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breath-taking beauty of the Champs-Élysées' downward sweep from the Etoile towards the Arc du Carrousel can be duplicated among the network of narrow streets round, say, the Church of St. Etienne-du-Mont on the Left Bank; or that the spacious grandeur of the Louvre, the Place de la Concorde, and the Tuileries Gardens has any exact counterpart elsewhere in the city. But there are fine buildings everywhere, even in the poorer quarters, not set off to such advantage by open spaces perhaps, but gaining something in compensation from the very juxtaposition of tortuous streets and from the sea of often crazily-leaning old buildings which laps the very foundations of some ancient church or monument emerging from it.

### THE SKYLINE

AND there is the skyline of Paris: not the sharply indented outline of some skyscraper-dominated modern city such as New York, but the even, placid skyline of a city in which few buildings rise above five or six storeys—so that, is you look out from any eminence

across the far-spreading grey equality of the roofs of Paris, you are able to recognise immediately and welcome as familiar and well-beloved landmarks the leaping spires and towers of churches and monuments—of Notre Dame, the domes of Les Invalides and the Panthéon and, yes, even the platinous shape of the Eiffel Tower.

The regularity of the Parisian architecture and skyline contributes much, I am convinced, to the atmosphere of oneness and intimacy, of being self-contained and willing to be possessed, which the city impresses upon you. Something is added, too, by the French genius for display, for architectural window-dressing, so to speak. Whether it happens by design or whether the effect is arrived at by accident (as indeed it often must be) nearly every public building and monument in Paris—yes, even the Eiffel Tower—seems to have been placed to the best possible advantage, so that no matter what corner you turn there is always some new perspective, some unexpected facet of a familiar edifice framed at the end of an avenue or boulevard or just some

narrow street, to surprise the gaze and at the same time make you feel at home.

