AN ORIENTAL STRADIVARIUS

By Louise E. Dew.

"MUSIC is the lament of love or a prayer to the gods." We went to Japan ostensibly to attend the chrysanthemum show, but in reality it was the ocean voyage that attracted us two weary ones, for we were convinced that the change as well as the sea air would straighten out the tangles in our hearts and brains.

My companion, the Critic, was a musician, having been educated abroad under the best masters, and she was quite a favorite on both sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, her critiques in the leading magazines had given her the foregoing appellation. In other words, the Critic was an authority. And yet now that she has gone and I can say it without treason, there was something lacking in her playing in spite of her flawless technique—at least there was until Stradivarius came into our lives.

On one occasion, when she followed a song by Nordica with a violin solo, her admirers drew interesting comparisons between the similarity of her tone color, and the singing of the great prima donna. A few of us who loved her best overheard the flattering statement, and for an instant my heart leaped with uncontrollable joy at the success of my beloved, for was it not more to me than my own? Then some one else admired, too, but concluded by deploring her "lack of soul," and I shuddered at the unjust criticism.

"Not that!" I murmured to myself, "but she is too absorbed in her art."

I am not a musician, I do not pose as one; but I do love and appreciate good music when it is my privilege to hear it. The Critic often told me that I was a good listener.

Once, before we went to Japan, she stopped in the midst of a piece she was playing, and looking into my face quizzically, she exclaimed: "You answer me without any nonsense, does my playing appeal to you?" There was an inflection on the pronoun that made me hesitate until she began to show signs of impatience.

"I want the honest truth," she said, kneeling by my side in her own pretty, coaxing way.

"It is now or never," I thought to myself, and drawing the golden head in my lap, I answered:

"You shall have it, little one, even though it pricks. You know I love to hear you play better than any one in the whole world, but my child, remember that it is not art, but heart, which wins, the wide world over." I paused, but she bade me to continue.

"You lack the power of drawing from your violin melodies of long drawn out sweetness with their evanescent and subtle graduations of tone color. I hope and pray that to you may come the awakening, when under your witchery—for you have it, beloved—your much praised technique may become a problem spiritualized."

It was a long speech for me to make, for I usually think more than I say. The Critic was evidently thinking so, too, for she looked at me in amazement.

"Is that all?" she asked quietly, then she picked up her violin, put it in the case, and without a glance in my direction, rushed from the room.

"What a fool I have been!" I cried, savagely. "How dare I criticise her, I, who do not know the first principles of music."

The Critic did not appear at the dinner hour, but at my plate was a little note which I knew could be from no other, for there was just a breath of violets about it that was as dainty as herself.

I opened the envelope and read:

"What is the secret of your life?" asked Mrs. Browning of Charles Kingsley. "Tell me that I may make mine beautiful, too." He replid: "I had a friend."

This was the token that my well meant, but bungling speech was understood and again was my heart made glad, for I had her favor, and to me, this alone was enough to make life worth living.

The subject was never alluded to again; in fact, the morning mail brought letters that changed all our plans, and hurried preparations were made for the voyage to Japan.

We were expected to return in the springtime, so the newspaper said, but the charms of the fascinating little island across the Pacific were stronger staid through the winter months to cherry blossom time. When the wistaria and iris fetes came around we were still in Japan, and then came lotus time, and our Stradivarius. We had spent a blissful month at that Mecca of saints and sinners, of which all the guide books and travelers say "Do not exclaim 'magnificent' until you see Nikko."

Kioto, the old capital, with its palace and wonderful temples of art, had enticed us for many weeks. We had been through the silk districts and watched the manufacture of rich brocades and exquisite chirimen, that lovely crepe, one breadth of which can be easily drawn through a finger ring, so soft and fine is it. We had fairly haunted the curio shops, with their ware and good carvings. We had ransacked these places for quaint old stringed musical instruments, of which the critic was making a collection.

We had been to Osaka, the Venice of Japan; to Kobe, Tokio, Nagasaki, and all the old castle towns with their aroma of medieval romance still clinging to them; in truth we had been to every place that was worth seeing. We had thus well earned the right to say "Kekko deska!" (It is magnificent!)

It all seems like a dream to me now, those golden days when we climbed thousands of moss-covered stone steps, shaded by ancient pines and cryptomerias leading to the glorious temples with their magnificent tombs of departed shoguns. Again, in fancy, have I paused to leave my shoes without the still, and then to read with reverence on the moss-like mats within. And sometimes I murmur aloud, "Ah, lovely Nikko, it is good to be here!" Then I always waken, and regret that it is only a dream.

