

the action of the Committee of the Art Gallery in rejecting works of Manchester artists in favour of outsiders. But, in my experience, its art standard is so high that it causes the rejection of 'specially invited' works by these very outsiders. On hearing that my picture was rejected I wrote to the Secretary, and was informed that my letter would be laid before the Committee, but I have not as yet received any further communication. I understand that in the process of a rapid development of a high standard, the gentlemen composing the Art Gallery Committee have been favoured with the invaluable assistance of Mr. C. E. Hallé, of whose competence to judge pictures on their technical merits the New Gallery affords numerous examples annually in his own work, the excellence of which would, of course, be acknowledged with acclamation by the most exacting body of painters, such, for instance, as the New English Art Club. But, putting aside the difficult question of artistic merit, surely, sir, taste in art should not in its newly acquired perfection be allowed to supersede entirely the older standard of taste in manners, which does not admit of great difference of opinion, and wherein bodies such as the Art Gallery Committee of Manchester would be on safer ground, I imagine. If the Committee desires to be overridden by an art gentleman from Regent Street, let it alter the wording of the 'Special Invitation,' and let it be understood that the artist will be required to *submit* his work for acceptance or rejection as the case may be: we shall then know where we are, and perhaps the arduous task of selection would in future exhibitions be sensibly diminished."

In a few days I received a courteous note from the Editor offering to insert a portion of my letter, whilst remarking that he "could not well admit the attack on Hallé." Perhaps the "Saturday Review" will have less reluctance in approaching this sacred ground.—I am, yours truly,
BERNHARD SICKERT.

CHEAP MICROSCOPES.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

22 September, 1896.

DEAR SIR,—It seems I have been wrong all along, and if I was only a manufacturer with thirty-six years' experience I might have known that fully seven years ago there was an efficient London microscope to be got at less than five guineas. I am bound to take the word of Mr. Crouch for that, and gladly assume that the high power was a really serviceable sixth. Only being merely a possible purchaser, at the very centre of the market, I sought it unavailingly, and so did my students, until the German instrument came along. For all practical purposes, it did not exist. No doubt the British merchant is, with characteristic modesty, even now concealing from sale that cheap balance I asked for, and that intelligently arranged set of chemical apparatus. If so, and he is simply waiting for his would-be customers to find him out, he is even a worse business man than I gave him credit for.

Mr. Crouch may take my word for it that the student's microscope trade is an altogether different market from that which the splendid work of Carl Zeiss won for Germany. It was not "fashion," but necessity, drove English students to German makers. I doubt if the ordinary elementary science student who seeks a microscope has ever heard of Zeiss. But Mr. Crouch, being a British merchant, is scarcely to be taught by a mere consumer. No doubt he will rest satisfied with his own theory in spite of my assurance. "Gratuitous trumpetings" of German goods indeed! My article was an embittered lament.

When will our merchants and manufacturers learn the obvious lesson that the discovery of a customer's means and what he wants, and what he thinks he wants, and the conscientious satisfaction of these conditions, is of far more importance than even a couple of centuries of "experience" and old-fashioned "take it or leave it" routine? Mr. Crouch, still unaware that there are two points of view in every market, still satisfied that only the merchant can understand the trade, is evidently not grateful for my article—and so he proves my case against the British merchant in his own person up to the hilt.
H. G. WELLS.

"AN UNHAPPY POET."

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

24 September, 1896.

DEAR SIR,—The writer of your article on Mr. Clement Scott as a poet and the author of that immortal line,

"Bexhill-on-Sea is the haven for me,"

and your correspondent who last week seemed to take the article somewhat too seriously, seem alike to have missed the point. Surely Mr. Scott's dramatic criticisms and poetry are both mere incidents in his career. As a descriptive reporter we see him at his best. Who has not been thrilled by every detail of his account—written, as he says, "in the interests of science"—in a recent issue of the "Daily Telegraph" of the physical impressions exercised by the recent Paris cyclone on himself and Mrs. Scott? Who could fail to be awed by the air of dignity which pervades the article?

Only a few quotations are necessary for the purposes of my argument. We read:—"The night before the storm my wife and I, who were staying at the Hôtel de Bade, on the Boulevard des Italiens, visited the Ambigu Theatre, to see 'Les Deux Gosses.' The atmosphere was stifling. It was almost impossible to breathe. We both experienced a dead, dull depression on the brain, that can only be described as the symptoms of semi-inebriety. We had not dined before going to the theatre, but had arranged to sup afterwards, and sit out in the air as long as we could. The arrangement was futile. It was as much as we could do to crawl to bed."

"It's an ill cyclone that blows no one good," the proprietor of the Hôtel de Bade will, doubtless, have exclaimed when he read a translation of the passage which Mr. Scott doubtless sent him. That the gentleman and lady "had not dined" is not, strictly speaking, of public interest; but the explanation is probably given to show that the sensation of "semi-inebriety" was not the result of dining overmuch.

To continue. We read further on that:—"In the morning I found my wife seriously and alarmingly ill. Her lips and skin were burning. She could not swallow, and could scarcely articulate. The pupils of her eyes were dilated, the whites were veined, and almost jet black. She had every symptom of narcotic poisoning. At that time it required all my nerve and courage to induce her to try and pull herself together, and to prepare for a start home as quickly as possible. For hours I tried to give courage to my poor wife."

Readers of a certain Sunday paper are familiar with the journalist who makes "copy" out of his bulldog and his parlourmaid. Mr. Scott has "gone one better" in making it out of the wife of his bosom.

How Mr. Scott "literally rolled into the train," "bundled myself into a cab with one sentence on my lips, 'I must sleep,'" and "awoke with one boot on and one boot off," is depicted with that realistic force combined with the delicate handling of the subject such as Mr. Scott has, above all others, mastered. Writing on the Friday—there is an air of the daily bulletin about the whole article—the writer comforts us with the assurance that: "The intolerable pressure on the brain"—we have suspected this for some time—"is getting less acute"; and he pathetically asks towards the end of his article, "What has happened to us? Will scientists explain?"

Perhaps Mrs. Scott can offer an explanation. The proprietor or editor—if there is one—of the "Daily Telegraph" certainly ought to.—I am Sir, yours faithfully,
"AN ADMIRER OF DOMESTICITY."

PRICES OF BREAD AND WHEAT.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

LONDON, E.C., 15 August, 1896.

SIR,—In your "Notes" of this week you ask "Has bread fallen in the same proportion as wheat?" You say it has not, but ignore the cause. The cost of manufacturing the wheat into bread and selling the bread is quite 2*d.* per 4-lb. loaf, so that at 4*d.* per loaf this manufacturing cost is half the price of the bread, while at 8*d.* per loaf it is a quarter; hence the difference in the proportion of prices of wheat and bread of 1868 and 1896.—Yours faithfully,
F. B. HASLAM.