

REVIEW.

The Gem-cutter's Craft. By LEOPOLD CLAREMONT. Pp. xvi. + 296, small quarto; with 118 illustrations. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1906. Price 15s. net.)

The title of this book, together with the statement in the preface that it is perhaps the first work on precious stones that has been written by a practical gem-cutter, would lead us to expect full details and valuable hints concerning the work of the lapidary. In this, however, we are considerably disappointed, for the description of the modern methods of cutting precious stones occupies less than thirty pages, and of this a very large portion is taken up with illustrations, which though effective exhibit considerable sameness. What we do find are descriptions to the different kinds of precious stones, but these descriptions leave much to be desired.

Throughout the book there are numerous errors, errors not only in the mis-statement and hopeless confusion of principles, facts, and quantities, but also in spelling and grammar. To select only two examples: diamond is said to crystallize as a 'six-sided octahedron', and corundum as scalenohedra. Blunders of such a kind as these one expects to meet with only in the hurried answers to an examination paper; but when the author has presumably had the opportunity of referring to the books which he recommends to his readers, they are inexcusable. In this bibliography, by the way, we miss a mention of Professor Church's well-known Handbook.

The book is well illustrated, though the figures are scarcely referred to in the text. Some of the photographic reproductions of uncut specimens of gem-stones come out very successfully, whilst others would have been better omitted. The specimens represented are in the British Museum collection of minerals, and were photographed by Mr. T. C. Hepworth, whose notes could not have been referred to, since the statements of the relative sizes of the specimens and figures are invariably incorrect. The book is well printed and issued in an attractive form, and this is the most that can be said in its favour.