How often we stood upon the sacred hill at Mikko and looked down on beautiful Diakawa as it cascaded over the side of the ravine, then went calmly on its way under the sacred red lacquer bridge. And how many times we heard the story of this same bridge over which no one but the emperor has ever walked, and which General Grant made famous by his refusal to do so when the courtesy was extended to him by the emperor himself.

Many, many times did we "explaim "Kekko deska!" And as often we looked into each other's eyes without a sound, realizing that after all there are times when words are colorless as well as useless, for "can they paint the flash of an eye. How much less the flash of a heart!"

Ah, me, that was long ago, but the picture is as if it were but yesterday.

One hot August morning we arose very easily, for the night had been a restless one, and by 5 o'clock we were out for a stroll. Instinctively our footsteps led us to Mangangi Garden, which is as perfect a piece of landscape gardening as one could wish to see outside of paradise. We walked about for a half hour drinking in the delicious, resinous air, and watching the clouds break away from the mountain peaks beyond; then we sat down to rest on a little bamboo seat beside a lotus pond, abloom with pink and white blossoms.

The vision before us recalled the lines of Sir Edwin Arnold in "The Light of Asia," and the critic softly hummed:

"The dew is on the lotus. Rise, great sun!
And lift my leaf, and mix we with the wave
Om mani padmi hum, the sunrise comes;
The dew drop slips into the shining sea."

"Look!" said she, a moment later, "there it is now," and as I glanced in the direction she pointed I beheld a dew drop glistening in the heart of a stately leaf like an oriental jewel. Just then a ray of sunshine rested on the liquid gem, and the opaque leaf to prevent the passage of the gleam, a thousand prismatic hues were reflected from the dew drop which at once made plain the mystic words:

"Om mani padmi hum"—Hail, jewel in lotus, hail!"

For a few moments there was no sounds save that of the birds chirping over our heads, and innumerable cicadea grating the trunks and branches of the trees. Hundreds of iridescent flies swarmed about the pond, all this combined with the buzz of other honey-gathering insects made us realize that we were in the far east. No telling how long we would have sat there without speaking, for we were both dreamers, had not our Stradivarius appeared on the scene? It was evident that he did not see us, for he sat down only a few paces from us, native style, his feet bent under his body, and placing an instrument in position he began to tune it.

The Critic and I exchanged glances, and by a pantomimic sign language agreed to keep quiet so as to not disturb the player.

For an instant the Critic looked amused—she had a horror of so-called native musicians, and she usually fled at the first "wail of distress," as she called their playing. However, it was plain that there was something about this man that impelled us to stay, probably as much the time and place as anything else.

I had never seen such an instrument before. The finger board and head piece were the same as those of a samisen, but altogether smaller, the dimensions being not more than 25 inches in length.

The square form of the body, and the thick board of wood made it resemble our violin, especially as it was played with a bow. There were four strings of the usual silken fabric, but ranging in thickness like the catgut strings of our violin.

It was certainly a picturesque instrument with its long bow, which the played handled with a grace and skill that was surprising.

"HE SAT DOWN ONLY A FEW PACES FROM US."

My companion wrote something on a slip of paper and handed it to me. It reads as follows:

"He is playing the kokiu. I saw one just like this in a pawnshop at Nara, and tried to buy it, but the shopkeeper wouldn't dispose of it, for he said he was sure the owner meant to redeem it. I wish I could get this one."

I nodded my head sympathetically, but was somewhat surprised at the animation of the usually stoical Critic, whose countenance was gradually changing from amusement to interest.

There were a few plaintive minor notes played very softly, then the musician began to sing a gentle little melody. He sang, as only an artist can do, with wonderful vocal rythms, learned perhaps from the very cicadae in the pines about us; or mayhap from the nightingale's improvising moonlight sonatas, with fractions and semi-fractions and demi-fractions of tones never written down in our musical language. We could not understand the words, for alas! we had only acquired a small vocabulary; but we did feel the sweetness and patience of Japan in the singer's voice and an invisible tenderness seemed to gather and quiver about us.

In my heart memories were stirred that brought the tears to my eyes; memories like the weight of heavy wings that could never be lifted—and yet I knew that it was these things which made me sympathetic so I smiled through the midst of tears.