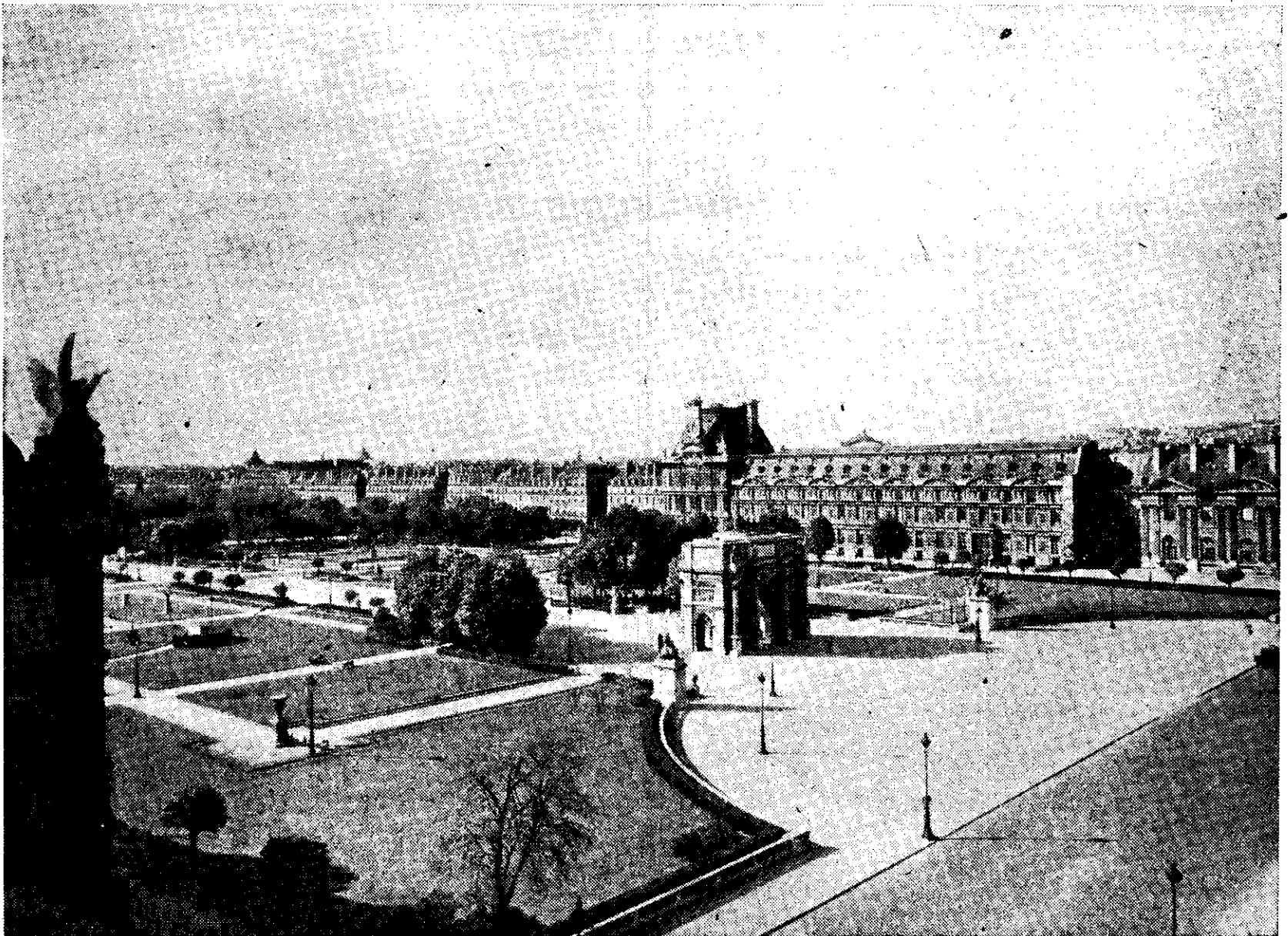
### THE TREES

BUT, above all, perhaps, there are the trees of Paris as a factor in its homogeneity—those trees which adorn so many of the great thoroughfares and avenues, so many of the little parks and squares dotted all over the city, and which are massed on the outskirts in the Bois de Boulogne and the Forest of Vincennes; those trees which somehow do miraculously burst into green almost overnight with the coming of spring and which, in such a highway as the Avenue Georges Mandel, form a four colonnaded green archway above the traffic; those trees which the Parisians love so much that, even in the freezing winters of their discontent under the Germans, they never thought of cutting them down for fuel, and are now rather horrified if an outsider suggests that they might well have done just that. So there are the trees in avenue and open space, like green strings and knots tying Paris together in one compact parcel.

The intimacy and magnetism of the Parisian scene has been much better

expressed than I could ever hope to do it by that *enfant terrible*, Henry Miller, who whatever else one may say about him, did know and understand his Paris. Take this passage from *Tropic of Cancer*:

The river is still swollen, muddy, streaked with lights. I don't know what it is rushes up in me at the sight of this dark, swift-moving current, but a great exultation lifts me up, affirms the deep wish that is in me never to leave this land. I remember passing this way the other morning. . . . A waggon from the Galeries Lafayette was rumbling over the bridge. The rain had stopped and the sun breaking through the soapy clouds touched the glistening rubble of roofs with a cold fire. I recall now how the driver leaned out and looked up the river towards Passy way. Such a healthy, simple, approving glance, as if he were saying to himself: "Ah, spring is coming!" And God knows, when spring comes to Paris the humblest mortal alive must feel that he dwells in paradise. But it was not only this—it was the intimacy with which his eye rested upon the scene. It was his Paris. A man does not need to be rich, nor even a citizen, to feel this way about Paris. Paris is filled with poor people—the proudest and filthiest lot of beggars that ever walked the earth, it seems to me. And yet they give the illusion of being at home. It is that which distinguishes the Parisian from all other metropolitan souls.



"Something is added by the French genius for architectural window-dressing"—a view of the Arc du Carrousel in its setting of lawns and gardens