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The Old Guilds of
England.



TYPICAL GUILD HALL.

(1/2)

THE OLD GUILDS OF ENGLAND

BY

FREDERICK ARMITAGE

*Author of "A Short Masonic History,"
"The Masonic Lodges of the World," &c.*

With Illustrations.

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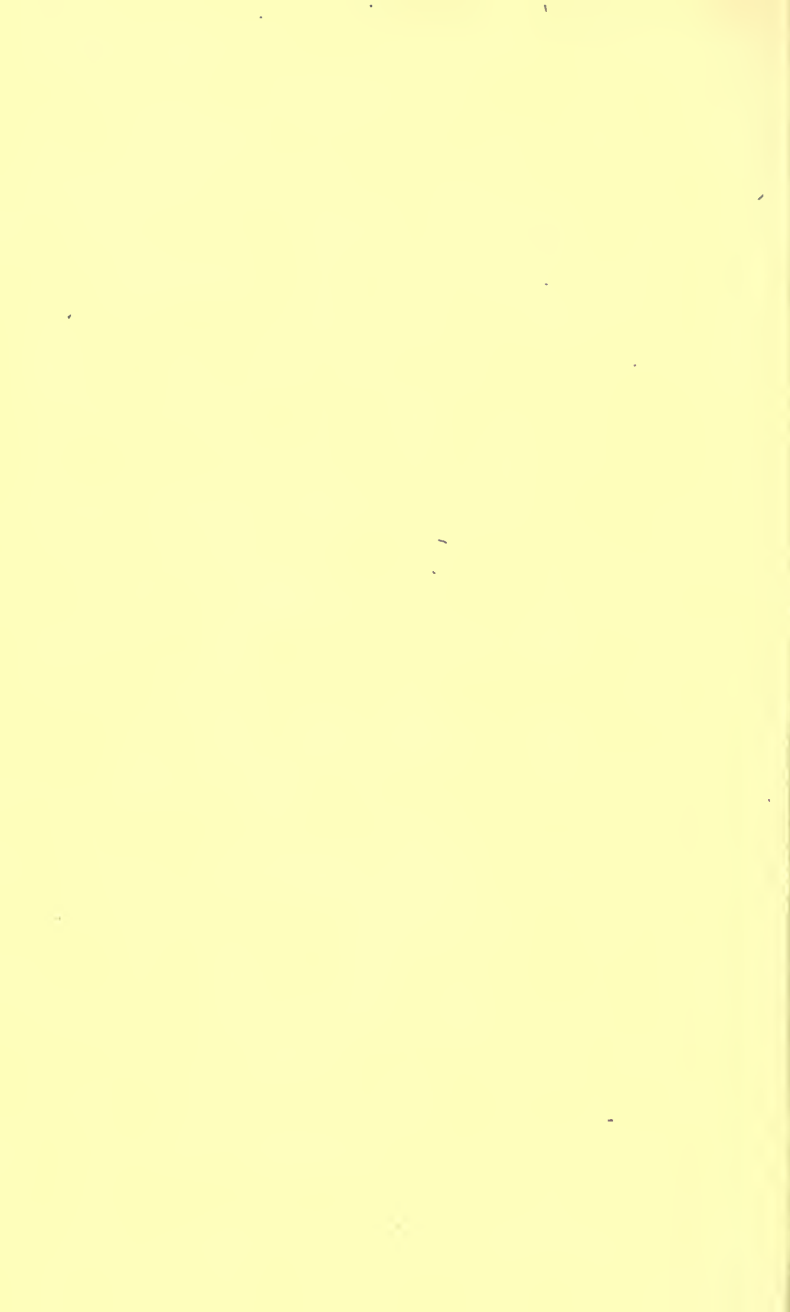
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THE OLD GUILDS OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

AS soon as men banded themselves together in communities, the first idea which occurred to them was that of mutual defence against attacks of their enemies; and, when they no longer feared those, they began to guard against plots amongst themselves and the putting down of the more unruly or dishonest members, who are found in all associations of men. For the latter some system of voluntary police was needed, who should band together to keep and maintain the peace of the community, and the earliest form of this was the "Frith," or Peace Guild, which we find in early days amongst the Danes, who no doubt were the means of introducing the idea into England when they invaded this country. Their regulations referred to such violent deeds as those of

murder and manslaughter, more common of course in those days than in ours. If a member of the Frith Guild was killed or injured, there were penalties to be paid under the rules of the Guild, and we hear of these rules in England as far back as the year 700. There is some questioning as to the true derivation of the word "guild," or "gild," as it is generally spelt in old documents. One class of students derive it from the Saxon word "gildan" to pay, being thus allied with the German word "geld," money, as relating to the fees charged for admission to these bodies. A more likely derivation is claimed from the Danish word "gilde," a religious feast in honour of the god Odin; from which, by an easy process, it came to mean those present at the feast, who contributed to the expenses, and so eventually we arrive at the idea of a guild or corporation.

↓ DEFECT GUILD

The first of these Frith Guilds of any importance in England is found to have existed as early as King Athelstan's days, for we find a code of laws dated 930, drawn up by the Bishop and Mayor, or Reeve, as the latter was then called, of the City of London, for the ruling and governance of the Guild. This code seems to have been a collection of bye-laws for the governance of the inhabitants of the City, providing for the punishment of thieves, the awarding of damages for personal injuries done by the citizens to each other, and other matters of a magisterial nature, and it was obviously the forerunner of others

which gave similar powers to the Trade Guilds of other towns in later days. The motto of these Frith Guilds was "Let us all share the same lot; if any miss let all bear it," and there were several of these Guilds in the same town, but in Athelstan's days it was felt that there was better security if they banded together, and accordingly in London all the Guilds united with the exception of the Knighten, or Cniten Guild, which remained separate.

These Frith Guilds held monthly meetings with a feast, the remains of which were given to the poor; and on the death of a member each brother gave a loaf for the benefit of the Guild, and sang fifty psalms, or paid someone else to do so. Each member also contributed fourpence towards a fund to reimburse members from accidental losses, and one shilling each when a thief was to be caught. The ranks of the members were divided into bodies of ten each, and 100 seems to have constituted a company under an acknowledged leader.

In later days the Guilds at Berwick-on-Tweed, which was obviously liable to raids from Scotsmen, pursued a similar plan to that of the Frith Guilds, and orders were given that where several Guilds were found in the same place, they should unite for defence, and the pious wish was expressed that the members should have a strong and hearty love for one another.

The idea of a Guild being once established with a religious element in it, what was more natural, when the Roman Catholic religion was once fairly established, and when the people of England were educated enough to take an interest in its forms, that the priests should use the organization of the old Guilds, and mould it to their own purposes, so as to get the people to take a personal interest in the affairs of their own Church, and to play some part in its ceremonies? It is true the worshippers could not read, and the only way, apart from preaching, to teach them the hidden truths of religion was to instruct them either by pictures, which plentifully adorned the walls of the churches; by processions with banners and crosses; and later, by sacred plays, in which they could get their parishioners to join, thus combining entertainment with instruction, and arousing great interest in the sacred stories which were represented. These involved the services of a number of assistants to take part in them, and enabled the clergy to band these helpers together into bodies, which they designated "Religious Guilds," the members of which were thus influenced to attend the regular masses in the churches, and not to overlook their other Sunday duties.

This religious influence continued in later days, when other Guilds were formed, the members of which were the workers in the various trades and crafts; for we find that each Guild had its own patron Saint, and its

own chantry chapel in the local church, or sometimes in the crypt of the neighbouring cathedral; and each of these Guilds had its own chaplain to minister to the spiritual wants of its members. These bodies were also Friendly Societies giving similar benefits to those of modern days by grants to members who were sick, and provisions for their funerals, and for other similar matters. Thus, at Exeter, we find a Guild which gave a form of insurance against the fires which were then so common with wooden houses by providing that if any member's house should be burned, each member was to contribute one penny.

These associations also partook of a social character, for most of them had their annual feasts, generally held on the patron Saint's day. To the Guilds the members were also, after about the year 1300, indebted for many of their surnames, some of which were derived from personal characteristics, such as Short, Long, Brown, Gray, and so on; and after the addition of the word "son" to the father's name, such as Richardson, Johnson, Thompson, had given out, the members fell back on adopting the names of their Guilds, and so we get Weaver, Fuller, Dyer, Carpenter, and many others as surnames.

The name of Smith, which is perhaps the commonest, probably did not come from a Guild, for we hear of few with that short title, though, of course, we have the important one of the Goldsmiths' Company of London.

There were also the trades of Coppersmiths, Tinsmiths, and every village must have had several Blacksmiths to attend to the horses of the Squire, the Farmer, and the Man-at-arms, though these blacksmiths were not sufficiently numerous, except in a few places, to band themselves together in Guilds, and the name of Smith has probably come direct from the trades of those men who worked with hammers, whether upon gold, iron, or other metals.

Taking an interest, as the Guild members did, in their religious duties, it befell that funds were accumulated for masses for the dead and other purposes, and, after Henry VIII. had despoiled the Monasteries and Abbeys of their riches, his last act was to turn to the Guilds, and to deprive them likewise of their little hoards, though it was left to the Protector Somerset in the first year of the following reign of Edward VI. to complete the process of spoliation.

This was the end of the Guilds in England, and on the Continent they were so associated with the Roman Catholic Church that after the reformation there, they too gradually faded away. The only type of body in which we do not observe the religious influence was that of the Merchant Guild, whose interests were more strictly confined to business than the Trade Guilds, and in consequence they had not the opportunities which the latter enjoyed of meeting together for social and religious purposes.

One point is very clearly marked in the history both of the Merchant and Trade Guilds, and that is the dominating nature of the influence imposed upon each by the Crown, for they derived birth either from the King or the municipalities where they existed. The Merchant Guilds were composed of a class of wealthy men, while the Trade Guilds, being extremely thrifty, out of their small earnings in time accumulated considerable sayings, which the eye of any Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was represented in those days by the King, might longingly rest, and be tempted to impose a tax.

As no legal levy of a tax could be made, the idea always was to question the legality of the institution of the body, and invite the members to accept a charter from the Crown, which would at the same time relieve them from further anxiety from further interference, and also replenish the coffers of the King. In fact no illegality lay upon the Merchant Guilds; but, nothing daunted, King Henry II. declared several of them to be illegal, or "adulterine," and exacted fines from them. In the same way Richard II., for fiscal ends, in 1388 got an Act of Parliament passed directing the Sheriffs to inquire into the work of the Guilds, and to send to the King copies of any charters which they held. The reign of Henry VI. has two Acts to its credit in this connection, one of 1425 forbidding confederacies of Masons' Guilds, and another of 1436 again requiring the Guilds to record

In the
of anti
Guild
Laws

their charters, while in 1503 another Act required the Guilds to submit their acts, or ordinances, to the Chancellor, Chief Justice, or Justices of Assize. The returns under this Act are most valuable to the historian, but it cannot be doubted that the main object of each Act was to get money.

one p. instance

The Trade Unions of the present day have no historical connection with the old Trade Guilds, and for many years combinations of workmen to raise wages were deemed illegal, and many Acts of Parliament were passed from time to time to suppress them. The first was one of 1303, which was followed by the Statute of Labourers in 1349, and an Act to prevent Masons from combining in 1425. These all culminated in the Act of 1799 to prevent combinations of workmen; but it was found useless, with the growth of manufactures, and the rapid increase in the number of workmen required, to effectually stop them from discussing their trade interests, in the same way as the masters did, and eventually all the Acts against combinations of workmen were repealed in 1824. The workman was still under many disabilities in trying to confederate, but he managed to do so in the same way as the old Trade Guilds had done by forming Friendly Societies. But the old dead hand of the law forbidding anything which might be deemed to be in restraint of trade, was, however, upon them, and in 1867 the Court of Queen's Bench decided, in the case of *Hornby v. Close*, that such societies

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were illegal. The decision, though perfectly correct, according to the law of the time, was not in accord with the spirit of those days, and in 1870 the Government introduced their Bill to legalise Trade Unions, which was passed next year as the Trade Union Act, 1871, and from that time the Trade Unions have become as strong a feature of public life as the old and honoured Trade Guilds.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELIGIOUS GUILDS.

THE next stage at which we arrive is the formation of the Religious Guilds, which were founded by the clergy in order to promote the pomp and circumstance attending their religious ceremonies. One was formed at York, called the "Guild of Corpus Christi," the members of which had to walk in procession through the streets of York, on Corpus Christi Day, the great feast of the Roman Catholic Church, held on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, and therefore falling in May, or early June. The members of the Guild were also found useful to be employed as performers in the Miracle Plays, which were promoted by the priests, so as to put in dramatic form, before the unlearned, the great stories of the Old and New Testaments. These members were always willing to pay a small fee for admission to the rights and privileges of the society, and, to make them feel that their position had solemn duties, as well as privileges, the priests administered to them an oath on their being admitted into the body; the features both of the fee on

admission, and the oath, being copied by the later Trade Guilds, which also closely identified themselves with the religious aspect. It will be seen that these later bodies were also Benefit and Burial Societies, and it must be remembered that such charitable objects were deemed religious, as indeed anything must be which is associated with the hallowed name of Charity, and in that sense the Trade Guilds themselves may be considered as coming within the definition of a Religious guild. The religious duties of taking part in the Miracle Plays were also extended to members of the Trade Guilds, and for one example out of many, we find by the ordinances, dated January 1436, of the Smiths' Guild in Newcastle-on-Tyne, that the members of it were bound to go in procession on the feast of Corpus Christi and perform in the play at their own expense under the penalty of having to pay to the Warden of the Guild a pound of wax. ✓

This item of wax for candles used in the Chapels at the Guilds is frequently referred to in the ordinances of all the Trade Guilds, and indeed wax was a common article for anyone of religious tendency to present to a church. In the household book of the 5th Earl of Northumberland, dated about 1550, it is stated that the Earl gave yearly 6s. 8d. for the "upholding of the light of wax which his Lordship findeth burning before the statue of the Virgin Mary at the Church at Wallingham, Norfolk." The candle used was

of large dimensions, and weighed no less than 11 lbs., and in addition the Earl paid 12*d.* to the "Canon that keepeth the light before Our Lady of Walsingham for his reward for the whole year for keeping of the said light, lighting of it at all service-times daily throughout the year."

These plays fall into two divisions, the Miracle Plays and the Mysteries, the former of which represented scenes from the historical narratives of the Bible; or the life, interwoven with miracles, of some Saint whose feast day was kept by the Church. As these would frequently include the account of some supernatural occurrence, the plays were easily distinguished by the name of "Miracles." The earliest record of them is in 1100, when Geoffrey, who afterwards became Abbot of St. Alban's, wrote a Miracle Play founded on the life of St. Catherine. These were frequently played in Chaucer's days, who, in his "Canterbury Tales," written in 1388, allows the Wife of Bath to say that as her husband was absent from home in Lent she then interested herself in religious observances, amongst which was attendance at these Miracle Plays.

"Therefore I made my visitations
To the Vigils and to processions,
To preachings, eke, and to pilgrimages,
To plays of Miracles and marriages."

Chaucer made an obvious mistake in putting down marriage in Lent, for the Roman Catholic Church never allowed them to be celebrated during that season. The second class were the Mystery Plays which dealt with such portions of the New Testament story as the Birth of Christ, his Death and Resurrection, which had a mystical meaning; but for popular purposes both classes of plays were known as Miracle Plays. Such success was achieved in the acting of them by the guildsmen that they were afterwards taken up by the Court and the nobles, who engaged their own actors to perform them.

From 1268 the Guilds acted both classes of play, which were arranged in sets, each of which was performed by the members of a different Guild, and in this way the plays would last for three, and sometimes for eight days. In fact one of them told the whole Bible story from the day of Creation to the day of Judgment. There are three sets of these plays still preserved, one of which is known as the Towneley, from the name of the family which possesses the MS., with 32 plays, being those performed by the Abbey of Woodkirk, four miles from Wakefield.

Other sets of plays comprise those of York, 48 in number, while the Coventry set has 42. Those of Chester number 25, commencing with "The Fall of Lucifer," and ending with "Doomsday," and there are

three of them, copied out in 1600, 1604, and 1607, but certainly acted long before those dates, for the performance of such plays ceased with the close of the 16th century, the last four taking place at Tewkesbury in 1585, at Coventry in 1591, at Newcastle in 1598, and at Kendal in 1603. The authors of them are unnamed, but they obviously must have been written by Churchmen, and as they were in later days performed by Craftsmen, it is fair to surmise that the Chaplains of the Guilds were those who wrote the later ones.

The earlier ones were written by the monks in Latin for performance in the Abbeys by Churchmen, the first being acted at Dunstable in 1189, while in 1182 there is mention of plays, founded on the miracles wrought by the martyrs of the Church, and interspersed with sacred chants, being represented in London. Later on the French language was used, and in one of the Wakefield plays King Herod apologises because he can speak no French. It would have been idle to continue the plays in Latin if they were to become popular, and in 1220 there was a Miracle Play in English performed in a church by monks, entitled "The Harrowing of Hell." It only contained 240 lines and began with a prologue—

" All hearken to me now,
A strife will I tell you
Of Jesus, and of Satan."

The play proceeds with a dialogue between Our Lord and Satan, in which the former says :—

“ They took me without sake (cause),
Bound my hands to my back,
They beat me, that I ran with blood.
Condemned me to die on a rood
For Adam's sin, certain t'is
I have suffered all this.
Adam thou hast dearly paid
That thou lovedst me not.
Adam thou hast been full sore
And I will not let thee suffer more.
I shall bring thee out of hell's pain
And with the holy reign.”

To this Satan answers—

“ Who is that I hear there ?
I counsel him to speak no more,
For he may so much do
That he shall us come to,
For to be our companion
And find how we prove here.”

Other speakers were Hell's porter, Adam, Eve, Abraham, John the Baptist, and Moses, who each speak in the same interesting manner.

It was in 1311 that, at the Council of Vienna, the Roman Catholic Church resolved upon the regular keeping of Corpus Christi Day, and after that the Miracle Plays were seen regularly on that day outside the churches, and on the village greens, performed by artisans who were members of

guilds, as being the most intelligent class of workmen. The performance of "The Harrowing of Hell" in English was against the traditions of the Church, and was not approved by it, but in 1350 a monk of Chester, named Ranulph Higden, made no less than three journeys to Rome to obtain leave for the plays to be spoken in English, and he was ultimately successful in obtaining the permission of the Pope for this purpose.

After this concession, the Miracle Plays gradually adopted a somewhat changed tone, and introduced comic interludes, in one of which there was a wrestling match between a master and his servant, while in another was a comic scene between Noah and his wife. Of this class was "The Second Shepherd's Play," contained in one of the Towneley collections, which was played about the year 1450, and presented the birth of Christ; but, before the Bible story was given seriously, there was a scene of the shepherd's watching over their flocks on a cold December night. They all fell asleep, except a shepherd called Mak, who stole one of the sheep, and taking it home put it in the baby's cradle, covering it with a sheet. When the shepherds awoke, they discovered their loss, and going to Mak's house, looked by chance in the cradle, when the following dialogue took place:—

"3rd Shepherd:

Give me leave him to kiss, and lift up the clout.
What the devil is this, it has a long snout!

"*2nd Shepherd :*

Ill spun web, I know, always comes foul out.
He is like to our sheep !

"*2nd Shepherd :*

I know cattle will creep
Where they should not go.

"*2nd Shepherd :*

I know him by the ear mark, that is a good
token.

"*Mak :*

I tell you, sirs, his nose is broken."

Notwithstanding this feeble excuse the thief is detected, and Mak is tossed in the sheet which is snatched off the sheep, and the play proceeds with the Bible story.

Another Miracle Play was called "Abraham and Isaac," and is preserved in the collection of early plays at Brome Hall, Suffolk, being dated about 1480. There were only two performers in it, and it preserves a stately diction, without any lapse into comedy, and may be regarded, with others of its class, as the pioneer of the school of modern Tragedy in the same way as the comic interludes of the Miracle Plays paved the way to the Comedies of the days of Elizabeth about 100 years later.

The play begins as follows : —

"*Abraham :*

Rise up my child, and fast come hither,
My gentle bairn that art so wise,
For we two, child, must go together
And unto my Lord make sacrifice

“ *Isaac* :

I am full ready, my father, lo
 Even at thy hand I stand right here,
 And whatsoever ye bid me do
 It shall be done with glad cheer,
 Full well and fine.”

The zealous nature of Abraham is well brought out, while the resignation of Isaac to the will of Heaven is delicately drawn, concluding with the prayer :—

“ Ah ! Father of Heaven to thee I cry,
 Lord admit me into thy hand.”

at which moment the Angel opportunely appears and Isaac's life is saved.

As we have seen, Chaucer says that the plays were performed in Lent, but here he must have erred, for it was then that the players were chosen, the first rehearsal being held in Easter week, and the second in Whitsun week, when the players were regaled with cakes and ale, paid for by a levy, ranging from a penny to fourpence, on each member of the Guild.

The performance usually took place on Corpus Christi Day which generally fell in June when summer was advanced, so that fine weather might be expected for the open-air performances. These started at four in the morning, and lasted all day, the plays being repeated several times, and the stage moved to different places in the town for all

to see, and thus be able to contribute to the expenses, which were heavy. The actors were paid from fourpence for supers, to one shilling for the leading actors, and if we multiply each figure by 12, we shall get at present day values. When the Guilds played they chose subjects approximate to the callings of the players; thus the Shipwrights and Fishmongers were interested in the story of Noah's Ark, while the Goldsmiths would play the part of the Magi at the birth of Christ, with their gifts of gold.

A third class of play followed the Mysteries, known as the Morality Plays, but they were never performed by the Guilds. The characters represented Virtues and Vices, such as Love, Good Deeds, Constancy and Death, who after a short story found that Good Morals or Virtue was the conqueror of all. This class of play also ended with the close of the 16th century, or a year or so after, for in 1601 Queen Elizabeth witnessed one called "The contention between Liberality and Prodigality."

The records of the old church of St. Mary Overie, now Southwark Cathedral, show that plays were a feature of the church services, for in the old documents there, dating from 1444 to 1534, we find entries such as these:—"Paid for a play upon St. Margaret's Day, 7d.," and "Paid on St. Lucy Day to the clerkes for a play, 6s. 8d." Some of these plays were performed by children, which was

quite a novelty then, and the entry reads "Item, paid to Harvy for his children upon St. Lucy Day, 20*d.*," while another entry shows that the stage costumier was in evidence at the time, for we also get "Paid for hiring of garments, 13*d.*"

One may ask why the players of these Mysteries should have been drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of the members of the Trade Guilds, and the answer appears to be drawn from the circumstances of the personality of the population of those days. The three present-day grades of upper, middle and lower classes existed then also, the upper classes being the nobles, who had some little education, but were above being play actors, while the lower classes were the agricultural labourers, with no education, and little aspiration, and quite unfitted for the purpose.

The large number of members of the Trade Guilds undoubtedly formed the middle class of those days, and though they could not read or write—printing and the consequent wave of education in England not coming into vogue till after 1475—they were at all events a superior type of men and quite the material, which with some care could be moulded into better stuff. Each Guild too had its chaplain, who was the motive force of the machine that drove the plays, and his personality was of great influence upon the habits and lives of the guildsmen. The chaplain as stage manager

and prompter would read and re-read the parts to the players, and with daily repetition the words became familiar to all of them, and allowing a little for liberty with the text, and for movement and even rough play amongst the actors, the words at length became well known to all the listening members of the Guild, so that anyone on emergency could take any part in them, for there was more evenness in the various rôles, and less necessity for actors of leading parts, than became the vogue in the days of Elizabeth. After that time, with printing an everyday occurrence, and a little education for the middle classes, the production of the plays necessarily became even more easy, and new ranks of professional play actors came upon the scene.

Even the Guilds sometimes became slack in the regular performance of their plays, for the players doubtless grew tired of the long hours during which they had to perform, and we find that, in 1467, ordinances were made by the Guild Merchant of Worcester, which of course had the character of a borough, and controlled the Craft Guilds, to the effect that the five pageants every year, "when the craftsmen should go to do service to God," were in future to be more strictly kept.

The performance of these plays naturally made a great impression on the performers, and the names of the characters impersonated would cling to them, so that in after days the name of Pope, Bishop, and King as

characters remained as a memory to all. Up to the beginning of the 10th century our forefathers in England managed to get on in the world with only their Christian names as a designation, but after the year 950, or thereabouts, surnames were found convenient, and for some of these the titles of the parts played came in most helpfully.