The musician played another bar, and this time the song was one of the hope. At last the music ceased. The man arose, laid the instrument on the ground and facing the east he clapped his hands worshipfully together, as he said his prayers to the great Lord Buddha; words that to us were meaningless, but which, no doubt, went straight to the heart of the eternal one for whom they were intended. Then he paused, picked up his kokiu, held it lovingly in his arms. With bared head and closed eyes he seemed to be gazing into the great beyond, a look of ineffable peace illumining his face.

At length he turned about and walked toward us with firm, manly strides, then we two cavesdroppers looked guiltily at each other, like a pair of culprits caught in the act; but we need not have felt embarrassed, for as he drew nearer we saw that our Stradivarius was blind.

The next morning I arose and dressed at the usual hour, then went to the Critic's door and tapped. There was no response, so I pushed aside the shogi and said: "Come, sleepy one, the sun has been up for an hour wooing us to bask in his brightness." But my words were lost, for the room was empty, and silent as a dead shell on the shore. I found her at our usual trysting place, and as I approached she came to meet me.

There were tell tale marks about her eyes, but I appeared not to notice them.

"You see, I stole a march," she said, with a pretense of cheerfulness. "You were sleeping so soundly that I did not have the heart to disturb you. I thought perhaps if I came to the garden early I would see our musician."

"And he has not been here?" I queried.

"No," said she, regretfully, "and to tell the truth, I am disappointed, for I want another lesson. Do you know when he was playing yesterday all I could think of was this:

"'Show me thy face, dear nature, that I may forget my own.'"

Then I knew that the transformation had commenced, and my heart was glad, but I simply squeezed her hand.

Several days passed, and we saw nothing more of our Stradivarius.

The inn keeper thought that he must be a strolling musician, but when we described his dress our host changed his mind.

"A Samurai," he said briefly, and we were no wiser than before.

One morning as we left the inn for our daily tramp, a boy handed us a card on which was the following advertisement, evidently the result of studying an English dictionary:

KOYOKWAN.

"Nikko fine art collection.

"Articles for inspection on sale.

"Various ancient arms, old saddlers' swords and musical instruments.

"Metallic curious of ancient tymes.

"Mikko park close to the two finest temples."

"Ah, musical instruments, we will go there," said the Critic promptly. "I have often noticed the place but supposed it was a priest's house."

Just before we reached our destination we heard the soft, plaintive music of a flute. People who were passing to and from the temples heard also, and as they approached, the noisy gates and the chattering tongues were hushed to listen to the harmony with which the air fairly palpitated.

Even the jinrikisha men who were at the next corner, came also to listen. Our host was in the act of saying "Irrashamshi (welcome) when the player began to sing, and there was no mistaking the voice, which we knew to be that of our Stradivarius.

The proprietor stood bowing and smiling before us, eager to show us his "curious," but the Critic had neither eyes nor ears for anything but instead seated herself on the soft mat outside the door, where she could watch the performer.

What a face he had! Great dark eyes that, though sightless, were full of dreamy music, and long, slender fingers that were alive to the very tips as he manipulated the simple bamboo reed ingenuity had fashioned into a flute.

"Does he speak any English?" asked the Critic, at the close of the song.

"Oh, yes, a little," was the response. "If you care to hear it I will ask him to interpret the song for you."

A conversation ensued between the two men, then the musician bowed with all the grace and dignity of a prince. He spoke rather brokenly, so I will give the translation in pure English, but without the wizard and his flute it is mere jargon.

"O, lovely Benten, sea-mother nurse of Japan. Thou who art the inventor of the lute; thou who art the guide of the evening star, and the model to all good mothers, because thou didst protect our little ones from the dargons of long ago. May the Lord Buddha rest the gentle mother!

"O, lovely Benten, sea-mother and nurse of Japan. Sailors and fishermen honor thee. When thou dost appear on moonlight night, sitting with thy lute on the knees at the edge of the cliffs projecting over the waves, so lovely is the melody from thy lute that the evening star is guided by it up to its place in the sky. May the Lord Buddha rest thee, gentle mother!"

"Arigato," (thank you), said the Critic, gently. "Now will you not play something on the kokiu for us?"

The room was filled with musical instruments, but without any hesitancy he walked to the one in question, and standing before us he began to play the national air of Japan. This was followed by the "Songs of the Seasons," and lastly a piece that we had never heard before; glad one moment and sad the next, then dreamy and peaceful to the end.

