



"Archery."

chosen by "free election" in which "more than half the population" (sic) voted.

In the last laps of "Russia's Race for Asia," the author catches up with the Russians while they are arming the Chinese Reds. He quotes as authority for that assertion General Fu Tso-yi, whom he calls the best Nationalist general in China. General Fu is now working for the Reds in Peiping. Mr. Creel elaborately doubts that the Reds ever fought the Japanese. He proves that they treacherously knifed the Generalissimo in the back—by occupying Hopei, Shantung, and Shansi in 1943—provinces from which Chiang's troops had been driven in 1937.

In the pursuit of his purpose the author makes other astonishing reports and observations, of which the following offer a fair sampling:

That Li Li-san in 1930 "led a Red army down from the heights of the provinces of Hunan"

That "Joseph Stilwell sacrificed China's best divisions by ill-fated Burma campaigns"

That at General Wedemeyer's advice and requests the Chinese soldier won a "balanced diet," a pay increase from \$1.50 to \$30 monthly, and a selective-service system which drafted sons of the rich as well as the poor

That because, in 1944, the Generalissimo's forces defeated a Japanese flank operation toward Kweiyang (provincial capital, far in West China) "more than a million and a half of Nippon's best troops were kept in China instead of being sent off to fight against MacArthur"

That "while Chungking was bombed unceasingly for five years no bomb ever fell on Yenan"

That "never at any time has the personal integrity of the Generalissimo been questioned"

Enough!

Serious students of such matters will know at once that the foregoing statements simply aren't true. But the book contains other contradictions, anachronisms, and logical fallacies of a more recondite nature, which it would require much more space to examine than is available here.

Mr. Creel's not very original pur-

poses may be entirely worth while and conceivably his arguments might be proved. But he has defeated them by a technique of heavy special pleading, based upon a hasty regurgitation of poorly digested material. The result is hardly more convincing than the "shoddy propaganda" of the Communists which he abhors. Mr. Creel's imagination has perhaps been excited by a too-literal interpretation

of his own title. After all, Russia's race for Asia has been going on for at least four centuries, but it is still led by "the Bear that walks like a man."

Edgar Snow, now an associate editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*, is author of "Red Star Over China" and other books. He spent more than a decade as a correspondent in China.

## Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

### COMMON PATRONYMS

Clark Kinnaird, of the King Features Syndicate, points out that, though they are not related in a blood sense, each of the following groups of literary practitioners has the same last name. Allowing three points for each name you can identify, a score of sixty is par, seventy-five is very good, and eighty-one or better is excellent. Answers are on page 25.

1. E. B.; W. L.; Walter; Nelia G. ....?
2. Sinclair; Lloyd; C. S. ....?
3. Thornton; Gelett ....?
4. Pearl; Frank ....?
5. Betty; Lillian; Harrison; H. Allen ....?
6. T. S.; George F. ....?
7. Langston; Dorothy; Rupert ....?
8. Frederick L.; Hervey ....?
9. Kenneth; Elizabeth M. ....?
10. Walt; Dorothy C. ....?
11. Craig; Elmer; Cale Y. ....?
12. Elliot; Louis ....?
13. Irwin; Bernard ....?
14. Arthur; Max; Helen T.; Alice D. ....?
15. Julian; F. L.; Paul ....?
16. Vardis; Steve; Dorothy C. ....?
17. Robert; George J. ....?
18. John; George Agnew ....?
19. Josephine; Hilda; D. H. ....?
20. Philip V. D.; G. B. ....?
21. James T.; Samuel H.; F. P. ....?
22. Graham; Ward ....?
23. Hesketh; Drew; Edmund L. ....?
24. Wallace; James ....?
25. Bruno; Louis ....?
26. Erskine; Taylor ....?
27. Charles R.; Joseph H.; Shirley ....?
28. Elmer; Clyde B.; H. L. ....?
29. Waldo; Jerome; John P.; Pat ....?
30. Ben A.; Tennessee; Wythe; William C. ....?
31. Margaret; Edmund ....?
32. Dorothy; Sylvia ....?
33. F. Hugh; A. P. ....?
34. Katharine; Norman ....?
35. John M.; Cecil; Frederic ....?