In York there are preserved the records of the performance of pageants played there in the time of the Mayor, William Alne, compiled by the Town Clerk, Roger Burton, which gives a list of fifty-four different Guilds, and the part each of them took in the plays. Thus the first is the Tanners' Guild, who showed the creation of Angels and the fall of Lucifer, while the second related the part taken by the Plasterers' Guild, who dealt with the creation of the world, while after them comes the Card Players' Guild, who dealt with the creation of Adam and Eve.

There is also a rhymed account of the performance of the Chester plays in the days of the Mayor, Sir John Annway, from which it appears that the plays were written by a monk of Chester Abbey, named Rendall. It is stated that—

“ This worthy knight, Annway, then Mayor of this
City,
This order took, as declare to you I shall,
That by twenty-four occupations, arts, crafts or
mysteries,

These pageants shall be played after brief rehearsal.

For every pageant to be provided withall
In which sort we purpose this Whitsuntide,
Our pageant into three parts to divide."

The carriage in which it was performed was on wheels, with two stories, in the lower of which the actors dressed, and on the upper part they played, the carriage being wheeled from place to place in the city.

There are records of no less than twelve religious Guilds in Norwich, and a similar number in King's Lynn, while at Bishop's Lynn there were nine. They had a governing body, and a chaplain, who performed daily masses in the Guild Chapel or "chantry" attached to the parish churches of big towns for the repose of the souls of the founders of the Guild and its deceased members; and later on, when the Trade Guilds came into vogue, these chantry chapels were used for religious purposes in connection with the Trade Guilds whose names they bore, and in many cases are still known by those names, as the Dyers' Chapel, the Mercers' Chapel, and others.

The first of these chantry chapels in England was erected in 1140 at the Church of Burford, in Oxfordshire, where eventually three other chantry chapels were added. Many parish churches had these new chapels added, amongst which we may mention

Cirencester, Boston, and in particular the churches at Coventry, whose three conspicuous spires still attract the eye of the visitor as he passes down the High Street.

Though no licence from the King was apparently required to establish such a body, it could not get on without funds, which in those days could only be derived from the income of land. Now here came the difficulty; for, as long back as 1216, it had been found against the policy of the fental laws to allow land to get in the hands of ecclesiastical bodies, which were never supposed to die, and in consequence the King was deprived of the fines which he derived on the death of his tenants. So the Mortmain, or "dead hand," Acts came at length into being, and forbade the holding of land by Churchmen. There is always a way out of an Act of Parliament, and the particular way in the days we speak of was to pay a small fine to the "Hanaper Office," or Treasury, and get the King to give his licence in Mortmain for lands to be held for religious uses. So we get in the State Papers the records of the Royal licences for the establishment of these Guilds. One in Edward III.'s days is dated 29th July 1349, which is in double form, for it first grants a licence to form a Guild and fraternity, consisting of both brothers and sisters in Boston, in honour of the feast of Corpus Christi, and to elect a Master of the Guild, who should bear the ancient title of Alderman. It then goes on to grant a licence

in Mortmain to allow the Guild to hold land to the value of £20, so as to pay six chaplains to celebrate mass for the benefit of the Queen, the Prince of Wales, the members of the Guild and their benefactors, and for the souls of all when they were no more.

Other instances are those of the chantry chapels at the Churches of St. Michael, St. John, and Holy Trinity, Coventry, the licences for which extend from 1323 to 1412. In later days all these chapels were used by the Trade Guilds of the town, and we shall refer to them in our chapter on that subject. In 1384 a licence was granted for a Guild of the Nativity at Coventry; but, later in the same year, trouble had arisen, and on 14th July the King appointed a Commission to enquire into a threatened abuse of the powers of the Guild by some labourers and workmen; who, when charged before the Mayor of the town with a breach of its laws, pretended that they were members of the Guild, and could not be punished except by the Alderman of that body. They were backed up by the religious Guilds of the town, so that great heartburnings arose, and it was necessary to appeal to the King, who appointed Commissioners to enquire into the trouble. There is no record of the result of the inquiry, but at any rate the Guild did not suffer, nor was its licence revoked.

There must have been also, in each case, a similar licence granted by the Bishop of the diocese to allow for the chaplain of the Guild

as an additional curate in the parish, and to avoid any friction between this priest and the rector of the parish church. We have an interesting example of one of these licences from the Bishop of Winchester in 1355, for the establishment of a Chantry Chapel, with two priests, at St. Mary Magdalen Church, Kingston-on-Thames, the founder being John Rockyn, who was three times Mayor of London. This chapel was established for masses to be said for the King, the Queen, the founder, his wife and their ancestors, and other faithful departed persons. The Warden and his chaplains were especially directed to abstain from gluttony and drunkenness and ordered to entirely avoid taverns; though, in spite of these directions, trouble afterwards ensued owing to the neglect of the Warden to properly carry out his duties.

In 1417, the days of Henry V., we find amongst the old State papers licences from the King confirming the establishment of these religious Guilds at Bristol and Norwich, showing that they had not only a chaplain to conduct the services, but that the lay members of the Guild were ruled by an Alderman and two Masters, and that by the regulations of the Society the members had all to wear suits or livery made of the same cloth, so as to present a uniform appearance in processions. This same plan was adopted in the Guilds of the City of London, who had to copy the dress from time to time imposed by the Lord Mayor, and it was from this fact that the

name of "Livery" arose as applied to those companies, who even to-day are known as the Livery Companies of London. Milton caught at this idea in his "Paradise Lost":—

"Now came still evening on, and twilight grey
Had in her sober livery all things clad."

The admission of members to a religious Guild was always a formal matter, and there were exact regulations on the point in the rules of these bodies, as an instance of which we may quote those of the Guild of St. Katherine at Stamford, dated in 1494, which run:—

"It is ordained that when the first even-song is done, the Alderman and his brethren shall assemble in their hall, and drink, and there have a courteous communication for the well-being of the said Guild. And then shall be called forth all those that shall be admitted brethren or susteren of the Guild, and the Alderman shall examine them in this wise: 'Sir, Be ye willing to be brother among us in this Guild, and will desire and ask it in the worship of Almighty God, our Blessed Lady St. Mary, and of the Holy Virgin and Martyr St. Katherine, in whose name this Guild was founded, and in the way of charity?'"

After this the clerk administered to the initiate an oath to be true to God, St. Mary, St. Katherine and the Guild, to pay scot and bear lot, "and keep the ordinances, constitution and rules with the council of the same

Guild, and to my power maintain to my life's end. So help me God and my halidom, and by this book." It is added significantly: "And then kiss the book and be lovingly received by all the brethren, and then drink about, and after that depart for that night."

By the Acts of 1546 of Henry VIII. all chantries were abolished, but to lead up to this, various Commissioners were appointed to make inquiries as to their revenues. The results of these were filed in the Augmentation Office, where is a list of chantries dated 1536, which contains reference to one at "Stretton, Leicestershire, founded by Hubert Heyrick, sometime Bishop of Chester, for one priest £4 10s." There is some mistake here, for there was no Bishopric of Chester founded till 1541, nor was there a Bishop of any other See bearing that name in Henry VIII.'s reign.

It is clear these plays were taking place up to 1558, the first year of Elizabeth's reign, for in the Act of Uniformity then passed there is a penalty placed on all actors or makers of "enterludes, plays, songs or rhymes" who spoke against the Book of Common Prayer. The plays practically ceased in that reign, but one was performed by special request of the King in the reign of James I.

The mysteries also flourished in France on similar lines to those in England, and the text of at least twenty of these written plays has been

preserved to us. One of these, entitled "The Passion," is by Arnoul Greban, dated about 1450, and is in poetical form. Peace and Mercy ask God to pardon man's original sin, which is opposed by Truth and Justice. The matter is settled by the voluntary sacrifice of the Son of Man, when Justice and Truth embrace Peace and Mercy, and harmony once more reigns on earth. The players were the members of the Guilds, and the plays took place in a specially erected theatre near the Church, and sometimes lasted for several days.

A most interesting Guild existed at Abingdon in Berkshire, called the Guild of the Holy Cross, from the days of Richard II., which obtained a Royal Charter in 1442, and died out with the other religious Guilds in 1547. It centred its activities on building, and erected at St. Helen's Church, Abingdon, a stately rood, and chose every year two proctors to collect alms and regulate its proceedings. It also built a fine cross in the Market Place, 45 feet high, made of stone, gilt and covered with statuary and coats of arms, which Cromwell's men in 1644 considered superstitious and sawed down.

The brethren of the Guild also built two bridges across the Thames, for which they obtained a licence from Henry V., copying the example of a French guild of bridge builders who erected two bridges at Avignon and St. Esprit across the Rhone in 1471.

CHAPTER III.

THE MERCHANT GUILDS.

IN a country like England it was unnecessary to plough more fields than it took to grow the corn to feed the scanty number of inhabitants, for obviously pasture then was more likely to pay than tillage. The habits of the people did not call for a large diet of meat, and though cows would be required for their milk and skins, still without doubt it was more easy and profitable to raise sheep for the sake of their wool. The villeins, as the lowest class of labourers were called, would attend to these at very small wages, and weaving the wool into cloth and flannel obviously became the main industry of the country. But, after the clothes required by the little community had been made, there would be a large store of wool over, and so arose the merchant or factor who was able to acquire the overplus, and by building his small ships to send it across to Flanders, where it was bought up and woven into cloth. We find that it was looked upon that three of these sea journeys were accounted enough to dub the traveller a merchant.

One easily sees how other trades must have followed in the wake of the wool trade ;

for, after the cloth had been made, it would need dying, and the dyer, with a big vat, dyed for several weavers, and became a merchant too. Then the cloth needed selling, or working up further, and adorning, and so we got the Cloth Workers, the Mercers, the Haberdashers, and the Merchant Taylors, all of whose names we recognise as those of City Guilds which were afterwards formed.

These merchants also saw the advantage which would accrue by their co-operation with others, which also meant the power of governing their own affairs, and the idea of the Frith Guild came to their minds, modified according to their own trade needs, and the Guilds of the Merchants became an accomplished fact. In a small community, the most minute events become of importance; and, in the England of those days, a small collection of people was looked upon as a crowd, and viewed with suspicion, so that, when a society was to be formed, it was always necessary to get the leave of some higher body, who, of course, was the King. So it came about that the King claimed to have the right to allow, or forbid, the formation of these bodies, and to take fees for licensing them. A list of these licences, written in Latin, has been preserved in what was known as the "Pipe Rolls" of the time, which was the modern equivalent of the Treasury; and, glancing over some of the old rolls of the days of Henry II., we find that, in 1177, the merchants of York paid £10 to

Henry I. as fines for its Guilds, and Nottingham 40s. ; while, in 1182, the merchants of Totnes in Devon, and some of those of London, paid fines for Guilds which they had established without warrant, and which were called "adulterine." This movement of the Crown in later days culminated in the Guilds applying for formal charters, which had the double effect of benefiting both the Kings and the Guilds, for the former got fees for the grant, and the latter obtained a clear authority for their existence, subject, of course, to the charters being annulled, as in some cases happened with a capricious monarch.

On this point Professor Pollard, in his "History of England," is of opinion that a large number of towns had been granted, or rather sold, charters by Richard I. and John, not because these monarchs were interested in municipal development, but because they wanted money ; and also that the bodies which had the means to pay the King's price were generally the local Merchant Guilds ; which thus were enabled to develop measures for better local government.

This word "adulterine" was a favourite one in early Norman times, to denote an unauthorised, and therefore illegal, act. After the time of the Conquest, it was the desire of every big landowner and lord, for purposes of safety, to erect his own castle ; but as this might possibly be turned into the means of attack against the King instead of defence

against a warlike neighbour, a royal licence for this purpose was required, and we find in the State Papers many records of these being granted. In some cases, however, the Lords put up their buildings without the necessary licence, and from the days of Henry I., from 1100 onwards, till Henry III.'s reign in 1216, many of these unauthorised buildings were found, and from time to time they were razed to the ground as being "adulterine" castles.

It must be remembered, in connection with the Pipe Rolls, that in the 12th century the whole revenue of the State belonged to the King, and there was no distinction between funds used by the Treasury for public purposes and those for the Privy Purse of the Sovereign. Both these funds were regulated by the Lord Chancellor, who was most frequently an ecclesiastic, and probably did not find himself at home with figures; for in course of time he left the Exchequer part of his work to an assistant, who joined the title of his employer to that of the office, and thus coined the new title of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and became an independent official to deal with the whole of the State revenues. In order to aid the recovery of debts due to the King, a separate Court of Justice was formed under the style of the Court of Exchequer, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer at first presided, assisted by several Judges, who were by courtesy called Barons of the Exchequer (*Barones Scaccarii*), and who sat at a table covered with a cloth of a

chess-board pattern, on which the money was laid out and counted, as Arabic figures were not then in use, and the old Roman numerals had to be employed. In course of time this Court became open to the ordinary suitor for his pleas, under the pleasant fiction of a Writ of *Quo minor*, which suggested that the Plaintiff was indebted to the King, but that he was unable to pay his dues as money was owing to him by the Defendant, who was accordingly summoned before the Court. It was amalgamated with the Court of King's Bench in 1873 under the Judicature Act, up to which time its Judges had always been styled as Barons, but once a year the old times are revived, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 10th November, which is the Eve of St. Martin, presides in Court, dressed in his full robes, when a list of gentlemen eligible to act as Sheriffs for the various counties are nominated for the King, who subsequently pricks the name of the first on the list for each county with a golden bodkin.

— Merchant Guilds sprang up in England probably in sympathy with those on the Continent, which were formed for the protection of trade, and which had a central warehouse or "hanse," where the goods traded in were stored. The Hanseatic League was a union of Merchants, formed in 1239, by merchants at Hamburg, primarily to protect its members against pirates on the Elbe and German Ocean; though afterwards, it numbered members in 85 towns with head officials at Lubeck,

Cologne, Brunswick and Dantzic. A body of Almaines, or German merchants belonging to the Hanseatic League, some years afterwards founded a factory or mart in London, at Thames Street, near the river, for which they had to pay to the Mayor of London the heavy rent of £70 per annum, which, in present day values, would mean over £400, and their site was afterwards moved to Bishopsgate Street. The goods they dealt in were, of course, the products of the countries round the Baltic Sea, comprising wheat, barley and rye as food-stuffs, while general merchandise comprised flax, hemp, tar, wax, steel, and other similar goods.

Another body of merchants known as Easterlings had a site in Cosin Lane, leading to the River Thames, now covered by part of Cannon Street Station. Here was the Steel Yard or weighing machine used by them, and which gave its name to the site, which was near to that of the Almaines.

In order to trade here, the foreign merchants had to obtain a charter from the Crown, which was granted in 1259 by Henry III., granting them freedom to carry on their trade in England without molestation, which might easily arise in consequence of the jealousy that would be aroused in the minds of rival English traders. Residence in England implied, if not payment of local taxes, certain duties, and the citizens of London considered that the foreigners should

pay for repairing the Bishop's Gate in the City, then in a dilapidated condition, which the foreigners refused to do. They were brought before the Barons of the Exchequer, who had to decide the case in 1317, when the citizens succeeded, and the foreign merchants had to pay 210 marks, and to agree to repair the gate in future. As the citizens had won, the Mayor of London could afford to be generous to the foreigners, and an agreement was made that the foreigners might store the grain they sent into England for 40 days in order to find profitable customers, without being obliged to sell it to the first comer; though in later times the importation of foreign wheat was forbidden, unless there was a scarcity in England, and the prices of wheat had risen above 6s. 8d. the quarter, and barley above 3s.

Encouraged by the success of the German traders, certain merchants of Venice in 1282 also applied to the King, who granted a charter allowing them to trade in England, as freely as the citizens of London, and they were also, though aliens, allowed to belong to the Guild Merchant of London.

All the Guilds eventually were ruled by an officer called an Alderman, and, as a place of meeting was necessary, a Guild Hall for them was erected. In the same way these Hanseatic merchants were allowed to have their ruling Alderman, who had, however, to be presented to the Mayor of London, and

approved by him. We mention these foreign traders, as they must have had a great influence on the English ones, who copied their methods of trade, and the continental form of government of their own League, or hanse.

We can now carry on the story of the English traders a step further, and find the English merchants copying the tactics of the foreign merchants, and having their own Hanse, or Guild, in each town, and, what was more, obtaining power to forbid anyone to trade in that town, except he belonged to the Guild. Trades were not then so diverse as to allow of separate Merchant Guilds for each trade, and one Guild Merchant seems to have been appointed for each town. Thus, in 1264, there is a grant to the citizens of Worcester to have a Guild Merchant, with a Hanse, and no one not in the Guild was to be allowed to do business in the town, except by special leave of the citizens. This grant also goes on to refer to some local conditions of servitude ; for, obviously, there was some lord near, whose villeins had escaped into the town, and taken up trade, in which they had proved themselves useful, but who might be reclaimed by the lord. Consequently the charter clipped such rights, by allowing a bondsman, who had been in trade for a year and a day, and was in the Hanse, to remain free from his lord thenceforth. There are numerous other similar grants ; one, in 1277, being to the burgesses of Wallingford to have a Guild Merchant with all its customs and

free laws, and it is clearly defined that the only authority its members were subject to was that of the Alderman of the Guild. In the case of Berwick-on-Tweed, in 1302, the Alderman is not mentioned ; but the Guild is directed to choose yearly a fit and discreet Mayor.

The regular method of obtaining a charter for a Guild Merchant was for a petition to be presented to the King by several of the townsmen, setting forth their wishes, which was followed by a formal enquiry as to whether it was desirable or not. Thus, in 1340, Coventry desired to have such a Guild for the benefit of its trade, on account of the town being so far from the sea. Accordingly the King directed an enquiry to be held by an Escheator appointed by him, sitting with a Jury, to decide whether any injury was likely thereby to occur to the Crown, and the result being favourable, the charter was granted, with the usual clause giving the Guild power to make ordinances for the well ruling and governing of the Guild.

Builth, in Wales, also had a Guild, and in 1383 the charter was confirmed ; but, as it was only a small place, it was expressly provided that the Guild was not to seek to forbid outsiders to its ranks to trade in the town and its suburbs. Obviously by this time the privileges of the Guild Merchants were beginning to break down ; and, by 1400, their reign was over in England, for

the power of the workers had begun to be felt. An impression of the seal of the Guild Merchant of Gloucester, dating from 1200, is preserved, which consists of a representation of one of the city gates, surrounded by the words, in Latin, "The seal of the burgesses and gild of Merchants of Gloucester."

When trade in England began to flourish, and when the coffers of the King were empty, what was more natural than for the King's advisers to consider if they could not get for him a share of the merchants' profit, by putting a tax on the commodities they dealt in? True, the Commons in the days of Edward VI., laid down that no taxes should be imposed without the consent of Parliament; but necessity, especially the necessity of Kings, knows no law, and this rule of the Commons, though it looked well on paper, did not work in practice. In 1303, money was wanted; but it had to be got tactfully, and, as the merchants were those to pay, a conference of them, at York, was called by the King, though they were strong enough to decline to pay any higher duties than they had done before.

In the days of the three Edwards, from 1272 to 1377, the King, sometimes with, sometimes without, the authority of Parliament, but always after formally consulting the merchants, put taxes on various articles, principally on the wool produced in the country, and sold by them. Thus, in 1297,

Edward I., by the Statute, "the confirmation of the Charter," promised to take no customs from merchants without the consent of the realm, but he expressly excepted the duties on wool, skins, and leather as having already been expressly given to the King by the faithful Commons, such duties being denominated "the hereditary customs of the Crown." Again, in 1343, Edward III., in order to pay his war expenses, put a tax of 40 marks on each sack of wool exported, which the Commons tried to annul on the ground that it was the English who were taxed, and not the foreigners, who declined to pay any more for the wool they bought. As, however, the merchants had conceded the point, and as the tax was already pledged to those who had advanced money to the King, there was no more to say, and the collection of the tax proceeded. But, after all, it was one thing to impose a tax and another to collect it, and the question was how this should be done; for wool and other goods might be sent out of the country from places where there was no tax collector, and the duty would thus be lost. The obvious plan was to have fixed or staple places, where all goods should be stored, which were liable to duty, and in 1353 the Statute of the Staple was passed, which directed that English wool and hides, tin, and lead, were to be sold at certain Staple towns in England and Ireland, and not elsewhere. These English towns were Newcastle-on-Tyne, York, Lincoln, Norwich, Westminster, Canterbury,

Winchester, Exeter, and Bristol. The trade of Wales was not large, and Carmarthen supplied all its needs, while Ireland was represented by Dublin, Waterford, Cork, and Drogheda. Other towns were afterwards added to these, amongst which was Calais, chosen on account of its proximity to Flanders, our largest customer for wool. By 1390, Calais was thought undesirable for this purpose, as it perhaps stopped foreign merchants from coming here, and accordingly an Act was then passed enacting that "the Staple be removed from Calais to England, and be holden in the places mentioned in the Statute of the Staple of 27 Edward III." It, however, went on to enact that every alien bringing goods to England was to find sureties to buy here goods such as wools, leather, fells, lead, tin, butter, cheese, cloths, and other commodities of the land to the value of half the merchandise brought by him here. By 1435 Calais again grew in favour, and again it was enacted that all wool and fells exported were to be taken there for sale with an exception for the merchants of Venice and Genoa.

The time had obviously come to curry favour with the foreigner, and accordingly two other Acts were passed in the same session, the first of which provided that no denizen of England was to carry wools, leather, fells, nor lead, being merchandise of the Staple, out of the kingdom, upon pain of forfeiture of the goods, those rights being

reserved for strangers. The second Act was a lesson in good manners, and enacted that merchants, being strangers, should be well and courteously and rightly used and governed, to the intent that they should have the greater courage to repair into England.

At each of the Staple towns there was a weigh-house, where the wool and other goods could be weighed, the one at Westminster being near St. Margaret's Church, the nave of which, as we read in the pages of Stow's "Survey of London," was erected jointly by the parishioners and the merchants of the Staple there. In each of the trading towns the Staple was controlled by the Mayor and constables, who were appointed, most fairly, jointly by the English and foreign merchants usually engaged in trade there. All disputes were settled by the Mayor, as representing the English traders, and by one foreign merchant, as representing the other interests.

Every effort was made in the 14th century to encourage wholesale trade in England, and as there were then no local courts where merchants could speedily recover moneys due to them, the legislators of Edward I.'s days passed in 1385 a most beneficial "Statute of Merchants." Under this, when a commercial transaction took place, the merchant brought his buyer before the Mayor of London, or some chief warden of a city, "or of some

other good town to be appointed by the King," where also attended a Crown Clerk; nominated for the purpose, who made out in duplicate a recognisance for the payment of the account on a fixed day, which was enrolled, one copy being kept by the Mayor, and the other by the Crown Clerk. If the account was not then paid, the merchant had only to make complaint to the Mayor, who would commit the body of the debtor to be taken and kept in the prison of the town. If the debtor had moved away, there was power to go to the Chancery, when a warrant was made out to the Mayor of the town where the debtor was then living. In addition to imprisonment, the debtor's goods were seized till full payment was made, and an "extent" levied on his lands. This recognisance was called a "Statute Merchant," and later, similar powers were exercised by the Mayors of the Staple towns, the procedure in that case being called a "Statute Staple," which lasted, nominally, at all events, till the time of George I., when the process was abolished in favour of the ordinary procedure of the Courts, though similar extensive powers still linger on to-day, in favour of the Crown, under the title of a Writ of Extent.

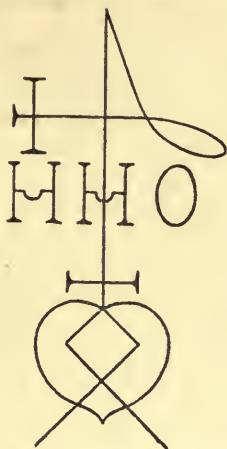
One must not imagine that all went well in those days, and that because there were Staple towns, where taxes should be paid, merchants did not try, even then, to avoid their obligations, and send goods elsewhere, or attempt to cheat in the weighing. On this

point we find, in the State papers, a black mark against the name of the merchants of the town of Boston, in 1395, who had defrauded their customers, and the Crown, in various ways by "deceits, excessive weighings and purchases of goods," and were officially reported to the King, Richard II., but doubtless a pardon was purchased, by an ample sum of money, which is not mentioned in the written chronicles.