"I like the last one best," the Critic remarked. "What is it, please."

"It is one of my own composition. I call it 'The Story of a Life,' was the grave response. And we were satisfied that it was his own.

"Just one question," said the Critic, thoughtfully. "Will you tell me what is supposed to constitute a true musician in your country?"

"Ah, lady," and his smile was singularly sweet, "that is a question that wiser than I have failed to answer. I can only tell you what I feel myself. To be a true musician one must be unselfish, he must have a heart that is large enough to take in the whole world, for unless it beats in sympathy with the great universe, he is incapable of interpreting nature aright. He must be all things to all men, and put his very soul in the tips of his fingers."

We spent two hours wandering about the beautiful house, which was a specimen of fine art. We viewed treasures from old yashiki (palaces) of bygone days. There were palanquins, kakemonos, cloisonne vases, lacquer sake bowls, and an infinite variety of musical instruments.

The Critic, with the eyes of a connoisseur, looked over the latter. "I want a kokiu," she said, "you have none here."

"Ah, wait, madam!" said our host, and he left the room to return a moment later with the kokiu of our Stradivarius.

The Critic looked at it in surprise and remarked, "But this belongs to him—the musician."

"No, madam, I bought it of him yesterday, and you may have it for thirty yen, which is very cheap, I assure you. Is it not a beauty?"

"Yes," said the Critic, exultantly, as she handed him the amount he asked. "But why does he sell it?" she interrogated, curiously, as we were leaving the house.

Our host shook his head significantly. "Well, you see, he is very poor, and he needs the money. I, too, am rich, but I buy it of him." I buy all my musical instruments of him, now he has nothing left but the flute."

"But how did he become so poor," persisted the Critic, "and how did he become blind?"

The shop-keeper walked down the path with us, and little by little we drew the story from him, for the two men had been friends for years.

It seems that our Stradivarius' father was a wealthy land owner, who was exceedingly ambitious for his son to be a good soldier. But the lad, who had a sensitive nature like his mother's, loved music better than anything in the world. This angered the father exceedingly, and he put the boy in a temple to be educated for the priesthood. Years passed, the gentle mother died, the old samurai's lands were confiscated and he died in poverty without seeing his son, but his dying wish was for the boy to leave the priesthood.

Ito was glad to grant the request, not only out of filial respect, but because he had never been contented.

It was, of course, necessary for him to do something to earn a livelihood, so he naturally turned to his beloved music. He rented a small back room of a shopkeeper and began the manufacture of musical instruments on a limited scale. His business gradually increased until he was compelled to take a more pretentious place. Sometimes he played and sang for his wealthy patrons, who were spellbound at his marvelous power. But this was not often, as he shrank from publicity, in spite of the title "Son of Heaven," which had been bestowed on him by his many admirers.

His life was a lovely one until Suye came into it; then it was filled to the brim for 12 blissful months. They built a nest for themselves on the outskirts of Tokio, for business was better in the city, and here they lived as happy as two children. Sometimes they took holidays, and went a-larking, a characteristic of the Japanese, and what glad times they had viewing the cherry blossoms by day, and the shimmering of fire flies on summer nights. Sometimes they went far out on the bay in their little boat, then Suye would take Ito's place and he would play the kokin or his sweet toned flute. Or, mayhaps, they sang together until the shadows lengthened over the hills, and beckoned them to hasten home.

When the leaves began to crimson in autumn they went out less, for Suye was very busy arranging flowers for the alcoves, feeding the tame gold fish in the garden pond back of the shop, or fashioning dainty little kimonos out of bits of chirimen she had been saving for this occasion. But there was always a song on her lips, and a far-away sweetness in her eye that only comes to those who welcome motherhood.

The day came when Ito knelt beside her, and a little one was placed in his arms. The saints in heaven could not have been happier than they were! But there came another day when Ito's eyes failed him, and that was the beginning of their trouble. It was as if a shadow had crossed the sun and dimmed the brightness with its foreboding presence.

"Paralysis of the optic nerve," the physician said, and Ito was fated never to look on his wife and boy again. Still he kept patient and cheerful even after Suye fell ill, but when in three days she was laid away, the child beside her, he was fairly stunned by the blow. He did not rally from the shock for many weary months, and then he took up the thread of life where they had been so cruelly severed, but he did not live on this earth, ah, no, he lived in Nirvana with his wife and child.

