

# BOOK REVIEWS

## A Bold Investigation Into The Creative Era Of Paris

By W. G. ROGERS

**THE BANQUET YEARS.** By Roger Shattuck. Harcourt, Brace, \$8.50.

Four men are the principal subjects of this bold investigation into the nature of what some folks call, pretentiously and incorrectly but comprehensibly, the "moderne" or "modernistic" book, poem, play, painting and musical score. The works of this quartet ran from about 1885 to 1918 but their spirit runs on still, and their color, shape and substance are to be seen in much of the culture of our times.

The four chosen astutely by Shattuck to illustrate his interpretation of the marvelous creative fever that raged in Paris in the 30 years surrounding the turn of the century are a painter, a composer and a pair of writers:

Henri "the Douanier" Rousseau, who died in 1910; Erik Satie, 1925; Alfred Jarry, 1907; and Guillaume Apollinaire, 1918.

Rousseau was not so simple as he seemed, nor was Apollinaire so sophisticated, Shattuck says; and his thesis is that the progression from one to the other contained the "vital principle" of what he aptly names "The Banquet Years."

Born in 1844 in Laval—Jarry's birthplace, too—Rousseau worked in the local Paris toll office, served in uniform, was a "Sunday" painter and achieved fame with such naive canvases as "The Sleeping Gypsy" and "The Jungle Lion." People who know their painters better than their paintings, as some do, may remember him best for that fabulous Bohemian banquet about which, as this devoted student of the era notes, there are written accounts by at least half a dozen participants, among them Gertrude and Leo Stein and Picasso's onetime mistress, Fernande Olivier.

Satie, born in 1866, one of "Les Six," wrote tinkly, tart and witty pieces, short-breathed, novel and fresh as the dawning century, "Three Pieces in the Shape of a Pear," for example.

Jarry, whose birth date is 1873, is perhaps the least known to us; but those who do know him will identify him as author of "Ubu Roi," which stirred Paris as no play had done since Hugo.

Apollinaire, born in 1860 in Rome and a Frenchman by choice, wrote "Les Mamelles de Tiresias" which, to Poulenc's music; has been performed several times in this country. Apollinaire was in a fashion the impresario of the group, Shattuck says; he defined cubism, and eloquently upheld the cause of all kinds of modern art. He died only two days before the end of World War I, in which he was severely wounded.

Out of this biographical tangle Shattuck gets the picture of the purpose and accomplishment of our artistic endeavors. These four in Paris—the locale is important—broke away from what he calls the "arts of juxtaposition," or "nextness." Then he carries it farther to represent it as the ultimate simultaneity, the coming together in a single flash instead of the traditional going-on. This is the repetitiveness of Gertrude Stein; this is the many sides of an object shown all at once cubistically as by Picasso instead of the old fashioned thinning-out into perspec-

tive; this is the convergence of all meanings to a single instant in the new writing.

Shattuck has an enviable share of the wit he writes about—Jarry was "something of a sensible maniac," he says, and the Rousseau banquet was "a lark in earnest." Or he can cap an argument with a sentence that recapitulates and demonstrates all by itself, as when he comments that "the subject of

a painting is not what it started with but what it ends up with."

Aside from the pleasure you get out of this book, there is the estimable profit. This is a brilliant examination of the character of modern artistic expression. The next time anybody says he doesn't know what this modern stuff is all about, tell him: "Read Shattuck." It is the wonderfully complete answer.

## Erika And The King Restores Monarch

Little was known of Nepal's King Tribhuvana in 1949. The real rulers of his country wanted the world to think of him as a drunk, a lecher and an opium addict.

A year later with India's help, Tribhuvana led a successful rebellion against the Rana family that had long run Nepal and had kept the royal family palace prisoners.

**ERIKA AND THE KING** (Coward-McCann) is Erika Leuchtag's story of the months in 1949 she spent in Katmandu as physiotherapist and companion to the royal family. Miss Leuchtag, far from finding a debauched monarch, respected the king as an intelligent, sensitive man who longed to lead his people.