The Merchant Guilds were composed of the better class of burgesses and citizens, who would desire to have a hand in the ruling of the towns, and these bodies clearly were the predecessors of the Corporations, which in the days of Henry VI. came into being with a corporate and perpetual community. It followed, therefore, that those days which were the birthdays of the boroughs, were also the days when the funeral knell of the Merchant Guilds was rung.

It is a familiar thing, nowadays, for bales of merchandise to bear particular marks and letters, so that they can be identified, in bills of lading and invoices; and this appears to be a continuance of the practice of the old days, when each merchant had his own "Merchant Mark" peculiar to himself, and which he not only placed on his own goods, but sometimes also adopted as a kind of coat of arms. It would also follow him in his devotions, and, when he had given a gift to his Church, his Merchant Mark was

sometimes carved upon the wooden corbels on the walls of the aisles, or in stone at the side of the porch, as we find in the Church of St. Mary, Hitchen in Herts, to-day.



MERCHANT MARK ON
CHEST AT SOUTHWARK
CATHEDRAL.

There is upon the muniment chest, in the North Transept of Southwark Cathedral, the very interesting Merchant Mark of Hugh Offley, who was Sheriff of London in 1588, and died in 1594. He was married in 1568 to the daughter of Robert Harding, who was also a Sheriff, and the chest is supposed to have been given by Hugh in the same year to the church, which was then known as St. Mary Overie. The chest, which contained the parish registers, is of oak, about 9 feet

long by 3 wide, but it is inlaid in various parts with coloured woods, and has been varnished and polished, and on the lower panels are two representations of the Palace of Nonsuch at Cheam in Surrey, which was built by Henry VIII. about 1535, and in later days was given by Charles II. to the Duchess of Portsmouth, who had it pulled down. The mark is of the usual inverted figure 4 type, though at the bottom it has an added ornament. Offley placed his initials on the chest, but thought it appropriate to combine those of his wife's surname, Harding; so the letters are "H. H. O."

When the Trade Guilds came to an end in 1547, it was clear that the foreign merchant guilds could not survive them, and in 1551 a formal petition of the citizens of London was presented to the King, making complaint of these foreign Guilds, the result of which was their abolition, though this had no influence upon the trade carried on by the Merchants as individuals.

A contemporary picture of them has been painted for us in poetry more than once. The first is by Chaucer, who in the Prologue to his "Canterbury Tales," describes the Merchant of the 14th century as follows:--

"A Merchant there was with a forked beard
In motley, and high on horse he sat,
Upon his head a Flemish beaver hat;
His boots buckled fair and properly.
His reasons spake he full solemnly,

Touching alway the increase of the winnings.
He would the sea were guarded for his things
Betwist Middleburgh and Orwell,
Well could he in exchange shields sell,
This worthy man full well his wits set,
There wist no man that he was in debt,
So stately was he of governance
With his bargains and with his suffieience,
For sooth he was a worthy man withal,
I know not, sooth to say, what men him call."

Again, in 1503, Stephen Hawes, who was the Court poet of Henry VII., writing his poem entitled "The Example of Virtue," tells us that—

"A realm is upholden by things three
The first and the chief it is the Sword.
The second is Law that ever serveth
But within the realm only.
The third be Merchants that do multiply
In this realm wealth and prosperity
For of everything they often occupy,
Every man like unto his faculty.
For without Merchants cannot be
No realm upholden in wealth and pleasure."

In mediæval days trade conditions were widely different to ours, and it was a constant policy to keep the foreigner out of our markets if he attempted to sell goods which we could make ourselves. There are several statutes passed from time to time dealing with these points, and we find restrictions on the import of manufactured silks, pewter and other articles; while by a statute of Edward IV., who was himself a trading Merchant, a large diversity of goods were forbidden to be brought into the kingdom,

the list embracing ribbons, woollen caps, cloths, laces, saddles, stirrup locks, scissors, razors, playing-cards, pins, needles, sacring bells, hats, brushes and white wire work.

Again in 1503 silk wrought into ribbons, laces, girdles, or points, were prohibited to be brought into England, though all other kinds of silk came in free. Nowadays such a prohibition would tend to raise the price of such articles, but no such result followed then because of the power of the Mayor or Justices to fix the prices at which the craftsmen should sell their manufactured articles.

There was always a feeling of rivalry between the Merchants and the craftsmen, though the Guilds of the Merchants were the first to suffer decay. One grievance of the Merchants at Hull was that the craftsmen there were doing the work of the former, and selling goods other than those of the class which they themselves made, so the Merchants took steps to set this right by passing ordinances or byelaws, in the year 1499, as they had power to do under their Charter. These stated that, as "the Merchants, having no other science, cunning or craft wherewith to get their living, but only by the way and means of buying and selling and great adventure, had greatly been hindered by means of people of divers occupations and craft, such as tailors, shoemakers, and others, who had never been apprenticed to merchandise, and who had presumptuously

taken upon them to buy and sell as merchants, and in their houses, shops, and windows openly had shewed much ware," it was therefore ordained that "no man of craft should buy nor sell any manner of ware or merchandise, but only such as appertained to the occupation and craft whereto he had been bound as apprentice."

The idea of monopolising foreign trade was eagerly caught at, and in 1407 a Charter was granted to a Merchant Adventurers Company in London, which was an offshoot from the Mercers' Company.

The Merchants of Bristol also considered that they ought not to have their large dealings with foreign countries cut into by the retailer, who, though he had no ships of his own, could buy of the captains of the foreign ships trading to the port of Bristol. Accordingly, in 1566, the Merchants Adventurers of Bristol got an Act passed to this effect, but politics were a moving force even in those days, and at the next election of M.P.s the members for that city, who had voted for the Bill in the House of Commons, were thrown out, and afterwards another Act was carried to revoke the monopoly of the Merchants, and in this it was plainly stated that the Act was passed as prices had been put up, and that many important inhabitants of Bristol have been cut off from the trade of the seas. In Elizabeth's reign foreign trading was again to the fore, and

in 1592, a charter was granted to the Levant Company to trade with Turkey, which did not last long; while in 1600, the successful East India Company had its birth and charter.

There always seems to have been a relationship between the Merchant Guilds and the Towns, and we have one good example of this bond in the case of Durham, which was ruled by a Mayor, 12 Aldermen, 24 Common Councillors, the last of whom were guildsmen selected annually from the 12 Guilds in the city.

The true story of the birth of the boroughs is not easy to tell, for, as Professor Maitland has pointed out in his "Township and Borough," no two of them have grown up in quite the same way. The word "burh" meant a walled enclosure, and within these walls were the thatched cottages of the townsmen, together with the few churches which they erected in honour of their patron saints, while some writers favour the view that they were also garrison towns with soldiers to guard them.

From Saxon days some form of government and order was established in these burhs, and the Domesday Book has a list of nearly eighty of such places as existing about the year 1080, such as London, Dover, Canterbury, Rochester, Chichester, Lewes, Reading, Devizes, Bath, Stafford, and York. For more than 100 years from that time,

only six charters for similar purposes were granted, the lucky towns being Petersfield, Guildford, Dunstable, Beverley, Preston, and Newcastle-on-Tyne, the reason for the paucity of the grants being that the establishment of a borough meant the freedom of its inhabitants, which it was the policy of the Norman rulers to repress. When we come to the reign of John in 1199, and the days of Magna Charta of 1215, it is not surprising to find a new era dawning, and many charters being granted to boroughs, whereby they obtained powers to be ruled by a Mayor elected by the burgesses. Hitherto they were dominated by the local baron or landowner, though, in some cases, when this personage was found to be in need, it was possible for the townsmen to buy up his rights, and thus obtain freedom of trade, freedom of government and pure administration of justice in the local courts, and in fact, by the year 1300, most large towns in England had secured such rights for themselves. The burgesses, or "burgense," assembled together to discuss town matters at the "borough-mote," an institution which has survived till to-day in the "wardmotes" of the City of London held each year on St. Thomas' Day, 21st December, to elect Common Councillors by show of hands for the ensuing year. In London, the wardmote is summoned by the ward beadle, who wears his old-fashioned cocked hat, and similarly the borough-mote was got together by the borough reeve, though in course of time an

inner circle, called the Common Council, was formed by the larger burgesses, who elected the M.P. for the borough.

In time, each shire had its borough, which for preference in early days was situated on a river, so as to enable goods to be carried by water; though, at the same time, it was necessary to be able to get horses and carts across to the other side by an easy ford. Thus we find several boroughs in the Midlands and South of England with this characteristic, such as Stafford, Hertford, Hereford, and Bedford.

With the accession of Henry VI. in 1422, a new idea came into the head of some lawyer, in Court circles, to grant charters to boroughs, so as to make them perpetual corporations, the first of such charters being granted in 1439 to Hull, which was followed in 1443 by charters to Plymouth, Southampton, and other places, while Canterbury and Nottingham gained similar honours in 1448. Grants in the old forms still continued to be made contemporaneously with those in the new form up to the days of Richard III. in 1484, but with the accession of Henry VII. no new ones were granted, and this continued during the whole of his reign, though his successor, Henry VIII., continued to make grants of both forms of charter.

The form of the charter granted to Hull states that, in consideration of the good

behaviour of the burgesses, and of their labour and expenses in ships and goods, the town should be "for ever incorporated of a Mayor and burgesses, who and their successors should be one perpetual corporation commonalty by the name of the Mayor and burgesses of the said town, and to have perpetual succession;" and to be able to sue and be sued by such name and to buy and sell lands.

It has been sometimes thought that, as the Merchant Guilds had a Mayor, and also possessed administrative powers over the trade carried on in the borough, that they formed the governing body there, but the better opinion is that this was not so; and it may be that in some towns, besides London, there were two Mayors at the same time, one for the Guild and the other for the town. That the powers of each were independent is clear from the fact that, under the Act of 1436, Guilds in towns had to submit their ordinances to the Mayor, or, as the Act puts it, "to the chief governor of cities, boroughs or towns where such guilds were," which shows clearly that the head of the Guild and the head of the town were two separate and distinct persons.

We can, however, feel some amount of antiquarian pride in thinking that our present day name of Mayor (from the Latin "Major," or "greater") came from the old

Guilds; while that of Alderman (from the Saxon Earldorman, or elderman) was derived even farther back from the old religious Guilds. The title of Mayor was also formerly borne in some royal burghs in Scotland, but has since been superseded there by "provost." Some decayed boroughs, like that of Queenborough, near Sheerness, continued to elect Mayors after the need of them was long gone, and was jestingly alluded to in the literature of the 17th century; though earlier than that, when the borough was still thriving in its small way, it was referred to by a writer, named J. Russell, in a work entitled "The Book of Nurture," written about 1460, in which he said: "The Mayor of London notable in dignity; and of Queenborough the Mayor, nothing like in degree."

The word seems to have come in first in Henry III.'s days, and was originally spelt "Maire," but in Elizabeth's time the Spanish form of "Mayor" was adopted. Shakespeare has a reference to the Mayor of London in his "Richard II.," Act 3, scene 1, where it is spelt "maior":—

"My lord, the Maior of London comes to greet you."

The typical Mayor has always been imagined, though oftentimes wrongly, as a man of ample proportions, and Shakespeare obviously had such an one in mind when he

drew, in his "Seven Ages of Man," the portrait of the Justice of the Peace—

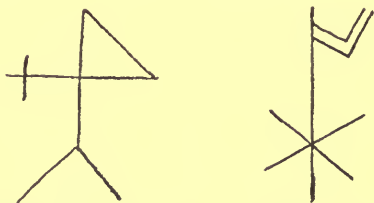
"In fair round belly, with good capon lined.
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut;
Full of wise saws and modern instances,"

while he completes the picture in his "Romeo and Juliet" by describing the ring, which was an important part of the apparel of the Alderman of the time—

"In shape no bigger than an agate stone
On the fore finger of an Alderman."

The very existence of a Guild necessarily implied that there would be a place where the members could meet, and the early religious Guilds found such a hall or room to be a necessity, but there was always the likelihood that it might be turned into a club house for frivolous purposes, not consistent with the decorum which should envelop a religious society. So we find, in the regulations of the Guilds at Bishop's Lynn, a provision that no one should stay in the Guild House after the Alderman had left, except the men of office, under a penalty of twopence. The hall was, of course, used for the annual feasts, and the Guilds of the Holy Cross, at the town referred to, had a rule that every brother of the fraternity should wear a hood of livery of the Guild, while others stated that no one should come to the feast in a tabard, which was a loose coat, nor with his legs bare, nor barefoot. Further, there was to be no noise or jangling during the feast, and if a member

tried to make trouble by forcing himself into the seat of another he was to be fined a halfpenny.



MERCHANT MARKS AT ST. MARY, HITCHEN.

There are only a few of these halls of the religious Guilds left, but there is a picture of the Holy Trinity Guild, which met near to the Church of St. Botolph, Aldgate, which was a hall with a Gothic wooden roof, containing a large fireplace, and a window with nine lights extending the whole width of the room, with two long wooden benches under it.

It is, however, due to the large Merchant Guilds that many towns had their own Guild Halls, which housed the Mayor and Aldermen of the Guild and provided a place where the administration of local affairs was carried on, and where justice was dispensed. The best illustration of this is the Guildhall of the City of London, which, according to Stow, was first placed in Aldermanbury, where the Aldermen kept their court, or "bery." By 1411 it was in its present position, for Robert Fabyan, who was an Alderman for

Farringdon Without, wrote his chronicles, in which he related that in that year "the Guildhall of London was begun to be new edified, and of an old and little cottage made into a fair and goodly house as it now appeareth." In 1501 the idea was conceived of holding a dinner at the installation of the new Mayor, at the Guildhall, instead of being held, as previously, at the Hall of some City Company, and in that year Sir John Shaa, the Mayor, had the first kitchen built there, and commenced the series of civic feasts which have been annually held at that place ever since. In the year of the great fire, 1666, the Guildhall suffered, with other city buildings, and was rebuilt, but as the design was not imposing enough, the present building was erected in 1789.

There is one feature of some of the Guildhalls which tells the tale of their use, for the one at Peterborough has, on the ground floor, a room open to the street, supported on columns, which makes it look as if it were originally meant for an exchange where the Merchants could walk about to discuss business matters, the guild room proper being upstairs. At Totnes, in Devon, there is a similar, but somewhat smaller, enclosure which leads to the hall, which is also on the ground floor, and is now used as a Magistrate's court. There appears to have been a similar structure on the west side of the Guildhall in the City of London, as we learn from an old illustration.

The city of Bristol has some old records which throw light on the use of its Guildhall, for they state that since the Conquest there had always been Mayors in that city, who used yearly on Michaelmas Day to take the oath of office before the Constable at the Castle gate. This continued till the accession, in 1327, of Edward III., who exempted the Mayors from taking the oath at the Castle gate, but ordained that from that time each new Mayor should be charged on Michaelmas Day by, and take the oath of office from, his predecessor at the Guildhall before all the commonalty there.

It is true that there were no millionaires in England in mediæval times, but the wealth of the Merchants was noted by all, and they vied with the Barons in magnificence of clothing, and oftentimes wielded more power from their ability to supply their Sovereign with ample stores of money to provide both men-at-arms and their necessary arms and accoutrements during our wars, particularly with the French in the 14th century.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRADE GUILDS.

From earliest times rulers of a country have always feared combinations of their people; but the Norman Kings, in despite of this point, and for the sake of gain, carried on quite a trade in selling, and afterwards cancelling, charters to allow tradesmen to combine in Guilds in their various towns. It was afterwards found, of course, that wherever these bodies were formed they quickly assumed a dominating character, as, of course, all the townsmen who belonged to the trade thus sanctioned, had perforce to belong to that Guild, which speedily became strong and able to make its voice heard.

In return for the privileges conferred the Guild had to pay a tax, which in London and some other towns was taken by the King, though in several provincial ones these payments were made to the neighbouring lord. As an instance of one which paid its tax to the King we may take the Weavers of London and Southwark, who in Henry I.'s days obtained from the King the privilege that none should introduce himself into their mystery, except he were a member of their Guild, and this right was ratified by Henry II.

Although in Norman times the profession of arms was the one most honoured by the

Kings and Nobles, they were obviously helpless without the expert craftsman who would make and repair their arms and weapons, their saddlery and their clothes; and accordingly we find that the artizan was as welcome a visitor to the castles and halls of the great as a knight himself.

This is shown in the 14th century Welsh Bardic MS., known as "The Red Book of Hergest," now in Jesus College, Oxford, and translated by Lady Guest, under the title of "The Maginogion," where in the tale entitled "Killwch and Olwen," in which King Arthur is one of the principal characters, the following dialogue occurs:—"Open the door." "I will not open it." "Wherefore not?" "The knife is in the meat, and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in Arthur's Hall, and none may enter therein but the son of a king of a privileged country, or a craftsman bringing his craft."

The idea of the plebeian workmen gaining power, and forming Guilds of their own, does not seem to have been acceptable to the Merchants, who feared that their power would be weakened; and in 1196 there occurred in London a rising of 50,000 men, many of them being craftsmen, under a leader known as William of the Long Beard, or William Fitz-Osbert, but the cause of the trouble was the usual one of taxes for the wars, which, it was complained, were unfairly assessed. William took the part of orator and advocate for his

men, and a warrant for his arrest was issued by the Chief Justiciar of King Richard I., when the leader took refuge in the tower of the Church of St. Mary-le-Bow in Cheapside. To force him to surrender, fire was set to the church, but as he escaped ~~he was stabbed to death~~ by a burgher's son, whose father had been killed by William. The rising thus came to an end for the time being, but the feeling of resentment was not gone, and the craftsmen afterwards gained their powers, for in 1261 they broke into the town mote, assembled for the election of chief magistrate, and chose Thomas Fitz-Thomas, one of their members, as Mayor, and he served the position. Thus the craftsmen felt that they had established their position, and we hear no more of their troubles.

Coming to the days of King John, about 1200, the London citizens found that the Weavers had become overbearing in their conduct and manners, as they felt that they held a privileged position, and the King was petitioned to revoke their Charter. The weak King had no idea of statesmanship, or the benefit of trade, and with him the whole affair was a mere matter of money. Consequently, as the Weavers only paid 18 marks per year for the preservation of their Charter and the Citizens offered 21 marks for its cancellation, the highest bidder got the bargain, and the Weavers of London were for a time defenceless. The weaving trade was, however, too important to remain long in a paralysed state,

X
A
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X

and, by 1121, they had got their Charter back again, but those were days of strife and physical damage, and the Weavers feared that their parchment Charter might be burned or stolen. To avoid this, as banks and strong rooms were unknown, they deposited it in the Exchequer at Westminster, to be kept there till they should require it. They probably got it back shortly after, and 100 years passed before any real trouble arose, but in 1320 they were brought before the Law Courts to prove that their Charter was a valid one. Like succeeding Guilds, they had framed certain regulations, or byelaws, for the rule of their body, relating to the details of their trade, and the admission of strangers into their ranks; and the Courts, while holding that the Charter was valid, decided that these byelaws were too ample, and set them aside as being *ultra vires*.

In days when wallpapers were not thought of, and when the walls of living-rooms were more draughty than we prefer them now, the adornment of them with tapestry was a very necessary matter, and the weavers of this material must have been very skilled and artistic men. Their Guilds were, therefore, of some importance, and we frequently find mention in the Pipe Rolls of these bodies under the name of "Gilda telarii," or guilds of tapestry weavers. As early as the year 1344 we find a writ issued under Edward IV. to inquire into the guild or mystery of working tapestry, which at that time was used for wall

hangings, and in 1398 there is a mention of arras hangings at Windsor Castle.

The story of industry in England cannot be told without referring to the Great Plague of 1348, which decimated the ranks of the workmen, and naturally caused the price of labour to go up, till, in the next year, Edward III. procured his famous Statute of Labourers to be passed. It set out its reasons as follows:—

“ Because a great part of the people, and especially of workmen and servants, lately died of the pestilence, many seeing the necessity of the masters and great scarcity of servants, will not serve unless they receive excessive wages, and some rather willing to beg in idleness than by labour to get their living, We considering the grievous incommodities, which of the lack, especially of ploughmen and such labourers may hereafter come, have upon deliberation and treaty with the prelates and nobles, and the learned men assisting us, ordained that every man and woman in England of whatever condition they may be, bond or free, able in body and under 60 years of age, not living by merchandise, or being an artificer, and not having property whereby they may live, shall serve the master requiring him or her.”

It was accurately foreseen that the effect of this would not be as beneficial as it was intended to be if some limit were not placed upon the amount of the wage which the workers could

demand, so a second Act was passed in the same session requiring labourers to accept the old wages usually paid in the locality in which they worked. This Act, it is true, referred only to the agricultural classes, but the same troubles of demands by artizans for a higher scale of wages, and a consequent rise in prices for commodities, was foreseen, so yet another Act was passed in that same session which forbade shoemakers, smiths, carpenters, masons, workers in leather, and all other artificers and workmen to take more for their labour than the wages they received in the year 1346 before the plague, with the penalty, if they did so, of being committed to the nearest gaol for an indefinite period.

The effect of this Act on the artizan, such as the mason or carpenter, who was also a guildsman, was an indirect one; for, by the rules of his society, he was bound to work for the wages fixed by his Guild, and this Act of Parliament bound those bodies not to increase them above the former level. In practice, we believe, the Act had little effect, as all such provisions must have which have not public sentiment behind them, for when a master found a good workman it was worth while to pay him more to retain his services. At a later period another Act was passed to put a penalty upon masters thus evading the Act, but the unlawful procedure of paying for work according to its true value still continued, much to the credit of employers in those days.

The thinning of the ranks of workers in consequence of the great plague of 1348, and the difficulty of earning a livelihood in the fields, seems to have caused the same influx of countrymen into the towns as we see to-day. Hitherto the masters had largely worked with their own hands, but they also instructed their wives and children in the details of their business, so that the craft would be continued from father to son. With the advent of so many strangers, who also sought to earn their own livelihood in trades to which they were not accustomed, the system of apprenticeship grew up with its advantages of securing to the master the skilled labour of the apprentice after his first period of tuition was over. To ensure this a period had to be fixed upon for the apprenticeship, and allowing, say, three years for tuition, when the apprentice was of little value, and four years for the reward of the master, the Biblical period of seven years was arrived at. As writing was not possible to unlearned people, there were two difficulties to surmount, the first being to get some visible and binding testimony of the transaction, and secondly to enforce the master's rights over the apprentice when his work began to be of value. Both these difficulties were overcome by the formation of a Society of Masters before whom the formal entry of the servant into the rank of workers would be made, and the heads of which would also be able to sit as Magistrates to enforce the due observance of the

master's rights. So the Guilds must have originated, but their powers and duties gradually grew to wider limits, including superintendence and inspection of the articles manufactured, and of the tools used in the trade. These regulations could, of course, only affect those governed by the Guilds, but they formed an useful object lesson for the State in larger matters, as an example of which we may mention the regulations as to cloths. In 1328, and again in 1373, Acts were passed requiring cloths of ray, that is striped or coloured cloths, to be of particular lengths and breadths, so that the unwary buyer might not be swindled by being given something less than he imagined he was buying; and in 1331 a similar statute was passed as to other cloths. It is one thing to make a decree but quite a different matter to carry it out, and this Act must often have been broken, for it would take up the time of many inspectors, travelling up and down the country, to enforce it, and it befell that in later days the Guilds themselves had to look after it. However, we find that, in 1389, the King appointed several Sergeants-at-Arms, together with the Mayors of Coventry, Leicester, York, and Lincoln, to search cloths exposed for sale in markets and fairs, and to seize those which were not found to be of the right length and breadth as prescribed by the statute. The cloths, however, though wrongly made, were to be sold, and the proceeds were paid into the Exchequer for the benefit of the State.

The Act of 1381, as to common cloths, was soon found to be unworkable, and in 12 years' time a repealing Act was passed, which provided that every person might make cloth of what length or breadth he would, but he was not to sell it before the pieces of cloth were measured by the King's officer, and were sealed with his seal. The Act, however, added by way of precaution that no one should mingle or use deceits in cloths of kerseys under a penalty.

It was in time found that these salutary provisions could be evaded by the importation of foreign cloths, and it was in 1340 enacted that such foreign manufactures should not be brought into the kingdom, but with a far-seeing eye, for the benefit of labour at home, another statute was passed in the same session granting a licence to cloth-workers of strange lands to come and dwell in England, so as to carry on their manufactures here.

