? How learn to bear  
Earth's shadow, laid on all the beautiful?

Perfection's frantic, brief, incredible flight,  
The bird of alien plumage—how endure  
The air's corruption, the slow, spotted blight  
That is our own and mortal signature . . .

Now it is gone—gone even out of belief.  
Behind the bird, the dull air closes in;  
And all is as it was . . . The sudden, brief  
Difference is something that could not have been,

That the heart turns to seek, and the fooled eye  
Stares after, and to find, would break the sky.

**Fiction.** *Three out of the six novels reviewed this week can be recommended for entertainment. In Kay Boyle's clear prose a serious theme is made dramatic. Alec Waugh's story of the love affair between a Connecticut artist and the young wife of an elderly British diplomat has no undertones to concern the reader. Charles Gorham's novel on the publishing business is straight satire colored with sex and alcohol. The most significant of the six is Josephine Herbst's Chicago novel, in which an immense number of human beings are dissected. The remaining two have a kind of universality. But in all of these books happiness, however fugitive, is ultimately achieved only in Kay Boyle's love story.*

## *Avalanche in the Haute-Savoie*

1939. By Kay Boyle. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1948. 152 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WALTER HAVIGHURST

ON A SUNNY September afternoon in 1939 Madame Corinne Audal filled her rucksack in the village and climbed alone to the chalet under the snowfields. Just the day before, in a neighboring town, Ferdl Eder stood in the prefecture of the Haute-Savoie and then was led to the train that would take him away from the mountains. This is the immediate compass of Kay Boyle's flashing and relentless story of how the world's violence came to two persons on an end-of-summer day in 1939. It left Corinne alone in the high bright Alpine silence, still fighting in her mind for her lover's chance at dignity and freedom. It took Ferdl from the mountain snows, the space and solitude, and sent him, without status or identity, to a concentration camp.

In this beautifully wrought novel-ette Miss Boyle has dealt with the problem of a man's responsibility to his time and the choices he must make. The simplicity of the story is a simplicity of art rather than of substance. There are many complexities in the character of the French woman who left her army-officer husband for an Austrian ski teacher, and of the athlete whose championships could not serve him on that September day. There are many ironies in their story, all encompassed in the larger irony

of the high mountain silence through which beats upon these people the unheard, growing din of Europe's downfall.

The story mounts in meaning as steadily as the old zigzag lumber road that climbs to the chalet. It reaches its final, ineluctable statement in the wonderful metaphor of Tarboux's card game—the game about the herbs he gathered on the slopes and mixed in the back room of his chemist's shop. "You have to know which card you want, and then you call for it by name. But only for one. You can't ask for two cards at the same time." That is the rule which Ferdl, champion skier, chess-player, and swimmer, had refused to learn. He had chosen to be both an Austrian and a Frenchman; he wanted both freedom and a woman's love. He had tried to live uncommitted, and he had failed.

It was just ten minutes that Ferdl stood in the prefecture, but it was long enough for his life to overtake him. He began with what he had to reassure himself with: "I make use of what ways and means there are for what I want." But that wasn't enough now. For him the main issue had been not to go too far in one direction or another. The time was past for that calculation. He had been a champion at the things men do individually. He had not learned, for all his mountain climbing, that men are relentlessly roped together.

The story is told with a sustained

inner tension, and Miss Boyle's style is fully equal to that demand. She observes, selects, and phrases with a miraculous freshness, as though she brought to the task of writing a new equipment. The high, dry mountain atmosphere permeates this little book, filling it with silence and a searching light, and there is an austere understanding that finds the fatal weakness lurking in Ferdl Eder's strength.

## *Moon-Drenched Love*

UNCLOUDED SUMMER. By Alec Waugh. New York: Farrar, Straus & Co. 1948. 289 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by HORACE REYNOLDS

FOR HIS first novel in six years the English novelist Alec Waugh, elder brother of Evelyn Waugh, has chosen to write a love story of a Yankee artist from East Haddam, Connecticut, and an Englishwoman, the young wife of an elderly English diplomat. The background is the French Riviera and England; the time, 1926, with an epilogue in the England of the 1940's.

That a man who had failed to fall in love until he was twenty-six should be swept off his feet by a woman because she puts him at his ease or, to quote Mr. Waugh's not too original words, because "she had known those things about the artist, about his interior struggle, his need for roots," is perhaps believable, for some people do fall in love for strange reasons. It's true, too, that a man can spend one sidereal day with a woman and remember her at intervals all the rest of his life. But to believe that Francis's memory of that one moon-drenched night with Judy could have kept him faithful for seventeen years to her stepdaughter Marion, the woman he eventually married, is asking a good deal of the power of idealization.

It's all pretty conventional. The tall, elegant, understanding diplomat calls his young wife the midget and encourages her in her crazes. The New Englander's puritan conscience nearly causes him to pluck the thorn and throw away the rose. He explains gangsters and prohibition to English women sipping pink gins. He can't quite believe he actually sits in such mighty seats. As Mr. Waugh puts it, "he had entered a whole new world. A whole new life was opening for him." A Jeeves-like valet helps him, puts him right on such matters as collars, ties, and tweeds. When the *nuit d'amour* finally arrives, it is framed in Judy's two platitudes, her opening, "Oh, my dear, what are we going to do about it?," and her closing,

