



**A BRIDGE**, in Paris, is a place to watch not just the river but the city go by. As the Seine glides beneath, pedestrians stroll past in a steady flow. The city's oldest bridge, the Pont Neuf, connects the Île de la Cité to the Seine's Left and Right Banks, literally and symbolically unifying Paris. Built in the 16th century, it is a relic of the medieval city that was swept away in the 19th century by Baron Haussmann's grand boulevards, but a pair of early photographs in *'Paris: Portrait of a City'* (Taschen, 623 pages, \$69.99) capture what once was: Beside the stylish passersby on the bridge rolls a horse-drawn wagon, comically piled 20 feet high with sod or hay. Laundresses ply their trade in boats just upriver, near where the Samaritaine department store would later be built. Panoramas from this era show now-forgotten bridges—the Pont Louis-Philippe, the Pont Rouge,

the Pont Saint-Michel—that would be demolished to make room for now beloved spans like the Pont Alexandre III, whose Art Nouveau decorations are barely visible amid the belching smog of a passing ship in an image from 1900, the year of its completion. But the changing face of the Seine is just one among dozens of stories traceable in *'Paris: Portrait of a City,'* which gathers hundreds of pictures from the past 150 years documenting the city's architecture alongside its cultural, political and social life. Even during the Nazi occupation, the rhythm of the street went on, as shown by Walter Dreizner's image of a young woman (above) on the recently completed Pont du Carrousel. But her forward-looking fashion—the bag, the dress, the shoes—are a reminder, too, that Paris is a city of ceaseless change.

— The Editors