To be sure, he had his kokiu left, but sooner or later even that must go, too; then what would he do?

A few days before he had come to Nikko on a pilgrimage, and he had stopped with his friend—the curio-dealer. A noted surgeon, an Englishman who was traveling in Japan, saw the blind man at one of the temples, and he felt sure there was help for him. Ito must have an operation on his eyes, the surgeon would give him his services free. But Ito had no money for medicine, and his friends were poor; there was only one thing to do, he must give up his kokiu for good. He had been obliged to pawn it before, but he had always redeemed it, even at Nara; now he must say goodbye to it forever or lose this chance of freedom from blindness.

And this was the story of his life, which we had heard him play.

We were standing at the little rustic gate, the Critic, the curio-dealer and I. The former held the kokiu in her arms—for she had insisted on carrying it herself, but when the tale was ended, she handed the instrument to the man and said:

"Will you give this to him for me, please, and say it is from one who has perfect eyesight, and yet who was blinder than he. Tell him also that a miracle has been performed, that when she heard him play it brought about a change in her vision—the blind can see."

The man almost prostrated himself at our feet.

"And when and where will the operation take place?" said I, trying to control my voice.

"At my house tomorrow, madam."

We waited until the twilight hour the next day, then we went ourselves to inquire after our Stradivarius. The curio-dealer was coming, and he met us at the door, then we knew as well as if we had asked, the outcome of the experiment.

It seems that he rallied from the anaesthetic, and asked that he could see. All at once he raised himself on the mat and cried:

"Suye, little one, anata?" (thou) then fell back dead. Heart failure, the surgeon said.

We did not go in, as we liked best to think of him as we saw him that first day, beside the lotus pond, a look of the most perfect self-abnegation on his face, as he took his farewell of earth, and his precious kokiu.

The next afternoon, just as we were leaving the inn, we saw the curio dealer coming up the path as fast as his clogs would carry him. In his arms was the kokiu. When he met us he prostrated himself with true oriental grace, and then handed the instruments to the Critic.

"He would have wished you to have it, lady," he said gently, when she remonstrated, and then he added, "Besides it really belongs to you."

With a sayonara he was gone.

An hour later, the train was bearing us swiftly away from Nikko, and in another two weeks the ocean lay between us and our oriental Stradivarius.

MUST THE WORLD PAY PARIS AN ADMISSION FEE?--Continued From First Page *of* This Section

who could be found to look the poetic part. Drop in tomorrow evening, sit through the "atmosphere" until half past 10 o'clock, and the same despairing poet will have the same old despairing fit.

It is but little different anywhere else within the circle embracing Paris, which is the magnet that draws all sightseers. Mostly the reckless, the Bohemianism, the dare-devilry, the wickedness of this dear Paris simmers down to the sagacity of a horde of experienced showmen, who make it a business to give tourists their money's worth.

Occasionally the real Bohemian spirit, which is still rife in Paris, does break loose—but usually in a fashion that betokens the profound scorn with which the true Bohemian regards the tourists who are so passionately eager to behold him in his habit as he lives.

A few months ago, in the earliest dawn of a pleasant summer morning—the hour when all good tourists were prosaically in bed with recollections of the tin plate Bohemianism they had thrilled over at 10 p. m.—a group of art students, in costumes approaching classic nudity and accompanied by some Mimis and Musettes whose attire achieved it, set forth upon a promenade through the streets of Paris purely for their own enjoyment and as an insult to the decorum of society. It was truly poetical—Arcadian in its elegant simplicity. The students had high hopes that it might start a revolution or, at the very least, a riot.

It did nothing of the sort. It merely landed them in jail for a few minutes, until the obliging police could hasten to the deserted studios and rake together enough clothing to degrade the heroes and heroines to ignoble decency.

But the Paris journals, for years reduced to the extremity of reproducing eminently proper photographs of actors and actresses at the local theatres, of daring aviateurs and the nation's heroes in Morocco, went wild with joy over the renaissance of the ancient spirit of the town. They put their artists to work, and gave whole pages of the glorious pictures which showed precisely how the students and their models looked on that auspicious dawn in the summer of 1908. The tourists fairly wept, when they learned what they had missed.

Yet, with all its ludicrous charlatanism, Paris has a hold upon the imagination of the world that will continue to be powerful during generations still to come. Even when he plans to be amusing the Parisian never fails to be interesting.