By the time of Charles I. the power of the Trade Guilds was over, but the same class of trade troubles remained. We find in the State Papers of 1636 the consideration of a petition to the King asking for a reformation of the abuses in the sale of silk stockings, and woven and knitted waistcoats. The petitioners asked that a mark of distinction might be ordered to be affixed to such goods, and it was pointed out that if that were done nobody could be possibly injured. Gentlemen, it was pointed out, spending three or four pounds on

an article would not begrudge giving a little more for the certainty that they were buying superior goods, while the common people could not object as they bought only the inferior goods. The Council which considered the matter agreed with the prayer of the petition, and made a note to the effect that they found no better way to remedy the abuse than by means of the mark to be applied to such goods.

X An important landmark in the history of the Trade Guilds occurred in 1363, when it was found that Parliament, and not the King, was the proper authority to deal with the growing power of the Guilds, and it was then enacted that "all artificers and people of misteries" should choose their own mystery before Candlemas Day, 2nd February following, and also that having chosen one Guild he should keep to that and no other. This was in the days of Edward III., who gave his Royal patronage to the Guild of the Merchant Taylors, or Linen-Armourers, as it was then known, by becoming a member of it, and trading himself; and needless to say his example was followed by some of the members of his Court, which formed a precedent for the other Guilds, which in course of time also admitted outsiders. In 1330, trouble had brewed in London by disturbances caused by the bakers, taverners, millers, cooks, poulterers, fishmongers, butchers, brewers, corn-chandlers and others, all of which trades took the complimentary title of "misteries," and the

King had to issue his mandate to the Mayor and Sheriffs of London to suppress these riots by means of corporal punishment, and, failing that, by other means. It will be noted that, at that time, the chief official of London was a simple Mayor, the title "Lord Mayor" not being conferred upon him till the year 1347.

The Guilds range over many classes of industry, but those of the workers in metals were not very numerous in the middle ages, for the iron and steel trades were then in their very infancy. Articles made of those metals were of course required for agriculture in the shape of spades and rakes, and also for ploughs, though many of these were then made of wood alone. Housewives required pots and kettles; men of arms wanted swords and armour, though much of this came from the Continent; and most important of all, those using horses must have them shod with iron shoes. The blacksmith was to be found working, not only in every town and village, but also in the hamlets, for the benefit of travellers, whose horses had mishaps with their footgear, but these smiths were mostly in solitary places, and we cannot expect them to have formed many Guilds of Smiths, unless they combined with members of other trades. We find a Guild of Smiths existing at Chesterfield, in Derbyshire, from early times, but it was few in numbers, and in 1387 amalgamated with the Guild of the Holy Cross of Merchants in that town, while another was formed at Newcastle-on-

Tyne. Its ordinances are dated 1436, and they not only direct the members to take part in the Miracle Plays, when performed in the town, but also furnish an interesting sidelight on the bitter feeling existing in those days between the English and the Scots, for they forbade members to take a Scotsman as an apprentice or workman. There was a similar Guild at Canterbury, which was strong enough to stand alone, without joining hands with another Guild, and concerning which there is a note, dated 1660, showing that it possessed land, which is described as "*terra quae pertinet ad gildam fabrorum.*" On the other hand, another Smiths' Guild at Gloucester included Ironmongers, Cutlers, Sadlers and Glaziers; while at Boston in Lincolnshire, there was a Guild in 1598, composed of Smiths, Farriers, Braziers and Cutlers; and at Preston, Lancs. and Shrewsbury the Smiths' Guilds also comprised Armourers.

We can find only three Goldsmiths' Guilds in the country, the most important one being that in London, while one other was at Newcastle-on-Tyne, which, being but small, was in 1536 incorporated with the Plumbers, Glaziers, Pewterers, and Painters; but in Georgian days it became a separate body and the year 1717 saw it standing alone again. There was also a Guild of Goldsmiths at Shrewsbury before 1425, but it subsequently joined the Mercers, and in 1480 was incorporated by Edward IV. as the Mercers' and Goldsmiths' Guild.

We shall expect to find references to some of these Guilds in the pages of contemporary writers, and sure enough they are mentioned by Chaucer in the Prologue to his "Canterbury Tales," written in 1388. In this work, when describing the pilgrims and their different occupations, he comes to the members of several of the Trade Guilds, who were all clad in costumes of the same colour, or "livery," a word which we may mention is derived by some writers from the fact that the cloth for this livery of the members was "delivered" to them, once a year, by the Guild officials. Chaucer's description is as follows:—

" An Haberdasher, and a Carpenter ;
 A Webber, a Dyer, and Tapicer
 Were with us eke, clothed in one livery
 Of a solemn and great fraternity,
 Full fresh and new their gear y-trimmed was,
 Their knives were sette, not with brass,
 But all with silver, wrought full clean and fair,
 Their girdles and their pouches everywhere.
 Well seemed each of them a fair burgess
 To sit in a Guild hall on the dais.
 Every man for wisdom that he can
 Was fitted for to be an Alderman."

This idea of having similar costumes worn by large bodies of men was appropriated by the Barons, who required their retainers to wear their badge, as well as their own livery of clothes ; but the habit grew into abuse, and in 1377 an Act was passed to prevent the custom being copied by those of lesser rank, who wished to ape the manners of more polite society. The Act said that "divers people of

small revenue of land and other possessions do make great retinue of people, as well of esquires as of others, giving to them hats and other liveries of one suit by the year, taking of them the value, or double the value of the livery, by such covenant that they shall maintain him in all quarrels, whether reasonable or unreasonable, to the great mischief and oppression of the people." In consequence of this it was ordained that from thenceforth no such livery should be worn. The statutes of those days do not seem to have carried much weight, and were frequently repeated, as if this might cause more attention to be paid to the matter, and accordingly, in the year 1392, another Act was passed on the same subject prohibiting all persons of less rank than an esquire to wear the livery of another. This provision was afterwards not deemed stringent enough, and in 1468 a much more elaborate Act was passed to a similar effect, but imposing penalties for its breach, though to make it quite workable a special proviso was inserted exempting those who had to wear such liveries at the Coronations of Kings, at the installations of Bishops, and also the members of any Guild, fraternity or mystery corporate, as well as the Mayor and Sheriffs of London, and other towns in England.

Stow, in his "Survey of London," refers to these liveries as worn by Guildsmen there, and says: "I read not of license of them (the Guilds) procured for liveries to be worn,

but at their Governor's discretion to appoint, as occasion asketh, some time in triumphant manner, some time more mourning like, and such liveries have they taken upon them, as well before, as since they were by license associated into brotherhoods, or corporations." Then under the heading of "Liveries worn by citizens of London in times of triumphs and otherways" he tells of various State processions of the Mayor and Sheriffs of London, and of their clothing. Thus in 1236, under Henry III., the citizens were clothed in long garments, embroidered about with gold, and silk in divers colours, while in 1300, 600 citizens rode in one livery of red and white, with the cognizances of their mysteries embroidered upon their sleeves. In 1415 the craftsmen rode after the Mayor in red, with hoods red and white, while in 1432 the commonalty of the City were clothed in white gowns and scarlet hoods, with divers cognizances embroidered on their sleeves. Stow points out that hoods were always worn up to the time of Henry VII., when square bonnets came into fashion for noblemen, gentlemen and citizens, and in the first year of his reign, 1485, the red colour of the Guilds was changed for violet, as a mourning colour, after the losses incurred at the battle of St. Albans.

In addition to the dignity of wearing livery, many of the Guild members, doubtless, copied their betters and wore swords, a fashion which the more advanced of the

labour classes sometimes desired to follow, with bad effects on others, as the possession of a sword was too great an advantage to a man with a hasty temper. Trouble had evidently arisen on account of this, for in 1389 Parliament passed an Act forbidding any servant in husbandry or labourer to wear a sword, buckle or dagger; and for the good conduct of their morals it was also ordained that they should not play at dice or other similar games.

The handy man, who was a dabbler in many trades, but who most likely excelled in none, was a trouble to the guildsman, and Parliament took up this matter, for it was found that there were many pairs of boots and shoes being sold of inferior make, as the tanner who cured the leather sometimes attempted to make them up into foot-wear, instead of leaving it to the bootmaker, or cordwainer as he was then called; so in 1423 an Act was passed setting out the grievance caused to the public, and forbidding, under a fine of 6s. 8d., cordwainers to enter the mystery of the tanners, and *vice versâ*.

Another Act of 1423 forbade the girdlers using white metal buckles for the girdles they made, and charging extra for the adornment. As this increased the cost of every-day dress, it was deemed so injurious to the nation that a petition was presented by the Commons to the King for powers to stop it. Richard II., however, with an eye to beauty in dress,

granted a licence to the Guild to enable its members to continue the practice if the girdles were sold at prices which were fixed, varying from one farthing to one penny each, and this regulation was also embodied in an Act of Parliament of 1391. This licence, however, expressly refers to a charter which had been granted to the Girdlers' Guild, though ordinarily the Guilds had only Letters Patent from the King, or sometimes relied on the records of the Exchequer as showing that they had paid the fees demanded of them. These are, as we have already shown, contained in the records of the Great Rolls of the Exchequer, commonly called "the Pipe Rolls," and those Guilds which were in default in their payments are described as "adulterine," which obviously meant illegal. An interesting instance of this default occurred in 1478, when the Weavers of York, through their poverty, were unable to pay their accustomed fee of £10 per annum, and King Edward IV. granted them a pardon for this offence by taking a composition of half the amount.

Having arrived at the point of the establishment of the Trade Guilds, the question naturally arises as to whether they were independent bodies or were subject to the oversight of some superior. In London this point seems at first to have been a dubious one, for when the Mayor claimed to exercise oversight, some yielded and became subject to the Court of Aldermen, while others claimed independent authority, alleging that

they were older in date of establishment than the Charter of the City itself, and therefore owed no allegiance. In the end it seems that most of them gave way, though the subsequent grant of Royal Charters, which clearly defined who was the body to approve the ordinances, cleared the ground. In the country towns one thing is clear, that by the end of the 15th century the Guilds in the towns had to submit their ordinances to the Mayor, with the one exception of Oxford, where the University obtained power, in their Charter of 1523, to wield the jurisdiction of the Mayor, who had annually to go to St. Mary's Church, and take an oath to maintain the privileges of the University, in default of which he was liable to be fined, as actually happened in one case. In fact, very few Guilds in the country possessed charters, but the Guild of Girdlers at Coventry, which attained some fame from the acts of its members in making the fancy girdles of which we have just spoken, certainly had a charter of its own.

When, as happened in some cases, the Guilds had deserted the towns and worked outside, they were subject to the authority of the Justices of the Peace. How this came about is not abundantly clear, but it appears to be most likely that it arose by virtue of various Acts of Parliament with which we shall now deal, always remembering that Acts were not so freely passed then as in our days, and were very few in number. Some were only passed till the next session,

when they were in some cases re-enacted with alterations ; while, most important point of all, it was difficult to enforce those of which the people did not heartily approve, and many of these Acts remained on the Statute Book as dead letters.

The first important Act for our purpose was passed by the Parliament of Richard II. in 1388, which met at Cambridge, and it directed an inquisition to be made by the Sheriffs of each county as to their Guilds, for which purpose two writs were issued to those officials. By the first they were required to call on the Masters and Wardens of all Guilds and Brotherhoods to give information as to the foundation, statutes, and property of those bodies ; and by the second writ they were to call upon "the Masters, Wardens, and Overlookers of all misteries and crafts in their counties" to send to the King copies of the Charters, or Letters Patent, by which they were founded. This was done, and we shall refer to the results of these enquiries later on in this chapter.

By the year 1436, in Henry VI.'s reign, further trouble had arisen as to the ordinances made by some of the Guilds, and in consequence a somewhat similar Act of Parliament was passed, which enacted that the Masters, Guardians, and men of every Guild, fraternity or incorporated Company were to record their charters before the Justices of the Peace of counties, or the

chief Governor of the cities, boroughs, or towns where such Guilds were, and these Guilds were prohibited from making any ordinance unless previously approved by such Justices of the Peace, or Governors. This Act seems to have expired shortly after, and in Henry VII.'s time, in 1503, another Act was passed, that no Masters, Wardens, or Fellowships of Craft or Misteries, nor any rulers of Guilds or Fraternities should take upon them to make any acts or ordinances against the common profit of the people, unless such ordinances should be examined and approved by the Chancellor, Treasurer of England, or Chief Justices, or before the Justices of the Assize, under a heavy penalty. This Act was largely disregarded by the Guilds, who desired to maintain their exclusive character, and increase very heavily the fees to be paid by apprentices and by craftsmen to obtain admission. Accordingly, in 1530, Henry VIII.'s reign, another Act fixed these fees at 2s. 6d. for the entry of an apprentice, and 3s. 4d. for his entry on the rolls of the Guild, when his term had expired and ended.

It is fortunate for us to-day that these Acts were passed, for the formal returns made by the Sheriffs under the Act of 1388 are now in existence at the Record Office, from which we have authentic evidence of the ordinances and byelaws which the various Guilds had made for their government.

The ordinances all have family characteristics, and begin with an ascription "To the God of Heaven, and his Mother, St. Mary, and all the Holy Company of Heaven," and then proceed to the various duties of the members of the Guild. We might sometimes imagine we were reading the rules of a monastic establishment; but when we remember that the members had a priest amongst their officers, and also that external forms of religion formed an important part of the life of every citizen, we need no longer wonder at the ecclesiastical tone of these documents, one of which we append.

"The regulations of the Guild of the Bretheren and Sisteren of the Fullers of Lincoln.

"A waxlight shall be kept burning before the Holy Cross on the days when they go in procession in honour of the Holy Cross. None of the Craft shall work (*i.e.*, full cloth by treading it with feet in the trough) and none shall work at the wooden bar with a woman, unless with the wife of a master or her handmaid. None of them shall work after dinner on Saturdays, nor on any days which they ought to keep as festival according to the law of the Church.

"If a stranger to the city comes in, he may, upon giving a penny to the wax, work among the bretheren and sisteren, and his name shall be written on their roll.

“ If anyone wishes to learn the Craft, no one shall teach it to him until he has given twopence to the wax.

“ If any of the brotherhood is justly charged with theft, to the value of a penny, he shall be put out of the Company.

“ When any of the bretheren or susteren dies, the rest shall give a halfpenny each, to buy bread, to be given to the poor, for the soul's sake of the dead.

“ If any brother or sister is going on a pilgrimage to Sts. Peter and Paul, and it is a Sunday or other festival day, all the bretheren and susteren shall go in company with him, outside the City as far as Queen's Cross, and each shall give him a halfpenny or more. When he comes back, if, as before said, it is a Sunday or festival day, and he has let them know of the coming, all the bretheren and susteren shall meet at the same Cross, and go with him to the monastery.

“ Anyone not keeping any of these ordinances shall pay half a pound of wax.

“ If anyone by mishap comes to want, and asks help from the Gild, sixpence a year shall be advanced to him, out of the goods of the Gild, for three years. When he gets in better case, he shall, if he can, repay the mouey advanced to him ; but if he cannot, then the debt shall be repaid to the Gild, out of what is collected after his death for his soul's sake

and what remains shall be faithfully applied for his soul's sake.

“When any brother or sister dies, the Dean shall put four wax lights round the body, and the Graceman shall offer a penny for a mass, and the Warden a halfpenny out of the goods of the Gild.

“If anyone is in arrear in the halfpence due for the soul, he shall pay a pound of wax to the Gild.

“In witness whereof, to have the greater proof thereof in time to come, the official seal of the Deanery of Christianity at Lincoln has at the special request of the bretheren and sisteren of this Gild, been put hereto. Given at Lincoln, on the Nones of September A.D. 1337.”

Notwithstanding the date, it is clear that the Guild was originally founded on the Sunday before the Feast of St. Philip and St. James, 1st May 1297, and it thus took forty years before the members thought it necessary to get the ordinances put in order and written out. At a later date some more were found necessary to be added, which we append:—

“Farther, it is ordered that the Graceman, and the two Wardens of the Gild, shall each of them have, at the Feast of the Gild, two gallons of ale, and the Dean one gallon.

“The Dean shall have for collecting the tould pennies from the bretheren, on the first day twopence out of the goods of the Gild, but not on any day afterwards.

“Whoever is chosen Graceman, and will not serve, shall pay four pounds of wax; whoever is chosen Warden, and will not serve, shall pay two pounds of wax; and whoever is chosen Dean, and will not serve, shall pay one pound of wax.

“Every new brother shall pay to the Dean one penny.

“Whoever fails in ought touching these ordinances shall pay a pound of wax.”

The reference to wax sounds odd to modern ears, but it appears to have been quite a customary payment to make to an ecclesiastic, for we find, in 1185, that the Knights Hospitallers were paying to the Bishop of Winchester as the rent of the Hospital of Holy Cross, just outside the city, five marks in money and two candles of wax.

The customs of these Guilds with reference to the burial of deceased members is still remembered by certain of the Livery Companies of London, which still preserve the palls officially used on such occasions. The Coopers' Company has an inventory, dating from 1570, showing their possession of a pall or bearing cloth of blue velvet, embroidered

with gold and silver and set with pearls which cost as much as £56.

In several of the ordinances of the Guilds we find reference to Music as forming part of the ceremonials performed by the Guilds. Thus in that for the Guild of St. Elene at Beverley, Yorkshire, dating from 1378, provision is made for a procession to take place on the Feast of St. Elene, or St. Helen, and in whose honour the Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross is held in the Roman Catholic Church. A fair youth was selected and clad as a queen, like to St. Elene, while an old man carrying a cross went before him, and another after him carried a shovel in token of the finding of the Holy Cross. And so, all fairly clad, they went in procession with much music to the Church of the Friars Minors of Beverley, now known as Beverley Minster, where at the altar of St. Elene mass was offered, and everyone of the Guild gave a penny.

In the same town one of the members of the Guild of St. Mary, on the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, 2nd February, represented that Saint with a boy baby in her arms and attended by other members of the Guild as angels, went to church "with much music and gladness."

At Lincoln, in 1389, there was a distinct society of musicians, known as the Guild of the Minstrels and Players of Lincoln. Similarly, in Bristol, there was, about the year

1500, a Society of St. Stephen's Ringers, with a Master and Wardens. This was a Guild of church bell-ringers, and the ordinances provide for fines for those who failed to attend when summoned to ring the bells, or who rang out of place, or took the rope out of his fellow's hand when the bells were doing well. As befitted a Church Guild, the regulations were strict, and members were forbidden to talk while the bells rang, and besides this everyone had to kneel down and pray before he went into the belfry, under a fine of 6*d.* for the first offence, or expulsion from the Guild for a repetition of it.

Another Guild composed of professional musicians is mentioned by Percy in his "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry." He says that, in the year 1469, Edward IV., upon a complaint that certain rude husbandmen and artificers of various trades had assumed the title and livery of the King's Minstrels, and under that colour and pretence had collected money in divers parts of the Kingdom, and committed other disorders, the King granted a charter to Walter Halliday, Marshal, and seven other of his own Minstrels, by which he created a Guild of Minstrels, similar to one formerly existing. The new Guild was to be governed by a Marshal appointed for life, acting with two Wardens to be chosen annually, who were empowered to admit Brothers and Sisters into the body; to examine the pretensions of all such as were affected to exercise the profession of Minstrel; and to

regulate, govern and punish them throughout the realm. For some reason the City of Chester was excepted from the authority of this Guild, which looks as if there a similar Guild held sway.

This charter was renewed in 1520 by Henry VIII. to his Marshal, John Gilman, and seven Minstrels, and 1635 Charles granted Letters Patent for a Corporation of Musicians in Westminster. This body was obviously intended to supersede the previous Guild founded by Edward IV., whose Charter is recited in the document of Charles I.

A somewhat similar Guild of Musicians existed in parts of Germany in the 15th century under the name of the "Meistersingers," and Wagner has woven them into the plot of his opera of that name. They were not a guild in the sense that they devoted their whole time to the craft of music, and to-day they would probably be called a club. The musical aspirant had to be admitted to the Guild after passing the ranks of Apprenticeship, Scholar and Singer, and he then graduated as a Master. The body was composed of the burgher class of various trades, who had made rules and traditions of their own to govern the forms of musical composition, and the lyrics to which they set their music. These were on lines far removed from those of the "Minnesingers," or Love Minstrels, of the older days of the 12th and 13th centuries in Germany, who were

concerned more with lyric poetry than with the musical form in which it was rendered, and were of the class of love cavaliers.

We find express regulations in most of the ordinances of the Guilds against going to law with members, and if any quarrel arose, the fellow members of the disputants were to try to heal it, without recourse to the Courts of Law, and only on failure was the member to go to litigation outside the Guild.

There was a well-defined code of rules concerning the taking of apprentices, which we may put under the following heads. To begin with there was the entry by the master of the apprentice on the rolls of the Guild, which gave him the title of "entered apprentice," and bound him by the rules of the Guild; echoes of which we can trace in old indentures of apprenticeship in various trades. In the latter we find that the pupil agreed to be honest and industrious, not to steal the goods of his master, not to resort to gaming houses, and not to commit matrimony, or any unlawful offence. The term of apprenticeship in the Guilds was always seven years, and the average age for the apprentice being 14 years, he was 21 when he emerged from his course of instruction; and it is still officially declared that by the custom of London no person can be bound apprentice under 14, nor over 21 years of age.

The second point, at all events in some Guilds, was that the apprentice had to be

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"free," an expression which at this time is, perhaps, not quite clear. In early days it must have referred to the distinction between the serf and the man who was free from bondage to his lord, the former of whom would not be eligible for admission to the Guild; but, afterwards, the expression "freeman" was used by the Guilds to denote a full member out of his apprenticeship, who was free to carry on his business with all the privileges of a full member. Later on, the cities used the same word to denote that their citizens were free from the jurisdiction of the Sheriff of the County, and were only liable to the Mayor of the City in which they resided. This right would descend to the Freeman's sons by "patrimony," as it was called, though strangers might occasionally acquire it by purchase.

It is significant that, in the reign of Edward II., it was enacted that no person could be admitted as a Freeman of London, even though he were an inhabitant, unless he also were a member of one of the trades or misteries; but, to-day, the position is reversed, for when a new member of a City Company is admitted he has, if not already a Freeman of the City, to become such, and this Freedom is now obtainable by anyone on the parliamentary register, by payment of one guinea to the City Chamberlain, though the Corporation occasionally honours distinguished strangers by the presentation of the Freedom to them and admits the apprentices

of Freemen, by "servitude," after they have served their term to their master. A narrow parchment certificate is given to the recipient by purchase, headed "London, to wit," which mentions his name, address and occupation, and states that he was admitted to the Freedom aforesaid, and made the declaration of loyalty to the King required by law in the Mayoralty of Sir A. B., Knight, Mayor, and Sir X. Y., Chamberlain, and was entered in the book relating to the purchasing of Freedoms, and the admission of Freemen. Then follows the date, with the year of the reign of the Sovereign, and it concludes "In witness whereof the seal of the office of Chamberlain of the City is hereunto affixed. Dated in the Chamber of the Guildhall of the same City the day and year aforesaid."

The third point about the entry in the Guild Books was that the apprentice had to take an oath to preserve the secrets of his master's trade, and it is probable that this oath was administered in the presence of the Guild chaplain, for it is difficult to see how else it could then have been given, as a copy of the Gospels was necessary, which would then only be in the possession of, and readable by, an ecclesiastic. This theory seems the more likely, as there is in existence the record of a case in an Ecclesiastical Court, before the Commissary of the Bishop of Lincoln, who had to consider how far it was a breach of such an oath, for the sworn member of a Guild to impart its secrets to

outsiders. We do not know the result of this case; though, in another cause, Archbishop Morton, when sitting as a spiritual Judge, let off a fraudulent executor, who was liable to that Court, on the ground that by his reprehensible conduct, he would be damned in hell, and that it was unnecessary to add to that punishment while he was alive.

We can trace no records of any written indentures of apprentices in the days we speak of, obviously for two reasons: First, the general lack of knowledge to write in men of the type with which we are dealing; and, secondly, the uselessness of such writings when the whole of the Guild knew of the fact of the apprentice being taken by his master, and if any difference, at any time of the apprenticeship should have arisen on the part of either the master or the apprentice, this would be speedily settled by the Master and Wardens of the Guild.