**Fiction.** The discovery of significant native painters, poets, and novelists in the West Indies islands and their recognition in the United States are welcome signs of the growth of Western culture. "New Day," the first novel of Victor Reid, a young Jamaican Negro, may have been motivated by the island's new constitution, which has removed the dead weight of colonial rule from its people. This patriotic and lyrically written story of eighty years of Jamaican life should be widely read. A sensitive and intelligent account of the problems of our own colored citizens can be found in Bucklin Moon's latest book, "Without Magnolias." Even Kay Boyle's new novel, "His Human Majesty," is filled with racial animosities. The background of her story has moved from France to wartime America, where the young men of many defeated countries were trained in the Colorado Rockies for the invasion of Europe.



"Kay Boyle's symbols of crusading manhood are embarrassing."

## Foreign Legion in Colorado

**HIS HUMAN MAJESTY.** By Kay Boyle. New York: Whittlesey House. 1949. 295 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

IN writing about a book by Kay Boyle, who is one of the shrewdest stylists in the language and something of a mystic no matter what material she makes momentary use of, one has to consider several things simultaneously, such as: what she is presenting and what she is suggesting, what she is saying and what music she is making, and how she is doing all of this inside an arbitrary plot-circle. The best thing she does is to transform the mundane detail and wring some spiritual essence from it; quite literally she can make (at her best) silk purses out of sows' ears, and you watch her writing as you would some marvelously deft machine performing this miracle, holding some scene or some person still while she outlines in space the nature of its, or his, meaning. And even when the miracle doesn't come off—as it does not in this novel—even when the gears turn and the music soars, yet nothing is revealed but the fine hands of the operator, still the process is an exciting thing to behold. Miss Boyle can so compel us with symbols that we are lulled almost into accepting them as the stuff of life. It is only, in this case, the very harsh and contemporary character of the tale she has chosen to tell that dispels her charms and reveals, this time, their impotence.

Actually her story is about a ski troop practising maneuvers in the Colorado mountains in the winter of 1944. They are a band of war emigrés drawn from every people that has at this date been vanquished by the Nazis: Austrians, Poles, Jews, Nor-

wegians, Dutch, French, salted with a scattering of English, Irish, and Americans. They are a kind of Foreign Legion preparing for the eventual assault upon the Continent. The story details some of their heartbreaking routines of practice upon the mountains in the bitter cold, some of their actions and reactions in barracks and towns, some of their personal obsessions, and a few of the clashes among them. The wife of one, an ex-newspaperman, comes up to visit him, falls instantly in love with another, an idealistic Englishman, and perishes in an extraordinary attempt to help a German prisoner-of-war escape. That is one strand of plot. Another is a latent strain of anti-Semitism in the troop, which culminates in a grotesque act of violence, in which an American actually hangs a German Jew from the rafter. This is the stuff of her tale, and most of it, excepting perhaps the plainly contrived romance, is recognizable material out of our recent war experience.

But the telling is all. Miss Boyle's way is to pass these men through the varied prisms of her own austere and romantic vision, until they have lost the common form and sound and touch and smell of men, and emerge as a very special set of symbols. Read her tale with this in mind, and you will be haunted at once by the spectral figure looming over her precious Fennington, the English skier, gaunt, ascetic, athletic, anguished, worshipping his exalted dream of a Woman (while never uttering the name of a Woman nor touching even the hem of a woman's skirt or the skin of her finger) and yielding his antiseptic passions up at last to an illicit love, brief and never having to be consummated, for the wife of his friend. It is Lancelot, the noblest warrior of them

all, best skier and most honorable prude, honor rooted in dishonor still. Or the two young Americans, Henson and Raleigh, whom Miss Boyle insists upon calling "the children" because they are twenty, two pink-cheeked and pure-hearted young knights, Galahad and Gareth. (And yet she must certainly have seen the twenty-year-olds under arms, in one camp town or another. Where did she find these dreamy squires who brooded upon purity of purpose and the protection of fair virgins? "I came here," cries Henson, "to save one woman who believes in one man...") How they stand in haloed nobility beside that other American skier, whom Miss Boyle characterizes from the first in an apparent fit of temper, as "Don Juan Cooper, the California heel." Cooper is a heel because he speaks disrespectfully of women and even suggests that they are to be had.

Miss Boyle's symbols of crusading manhood are embarrassing because they are out of the legendry of another era, and have no reference at all to what she is writing about. What the members of a fighting ski troop might have to say about Fennington and Henson and Raleigh would probably not bear reprinting upon this page. And even the German Jew, Rudi Mendl, who stands there trembling and mute while the incredible Tennyhook proceeds carefully to hang him, has no meaning for us. Miss Boyle has distorted both of them beyond credibility and forced them outside the world of the living. They will serve, with Fennington and the others, to illustrate Miss Boyle's signal failure here: to bring her visionary art to terms with reality.