No novelty escapes his cosmopolitan eye, although it may take a long time to reach him. When it does, he is as hospitable as were the ancient Romans with their circus or the modern American with his.

For a hundred years it remained a matter for wonder that Paris failed to appreciate boxing, although the savatte, where the feet played the bruising part of the fists, continued to be perennially popular with the French. At last the philosophers of the ring took refuge in the explanation that boxing was altogether too rough a game for a Latin people—an explanation lame enough, inasmuch as it was among the Latins of the Latins in Rome at the height of its splendor that boxing was held in the highest esteem, and was attended with bruising such as brass knuckles alone could parallel today.

But that the noble art of self-defense could be very readily adopted by the Parisians was made impressively apparent the instant France realized how important to her was the newly found friendship of England, and when Paris realized how well it could be made to pay from the exhibition standpoint. For a year sparring matches have been one of the prominent features of the immense one-mile circus that constitutes the amusement ring of Paris, and now a hearty knockout amuses much less of the display of humor there than in the United States where the great traditions of the game invest it with its main prestige.

The woes of the prize fight were scarcely set up when another classic novelty sprang into popularity as well as notoriety. The rat pit, that thrilling amusement which is under the ban of the police everywhere in the United States, is one of the exciting features of a thorough night in Paris, and its thrills are not limited to men alone.

Women tourists can enjoy the fierce rush of the dogs and the terrified squeals of the slaughtered rats as much—well, as much as they usually enjoy such edifying pastimes, when they can persuade themselves to witness them.

Apart from the set performances, the very streets of Paris afford a perpetual panorama, which alone, as the municipal councilors are prepared to aver, is worth the price of admission. Meals al fresco, with a perceptible quota of the female population in ebb and flow very coquettishly along the boulevard; the martial colors of stray uniforms glinting here and there as constant reminders that France takes her pleasures armed; a Sunday outing that may convert itself into a jubilant dance symbolical of the fiction that life is a round of joy—these, and a hundred other quaintnesses and oddities, lend to a promenade the sensation of being part and parcel of some continuous vaudeville.

If, taking that promenade through the maze of curious sights and keeping a weary eye open for the merciless dash of cabs and autos, and for any stray barrel rolling contest in which a few local "heroes" may be indulging, you should have in view some such destination as a charity flower fete, studiously turn a deaf ear to the siren call of the flower girls at the different street corners you pass.

The blossoms they vend are fresh and sweet and natural; and every girl has a big, cubical basket for you to choose from. But, if you were to garland yourself with a whole basketful, they would still be inadequate protection against the onslaughts of the aristocratic dames in waiting at the charity bazaar. There every rose, crowded into your lapel by delicate yet insistent fingers, will cost you from five to fifty francs, while the tiny bunches of violets, which you dare not for your life refuse, has a price regulated solely by the social position of the woman and her estimate of your available funds.

These diversions, embracing all the novelties and oddities that respond to the summons of a town eagerly cosmopolitan, with climaxes tumultuously prepared for the close of the evening at a rat killing match, or impromptu waltzing or the maddest sort of singing in the Red Mill, the Moulin de la Galette, or the Cafe Cornet, did not appear to be sufficient in the eyes of leading Parisians this summer. They decided that, since Paris has achieved the position of the world's chief pleasure resort, the town must maintain its reputation in a manner independent of the laudable efforts of its individual citizens.

So the management of the opera arranged to have a special season, from May 15 to June 15, for the benefit of the opera, and the diversion of the army of American tourists who invade Paris in the early summer.

Then, a little later, a grand floral festival was arranged in the Tuileries Gardens, and the hundreds of experimenters in aerial navigation were encouraged to do their experimenting in and around Paris to the top of their bent.

In fact, during this last season Paris has resembled no place on earth so much as Chicago in its wholesouled effort to make the exposition of 1893 serve as the magnet to convert Chicago into the center of the universe. The only drawback was that this year, of all years, proved to be one selected by the annoying Americans to stay numerously at home and economize.

With the fall it became apparent that, for all this dancing, singing, floralizing and entertaining, some one must pay, especially as the deficit caused by the removal of the octroi did not in the least decrease. It was worth thinking about, too, that the prices to foreigners of wines and beer had not lessened, and that to them must be attributed a large proportion of the local trade in drinkables. It was out of the question to dream of taking the octroi deficit from the tills of hotels and restaurants; so it must come, directly or indirectly, from the pockets of the tourists.