In later days, as at the present time, written Articles of Apprenticeship came into vogue, and these more modern forms doubtless contained provisions adopted from the usages of the old Guilds. Thus the apprentice contracted not to steal his master's goods; to do him good and laudable service; and, most significant of all, not to commit matrimony, and to play at no unlawful game.


One game much used by apprentices, and lawful in England until the year 1849, was

that of cockfighting, which was an old English pastime, indulged in by schoolboys as early as the 13th century on Shrove Tuesdays in particular. Each man provided his own cock, which was armed with spurs, and made to fight in a cockpit on a circular stage, about 20 feet in diameter, covered with matting, and enclosed by a barrier for the spectators. A licence was required to carry on a cockpit, and we have before us one granted in 1706 for an establishment at Newport, Isle of Wight, which states that the holder of it was appointed to keep a house for the exercise of a cockpit, on conditions which are set out. The first is to keep good order, and after that there is one requiring the licensee not to suffer apprentices to play, but only at such times as are allowed by their masters, and not on Sundays. The holder is not to suffer idle and suspicious persons to lurk about to cheat and defraud, but only to use the cockpit for the moderate recreation of civilly-disposed persons, and at seasonable and lawful hours.

Bull baiting was also one of the lawful games for apprentices and others in England until 1835, and this same cockpit in the Isle of Wight was also used for this game until 1759, when the streets were used for the purpose. The bull was often supplied by the Mayor, and when it was killed its flesh was given in charity to the poor, though we devoutly hope it was not found too tough for them, as a fighting bull must have proved somewhat hard to eat.

One point about the descriptions of the Guilds is liable to give rise to some misconception, for they are, one and all, described as being an "art or mystery," and as all had an oath of secrecy, it is natural to assume that the word "mystery" meant secret. It seemed to recall those old bodies in Greece, who conducted in secret their rites, which they called mysteries, the best known of which were the Eleusinian. The word, as used by the Guilds, had, however, a far different meaning, for it came from the French "mestier," or "metier," meaning a trade or craft, and we find the expression "artificers and people of mysteries" used in a statute of the reign of Richard II. This word, which we find spelt indifferently as "misteries," or "mysteries," at last became so hackneyed that it grew to mean the members of the Guilds, and we find the Goldsmiths' Company sending out an invitation to their members for a dinner to be held on 6th February 1707, which reads: "You are invited to meet the rest of the mysteries of Goldsmiths at the Parish Church of St. Lawrence, near the Guildhall, and afterwards to a dinner at the Hall."

The apprentice, having emerged from his course of pupilage, became a craftsman, and a formal member of the Guild, for which privilege he had to pay a fee, which ranged from 3s. 4d. upwards. On this occasion there was also an oath administered to preserve the secrets of the Guild, to which we refer later on in this chapter.



It has been estimated that there were in Edward III.'s reign about 40,000 religious and trade Guilds in England, most of them small, though that of Corpus Christi at York, which was a religious one, had as many as 15,000 members. There were no less than 150 of these Guilds at Bristol, Coventry, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Norwich, and York, amongst which were the Merchants' Company at York, the Guild of St. George at Norwich, the Merchant Adventurers Company at Newcastle, and another of the same name at Bristol, the last two of which still survive.

The Guilds met periodically, some every week, but most of them once a quarter, in their livery; and if they had no proper hall, the members of the various Guilds met at each others' houses in rotation. The property of the Guild was kept in a wooden chest, which was an important item, and was fastened with several locks, the keys of which were kept by several officials. This chest would contain the charter of the Guild, if there happened to be one, with the Guild funds, and the opening of the chest was deemed such a solemn ceremony that everyone present had then to uncover his head. There is an illustration existing of the money-box of the Cordwainers' Guild of Oxford, which dates back to the year 1100, and is of a tub shape, encircled with five iron hoops, and having two locks and a * chain. There are also descriptions of the chests of two Guilds at Cambridge, con-

The chain was usually made fast with a padlock - thus making 3 keys.

tained in their regulations, which provide that the money and goods of the Guild were to be kept in a chest, having two locks and two keys, the latter of which were to be kept by each of the two Aldermen of the Guild. *



CHEST OF TRADE GUILD.

The high day of the year for the Guild was the festival of its patron Saint, and we can well imagine the scene in the town. All the members were attired in a livery of the authorised colour, and met at the Guildhall, from whence they went in procession to attend Mass, celebrated by their Chaplain, at the Guild Chapel in the Parish Church. After that they returned to the hall with their wives and families, where they partook of an ample banquet, which was doubtless prepared by several of the

Usually 3 Asps and Pad-locks; 1 held by the Master - and 1 each by the Senior & Junior

more important members of the Guild at their joint expense, and presided over by the Warden. Dinner having ended, business would be taken in hand, the new Warden for the year elected, and the money in the chest counted, and agreed with the accounts. After that there was morris dancing and singing, unless a miracle play had been arranged to be played by the members of the Guild in the open air. Thus, business was combined with pleasure, and pleasant social relationships established between the fellow traders.

The room where the Guild meetings took place, to accommodate the number of the members, was necessarily a spacious one, and Spenser in his "Fairie Queen," Book 11, Canto 7, written in 1590, has described one of his time :

"The room was large and wide,
As it some Guild or solemn Temple were."

We have seen that in the case of the religious Guilds there was an Alderman as a high official, and we get the same name occurring in the Trade Guilds. Thus, Henry II., in 1180, made a raid on the unauthorised, or adulterine, Guilds of London, and fined 19 of them, each of which, as the Pipe Roll records expressly state, had an Alderman, whose name is given as the offender, instead of the Guild to which he belonged.

The records of subsequent years each show money coming into the Exchequer from

the Guilds, and in 1181 there is a note as follows: "An adulterine Guild, the Alderman and other particulars of which are noted on the 26th roll owe 120s. as a fine, because it was constituted without a warrant." From this note it does not appear that the money in question was actually paid at the time, for in all cases where this was done a note of the settlement is added in the words "Et quieti sunt"; and the virtue of giving credit was obviously not unknown to the State of those days, for, in 1182, there is a note concerning Radulfi Divis de Lideford, who was no doubt the Warden of a Guild which had no warrant, which was fined 34s. for this offence, but as he had only 11s. 4d. in his pocket this was accepted in part payment, while the note adds "and he owes 22s. 8d." though we cannot trace any record as to the recovery of this balance.

In 1348 there is a change of name in the governing powers of the Guilds, for the title of "Master and Wardens" appears, that of "Alderman" having been transferred to the new boroughs, though the head of these is now styled Mayor. It is also to be noted that with the growth of the Guilds their funds also increased, and it was necessary to take greater trouble with the accounts, so that auditors were appointed to assist the Wardens with the figures. The latter, if the town had a Mayor, were brought before him annually, and took an oath to faithfully perform their duties, while disputes between the various

Guilds of the towns were discussed before the Mayor, who settled them.

There is an interesting sidelight on the modes of life of workmen in 1396, when the King granted a pardon to the Barbers of Coventry, who had got up a strike against shaving, unless their prices were raised, making, as the record quaintly says, "the cost of that art so much dearer, to the damage of the whole people." The Coventry barbers anticipated the tactics of the workers of the present days so well that, when one of them, named John Wilnhald, turned blackleg, and dared to shave a scrubby customer, in defiance of the rules of the strikers, he was assaulted and injured. In the end the strikers were condemned to fine and imprisonment, but, the case being presented favourably to the King, Richard II., he was pleased to grant them a pardon.

As these Trade Guilds were so closely allied to the Church, it is no wonder that they joined with the religious Guilds, and took their part in the performance of the mysteries, or miracle plays, on Corpus Christi day. In the British Museum are about fifty manuscripts of some of these plays, performed at Coventry, in 1468; while others performed by the Guilds at York form a series going over the Bible story from the Creation to the Last Judgment, with an additional one on the Coronation of the Virgin Mary.

The Guilds undoubtedly did good work in their day, and exercised a strict vigilance over trade; not only in the interest of the workers, but also of their customers, an important section of which were the priors and monks of the numerous and wealthy monasteries. All things, however, have an end, and signs of decay began to set in after the year 1400; for the Guilds began to lose interest in their work, and aspired to the dignities formerly acquired by the Merchant Guilds. The Crown, seeing how matters were going, thought fit to step in, and an Act was passed in 1437 against the Guilds, declaring that they were not to use any of their regulations or ordinances against the interests of the King, or the common profit of the people. The Guilds got on very well while London had only the importance of a provincial town and trade was dislocated by the Civil Wars of the Roses, but, when quietness was restored, trade revived, and the most important trade, that of wool, dealt in by the Mercers, was the first to be dealt with, and its doors thrown wide open to competition for cheaper prices.

In 1487, an Act was passed, cutting down the powers of the Guild of the Mercers of London, and it was enacted that all traders were to be at liberty to buy and sell in London, without regard to that Guild. This was followed by a Statute of Henry VII., dated 1503, by which the authority of the

Lord Mayor of London to confirm the ordinances of the Guilds there was transferred to the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer, and the Chief Justices at Westminster.

Another important phase of Guild life arose, when craftsmen resolved to set to work in the villages, where no Guilds existed, thus avoiding the Guild regulations. At first, this simply led to idle prohibitions, as, for instance, one forbidding the making of cloth in the villages round Worcester; but it is always useless to try to prohibit what the public find to be of benefit, and, in course of time, the Guilds lost much of their power by the rivalry of these outside workers.

The next reign, of Henry VIII., was one of social revolution, for the Monasteries were disbanded and ecclesiastical property confiscated. This alone must have largely influenced the Guilds, but in course of time they had accumulated property in connection with their religious side, though in the reign of Richard II. the Sheriffs had reported that the Guilds had no property, except their subscriptions. First the larger abbeys and monasteries went, and in 1546 the lesser ones followed; and it was a natural sequence that the ecclesiastical property of the Guilds should eventually also be taken away, as was done by Statute in the last year of Henry's reign, though in 1544 he had borrowed money of them.

The Act in question was described as one "for the dissolution of colleges, chantries, and free-chapels." As, however, the King was ill at the time, nothing effectual was done till the succeeding reign of Edward VI., when another Act was passed for the same purpose, vesting in the King all colleges and chantries, which had not before been seized, including all payments by Corporations, misteries, or crafts made by them for priests, obits for the dead, and lamps for chantry services. This might have left the trading part of the Guilds still standing, but they became disheartened, and slowly faded away. One remained at Preston, in Lancashire, while the larger Guilds in London, as we are told by Stow, managed to buy back their rights from the King, for about £18,000, and a similar body, which had the same good fortune, was that of the Merchant Taylors' Guild at Bristol.

The admissions to the Guilds were intended to be invested with dignity and solemnity, and, in the case of an apprentice, this was sealed by administering to him a solemn oath. The form of this, as used by the Mercers' Company, was inquired into by virtue of the Act of Henry VII., and sealed by the Lord Chancellor and by the Chief Justice of England and the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in 1504, and is as follows :—

"Ye shall swear that ye shall be true unto our liege Lord, the King, and to his

heirs, Kings. Also ye shall swear that well and truly to your power ye shall serve your Master during the term of your apprenticeship. And ye shall hold and perform the covenants in your indenture of apprenticeship contained. Also ye shall hold steadfastly, secretly and for counsel all and every the lawful ordinances, whatsoever they be, to the Craft or occupation of the Mercery belonging, and, as much as in you is, every of them, ye shall observe hold and keep, and not to break, discover, open or shew any of them to any person, but unto such as unto the fellowship of the Mercery is here according to this oath sworn. And that ye shall not depart out and from the said fellowship for to serve, not to be accompanied with any manner of person of any other company, fellowship, occupation or craft, whereby any prejudice, hurt, or harm may grow or be unto the fellowship of the Mercery, or any of the secrets thereof thereby to be discovered or known. So help you God, and all Saints, and by this Book."

The next oath is "for him that hath served his years, and desireth to be free," which means of course the oath taken by the craftsman on formally entering the Guild as a full member, and it proceeds thus:—

"Ye shall swear that ye shall be true unto our liege Lord the King, and to his heirs, Kings. Ye shall also be obedient and ready

to come to all lawful summonance and warnings of the Wardens of the Mercery when, and as often as, ye be duly monished and warned by them, or by any of them, by their beadle, or by any other in their name, lawful excuse always exempt. All lawful ordinances and rules by the fellowship of the Mercery ordained, made, and stablished, and hereafter for the weal, worship and profit of the said fellowship to be made, ye shall hold and keep. All lawful communications, necessary ordinances, and counsels for the welfare of the said fellowship, and the secrets thereof to you shewed, ye shall keep secret and hold for council, and them nor any of them to discover or shew by any means or colour unto any person or any other fellowship. Ye shall also be contributory to all charges to you put by the Wardens and by the Fellowship, and to bear and pay your part of charges set for your degree, like as others of the same fellowship shall do for their degree. Moreover, ye shall not depart out of the said fellowship for to serve, nor ye shall not accompany you with any person of any other fellowship, through whom prejudice and hurt may in any wise grow to the fellowship of the Mercery. And over this ye shall swear that during the time of your service ye shall neither buy nor sell for your own self, nor for any other person, nor that ye shall receive any goods or merchandizes by any colour belonging to any other person than only to your Master that ye now serve, or shall serve within the fellowship of the Mercery, except by his special license

and will. Also that ye shall not take any shop, house, chamber, cellar, nor warehouse by any colour for to occupy, buying and selling unto such time as that ye have been with the Wardens of the Mercery for the time being, and by one of them for shopholder admitted sworn and entered. Nor that ye shall take or have any apprentice or any so for to occupy until that he be by you unto one of the said Wardens for apprentice first presented, and by the said Wardens so admitted. Also such points, and every of them to your power well and truly ye shall hold and keep. So help you God, and this book."

The faithful apprentice might be selected by his Master to go abroad for him to sell his goods, or make contracts, and here was another opportunity when the sanction of religion might help to keep the man honest. So a further form of obligation was devised to fit this occasion, and we have "an oath for the apprentice and fellowes that goeth over sea for their masters."

"Ye shall swear that ye shall be true unto our liege Lord, the King, and to his heirs, Kings. Ye shall also well and truly serve your Master according to the covenant between you made. Also ye shall not buy or sell any manner of goods for your own self, nor for or to the behoof of any other manner person, but by consent, will and agreement of your said Master, nor by any cautel or subtle means shall colour or convey any money, jewels,

goods or merchandises of or for any such servant in prejudice and hurt of your said Master, or for any other person of our said fellowship of the Mercery, nor that ye shall not accompany you with any manner person as in communicating the secrets of our occupation, but with such as be under obeisance of our said fellowship. Nor that ye shall take any chamber, cellar, warehouse, or packhouse with any manner person, together for to occupy, buy, sell, sack, or pack, or willingly suffer any person to be with you present at buying of any mercenary ware, but such of our said fellowship as are free or under the obeisance of the same. Also ye shall make and yield unto our said Master, or to his deputy or attorney, at all and every time lawfully required, true account and reckoning of all such goods as that ye for him have received, had or bought, and for him shall receive, buy, or have, and of the true costs also therefore spent and paid, without any increase by you thereof, to have or any advantage thereby to take and have, as of measure, 'makelardy,' or otherwise, against truth, conscience and good rule. Also ye shall not play at dice, cards, tennis, nor at any other sports, or plays, to any prejudice hurt or harm of your said Master. And that ye shall also obey and observe all your Master's lawful commands as well by writing as in saying to you by mouth. And that ye shall not permit or become surety, or set any seal for any manner person, but for your said Master, only except by his special license and will. And if any

person, servant of our said fellowship, by you now, or at any time hereafter, known offending in any the premises, that ye thereof shortly, as soon after as that ye well may, either by mouth or writing to give knowledge unto one of the Wardens of the Mercery. All which points, and every of them, to your power, well and truly ye shall observe and perform. So help you God, and all Saints, and by this Book."

The next Oath is for the Master, who is about to take up a shop for himself so as to sell goods by retail, and his obligations are as follows :—

"Ye shall swear that ye shall be true unto our Lord the King, and to his heirs, Kings. Also ye shall swear that ye shall keep sad and good governance in your own person and your servants, and also ye shall be obedient and ready at all lawful callings and summonses of the Custoses and Wardens for the time being, and to every of them. And that ye, nor none in your name, buy, nor sell, nor do to be bought nor sold, within the city nor without, any manner of wares of any person, servant, apprentice nor lowes, but if the good and the avail thereof, if any, he grow properly to the use of the master of the foresaid servant, apprentice or lowes. And also that ye shall not receive, colour, nor convey from those parts of England over the sea, nor from those parts into these parts, no manner of merchandizes that any such apprentice, or

lowes, buyeth, selleth, sendeth, or occupieth to his own use, without special license known and had to his Master. Also that ye take none apprentice, but that ye first present him unto the Wardens, or to one of them, and to you admitted. Also, if ye know any person doing the contrary to this ordinance and oath, ye shall shew and open it, or do it to be shewed and opened to the Custoses and Wardens for the time being, or to one of them, within eight days after such knowledge had if ye may come to them, or else as soon as ye goodly may. So help you God, and All Hallows, and by this Book.”

The last form of obligation used was an oath for strangers admitted unto the fellowship, and it ran thus:—

“Ye shall swear that ye shall be faithful and true unto our liege Lord and King, and to his heirs, Kings. Also ye shall be true and faithful unto the fellowship of the Mercery, and their counsel keep in all things requisite that shall be shewed unto you, and upon a reasonable warning as ye may attend to come to all lawful courts and assemblies. Also ye shall be contributory to all charges to you put by the Wardens and Fellowship, and to bear and pay your part of charge set for your degree, like as other of the same fellowship shall do for their degree. All such points, and every of them, to your power well and truly ye shall hold and keep. So help you God and all Saints.”

It will be noted that in each form of oath the concluding words have a peculiarity of their own, but obviously the only reason was to give each an individual touch, and to banish anything like monotony.

Most of the early Trade Guild Charters bear a strong resemblance, though some have longer regulations than others, and an interesting one is that granted by Edward IV. on 17th November 1466 to the Tailors of Exeter, which states that "the King, for himself, his heirs and successors, enabled his lieges of the Craft of Tailors in Exeter to establish a Guild of the Craft," but here the draftsman apparently had his doubts as to the real necessity of any Charter, and he qualifies the grant by the words, "so far as he (the King) has power." The Guild was empowered to choose a Master and four Wardens, and for the members to wear a livery, to have feasts, and to make such regulations as they thought best.

The Guild was to be a corporation with a seal, and be controlled by the Master and Wardens, who were to amend the misdoings of the members, and their servants in trade. Then follows the important rule, still existing with the London Companies, that no one should have a board or shop of that craft, unless also free of the City; and no one was to be allowed to join the Guild, unless known to be of good character and faithful. The Master and Wardens were given a general control over the Craft of Tailors, and over

others joining the Guild. The connection which was in those days sought to be established between the Guilds of a City and its governing body is brought out in the next clause of this Charter, which gives the Master and Wardens power to fine offenders "with the consent of the Mayor of the City for the time being"; though to prevent any difficulty arising on this matter, in case some inferior officials of the Guild sought to usurp these powers, it is clearly stated that no one else should have such control, except the Master and his Warden, or the Mayor and his deputies.

We also, in this case, have preserved the form of the oaths which were to be taken by the members, by which they promised to be true to the fraternity; to obey the Master and Wardens; not to disclose the affairs of the craft; not to encourage strangers; to show the indentures of their apprentices to the Guild; and further, the oath went on, "Ye shall at the end of his term bring him to the Master and Wardens that he may take charge of the craft, like as ye do now." The obligation proceeded to require the member not to hire or entice away any workman or apprentice; not to take a shop till admitted as a freeman; not to procure or incite any customer to withdraw from his Master, nor from any brother of the craft; nor to leave the Guild, but to uphold it according to the estate of the member, and when he died to leave the Guild a legacy; while it concluded,

“and you shall sue no man of this craft without license of the Master for the time being.”

A still existent part of the admission of a freeman of a City Company is the taking of an oath before the Master, Wardens and Court, which is founded on the old lines of the Guilds, as witness that for the Coopers in use from very old days, and the present form of which is dated 1741. It runs:—“You do sincerely promise and swear that you will be faithful and true allegiance bear to His Majesty the King. You shall in all honest and lawful matters be obedient to the Master and Wardens of the Fellowship of Coopers within the City of London for the time being, and obedient and ready to come to the lawful warnings given you on the behalf of the said Master and Wardens, except you have a reasonable excuse, without feigning or delay. And you shall observe and keep and to the best of your power cause to be observed and kept all lawful ordinances and statutes made for the good rule and politic guiding of the said Fellowship. You shall also keep all the lawful secrets of the said Fellowship, and all such lawful things as by way of counsel in communication at any day of assembly amongst the said Fellowship shall be holden by the said Master and Wardens and Fellowship, and not disclose the same to any person of the same Fellowship and especially to any such person whom the same matter doth or in anywise may touch. So help you God.”

We have preserved to us the forms of obligation used by the Tailors' Guild at Exeter, that for the new craftsman being as follows:—"Ye shall swear that ye shall be good and true to the fraternity of St. John the Baptist of Tailors within the City of Exeter. Ye shall not withstand or disobey the Master and Wardens for the time being, but thereto be obedient at all times without reasonable excuse. Ye shall not discover the counsel of the brotherhood or of the Craft, that ye have knowledge of, that should be secret within ourselves." It proceeds with promises not to encourage any stranger to dwell within the franchise of the craft; to show to the Wardens the indentures of apprentices, and to bring them into the craft at the end of the terms; not to lure or entice away any worker or apprentice; not to take a shop till admitted by the Master and Wardens; not to withdraw from his master, or any brother of the craft, any of their customers; not to leave the Guild, but to uphold it, according to his ability, and when he died to leave it a legacy; also not to sue any brother of the craft without the license of the Master.

There are examples of the discipline of the Exeter Guild, for one customer complained to the Master and Wardens that he had given cloth to a craftsman to make into a gown, but that part of it was wanting. The case was carefully gone into, when the Master and Wardens found that no cloth had been

stolen, but that some had been wasted by the tailor's lack of skill, so poetic justice was done by ordering the tailor to pay for the cloth, he being allowed to keep the gown himself.

In Hull the Guilds were authorised by warrant, termed a "composicion," from the Mayor. The earliest of these documents is dated 1470, that of the Plasterers and Tilers bearing date 1598. They begin: "To all Christian people to whom the present Indenture of composicion shall come," and have the usual ordinances for the moral guidance of the guildsmen. Apprentices were ordered to serve for seven years, and to ensure their due training in the craft no master was to have more than one apprentice till the first had served four years of his time, and to ensure good behaviour the master was ordered always to bring his apprentice to church with him. The Guild was ruled by a Warden, who had power to inflict fines on members resorting to alehouses during working hours, or being disorderly at, or absent from, meetings of the Guild, and there was the usual rule requiring members to attend the funerals of deceased brethren.

At Newcastle was the Ancient Guild of Masons, which was constituted in 1581 as a body corporate, with power to choose two Wardens. It had the usual rules as to apprentices and against the admission of Scotsmen, and there was an express ordinance as to the mystery plays on Corpus Christi day,

when the members were required to perform "The burial of our Lady Mary the Virgin"; and with a view to the benefit of the town, it was also ordered that the fines inflicted on members should be divided, half going to the Guild, while the other half was to be spent on the repair of the great bridge across the Tyne.

In most towns it was only the large Guilds which were allowed to take part in the government of the place, and for this reason it sometimes occurred that several Guilds would unite. Thus at Reading there were five such Guilds composed of members of several trades, while Andover possessed three Guilds, those of the Leathersellers, Drapers and Haberdashers, the last of which included amongst its members those of such scattered trades as Mercers, Grocers, Innholders, Vintners, Bakers, Brewers, Smiths, Cappers, Barbers, Painters and Glaziers. At so large a town as Hull one of the Guilds comprised Goldsmiths, Pewterers, Plumbers, Glaziers, Painters, Cutlers, Musicians, Stationers, Bookbinders and Basketmakers; while another comprised Bricklayers, Tilers, Wallers, Plasterers and Paviers. Again at York the smaller Guilds, which had no hall of their own, were allowed in 1554 by the Corporation of the city to assemble in the great chamber of St. Anthony's Hall.