Erika plotted to free the king. She appointed herself go-between for messages from Tribhuvana to Indian officials, and vice versa. Possibly because she was a fugitive from Hitler Germany, she was a willing conspirator against the Rana tyranny.

She is not sure how much she helped, but the king regained power in 1950. He died in 1955 and was succeeded on the throne by his son, Mahendra.

Erika weaves an interesting story of the royal family. She was brought from India to treat the senior queen and in no time at all was teaching the king, his queens and daughters how to dance, western style. She pictures the royal palace as a happy home where two queens and a concubine they had selected personally lived in harmony and understanding.

"The King made no distinction between the sisters, and if, in his spontaneous generosity, he gave one a present for some pleasure she had given him, then he gave the other an identical present," Erika writes of the queens. "They were not two women to him, but one, Lakshmi, his consort. His children, also, looked upon both queens as one parent, calling each Maa-ji—Mother—whether she was in fact or not."

## Complacency In The Schools Attacked By Former Senator

By THOMAS P. WHITNEY  
**THIS IS THE CHALLENGE.** By William Benton. Associated College Presses, \$3.95.

Former Senator Benton went to the Soviet Union in 1955 for a brief fact-finding trip. He devoted particular attention to the Soviet educational system. He returned to warn that the U.S.S.R. was making great progress in training and educating its young people—particularly in science and technology—and that America must

make a tremendous effort to meet this challenge. Now that the Sputniks have made America conscious of Soviet advances, Benton has made available in book form his notes and observations.

The book was edited by Edward W. Barrett, dean of the Columbia School of Journalism, and carries a foreword by journalist John Gunther and a prefatory note by Adlai Stevenson.

The bulk of the book is speeches, articles and testimony before congressional committees and memoranda. Of this material only a small part becomes publicly available for the first time.

"This Is The Challenge" brings together many important facts about the U.S.S.R. and intelligent commentary by the author. It also presents concrete proposals to speed up our educational process. It is objective and sane—and impressive testimony to Benton's energy in attempting to make Americans aware of the continued dangers which lie in complacency.

## Thoughts Of A Sainly Boy

By W. G. ROGERS  
**SPRING RETURNS.** By Haniel Long. Preface by Anne Morrow Lindbergh. Pantheon, \$3.95.

A young boy, Roger, of a saintliness at least as uncommon in literature as in life, is the central figure in this novel. Set in upper New York State half a century ago, the story tells of the effect of Roger's influence on people whose ages vary greatly but whose temperaments, except perhaps for mad Isabel, are seraphic. There is action, and then a climax, but this is not a novel in any conventional sense. It is, in Roger's words, and in Long's constant practice and purpose, an unremitting time of "having the most wonderful thoughts."

Mrs. Lindbergh was just the one to write the sympathetic preface. She did not know Long, she says, but corresponded with him. He died before this book was published. Some 40 years ago in "Song" he wrote of the dead: "They are safe and shall not fade, After everything is done, Past the solace of the shade, Or the rescue of the sun."

## The Hickory Stick Can Still Be Heard

By JERRY BENNETT  
NEA Staff Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NEA) — The tune of the hickory stick can still be heard in classrooms throughout the nation.

This is one of the main themes which education experts use to counter charges that lax discipline in public schools is helping to increase juvenile delinquency.

A National Education Association survey of more than 4,000 teachers reveals that about half of them have the authority to enforce discipline with corporal punishment. In addition it shows that spankings can also be inflicted by about three-fourths of their principals.

Education experts cite this report as only one important example to prove that they are not coddling pupils. They explain that all schools have disciplinary programs which are usually enforced with some type of punishment.

Many school officials believe that largely restrictive methods should be used to make kids toe the line. Pupil control is usually maintained by imposing such conduct penalties as keeping students after school, taking away their privileges and reprimanding them. Other important enforcement methods are suspension and expulsion from school, assigning special tasks and corporal punishment.

Other schools operate under the philosophy that discipline should be learned like any other subject. This program attempts to teach pupils their responsibilities to society and how to meet them.