Whatever plans for swelling the municipal revenues may be adopted, there can be no question that the two per cent, which Paris needs on the credit side of her finances, will come out of the pockets of the tourists—and most of it from the pockets of Americans.

For, though the stream of travel may thin and rage more loudly in its shallower flow, all roads must lead to Paris for a long time still.

And the Parisians are patriotic enough to raise the rate on their peanuts and pink lemonade when the price goes up for the whole grand show.

THE CHAMELEON--Fickle Little Animal as House Pet

OF ALL the various species of reptiles that are kept as pets, the chameleon is probably the most interesting—certainly the most bizarre in appearance. Unfortunately they are very susceptible to cold, and therefore difficult to keep through the ever varying climatic conditions of a northern winter. Nevertheless so quaint, interesting and amusing a pet is the chameleon that it will well repay one for all the trouble or care lavished upon it. Certainly the most successful method of keeping chameleons would be to let them have the run of a small conservatory, kept at an even temperature of about 65 to 70 degrees Farenheit, and in which there were a few dwarf trees for them to climb about. A cheap and successful method, where a conservatory is out of the question, is to have a wooden cage, with a glass front and sides, and a shallow water tank floor. The water in the tank can quite easily be kept at an even temperature by means of a spirit lamp placed beneath it. In such cages the author has kept chameleons and boa constrictors most successfully, and at a very small cost. Once the desired temperature is indicated on the thermometer, the flame of the spirit lamp can be reduced to a very small size, and the cost of spirit consumed will only amount to a few cents per week.

What a quaint, archaic appearance the chameleon presents, more like the creation of some monish sculpture, a stone "devil of Notre Dame", come to life, or some survivor from a past geological age. The toes, in their arrangement of three on one side and two on the other of each hand and foot, are singularly suggestive of a bird, as is also the manner in which they grasp the bough on which the chameleon is resting or climbing. The constantly changing facial expressions are very quaint and laughable. There is always a look of sardonic humor lurking round the lines of the mouth, and it is greatly increased by the weird effects produced by the independently moving eyes; indeed the little reptile is a champion squinter. Anatomically there are at least two most interesting points about the chameleon. First, it is unique among reptiles as the possessor of a prehensile tail; and second for the peculiar blind outgrowths of the lungs, which, spreading through the body literally enable the animal to "swell wisibly."

Generally speaking the body of the chameleon presents a very lean and emaciated appearance, and can by the contraction of the muscles lying between the ribs become still more attenuated. This contraction generally takes place on the chameleon observing the approach of a foe and is accompanied by a change of color to a tint closely resembling that of its surroundings, making it practically impossible to detect the whereabouts of the reptile. For its size, the chameleon has a very hot and ungovernable temper, and if disturbed and provoked will swell out its body, hiss, make violent snaps with its jaws, and change from one color to another with great rapidity. By this sudden and extraordinary display of wrath it very easily startles and puts to flight its smaller, unwelcome visitors.

To watch a chameleon feeding is really a wonderful and most interesting sight. The chameleon, resting absolutely motionless on a bough, except for the independent rolling of its eyes, watches until an insect comes within the length of about its body and tail, then suddenly the long, fleshy, cylindrical tongue, with its curious lobed, cup shaped end, is shot out, and the victim is stuck fast to it by a viscid secretion and drawn into the hungry mouth. If in a healthy condition the chameleon thoroughly joys a tepid spray bath, administered by the aid of a garden syringe. The water used should never be quite cold, but with just the chill off. It also likes to lick the water off the leaves of the bush or shrub on which it has taken up its abode. Although not exactly of an affectionate disposition, it soon learns to recognize its master or mistress, and on seeing him will climb along the bough in expectation of a feast of meal worms. Altogether the chameleon makes a most charming and interesting pet, requiring but little attention beyond a daily supply of live meal worms, and a cage kept at a regular and even temperature.

To Relieve His Feelings.

From the Strand.

Boldly displayed in black letters on the white gable of an unpretentious house on the road to Mount Stuart, Bute, Scotland, is the following inscription: "The Materials of This Outrage Are for Sale." According to the local historians, the announcement as it stands is the last word in a duel between neighbors.

It is said that the house was built to obstruct the view of a gentleman who had been successful in getting an interdict to prevent the owner from enclosing the foreshore. But after the death of the builder the house came into the market and was purchased by the other gentleman, who now seeks to express his wounded feelings in paint.

An Inducement.