All the City Companies of which we shall treat later have their own coats of arms, and

in many cases the Trade Guilds acquired one of their own, which they emblazoned on the banners borne before them in processions and at funerals of members. The Guild of St. Michael on the Hill, Lincoln, amongst its ordinances had one on this point as follows:—"The banner of the Guild shall be brought to the house of the dead, and there openly shown that men may know that the dead was a brother or sister of the Guild; and the banner shall be carried, with a great torch burning, from the house of the dead before the body to the church."

The London apprentice, amongst his other duties, some of them domestic, had to help in his master's shop, and historical fiction has oftentimes called them in aid, when describing riots and street quarrels, as being a body which could be easily gathered together on the sound of any tumult in the City. Lytton in his "Last of the Barons" deals with the days of Edward IV., and introduces as a character an apprentice to a goldsmith; while Dick Whittington, as we know, was a real character, and in 1483, the first year of Richard III., he was apprenticed to a mercer, Fitzalwyn.

With Shakespeare they were familiar figures, for he in "Richard II.," Act I., Sc. 3, introduces this passage:—

" Must I serve a long apprenticeship
To foreign passages, and in the end,
Having my freedom, boast of nothing else
But that I was a journeyman to grief."

Scott, in his "Fortunes of Nigel," bases a full note upon them thus:—"Confiding in their numbers and convictions the apprentices of London were often seduced into taking liberty with the passengers and exercising their wit at the expense of those whom they had no hopes of converting into customers by their eloquence. If this was resisted by any act of violence, then the inmates of each shop were ready to pour forth in succour, and in the words of old song which Dr. Johnson was used to hum—

“ ‘Up then rose the ’prentices all
Living in London both proper and tall.’

“Desperate riots often arose on such occasions, especially when the Templars or other youths connected with the aristocracy were insulted or conceived themselves to be so. Upon such occasions bare steel was frequently opposed to the clubs of the citizens, and death sometimes ensued on both sides. The tardy and inefficient police of the time had no other resource than by the Alderman of the ward calling out the householders and putting a stop to the strife by overpowering numbers.”

In the days of Elizabeth the powers of the Guilds were obviously waning, and as it was felt that they should be assisted by Acts of Parliament, several, as we have seen, were passed. Amongst other matters it was found that men were trying to attain a knowledge of their craft by entering into trades by other

doors than the ancient ones of apprenticeship, and to stop such new notions the Act of Apprentices was passed in 1562, by which it was enacted that no person should in future exercise any trade, craft or mystery, at that time carried on in England, unless he had previously served an apprenticeship to it of seven years. Legislation which is not in favour with the public is generally useless, and this Act shared the fate of similar ones in being ignored very largely, the judges giving to it as narrow an interpretation as they could, while in 1814 it was formally repealed.

With the constant presence of the Chaplain in these Guilds we are not surprised to find that religion largely figured in their proceedings, which were often conducted in the Guild chapel. In most churches, the chancel faced the east, for at their building it was a usual custom for the Bishop, with various local celebrities, to meet the master builder and his craftsmen at dawn, and set up a rod at the east end of the site. Then followed praying and singing, until the sun cast the shadow of the rod on the ground, and the axis of the building was thus fixed. Oftentimes this ceremony took place on the feast day of the Patron Saint of the church, so that all churches would not have quite the same orientation.

This practice was not always strictly adhered to by the Roman Catholic Church, but whatever the actual direction of the

chancel it was always deemed to point to the east, and the same thing was observed in the chapels, which actually faced different ways. The craftsmen thus formed the idea that the building in which they were carrying on their Guild ceremonies always faced east, and when these bodies merged afterwards into the modern body of Freemasons they in turn adopted the idea of their lodges facing east and west.

In addition to this the Guildsmen, as devout Roman Catholics, used the sign of the Cross when they entered their Guild Chapel, and in time they appear to have adopted this as a sign amongst them.

CHAPTER V.

THE LONDON GUILDS.

The Guilds were always, as we have seen, confined to town-life, and when attempts were made to carry on trades in the villages, where labour was cheaper, protests were made to the Crown, and the trades were brought back again to the busier centres. We must not, however, think of these tradesmen as the busy people of modern days, employing a large staff of workmen, for it is clear that all the tradesmen of the middle ages worked with their own hands; and as luxuries, indeed even the most elementary comforts of home, were then almost lacking, the busy hands of the trader's wife were not required to attend to any housework, save the care of the children and the cooking of the modest meals. Hence, with time at her disposal, she had the opportunity of joining her husband in carrying on his daily work, the details of which she would necessarily learn from being always with him in the shop on the ground floor, the room above that being the sleeping apartment. She was therefore eligible as a member of the trading Guild, and after the husband's death she would carry on the business with her children, so that in this way trade ran in families. Even when a new apprentice came into the trade, he soon became one of his master's family, lived in his master's house, and

performed many household as well as trade duties.

When we apply these conditions to the City of London, we must think of its citizens as growing in wealth and influence quicker than the inhabitants of the country towns, because they were in closer touch with the wealthier merchants of the day, and amenable both to the refining influences of the Court and of the educated men around them. As to wealth, London, as far back as Canute's time, was in a premier position, for out of a total revenue to the State of £82,000, London contributed as much as £15,000, and later on, during the days of Stephen, in the 12th century, the Bishop of Winchester told the citizens of that city that they were to be accounted as noblemen on account of the greatness of their city, into the community of which even Barons had been proud to be received.

Apart from these signs of dignified wealth, there were trading guilds of workers which we know to-day as City Companies, most of which started as voluntary societies, without any leave from the Crown; for it will be remembered that no less than 18 of them were fined in 1180, as not having been properly founded, though they still continued to exist after that, with all their errors of birth. We must remember that up to the Tudor period, London was the great manufacturing centre, for it was there, and in its

suburbs, that the principal industries took place of cloth making, iron smelting, and the manufacture both of armour and bows and of goods in silk, leather, gold, and silver.

The first body in the nature of a Guild in London was the old Saxon "Frith Guild," formed for the preservation of peace, each male person above 14 years of age having to give security for his peaceable behaviour in days when rebellion and deeds of violence were everyday matters. This Guild, of course, died out as customs changed, and the next similar association in London was the "Knighten Guild," a body with old-day traditions, reminding us of the times of King Arthur, which was said to have been founded by King Edgar, in the 10th century, by a brotherhood of 13 knights, who had to do chivalrous deeds, by fighting once above ground, once underground, and a third time in the water, and to prove the victor each time. In addition to this, they had to contend at ~~West~~ Smithfield, near the Tower, with spears against all comers. For these services a piece of ground was allotted to them in Portsoken Ward near Aldgate, and a Charter, written in Anglo-Saxon, was granted them by Edward the Confessor, and confirmed by William II., which begins thus:—"Know ye me to have granted the men of Knighten Guild, the Guild that belonged to them, and the land that belonged thereunto; with all customs as they had in the time of King Edward and

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my father." Afterwards, this Guild seems to have become a religious one, and their lands were given to the Church of Holy Trinity at Aldgate. Two other Guilds with a similar name existed, at the same time, in Winchester and at Canterbury.

In dealing with the powers of the City authorities over the Guilds, we must bear in mind that for 13 years from 1285 the City of London lost its franchise, and was in the King's hands, so that it could not during that time exercise any rule over the Guilds. In 1298, however, the City made the *amende honorable* by voting the King, Edward I., a sum of money on his return with the army from France, when he again restored its privileges with the power of electing its own Mayor.

The Guilds in London assumed to divide themselves into two classes, viz., those which claim to have been founded before the days of William I., when the City got its charter, and those which came into existence afterwards. The former claimed to be independent of the City authorities, but the latter were subject, like other Guilds in country towns, to the oversight of the civic authorities, exercised in London by the Court of Aldermen; and the various old records kept at the Guildhall in London, and known as "Letter Books," marked with the letters of the alphabet, A to L, contain many references to the matter.

From these books we learn that there were at least four forms of oversight exercised by the City over the Guilds. First, it was on several occasions made the agent of the Crown to enquire into the Charters of the Guilds. Second, the newly elected Masters each year had to attend at the Guildhall, and take an oath of office before the Mayor. Third, the City Corporation possessed powers to approve the ordinances of the Guilds, and to revoke such as they deemed irregular; and fourthly, they went into the question as to the powers of the guildsmen to elect the Common Council.

On the first point we find that in 1378 the Mayor, Nicholas Brembre, with the Aldermen and Common Council, having obtained the assent of some of the misteries, ordered that all Masters who had Charters for the governance of their misteries should surrender them to the Mayor and Chamberlain of the City. All the misteries appear to have complied with this order, except the Fishmongers, who sent certain useless patents, but were ordered to immediately deliver up the others. This was done for the purposes of the City Corporation, but it was only a prelude to a similar move on the part of the Crown, for in 1388, in Richard II.'s days, there came from the King a writ, addressed to the Mayor and Sheriffs, to make proclamation for all Masters, Wardens, and Surveyors of misteries and crafts in the City and suburbs to bring unto the King's Chancery all their charters.

There seems to have been but a poor response to this writ, though the Barbers' Company have preserved their return to it. A second writ was in the same year also issued referring to guilds and fraternities of religious and social bodies, to which a larger return was made.

On this point of Charters, it has often been thought by bodies which wished to be considered of old lineage that at one time they had a Charter which had become lost, and this line of argument was helped from time to time by divers expedients, amongst which one is outlined by a MS. dated 1397 which has come to light, and states that "after the presentation of the said supplication from the citizens to the King there were made many blank Charters, and all the men of every craft of the said city were charged to come to the Guildhall to set their seals to the said blank Charters."

On the second point, as to the oath of the Master taken annually before the Mayor, it will be found that on the fly-leaf of Letter Book D is set out the form of oath taken by that officer, who is curiously enough designated by the more familiar title of Warden. The oath is given in French, and is to the following effect:—

"Ye shall swear that ye shall well and truly oversee the craft of ——— whereof ye be chosen Warden for the year. And all the good rules and ordinances of the same craft

that have been approved here by the Court, and none other, ye shall keep, and do to be kept. And all the defaults that ye find in the same craft and done, to the Chamberlain of the City for the time being ye shall well and truly present, sparing no man for favour, nor grieving no person for hate. Extortion, nor wrong, under colour of your office ye shall not do; neither to nothing that shall be against the state, peace and profit of our Sovereign Lord the King, or to the City ye shall not consent, but for the time that ye shall be in office in all things that shall belong unto the same craft after laws and franchises of the said City well and lawfully ye shall have you. So help you God and all Saints."

In each year there is a record with dates of the months when the newly obligated Masters appeared before the Mayor "to govern their misteries, and present defects to the Mayor, Aldermen and Chamberlain."

On the third point, as to the approval of the ordinances of the Guilds, we find that in 1364 it was ordained by the Mayor and Aldermen that "all misteries of the City be lawfully ruled and governed, each in its kind by good men elected and sworn from each mistery, so that no deceit or false work be found therein."

Further, in 1420, as stated in Letter Book I, disputes arose amongst members of the mistery of Cutlers as to the mode of

election of Master, which was ordered to be settled by the arbitration of two members of the Mercers' Guild appointed by the Mayor. In the course of the discussion the amount of fines levied by the Cutlers came to light, and the Mayor promptly claimed a portion of these, besides ordering that all ordinances contained in the book of the Cutlers which had not been sanctioned by the Court of Aldermen should be annulled. In conformity with this the Cutlers' Guild submitted certain fresh ordinances for the approval of the Mayor and Aldermen, amongst which were provisions that the Master and Wardens should be authorised to summon all persons using the mystery within the City, whether they were of the livery and clothing of the mystery or not, and to charge them to keep all the ordinances of the mystery approved by the Court of Aldermen, and that every freeman and woman of the mystery should answer any summons of that body speedily under the penalty of twelve pence.

Again it was ordained, in 1487, by the Mayor and Aldermen that the Wardens of Misteries should thenceforth make no ordinance unless the same were approved by the Mayor and Aldermen for the time being; whereupon, it is stated, the Wardens of divers misteries brought in their books of ordinances that had not been approved by the Court of Aldermen, and those were cancelled, and the leaves of the books in which they were recorded were cut out.

On the fourth point, as to the powers of the Guilds to elect members of the Common Council, it appears that at all events up to 1347 the Common Council was elected from the Wards, as is done to-day, but after that the Guilds desired to take this power to themselves. Accordingly, in 1351, a precept was sent to each Guild as follows:—

“Assemble the good men of the said mystery, and cause them to elect, by common consent, four good men of the said mystery, the wisest and most able to treat with the Mayor, Aldermen and Sheriffs of certain important business touching the state of the said City.”

This was out of the ordinary course, and after a time disputes arose as to it, for in 1376 there is a letter from the King under the Privy Seal to the Mayor as to dissensions which had taken place as to this mode of election of Mayor, Aldermen and Sheriffs, and the manner of making ordinances. To this the City made an answer that in future such elections should be made by the Guilds, and this course was pursued till 1383, when the old powers of the wards were restored to them.

Of course every Guild at first was governed only by ordinances, and it is interesting to watch their growth till they attained to the dignity of possessing a Charter. On this point Stow, in his “Survey of London,” sets out the names of 69 Guilds and Companies which, in 1531, attended at the Mayor’s feast

at the Guildhall, beginning with the Mercers, and ending with the Bladesmiths, concerning which he adds, "these Companies severally, at sundry times, purchased the King's favour and license, by his Letters Patent, to associate themselves in brotherhoods, with Masters and Wardens for their government; many also have procured corporations, with privileges, &c."

Thus the Cordwainers got their ordinances first passed in 1271, which served them well till 1439, when they obtained their charter; and similarly the Armourers and Braisers in 1322 obtained their ordinances, while the charter was deferred till 1453. The Cutlers' ordinance bears date 1344, and their charter 1415; while the Coopers in 1396 got their ordinances and their charter in 1501. The Masons, as the records in the Guildhall show, under the name of "the Art or Mistery of the Masons of the City of London," came into the Court of Aldermen and prayed that certain articles for the better regulation of the mistery might be approved, which was done. These included one to the effect that within 10 days of the feast of the Holy Trinity, the Freemen of the Guild should assemble to choose two Wardens for the two years next ensuing, such new Wardens to be presented by the old Wardens, and six other members of the craft for approval, and to be formally sworn in before the Aldermen at the Guildhall, with a fine of 40s. in case of refusal to accept the office.

The regulations went on to declare that no one was to be admitted into the craft till after examination by the Wardens, and there was also a regulation that the members should wear the livery of the craft under a penalty of 6*s.* 8*d.*, while another provided that members should attend Mass at Christchurch, Aldgate, and put one penny in the collecting box, being clad uniformly in their livery, and afterwards attend with their wives at a dinner, for which they were to pay 1*s.* for themselves and 8*d.* for their wives, with a fine of 3*s.* 4*d.* for omitting this social function. This Mass and dinner was held once every two years, the date being fixed by the Wardens, but in addition to this the members were every year on Quatuor Coronati Day, 8th November, the feast day of the Patron Saints of the Guild, to attend Mass under a fine of a shilling.



ARMS OF THE MASONS' COMPANY.

In 1472 the Masons' Guild obtained a grant of their well-known coat of arms, while in

1677 Charles II. granted them their Charter, under which their chief officer, styled "the Master Mason of England," was to help the King, by providing Masons, members of the Company, to erect forts, towers and fortifications when required.

The Guilds of London fall conveniently into several distinct trade groups, and we shall best describe them under the headings of the Textile Trade Guilds, the Metal Trade Guilds, the Leather Trade Guilds, the Provision Trade Guilds, and the Building Trade Guilds.

The Textile Trade Guilds.

Amongst the City Guilds, which in 1423 numbered as many as 111, afterwards reduced to about 90, we shall expect to find several connected with the woollen industry, the staple trade of England, and there are no less than five of this nature, viz., the Mercers, Merchant Taylors, Drapers, Haberdashers and Cloth Workers, and amongst the lesser ones are those of the Dyers and the Weavers.

The beginning of the Mercers' Guild runs back to a time of which the memory of moderns has no knowledge, from which fact we may well imagine that in its origin the Guild was very small. It was not one of those which were fined in 1180 as being "adulterine," either because it was not then in existence or because it actually held then the permission of the King.

The name of Mercer seems to have been taken from the old French word "mercier," which, in its turn, came from the Latin word "mercator," both meaning, simply, a merchant. The Guild included traders, who dealt in those goods which are now bought in a "general shop," and which could be weighed in small scales, and did not require a heavy beam for that purpose. These articles were haberdashery and dress materials, while later on silk was included when that was imported from France; but, oddly enough, spices and other articles of household use are also mentioned. By 1214, a member of this Guild became Mayor of London, and after that date many of the Grocers', Goldsmiths' and Woolstaplers' Companies also attained to that dignity. The Mercers' Guild apparently in time decayed, and in 1347 it was reorganised with a body of the usual Guild rules, providing for the settlement of disputes by the Wardens without recourse to law, regulations as to apprentices, and, in addition, a rule that the Mystery should appear at Easter every year in their livery, so that all the members were thus dressed alike.

In 1393 it had funds in its wooden chest, and, for an outlay of £87, it got a further charter in which its members were described as "men of the Mystery of Mercery in the City of London." As was inevitable, in due time land and houses were bequeathed to it by wealthy members, and for another modest

outlay the Crown was persuaded to give it another warrant, this time a license in mortmain to hold lands to the value of £26 per year. The name of the Company, though well known, fades into comparative insignificance against the name of one of its members, Sir Richard Whittington, who served as Master, or Warden, on seven occasions, and four times held the office of Lord Mayor of London, dying in 1423. Two years later the Guild got its second charter from Henry VI., which stated in the ponderous tones of an "inspeximus," as it was called, that the previous charter had been inspected and confirmed, and also gave the Guild power to use a seal for ratifying its acts. In 1467, Edward IV., himself a merchant, was in the usual position of Kings of those days, needing money to carry on his wars, and the Mercers' Guild lent him £370, for which the King granted it a charter, enabling it to import all the merchandise it traded in, except wool and hides, without paying any custom duty.

The Mercers' Guild felt that they had power on the Continent as well as at home, and it seems that they had in Henry VII.'s day made other English traders, doing business in Flanders and Holland, pay a fine for so doing, which they attempted to justify as being the representatives in some undefined way of a fraternity of St. Thomas of Canterbury. Accordingly an Act known as the Statute of Merchant-Adventurers was

passed in 1496, ordaining that Englishmen should be at liberty to buy and sell in those countries without any fine being imposed upon them.

In 1504 was passed the Act of Henry VII. concerning Guilds, which required them to submit their qualifications to the Lord Chancellor, which drew from the Mercers' Company a full disclosure of its organisation, which was engrossed in a Deed Poll. Its contents are extremely interesting, for they set out in full the byelaws of the Guild, and the words of the obligations taken by its members and apprentices, which sheds interesting light on the customs of the other Guilds of those days, and to which we have referred in our chapter on the "Trade Guilds." Another important member of the Mercers' Company, to whom we must refer, was Sir Thomas Gresham, who lived in Bishopsgate Street, where he received Queen Elizabeth when she came to the City to open the Royal Exchange, built for the merchants of the City. He died in 1579, and was buried at Great St. Helen's Church, Bishopsgate.

Another of the twelve great Companies is that of the Merchant Taylors, which originally was the Guild and fraternity of St. John Baptist, and whose origin is lost in the early Norman days. In 1300 Edward I. granted it a charter of confirmation by the name of "The Guild of the Tailors and Linen-Armourers," with power to hold a feast at Midsummer, on

their patron Saint's day, 24th June, when they could appoint a Master and Wardens.

In 1482 the Guild, like other similar bodies, longed to possess a coat of arms of its own, and accordingly applied for, and obtained from the King of Arms such a grant. Several Kings, from time to time, were claimed as being honorary members of the Guild, and undoubtedly Henry VII. belonged to it, and he appears to have been the first to ratify the ambitions of a City Guild to change its name, and become a Company. The Charter he granted for this purpose sets out that the business of the members of the Guild was to buy and sell all wares and merchandises, especially of woollen cloth, and in consideration of their successful business qualities they were stated to be translated from being a Guild into a corporation, by the name of "The Master and Wardens of Merchant Tailors of the Fraternity of St. John Baptist in the City of London."

The Drapers got their charter in 1300, the same year that the Merchant Tailors had theirs, while another charter followed in 1304, when in conjunction with other London Guilds, the Drapers gave money to Edward III. for his French wars. This charter shows that the Drapers were engaged in making, as well as selling, clothes, and it was followed by other charters in the reigns of Henry II. and Edward IV. Apparently for some time the Guild did not rise to its religious duties, as the

others had done; for, in 1459, a generous benefactor, Simon Eyre, tried, but ineffectually, to rouse sentiment by making a bequest to them of 3,000 marks to establish a Master or Warden, with five priests, six clerks and two choristers to sing a daily service in his chapel at the Leaden Hall, though Stow in his "Survey of London" adds a sorrowful note that this programme was never carried out.

The Drapers' Guild did not touch upon the manufacturing branch of the business, but confined its interests to those who traded in drapery goods. In the 13th century they dealt mainly with imported foreign cloth, but after 1350 they turned their attention to home manufactured goods, and a century later found this class of trade was also being taken up by the Merchant Tailors and Clothworkers. Like other Guilds they, in time, gave way to the admission of outsiders to their body, and we find that from 1475 onwards a fluctuating number of non-liverymen were invited to their dinners and paid their quarterage fees to the Guild. It took its part in national affairs as a moneyed body, for in Elizabethan days it was called upon to buy and store corn in times of necessity; to raise troops and privateer vessels; and to subscribe to State loans and lotteries.

The distinction between the two Guilds of the Drapers and Merchant Taylors seems to have been that, whereas the latter body dealt

mostly in linen goods, taking the title of "Linen Armourers," the Drapers dealt in woollen goods. When the latter trade began to feel a slackness, in the days of Charles II., a curious impetus was sought to be given to it by the enactment of an Act in 1678, requiring dead bôdies to be buried in wool instead of linen shrouds.

The Haberdashers, also known as "the Hurrers," was an offshoot of a Merchants' Association, known as "the Guild of Catherine and St. Nicholas," which eventually obtained a charter in 1448. The Cappers' or Hat Merchants' trade became absorbed into this Guild, as a matter of trade convenience, in the days of Henry VIII.

The Clothworkers Company comes next, and is a combination of the Guild of the Shearmen, who sheared the wool from the sheep, and that of the Fullers, who bleached it. The Shearman's Guild was one of the eighteen fined in 1180 as being adulterine, and in the Latin of the Exchequer Rolls it is called "Pannarii." The Fullers' trade was supervised by the Crown, in the interests of the workers, and in 1404 a regulation was made that fulling should not be done carelessly, by treading wool with the feet, but was to be carried out by hand. The two bodies were brought together in 1528, and it is strange to find a Guild Charter being granted as late as the days of Henry VIII., only to be revoked nineteen years later, when all the

Guilds were disbanded and their property appropriated.

The Dyers were not a large body, and were somewhat on the same level as the Shearmen and Fullers, for all these bodies had to deal with the preparation of the wool before it was actually manufactured. We find them existing as a Guild in 1426, and there is further reference to them in 1473 as then consisting of a Warden and Commonalty. In 1516 they had a dispute with the Clothworkers, as to which body had the precedence in honour, which was settled by the Lord Mayor, who put the Dyers last.

The Weavers were always an important body, for their goods went farther abroad than those of other Guilds, and we find a charter of Henry II. in 1164 granting to the Weavers of London their right to meet in a Guild, with all the freedoms they had in the time of Henry I., the grandfather of the then King, which carries the matter back to 1100. For some reason it was deemed necessary to have a confirmation of this charter in 1185, but, as a foreign trade was springing up, which it was deemed necessary to suppress, it was specially ordered that if any man made cloth of Spanish wool, mixed with English wool, the Portreeves of London were to burn it.

The Metal Trade Guilds.

Amongst the associations working in these trades in London we may start with the

Goldsmiths' Company, for from early times the idea of personal adornment has been the same, and the wealthy classes have always delighted in decking themselves with gold brooches, buckles, and sword hilts, while the Churches sought to honour themselves by providing golden chalices and patens for sacred worship. We find the Goldsmiths' Guild established in London as early as 1180, for in that year it was fined the equivalent of £120 for being "adulterine," and it is now one of the twelve larger Livery Companies of London. In early days, Guilds gained strength by uniting with others of smaller growth, but when we come to the 16th century the reverse process is in operation, and we often see a large Guild splitting up so as to open the ground for a new society confining itself to one particular branch of the trade of the parent body. On these lines, from the side of the Goldsmiths' Company sprung, in 1623, fully developed, the Gold and Silver Wire Drawers' Company, which is still in existence.

