Travel, Classes, Theater Fill Student's Summer In France

By LYNDAA HARPER

Lynda Harper, junior French major, received a $1000 Alliance Francaise Scholarship for a trip to France last summer. The following article presents her impressions and experiences while abroad—Ed.

It is hard to recall the excitement that I felt on my first day in Paris in the midst of new and wonderful sights. I remember that Paris was radiant.

The Right Bank was full of people hurrying to and fro, and the Louvre was larger and more magnificent than I ever had imagined. The bouquinistes were under the trees along the bank of the Seine.

ON THE LEFT Bank the biweekly market was in full swing under the trees on the esplanade of the Boulevard Raspail. Housewives with mesh grocery bags were scurrying from all directions. You've never been pushed and jostled until you've walked in the narrow aisle between produce stands at a Parisian market!

One of my favorite spots in Paris was the Jardin de Luxembourg. In the afternoon the Jardin comes alive. People are everywhere—sitting in chairs under the sun, reading, talking, knitting, or just relaxing. Children sail their boats in the immense pool in the center of the Jardin.

THE FRENCH must love flowers, for their gardens are the most beautiful in Europe. In the Jardin de Luxembourg, as well as in the Jardin des Tuileries, the gardens are magnificent. These are no ordinary gardens—they are often laid out in designs, such as a crown or a fleur de lis. Flowers of different colors are carefully combined to please the eye.

While in Paris, I saw three performances at the Comedie Francaise: "Le Cid," "Le Misanthrope," and "Ruy Bias." I visited several art museums, saw a number of French films, and saw a performance at the Opera Comique.

ONE OF THE highlights of my trip was a tour of the Loire Valley, otherwise known as the "chateau country." The chateaux are amazingly well kept; most of the furniture is preserved; the gardens are in full bloom; and guides are available in several different languages. All of this, of course, is for the sake of tourists, and it is a good thing for one can get an idea of how life once was in the magnificent chateaux.

Since a good part of my days in Paris was spent in classes, my sightseeing was limited. I managed to see Versailles twice, the Bois de Boulogne, Notre Dame and La Sainte Chapelle several times, the Cathedral at Chartres, Fontainebleau, and Rembouillet.

I left many places unvisited and many things unseen. Paris has so much of interest that all I can think about is going back and "finishing up." I hope that any of the students at Rice who are planning a trip to Europe will set aside two weeks at least for Paris.

IF YOU know French, don't miss going to the theatre. Above all, try to see some of the art museums and a performance at either the Opera or the Opera Comique. Paris has as much to offer in these areas as it does in spots of historical interest.