It's this so-called "new concept" of discipline that's largely responsible for the verbal spankings which schools are suffering in the controversy on classroom law and order.

Critics claim that this system is too lax and often results in a complete breakdown of classroom control.

Advocates of the "new concept" counter this charge by explaining that it is supported by psychological and educational research. They also point to the large number of law abiding graduates from schools using this system as further proof that it is not a disciplinary bugaboo.

And they usually cap their arguments by explaining that the "new concept" has not abolished punishment. Instead, these school officials explain, it imposes penalties especially designed to fit the nature of the offense.

For instance, punishment for breaking a window would be to make the offender pay for the damage instead of whipping him or making him stay after school.

Officials of the education association say, however, that their studies show the disciplinary trend still leans toward regular types of punishment. They explain there's more talk about the new concept than actual practice.

But this doesn't mean that corporal punishment is the answer to keeping kids out of trouble, education experts insist. Investigations of classroom disciplinary measures reveal that teachers with authority to give spankings have about as much trouble with their pupils as those who don't.

This is one reason why school officials emphasize the real cases of juvenile delinquency do not lie within classroom disciplinary systems.

They blame such well known social faults as unsatisfactory home conditions, irresponsible parents and lack of parental supervision due to mothers working outside the home.

Education experts also accuse large overcrowded schools for student behavior problems. They believe many disciplinary headaches would be eased if more classrooms and teachers could be provided for the booming school-age population.

In addition to operating disciplinary systems, schools are trying to combat the delinquency problem by cooperating with community agencies concerned with youth development; providing special guidance programs and promoting pupil organizations which stress good citizenship.

## Capsule Reports

By W. G. ROGERS

**THE MOUNTAIN ROAD.** By Theodore H. White. William Sloane, \$3.95.

Back in 1944, according to White's novel—his first though it is his third work to be chosen Book of the Month—a band of eight Americans led by Major Baldwin gets a tough mission: Retreat along a Chinese mountain road, stay out of reach of pursuing Japanese, destroy bridges and dumps to block the enemy yet not get into trouble with their supposed friends, the Chinese, whose land they must lay waste.

The major is a credit to American manhood; two soldiers ably demonstrate contrary attitudes about the natives: Collins, for fraternization, and Michaelson, for kicking them in the teeth; one man is ill; a pretty Chinese widow goes along for the ride; and the whole is capped with the moral that power corrupts. If it is a familiar moral; it is also, however much you approve, a familiar tale. I've gone up into those mountains, or flown them, or slogged across Normandy hedgerows with those same eight men so many many times I can do it in my sleep—which is about where I ended up this time, too.

**THE JINGER MAN.** By J. B. Donleavy. McDowell, Obolensky, \$3.95.

A young man named Sebastian Dangerfield, whose rascally character gives this first novel its title, runs wild over wine and women in Dublin. He has a wife Marion of whom he says, with a rueful sympathy: "She wants it both ways. Dignity and me. She's got me." Yet he is not quite fair to himself for there is a kind of savage dignity about him in fact. He clouts his women in the mouth, he talks filth, but a fabulous energy possesses him and drives him like mad. He is uninhibited natural man, but with a brain.

### Vertical Panels

Q. In installing vertical paneling on a wall, how far apart should furring strips be?

A. It depends upon the stress to be put on the wall. If it has to support heavy shelves, furring strips should be closer together than if no wall hangings are to be accommodated. But the Western Pine Association recommends that no more than four feet be permitted between furring strips in any paneling job.

Empty egg cartons can be used for storing earrings, Christmas tree decorations, children's socks, nails, nuts and bolts, and other small items.

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### FIRST MEAT PACKER

SPRINGFIELD, Mass (UPI) — Though the meat packing industry is centered in the Middle West today, it began here in Springfield. William Pynchon, founder of the city, started the nation's first meat packing plant in the 1640's, sailing his ships down the Connecticut River with supplies of corned beef and salt pork for the West Indies.