Another of the twelve larger Companies of London is that of the Ironmongers, the foundation of which in very early days, probably from 1100 or thereabouts, leads us to enquire as to the extent of the metal trade in England in those days. Ironstone was found in Sussex and Kent, and smelted in a small way from Norman times, but the trade took years to develop as iron then was used for only a few domestic articles; excepting, of course, for

military purposes in the shape of swords and suits of armour, though most of those came from the Continent. The first use of iron for cannon was in 1327, when Edward III. warred against the Scots, though those weapons were made abroad, but the English iron trade was already springing up, for by 1354 the exportation of iron from England was forbidden. In 1453 the first cannon cast in England were made at Uckfield, Sussex, and thirty years after that the King and his advisers felt so sure about its iron industry that they anticipated the fiscal problems of to-day by prohibiting the importation from abroad of iron goods, if they could be manufactured at home. Nearly a century after that, in 1584, the iron industry was progressing so rapidly in the South of England that an Act was passed forbidding the building of any more ironworks in Surrey, Sussex, or Kent.

Reverting to the Ironmongers' Company, it is clear that it would be useless to have a Guild of sellers of iron goods unless there were makers of such articles, not only on the Continent, but also in England. The Company existed first as a voluntary Guild, from an uncertain date, but by the year 1404 it obtained a charter from Edward IV., and the title it took then was that of "The Master and Keepers, or Wardens and Company of the Mistery or Art of Ironmongers, London." In the same way as we have noted above concerning the Goldsmiths' Company, a new body was developed out of the Ironmongers

in 1670 under the name of the Tin-plate Workers' Company, to guard the interests of that particular part of the ironmonger's trade.

The next body we note is the Armourers' and Braziers' Guild, which must always have been a necessary one looking at the large demand there was for articles of armour, which we know was worn as late as the time of Charles II. The Company dates from before 1412, for in that year they hired the Brewers' Hall for their meetings, having none of their own. The other similar bodies include the Pewterers' Guild which was interested in the many domestic articles of pewter which our ancestors loved to use, and which came along in 1372, as also did the Blacksmiths' Guild in the same year.

The cutlery trade was always a flourishing one in London, and it was divided into several branches, for there were the bladesmiths who fitted the blades, the cutlers who fitted the handles, and the sheathers who supplied the sheaths; though it was the cutler who sold the finished article, and upon whom the whole blame for faulty goods rested. In 1369 ordinances were made treating the handle-makers and bladesmiths as separate bodies, and it was expressly declared that none of the latter class should be also a cutler; but these ordinances were found very oppressive and unworkable, so that in 1408 the London cutlers laid the matter before the Mayor, and solicited his interest for some

alteration to be made, but though this aroused his interest and sympathy nothing was able to be effected. For a time under this system the Mercers' Company, as a general trading body, were able to make profit out of it, for they found the necessary capital and bought blades, which they gave to the handle-makers to complete into the finished article. This caused great resentment, but in 1415 the whole trade was put on a different footing, for then the Cutlers' Company was established in London by Royal Charter, under which byelaws were made giving to the cutlers exclusive rights to trade in knives, the handle-makers being merged with them, while the Mercers were forbidden to interfere with the trade, except that, as merchants, they were allowed to sell the finished article.

The ordinances of the Spurriers' Company deal more exclusively than any other with the details of its own trade interests, and is dated 1345, reading as follows :--

“ Be it remembered, that on Tuesday, the morrow of St. Peter's Chains, in the nineteenth year of the reign of King Edward III, the articles underwritten were read before John Hammond, Mayor, Roger de Depham, Recorder, and the other Aldermen; and seeing that the same were deemed befitting, they were accepted and enrolled in these words :

“ In the first place—that no one of the trade of Spurriers shall work longer than

from the beginning of the day until curfew rung out at the Church of St. Sepulchre, without Newgate; by reason that no man can work so neatly by night as by day. And many persons of the said trade, who compass how to practice deception in their work, desire to work by night rather than by day; and then they introduce false iron, and iron that has been cracked, for tin, and also they put gilt on false copper, and cracked. And further, many of the said trade are wandering about all day, without working at all at their trade; and then, when they have become drunk and frantic, they take to their work, to the annoyance of the sick, and all their neighborhood, as well by reason of the broils that arise between them and the strange folks that are dwelling among them. And then they blow up their fires so vigorously, that their forges begin all at once to blaze; to the great peril of themselves and of all the neighborhood around. And then, too, all the neighbors are much in dread of the sparks, which so vigorously issue forth in all directions from the mouths of the chimneys in their forges. By reason thereof it seems unto them that working by night should be put an end to, in order such false work and such perils to avoid; and therefore the mayor and the aldermen do will, by the assent of the good folks of the said trade, and for the common profit, that from henceforth such time for working, and such false work made in the trade, shall be forbidden. And if any person shall be found in the said

trade to do contrary hercof, let him be amerced, the first time in 40 pence, one-half thereof to go to the use of the Chamber of the Guild-hall, of London, and the other half to the use of the said trade; the second time in half a mark, and the third time in 10 shillings, to the use of the said Chamber and trade; and the fourth time, let him forswear the trade forever.

“ Also, that no one of the said trade shall hang out his spurs on Sundays, or on any other days that are Double Feasts, but only a sign indicating his business; and such spurs as they shall so sell, they are to shew and sell within their shops, without exposing them without, or opening the doors or windows of their shops, on the pain aforesaid.

“ Also, that no one of the said trade shall take an apprentice for a less term than seven years, and such apprentice shall be enrolled according to the usages of the said city.

“ Also, that if any one of the said trade, who is not a freeman, shall take an apprentice for a term of years, he shall be amerced as aforesaid.

“ Also, that no one of the said trade shall receive the apprentice, serving-man, or journeyman of another in the same trade, during the term agreed upon between his master and him; on the pain aforesaid.

“ Also, that no alien of another country, or foreigner of this country, shall follow or use the said trade, unless he is enfranchised before the Mayor, Aldermen and Chamberlain ; and that, by witness and surety of the good folks of the said trade, who will undertake for him, as to his loyalty and good behavior. .

“ Also, that no one of the said trade shall work on Saturdays, after Noon has been rung out in the City ; and not from that hour until the Monday morning following.”

The Leather Trade Guilds.

Leather was the basis of an important industry in London, and was represented by several Guilds, the most important of which was the Leathersellers' Company. This was founded in 1442, its Hall being in St. Helen's Place, Bishopsgate, which was part of an old nunnery connected with the Church of St. Helen.

The Skinners was also a powerful body, which got a charter in 1328, and as leather gloves were the fashion in old days, we get the Glovers' Company in 1348. The Saddlers, as we may expect, was early among the Guilds in the year 1200, and the Cordwainers, or Bootmakers, came in 1271 ; while the Girdlers, who made fashionable belts and waistbands, were thought of in 1448, and in 1605 the Curriers, who worked in coloured and fancy leather, established their Company.

Under the same heading we may include the Horners' Company, promoted to foster the interests of workers in horn, of which material they made cups, plates, forks, and other similar articles for everyday domestic use. Such an industry must have come down from quite early times, and it is suggested that this body may furnish one of the cases of a supposed "lost grant" of an old charter. At all events, we can go back to the days of Edward I., in 1391, to find in the records of the City of London a petition of the Company to the Mayor to appoint two Wardens on the Feast Day of St. Michael each year (29th September) to search for all bad work in horn, and to present the culprits to the Chamberlain at the Guildhall. Also for powers to prevent work being done at night, or on Saturday afternoons, or vigils of feast days, under a penalty of 3s. 4d. to the Guildhall and 1s. 8d. to the Guild. In addition to this, powers were asked for to forbid foreigners working in horn in the City, to all of which points the Mayor gave his assent, as appears from the records in the Guildhall. (Letter Book H, fo. 259.)

Despite this order the foreigner still came to the City to buy horns which he worked up abroad, and accordingly in 1464 the Company presented a petition to the Crown, stating that "men of the occupation of the Horners, being enfranchised in the City of London," complained that foreigners did these acts to the damage of English trade.

The petition was deemed a sound one, and accordingly an Act was passed in that year declaring that no alien should be allowed to buy unwrought horns in England.

To go back to 1455, there is the record of another petition to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City, praying that the secrets of their craft might be preserved, and that no "green horns" of imperfect growth might be allowed to be used, and for similar powers to those possessed by other Guilds.

The Provision Trade Guilds.

In dealing with these trades we start with the Bakers, whose first appearance as a Guild is in 1155, when they paid £6 a year to the Crown for their rights to combine together. There were at first two Guilds, one for White Bakers and the other for Brown Bakers, the former using fine meal and the latter the coarse variety. The two amalgamated and obtained one charter in the days of Henry VIII. ; but in 1622 the Brown Bakers split off, and obtained a separate charter of their own, though this did not last long, and by 1650 they were united again.

The Mayor of London from early times had the power of fixing the price of bread as the most necessary article of food, under the name of "The Assize of Bread." The Corporation of London have a folio volume on parchment, containing entries from 1293

to 1438, concerning this matter, and the book contains a rough drawing showing a fraudulent baker being drawn to the pillory on a hurdle by two horses, with a short-weight loaf round his neck, as a punishment.

The Fishmongers appear in the Pipe Roll of 1154 as one of those which were fined for trading without a Royal licence, though the fine itself made them legitimate; and in 1298 the Guild celebrated the victory over the Scots by a pageant, in which appeared sturgeons of gold and salmon of silver. In 1364 Edward III. granted them rights by Letters Patent, which assumed that they had existed from time immemorial. Their hall on the North side of London Bridge was acquired in 1434, and has stood there ever since, where can be seen a dagger which tradition says is the identical one used in 1381 by the Mayor, Sir William Walworth, a member of the Company, to slay Wat Tyler.

Next comes the Salters' Company, which existed as a Guild in 1355, when it contributed £5 towards the Royal expenses of the French War, in return for which certain privileges were granted to them. A confirmation of their rights was granted by Richard II. in 1394, while the ordinances were approved by Edward IV. in 1465, but in Elizabeth's days they got a charter incorporating them as "Freemen of the Art or Mystery of the Salters of the City of

London, or suburbs thereof." As usual in those days, a supplemental charter was granted by James I., which gave power to the assistants of the Company to enter the premises of members to inspect both the goods offered for sale and the weights and measures, rejecting all those that were faulty.

In course of time they overflowed the narrow limits of the salt trade, and dealt also in flax, hemp and chemicals, hence they became known as Dry Salters.

The Butchers must necessarily have been a very old Guild, for as early as 1180 it was fined one mark as being "adulterine," or acting without licence from the King. As early as 1266, after much controversy, a food Act was passed to forbid the exposure for sale of diseased meat, and offenders were punished by being put in the pillory, while the putrid carcases were slowly roasted in front of them.

It was not till 1548 that the Company obtained a lease from the Governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital of their Hall in Stinking Lane, Newgate Street, which was then the centre of the meat trade, and in 1605 they received a charter of incorporation. The Company had one illustrious member in the person of Defoe, the author of "Robinson Crusoe," who in 1628 was admitted a member by patrimony.

In 1180 came the Pepperers and Spicers,

several of whose members served the office of Mayor, one of whom, Andrew Bokerel, gave his name to the street which is still called Bucklersbury. By 1345 the Pepperers had changed their name to Grocers, and also enlarged their sphere of action by dealing in other lines of business, as is seen from a complaint made in Parliament in 1365 that "merchants, called Grocers, engrossed all manner of sellable goods and raised the prices, and kept the goods till they had become dearer." They got a charter in 1428, and ultimately, like our modern stores, they dealt also in drugs, for in 1447 they received Letters Patent, relating to these goods and to oils, confectionery, syrups and spices. Ultimately, in 1617, the separate body of the Apothecaries' Company was incorporated by charter with the usual ordinances, under the latter of which the members were required to wear a livery, to submit all disputes to the Wardens, to contribute to a common fund for assisting indigent members, and to attend the Annual Mass and Feast.

We now pass on to the Vintners, incorporated in 1427 as the successor of several previous Guilds, one of which in 1363 obtained Letters Patent from Edward III. to trade in wine imported from Gascony, in succession to one known as "Wine Sumners of Gascony."

The Brewers' Guild of London came into

being in 1361, while the Innholders' Guild was founded in 1473 as "The Mistery of the Hostillers in the City." A hostel was originally a place for rest only, no refreshments at first being provided, though in Chaucer's days we know that the "Tabard" in the Borough provided accommodation and food for nine-and-twenty guests.

Candles were always an important item in household economy, and accordingly the 'Tallow Chandlers' Company came into vogue in 1462. Stow, in his "Survey of London," tells us of numerous cookshops existing in Eastcheap in his days, and we find a Company of Cooks founded in 1482. The Poulterers' Company guarded the interests of the poultry trade in 1504,; while as to other domestic trades the Starchmakers arrived in 1632 and the Soapmakers in 1638.

Another London Guild must be mentioned of a character quite apart from all those we have been considering, no less than a body of volunteers. We refer to that now known as the Honourable Artillery Company, but which owes its origin to Henry VIII., who, in 1537, granted a charter to the "Fraternity or Guild of St. George: Masters and Rulers of the Science of Artillery, rehearsed for Long-bows, Crossbows and Hand-guns." Happily this was not one of the Guilds which came under his ban in later years, and it still exists as one of the foremost of the branches of the Territorial Forces of to-day.

The several divisions which we have made of the City Guilds, with those of the building trade, comprise the majority of the London Companies, which from the year 1320 have been known as "Livery Guilds" from the fact that the members of each originally wore a livery of their own. Amongst those which do not fall into the various categories we have named we may mention the Stationers' Company, founded in 1555, at whose Hall, until the Copyright Act of 1911, all printed books had to be registered to preserve the rights of their authors. There is also the equally important Apothecaries' Company, established in 1617, which safeguards the interests of the Chemists, and provides a medical diploma, known as "Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries."

The next page in the history of all the Guilds in England was written in 1546, the last year of Henry VIII.'s reign, when an Act was passed for the dissolution of all colleges, chantries and free chapels, a description which included the Guilds, most of which had their own chantry chapel. Owing to the death of the King, there was a year's grace before active steps were taken in the matter, but, in the first year of the following reign of Edward VI., a new Act vested in the King all chantries which had not before been seized, including all payments by corporations, misteries, or crafts for priests. There were also confiscated obits for masses for the dead and lamps for chapel services. Why the stoppage

of the ecclesiastical side of the Guilds should have also brought to a standstill their business methods is not clear; but the City Guilds got out of their troubles by compounding matters with the King, for they paid as much as £18,700 for their property, and went on with their work. Shortly after that time the City bodies gradually dropped the title of Guilds and called themselves Companies, as had previously been done by the Merchant Taylors.

The next stage was again one of plunder, for in 1684, the last year of the reign of Charles II., the Attorney-General moved in the Court of King's Bench for a writ of "Quo Warranto" against all the City Companies, calling upon them to show by what warrant or title they existed. The rule was made absolute by the Court, apparently for the reason that an Act of Edward III., which was unearthed for the purpose, had put an end to their legal existence, and, for the time being, the City Companies were considered as dead. The Fishmongers' Company was the first to bestir itself to get out of the legal quandary, and the very next year it got a fresh charter from James II., but it need not have troubled, for the Revolution was at hand, and, in 1690, when William and Mary had come to the Crown, an Act was passed annulling all the proceedings against the City Companies, and allowing them to continue their corporate lives.

All these bodies are called "Livery Com-

panies," which merely describe their genesis from the older Guilds, each of which, as we have explained, had its own livery. It must, however, be noted that each of the Mayors of London adopted a livery of their own for the citizens, and we find that in the year 1300, at the wedding procession of Edward I. and Queen Margaret, the citizens to the number of over 600 were robed in a livery of red and white with hoods over their heads, and tippets round their necks. Such as were members of the Guilds could not, of course, also be attired in their own liveries, and they adopted the plan of wearing upon their sleeves some heraldic mark, to denote the Guild to which they belonged.

Spectacular sights have always been pleasing to the inhabitants of towns, and especially to Londoners, when the dull outlines of buildings could be relieved by the colours of gay trappings and uniforms. The annual Lord Mayor's Show still pleases us, but in former days it frequently happened that on public occasions processions took place of the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Aldermen, but the colour and bulk of the show was composed of the Craftsmen of the Guilds clad in their different liveries. Thus, in 1236, the Mayor, Aldermen, Sheriffs, and 360 citizens rode out to meet Henry III. and his new wife Eleanor, the citizens being clothed in long garments embroidered with gold and silk, each one bearing a gold or silver cup in his hand; while in 1300 a similar proces-

sion with 600 citizens rode out to meet Edward I. and his wife Margaret, the citizens wearing their livery of red and white. Again in 1382 the Mayor, Aldermen, and citizens of London marched to Temple Bar to receive Anne of Bohemia, the new Queen of Richard II., on which occasion we find that the guildmen or members of misteries wore a livery of red and black, instead of the red and white used in the reign of Edward I. Another procession was in 1415 to meet Henry V. returning from France, the Mayor being accompanied by the Aldermen and Craftsmen, the latter in red with hoods of red and white; and in 1432 Henry VI. was met by the Mayor and Commonalty, who were mostly Craftsmen, clothed in white gowns with scarlet hoods, while in 1485 Henry VII. went to St. Paul's Cathedral with the Mayor, Aldermen, Sheriffs, and Commonalty clothed in violet. Again, in 1554, during Queen Mary's reign, there was a great function at St. Paul's Cathedral to receive Cardinal Pole, when the Lord Mayor with his assistants and the City Guilds made an imposing show; and two years later there was a similar procession from St. Paul's, through Cheapside to Bucklersbury, and back again through Watling Street, with the Bishop of London following, accompanied by his clergy and choir singing as they went, with the Guilds in attendance. In 1561, the third year of Elizabeth's reign, she made a procession through the City accompanied by the Lord Mayor, when the craftsmen of London were ranged in their

liveries from St. Michael-le-Quarn to Aldgate. Again, in November of the same year the craftsmen were seen in the streets at night carrying torches, and accompanying the Lord Mayor to St. Paul's, where a sermon was preached, and they all returned home after midnight. In the new reign of James I., the King came in state to St. Paul's, accompanied by the Lord Mayor and the Guilds of London, to hear a sermon preached in support of the movement to provide funds for the repair of the Cathedral, which was then in a very dangerous condition, and was in consequence partly restored under Inigo Jones, the King's Surveyor.

The City Companies have always felt that their wealth may some day again, as it did in the days of Henry VIII., attract the attention of the Government, and that there may be once more raised the question as to whether the interests of the trades they represent are properly attended to; and in 1884 they were all in a state of ferment, for a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into the whole matter, and returns were asked from each Company as to its history, its corporate possessions, and the actual steps it was taking to foster the trade it represented. The only result of this Commission was the presentation of a lengthy report in five volumes, which are a very storehouse of interesting information relative to the various Companies. It should, however, be mentioned that, a few years before that, several of the

larger City Companies had formed an educational scheme of a technical character which has yielded good results, to which was given the name of "The City and Guilds of London Institute," and now has two large branches at Finsbury and Kensington.

We see the troubles and disputes of the Trade Unions of to-day, and consider them unique, but if we look back to mediæval days we shall discern their counterparts in the numerous quarrels of the old Trade Guilds, both with the merchants and amongst themselves. Those in London were certainly more noticeable than the quarrels in the country districts, but all had their fair share of quarrels and bickerings to maintain their precedence and their trade advantages. For some time in London there was a division amongst the Guilds, and on one side we find the four Guilds who represented the Provision Trades, viz., the Grocers, Fishmongers, Salters, and Vintners, who were under the leadership of Nicholas Bembre. He fought the battle of the advantages of protection against the other Trade Guilds directed by John of Northampton, who advocated free trade. Under the auspices of the latter, there was compiled in 1377, the year of the Jubilee of Edward III., a "Jubilee Book," which propounded a scheme for controlling the action of the four Guilds, and this book was eagerly sought after by the followers of Wat Tyler in 1381, not for purposes of study, but for destruction.

Early in the 15th century occurred a great quarrel between the Guilds of the Merchant Taylors and the Skinners over their precedence, during which blows were exchanged, and several liverymen were killed. Happily the Mayor was called in to act as arbitrator, and he solved the problem by allowing each precedence every alternate year, and to seal the peace he directed that each body should entertain the other annually. So it has come to pass that up to the present time the Skinners entertain the Merchant Taylors on the vigil of Corpus Christi Day, shortly after Trinity Sunday, while the Skinners in turn become their guests on St. John the Baptist's Day in June.

The year 1437 was a memorable one in the history of the Guilds, for then a petition was presented to the King, Henry VI., by the masters, wardens, and members of various Guilds throughout the country, praying him to take steps for stricter regulation of such Guilds. As the result of this the Act 15 Henry VI. cap. 6 was passed.

The places where the various trades of London were carried on in mediæval days may still be clearly traced by the names of several of the streets in the City; for in those days imagination and fantasy did not play a great part in the minds of our matter-of-fact forefathers. Thus, walking from London Bridge, northwards, we first come across Fish Street Hill, obviously where the fish was sold

wholesale when landed; and we may note that, powerful as the Fishmongers' Company ultimately became, the Mayor of London was, in 1381, interested in getting an Act of Parliament passed by which the trade of a fishmonger was thrown open to all, and he further declared under his powers as Mayor that the trade of a fishmonger was not a craft or mystery at all, and thus found itself outside the pale of the Guilds.

Beyond is Eastcheap, where many stalls were found of all kinds of wares, besides many cookshops.

Proceeding, we pass Gracechurch Street, then called Grasschurch Street, from the fact that hay and grass was sold there; while, turning the corner on the left we come to Cornhill, where the sister trade of selling corn was carried on.

Proceeding westwards, we come to the site of the present Mansion House, then called the "Stocks," where was another fish market, with a few butchers' shops. Opposite is the Poultry, where the poulterers sold their wares; beyond which, on the right-hand side, is the Old Jewry, where the Jews carried on their trades of gold and silver dealing, and lending money. We are now fairly in Cheapside, or West Cheap, where the chapmen had their stalls, and the various trades carried on are indicated by the names: Ironmonger Lane, Honey Lane, Milk Street and Wood Street.


On the left-hand side Bread Street speaks of bakers, while Friday Street tells of days when fish was an important item of diet on Fridays, and in this street additional fish shops were found open on those fast days.

Beyond, we come to Newgate Street, on the right-hand side of which was Butchers' Row, where the meat trade was largely carried on, and many slaughter-houses existed, the offal from which was, for many years, cast into the Thames.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BUILDING TRADE GUILDS.

We must remember that, in England, shortly after the Norman Conquest, apart from churches and castles, the whole of the building trade was in the hands of the carpenters, houses then being built of wood. Bricks of a narrow shape had been used by the Romans in this country in the year 44, and the famous boast of Augustus will be recalled in this connection, that he found his capital, Rome, built of brick, but he left it constructed of marble. Bricks ceased to be used after these days, except for a short time under Alfred, in the 9th century, though the Normans sometimes, as in the case of St. Botolph's Abbey, at Colchester, used the Roman bricks over again for their own work. On the Continent, especially near Bruges, the Flemish builders also used bricks, and these were introduced into England in the 15th century, and in 1426 Tattershall Castle, in Lincolnshire, was built of brick for the



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Lord Treasurer Cromwell, and about the same time for church work. They were revived again in the days of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth for domestic purposes, but did not oust wood till the fire of London, in 1666, proved their suitability in the case of large cities, where houses were placed close to one another.

Stow, writing in 1603, says that in London, up to about the year 1200, houses were built of wood, covered with reed or straw, but then the Mayor ordered them to be built of stone covered with slate or tiles, but this must soon have been disregarded, or else there would not have been so great a conflagration when the great fire took place in the days of Charles II. We find, however, that both in London and outside it was usual, when building houses of any size, to construct an underground cellar or crypt of stone, which was useful for the storage of goods, and in those days of fighting and tumults such a refuge could be adapted for purposes of concealment. Most of these crypts have been demolished in the process of rebuilding, though we must remember that their construction called for the services of skilled masons, as the ceilings were vaulted of stone, which was necessarily a difficult operation.