From the Cleveland Leader.

"Is there anything I can do, cried an exasperated west side mother, "to induce you to go to bed?"

"Yep," replied the small boy promptly. "Well, for goodness sake what is it?"

"I—I—may go on the boys' lounger."

TARIFF REVISION

NOW that a special session of congress has been promised by Taft for looking to the revising of our tariff, special articles and editorials upon that subject are very opportune, and will appear from time to time in these columns. A good starter is furnished by the New York Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin, as follows:

Those who are appearing at the tariff hearings of the ways and means committee at Washington in behalf of various "protected interests," instead of helping toward a "revision downward" of the present tariff, almost invariably put in pleas for more protection by means of higher duties. To their minds the purpose of a tariff is not to raise revenue for the government by a tax upon consumption, which customs duties necessarily are, so far as imported articles are concerned, but to increase the profits of their business or to enable them to carry on a business here which would otherwise be unprofitable by extending the tax to the consumption of domestic as well as imported articles. Every addition to the price of articles that enter into consumption resulting from duties on imports is necessarily a tax upon consumers for the benefit of those who provide these articles. The high cost of living which is the consequence is construed as a high "standard of living" that justifies high wages for labor.

At the hearing on the schedule of chemicals, oil and paints, an increase of duties was demanded on coal tar colors from 30 to 40 per cent ad valorem, because they are produced cheaper and better in Germany and sold in this country at a lower price than the domestic products, in spite of the present duties. Figures were presented exhibiting the cost of a coal tar dye paint, the cost of materials used, the number of employes and the salaries and wages paid, in the United States and Germany, respectively, all tending to show how much less it costs to make the colors in Germany and to prove the necessity of more protection for the industry here. The German colors are now sold here, it was said, for less than it costs to make them in this country. This is a plain confession of American inferiority. Germany has no natural advantage over the United States for the production of coal tar dyes. This is the land of petroleum and should have the advantage in raw materials, but the Germans have assiduously applied science, ingenuity, skill and trained industry to the production of dyes and colors from coal tar, and attained economy and superiority in that industry, which enables them to sell the products here in spite of the cost of transportation and an ad valorem duty of 30 per cent.

How is a competition of this kind to be met? The normal way would be to vie with the Germans in the knowledge, enterprise and skill necessary to produce for ourselves the goods which they offer in our markets, and not to insist upon a protection that will maintain high prices and large profit on making inferior goods by less effective and economical methods, thereby raising the cost of everything for which the articles in question are used. Protection against competition is the death of emulation, a check upon improvement, a hindrance to progress, a safeguard only for inertia. If our people have the capacity, the ability, the qualities, for competing with the Germans in a particular industry and do not do so, it must be because the same faculties can be employed more profitably in other industries. The proper way to test the matter and stimulate the effort at rivalry is to leave competition to its legitimate effect. The moment the barrier against it is raised the incentive to excel and to win the market by superior economy and efficiency is greatly weakened, if not wholly removed. One of the speakers at the hearing admitted with reference to the duty on lactic acid that it "kept out German goods very well until the Germans hit upon the scheme for strengthening the acid to 80 per cent strength." That was a legitimate means of getting into a market. Why should not American manufacturers hit upon schemes of improving their goods, increasing their value and cheapening their products? Chiefly because they are protected against the need of doing so and deprived of the incentive.

There is beginning to be complaint in England that Germany is excelling in shipbuilding and getting the big jobs away from British shipyards. Why is it? There is no protection and no subsidies for shipbuilding in Germany. The materials are free of duty, but foreign vessels can be freely bought and put in the German shipping trade. But the Germans have been putting science, energy and industry into shipbuilding as well as into the manufacture of chemicals. They have not been greatly troubled with labor unions that raise the cost and lower the efficiency of skilled labor and indulge in such protracted strikes as have tormented the British shipbuilders and hampered their energies. Consequently, Germany has no such serious problem of the unemployed as is troubling England. So far as Germany may be beating any other country in industry or trade, it is not due to tariffs or protection against foreign competition, but to the development of energy, skill, industrious habits and economical methods; that is, methods which produce the best results at the lowest cost.

A Predicament.

From the St. Louis Times.

Parker—What's wrong? You seem worried.

Streeter—I am. I wrote two notes—one to my brother, asking him if he took me for a fool, and the other to Miss Golding asking her if she would be mine. While I was out somebody telephoned "Yes," and I don't know which one of them it was.