As the main buildings were of wood we shall, of course, expect the most important

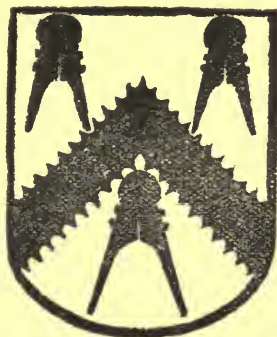
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building Guild to be composed of Carpenters, and accordingly the Carpenters' Guild of London is traced back to 1st September 1333, at which date there are ordinances of their body in existence, a copy of which is filed at the Public Record Office. These begin thus: "Guild of Carpenters of London. This is the Book of Ordinances of the brotherhood of Carpenters of London made the 1st day of September, in the 7th year of the reign of our Lord King Edward III. after the Conquest," and they go on to state that "the good men Carpenters had arranged a Fraternity to be held in the churches of St. Thomas of Acon, and of St. John the Baptist of Holywell beside London," to found a taper burning before the altar of Our Lady and St. Joseph in the Church of St. Thomas to be holden and ruled as after specified. There are ordinances as to the Guild attending mass in mid-winter, when each person was to subscribe a penny, or in default of attendance to pay to the Brotherhood a pound of wax. The members, amongst whom were included women, were also to attend the funerals of deceased members, and if such members died poor the Guild were to provide the funeral, and masses were to be said for the souls of the deceased members, sick members were to be assisted, as well as those out of work, and the Guild was to be governed by four Wardens elected annually, to whom the members were to pay their dues four times a year. There are other ordinances forbidding the Guildsmen to go to law, and



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other provisions similar to those of like Guilds.




ARMS OF THE CARPENTERS'
COMPANY.

After 144 years the Carpenters obtained a former charter from the Crown dated 1477, giving to certain Freemen of the Mistery of Carpentry in the City of London rights to establish a Brotherhood or Guild in the City to remain for ever, the body consisting of the Master, three Wardens and a body of Freemen. People had not learnt to abbreviate in those days, and the full title was "The Master Wardens and Commonalty of the Mistery of Freemen of the Carpentry of the City of London." This Charter was, according to the customs of the time, affirmed by subsequent Sovereigns, apparently to guard against any attempt being made to treat the grant as being void and out of date, which, in fact, happened in the cases of all the City Companies in the reign of Charles II., until

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this Charter of the Carpenters was confirmed by Mary and all the subsequent Sovereigns up to James II. 

The objects of the Company, as defined by these charters, were to superintend the erection of wooden buildings in the City of London, and to prevent the use of bad materials, which, with the substitution of stone for wood, afterwards comprised the functions of the Mason Guild or Company of London. The titles of all the London Guilds in course of time became changed into that of "Company," apparently by use; in the same way that the title of Mayor became gradually changed into that of "Lord Mayor," though without any sanction, except that of the City officials, though in more modern days it needed the order of the King, Edward VII., to give the title of Lord Mayor to cities like Liverpool, Birmingham, and some others.

In the early part of the 17th century "viewers" were appointed to inspect buildings, but, after the fire, wood naturally began to go out of fashion, and brick was used; while in 1774 a building Act was passed by which District Surveyors were appointed, and then the duties and usefulness of the Carpenters' Company gradually fell into abeyance. 

The whole secret of the collapse of the Carpenters' Company as governing the wood

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building trade of London is to be found in the fact that, in consequence of the fire of London in 1666, an Act of Parliament was passed in 1679 by which the freemen of the Company, owing to their lack of numbers, were deprived of their monopoly, and foreign workmen were for the first time allowed to work in the Metropolis under the protection of the State. In addition to this we have the fact that houses in London were no longer built almost exclusively of wood, as more fire-resisting materials were thenceforth used.

There was also in London the Plasterers' Guild, which dates back from 1501, in the days of Henry VII., when the King granted a charter to "members of the Mystery or Art of Pargettors of the City of London, commonly called the Plaisterers." The objects were "to search and try, and make due search upon all manner of stuff, touching the art and mystery of Pargettors, and all work and workmen in the said Art or Mystery, so that the said work might be just, true and lawful without any deceit or fraud in the City of London or Suburbs thereof," and they had a coat of arms granted to them in 1546.

Sanitary engineering was little thought of in the days with which we are now dealing, though a primitive form of it was doubtless carried out by the Tylers and Bricklayers, and we may note that the first

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Sanitary Act framed in this country was in 1388, when Richard II. imposed a penalty of £20 upon any person who polluted "ditches, rivers, and waters."

It was in the year 1531 that a further step was taken in this direction, for then Henry VIII. appointed commissioners of sewers, who were to proceed "by such ways and means and in such manner and form as shall seem most convenient to be ordained and done to reform, repair, and amend the wells, ditches, banks, gutters, sewers, gotes, calcies, bridges, streams, and to cleanse and purge the trenches, sewers, and ditches in all places needful."

Collecta

In Queen Elizabeth's days there is an entry in the State Papers, under date of 7th March 1585; which states that directions were given by the Council to Thomas Greves, Surveyor of the Queen's works, to survey and report on the Fleet ditch, which was then, like most such town streams of those days, in a most dirty condition owing to refuse being thrown there and left to decay.

The Tylers' and Bricklayers' Guild was founded in London in the Middle ages, and governed by a "Master and Custodes," or "Warden of the Fellowship," who made rules for its good order and government. The first charter was granted by Queen Elizabeth on 3rd August 1568, and a later

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one, in 1571, allowed the Wardens power to search and view bricks and tiles, and to fine the makers of bad and imperfect ones. The last ordinance concerning the Company, as a working body, was made in 1723 by George I.

But while some houses were being built of wood, more important buildings were constructed of stone, for which special skill was required in the workers, who found it wise to band themselves together into Guilds for the protection of their trade interests. The buildings they were engaged upon divide themselves into three classes—Cathedrals, Churches and Castles, and the building of these necessitated that the band of workmen engaged upon them should remain in each other's society, and in the same spot, for many months, or, in the case of Cathedrals, for years. The Guilds they formed differed, therefore, from the other Trade Guilds in that they were not fixed to one town, for many Churches were built in sparsely populated villages, while Castles would always be erected in isolated spots. The Cathedrals and Churches passed through the styles of the Norman, which lasted till about 1200, when the Early English came in vogue, to be succeeded by the Decorated, which spread over the period of the three Edwards in the fourteenth century, and wound up with the Perpendicular style, which lasted till the reign of Henry VII. Then Church building came to a stop for some years, and as to Cathedrals,

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none were erected till the later years of the reign of Victoria, when Southwark and Truro Cathedrals were constructed, while the stately pile at Liverpool is still in progress.

Castles could only be built by licence of the King, so that armed garrisons could not be erected by Barons who might use their forces against the Crown, and we find constant references in the State Papers to these Royal permissions for Castle building. As examples of these we may quote a grant in 1253 by Henry III. to the Earl of Cornwall, allowing him to build and fortify a castle of stone above his Manor of Mere ; and in 1261 he also gave a formal grant allowing Robert St. John to fortify with a paling his house at Basing up to the dyke then thrown up there, and to keep it fortified as long as the King allowed.

Edward III. revelled in building, and by an order of 6th January 1359, made when the Court was at Reading, he appointed a King's Mason, Master Robert de Gloucester, to take masons for the King's works in the Castle of Windsor, then being erected, and to put them to work there at the King's wages. There were strikers, apparently, in those days, but the remedy was a summary one, for the King's Mason had power to arrest those found "contrariant or rebellious," and to have them brought to him at the Castle and imprisoned, till they found security to

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stay quietly in the works, "according to the injunction of the said Robert."



THE KING AND HIS CHIEF MASON,
FROM "THE HISTORY OF KING OFFA"
BY MATTHEW PARIS, THIRTEENTH
CENTURY, IN BRITISH MUSEUM.

The question has always been raised from whence did our early Cathedral builders gain their knowledge and who drew their plans? It was always usual to talk about ecclesiastical buildings being erected by the Abbots, and, by an easy transfer of thought, people came to think that the Abbots themselves drew the plans, and that the monks did the actual work; but we know better now, and that from earliest days stonework was carried out by experts. So far back as the time of Pope Gregory, in the sixth century, there were Italian stonemasons living in Lombardy, near

Lake Como, who are said to have travelled over Europe helping to build Churches where they were required, and it is added that that Pope, in 598, and again four years later, sent some of these masons into England, at the time of the mission of Augustine here, so that the converts which he made in England might have proper Churches in which to



CHURCH BUILDER OF ELEVENTH CENTURY.

worship. One of these builders, it is said, was Paulinus, who came to Northumbria, of which he was bishop in 625, though afterwards he was translated to Rochester, where he died in 644, having been responsible for much church building in both places. The fraternity at Como had many of the characteristics of the England operative Masons of later days, having Grand Masters presiding over lodges,

and three degrees of workmen ranked according to their ability. They made use of symbols under the heads of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, and they also, like the later Operative Masons, fraternised, while engaged on their Church work, with the ecclesiastics, who thus grew interested in architectural studies.

It is contended that these Como Masons were the descendants of the old College of Masons at Rome, from the members of which they derived their symbolism. Whether the Operative Masons in England of later days still retained the traditions of the Como builders seems a very doubtful question, as it is unlikely that the latter would remain in England after their building operations were finished, and if they did their descendants would in time become more English than Italian. It is interesting to note that about the year 630, shortly after the time that the Como Masons first came to England, there was a Pictish Prince in Scotland, named Nethan III., who, as Bede, in his "Ecclesiastical History," Chapter XXI., informs us, sent messengers to the Venerable Ceolfrid, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Peter and St. Paul at Jarrow, praying to have architects, obviously Italian, sent to him to build a Church in his nation after the Roman manner. This Church, which he promised to dedicate to St. Peter, was to be built of stone instead of oak, roofed with rushes, as was the fashion then in his country, and it was

required for the Culdee monks, who had been working in the Island of Iona, under Columba, the missionary, who came from Ireland in 560.

Whether Paulinus was a mason or not is certainly open to question, but this at least is clear, that he had much to do with building Churches in England, for Bede refers to two edifices which were built in places under his rule. The first was York Minster, where our author states King Edwin, "as soon as he was baptised, took care, by the direction of the same Paulinus, to build in the same place a bigger and nobler Church of stone, in the midst whereof that same oratory which he had first erected should be enclosed." The second building which Paulinus erected was a church at Lincoln, where, it is stated, "he likewise built in that city a stone Church of beautiful workmanship, the roof of which having either fallen through age, or been thrown down by enemies, the walls are still to be seen standing." Such a personality must interest us, and we are glad to have his description painted for us by Bede as being "tall of stature, a little stooping, his hair black, his visage meagre, his nose slender and aquiline, while his aspect was both venerable and majestic."

The origin of the order of the Culdees, as well as the name, is in doubt. On the former point some have guessed that they were actually the survivors of some Druids,

who had been converted to Christianity, while others seek to bring them from Phœnecia, though we consider both stories improbable, and that these monks were simply ardent admirers and followers of Columba, and came to dwell with him at the island of Hii, or Iona. The name of Culdees has caused great trouble to students, for some seek to derive it, obviously wrongfully, from the Latin "Cultores Dei," worshippers of God, while others get it from the Gaelic "Ceille De," meaning Servant of God, or from another Gaelic word "Cuildeach," meaning a monk, or hermit. From the independent attitude they assumed to the Church of Rome they early incurred its wrath. There were five main points on which they differed; (1) the date when Easter should be observed; (2) the question whether prayers should be said for the dead, which they refused to do; (3) the tonsure, which they also refused to adopt; (4) celibacy, which they declined to carry out; (5) the appointment of Bishops, as they had an Abbot at their head and declined any higher authority, though, in a charter of William the Lion of Scotland, he addresses it wrongly "to the Bishops and Culdees of the Church at Brechin." However, they must have given way on this point, for we find that they afterwards used to elect the Bishop of St. Andrew's, though in time an order of Canons was constituted there in 1114, who elected the Bishop. This was the beginning of the

end, and it is said that in 1127 they were expelled from the town of Dunkeld, where they resided. By 1250 matters came to a head, for the prior of St. Andrew's then claimed the right to direct the affairs of the Church there, which was disputed by the Culdees, and on appeal to the Pope he appointed the English Priors of St. Oswald and Kyrkham to hear the case, who decided against them. They let some years elapse, and appealed to Rome in 1297, when they sent their Prior, William Cunning, to plead their cause before Pope Boniface VIII., but he was unsuccessful. It is said that they remained at Iona till about 1310, and after that all trace of them is lost.

If we are to believe a Welsh writer, Giraldus Cambrensis, they were in 1185 found in Ireland at North Munster, where, on the Isle of Monavincha, was "a chapel wherein a few monks called Culdees, devoutly serve God." He also found them in Wales, for he says, "the Isle of Bardsey is inhabited by religious monks, who are there called Coelicolas, or Colideos."

Another writer, Goodall, in his "Monasterii Anglicanorum," brings them to York, for he says, "As to the Culdees it is very certain that there was a sort of monks, and secular priests too, who went under that appellation, not only among the Scots, but also among the Britons and Irish, and even

among the northern English, who were first converted by the Scots, particularly in the Cathedral of York." We may mention that there is definite evidence of their being at several places in Scotland, such at Melrose, Brechin, Dunkeld, and elsewhere, but we doubt if the monks at York were of the same order as those at Iona.

A second reference to the Culdees at York is given by the assertion that they were officiating at the Cathedral as far back as 936, when King Athelstan asked for their prayers for his success in an expedition he was making against the Scots. Returning victorious, he gave them a grant of a tithe of corn from the plough fields in the Diocese of York, to enable them to help the poor and the wayfaring travellers who might solicit their alms. The association of them with King Athelstan, who in some of the old Ancient Charges of the builders was described as one "who loved well Masons," has been enough to draw the Culdees into the ranks of the builders, and to envelop them with the assumed dignity of being masters of a symbolic system allied with Masonry. We can find no warrant for this, and think that the fact that Paulinus had his builders working close by them in Northumbria has been enough, in combination with the story of Athelstan, to cause these imaginative ideas that the Culdees were early speculative Masons.

Turning now to the old operative Masons, we find that each of those bodies had an "Ancient Charge," of which seventy-five different specimens have been found, ranging in date from 1390 to 1686, or nearly three centuries, so long did the old custom continue to flourish. They were written on rolls of parchment, and slowly unwound in the reading, though the fact that part of the back is more coloured than the rest tends to show that only a portion was in actual practice habitually read.

The earliest example of such documents is a rhymed one, dating back to about 1390, now in the British Museum, at first called the "Halliwell MS.," from the name of the discoverer of it, Mr. Halliwell-Phillips, but now known as the "Regius MS.," as it is in the collection of old documents presented to the nation by George III.

These Ancient Charges, though they differ in wording, are all substantially in similar form, consisting of three parts, the first of which is the Invocation to the Trinity. This part, in the "Dowland MS.," reads thus:—
 "The might of the Father of Kings, with his glorious grace, through the grace of the goodness of the Holy Ghost, there being three persons in one Godhead, be with us at the beginning, and-give us grace so to govern."

The second part consists of a history of the building world since the day that Adam

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erected his tent outside the Garden of Eden, and therefore became the first Mason, down to the days of King Athelstan in 930, "who loved well Geometry."

The third part is the most important of all, containing the charges to the apprentices, concerning their business and moral duties. We quote this part from a MS. in the Inner Temple Library, entitled the "Henery Head MS.," from the name of the transcriber, who dated his copy 1675, though the original was probably much earlier than that. The Charges read thus:—"Particularly the first and principal that you shall be true men to God and the Holy Church, and that you shall neither error nor heresy by your own understanding, or discreet or wise men's teaching, and also that you shall be true liege men without treason or falsehood; and if you know either treason or treachery look ye amend it if you can, or else warn privily the King, or his ruler, or his deputy, or his officers. And also that you shall be true one to another, that is to say, to every Master and Fellow of the science and craft of Masonry that be allowed Masons, and to do unto them as they would they should do unto you. And that every Mason keep true council both of lodge and chamber, and all other councils that ought to be kept by way of Masonry. And also that he shall be true to his lord and master that he doth serve, and truly look to his master's profit. And you shall call Masons your fellows, or your brethren, and by no

other foul name, nor shall take your fellow's wife in villainy, nor further desire his daughter or servant. And also that you pay for your meat and drink wheresoever you go to board. Also you shall do no villainy in the house, whereby the craft may be slandered. These be the charges in general, and that every Mason should hold by Masters and Fellows.

“ Now other singular charges for Masters and Fellows. First, that no Master or Fellow take upon him any lord's work, or other man's, but he knoweth himself able and cunning to perform, that so the craft be not slandered, or dis-worshipped, so that the lord may be well and truly served. And also that no Master take no more work, but that he take it reasonably, so that the lord may be well and truly served with his own good, and pay his fellows truly their pay as the manner of craft useth. And also no Master or Fellow shall supplant others of their work, that is to say, if he have taken a work, or stand Master of a lord's work, or other, he shall not put him out, unless he be unable of cunning to end the same. And also that no Master or Fellow take no prentice to be allowed his apprenticeship, but for seven years, and that prentice to be able of birth, and of living as he ought to be. And also that no man to be made Mason without five or six of his fellows at least, and he that is to be made Mason to be a man on all sides, that is to say, that he be free born, and of good kindred, and no bondman, that he have his right limbs as he

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ought to have. And also that no Master or Fellow put no lord's work to task that hath been accustomed to be journey work. And also that every one give pay to his fellow only as he may deserve, so that you nor the lord of the work be not deceived through false workmen. And also no workman or Fellow do slander other behind his back to make him lose his good name, or his worldly goods. And also that no Fellow within lodge, or without, do minister evil answer to other ungodly with unreasonable cause. Also that every Mason shall do reverence to his betters, and shall put at worship. And that no Mason shall play at hazard, or at the dice, or any other unlawful game, whereby the craft may be slandered. And also that no Mason should be any ribald at lechery to make the craft slandered. And that no Fellow go into the town in the night time without a Fellow to bear him company, and witness that he hath been in honest company, for if he so do there a lodge of Fellows to punish him for that crime. And also that every Master and Fellow, if they have trespassed, to stand at the reward of Masters and Fellows to make them accord there, and if they may not accord them, then they go to the common law. And also every Mason shall receive and cherish strange Masons when they come out of the country, and set them to work, as the manner is; that is to say, if they have worked in stones in place, you shall set them a fortnight at the least, and give each his pay, and if he have no stones for him to work that then he

shall refresh him to the next lodge. And also you and every Mason shall truly serve your lord for your pay, and justly and truly make and end your work, be it task or journey, if you have had your pay truly according as you ought to have. And also that every Mason shall work truly upon the working day, so that he may receive his pay and deserve it, so that he may live honestly upon the holy-day. And that every Mason shall receive your pay godly of your Master, and that he shall keep due time of work in your wages, and in your rest, as it is ordained by the Master's Council. And also that if any Fellows shall be at discord and dissension you shall truly treat between them, to make accord and agreement, and shew no favour unto neither party, but justly and truly for both parties, and that it be done in such time that the lord's work be not hindered. And if you stand Warden, and have any power unto the Master you serve, you shall be true to your said Master, while you be with him, and be a true mediator between your Master and his Fellows to the uttermost of your power. And if you stand Steward, either of lodge or chamber, or of common house meeds, you shall give a true account of the Fellows' good, how it is dispensed, and at what time they will take account. And also that if you have more cunning than your Fellow that stands by you in his or your work, and see him in danger, to spoil his stone, and he ask counsel of you, you shall inform and teach him honestly, so that the lord's work be not spoiled."

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After this came the formal reading of the oath, as follows:—

“These charges that we have declared and recommended unto you, you shall well and truly keep to the uttermost of your power; so help you God, and Holidome, and by the Holy contents of this Book.”

While this oath was being read the Bible was held up by the older members of the lodge and the new member placed his hand upon it and afterwards kissed it.

In the Regius MS. of the days of Richard II., the injunctions were longer and more explicit, and one of them forbade the members either to come to church late, or to speak scandal in the gate, and also enjoins upon him—

“His master’s counsel to keep and close,
And his fellows by his good purpose.
The secrets of the chamber tell he no man,
Nor in the lodge whatsoever they done.
Whatsoever thou seest or hearest them do
Tell it to no man, wheresoever thou go.”

The MS. we have cited lays great stress upon Geometry as the foundation of the Mason’s art, and speaks of it thus:—

“In that time, through good Geometry,
This honest craft of good Masonry
Was ordained and made in this manner,
Imitated of these clerks together.
At these lords prayers they imitated Geometry,
And gave it the name of Masonry
For the most honest craft of all.”

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The expression "Geometry" was then a somewhat wider one than it is now, and we have its then interpretation in the work of a French author, Chretien de Troyes, who wrote in the year 1180 four Arthurian romances, one of which is entitled "Eric et Enide." In this he tells of a cloth, made by fairies, with four figures upon it of the four major arts, Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, and Astronomy, the first of which he describes thus:—"One represented then Geometry, how it estimates and measures the extent of the heavens and the earth, so that nothing is lacking there; and then the depth and the height, and the width and the length; then it estimates besides how broad and deep the sea is, and thus measures the whole world. Such was the work of the first fairy."

In evidence of the change in the meaning and use of words from time to time, we find this word Geometry used in the secondary sense of "design" in the 15th century, for Stephen Hawes, in his poem "The Example of Virtue," twice uses the word so, telling us that "The roof was wrought by marvellous Geometry," and also describes "A fair chamber of fine Geometry right well wrought."

From the period of the Statute of Labourers of 1349 there were many attempts to fix wages of labourers, but in 1389 an Act was passed affecting Masons and others, which ordained

that the Justices of the Peace in every county, at their Sessions, to be held between Easter and Whitsun, should make proclamation at their discretion, according to the dearth of victuals, how much every Mason, Carpenter, Tiler and other craftsman, workmen and other journeyman labourers, as well in harvest as in other times of the year, should take by the day with meat and drink, or without meat and drink, between the two Sessions.

During the 13th century the Act of 1389 must have fallen in abeyance, for the Masons felt their power as important workmen who could fix their own rates of remuneration, and they anticipated the modern Trade Unions by holding annual meetings in various parts of the country to regulate their craft and to fix their rate of wages without consulting their masters. This was foreign to the spirit of the times, and showed too much initiative on the part of the workmen as against the interests of the masters, and was in flat defiance of the trend of the old Statute of Labourers of Edward III.'s days, under which labourers were bound to serve some master, and to have their wages fixed by the local Justices of the Peace. Accordingly, at the Parliament of Henry VI., held at Westminster in 1424, an Act was passed, in the Norman-French language, against the Masons, which enacted that "As by the annual congregations and confederacies made by the Masons in their general chapters assembled, the good course and effect of the Statute of

Labourers is publickly violated and broken, in subversion of the law, and to the grievous damage of all the Commons, our Lord the King directs that the said chapters and congregations shall not henceforth be held, and if any such be held, let those, who cause such chapters and congregations to be held, be convicted and adjudged as felons, and that all other Masons who come to such chapters and congregations be punished by imprisonment of their bodies, and make fine and ransom at the pleasure of the King."

In London, the interests of this trade were guarded by a Stonemasons' Guild, which subsequently became the Masons' Company of London. As the records of the latter body were destroyed in the Great Fire, it is difficult to trace its early history with exactitude, but so far back as 1272 there is a record of a charter being granted by the Lord Mayor of London to the "Worshipful Society of Freemasons of London," their duties being to inspect the condition of the gates and walls of the City, which were obviously very important and necessary points in those days.

There is a record of a meeting in 1350 to settle a trade dispute between the hewers of stone and the setters and layers of it. Twenty years later, in 1370, the Masons' Company had grown to such importance that it claimed the right to return four members to the Common Council of the City, and in 1472 it obtained a grant of Arms.

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In 1481 its ordinances were submitted to the Court of Aldermen, and approved by them, as recorded in "Letter Book L" of the Corporation of London, which is to be found at the Guildhall Library. It reads thus:—"15 Oct., 21 Edward IV. (A.D. 1481) came good men of the Art or Mistery of Masons of the City of London into the Court of the lord the King, in the Chamber of the Guildhall, before the Mayor and Aldermen, and prayed that certain articles for the better regulation of the Mistery might be approved." The reason for this was that the Company was only a voluntary association, without a charter from the Crown, but how the Court of Aldermen obtained their powers in the matter is not clear, and we can only think that they assumed it as the ruling power of the City, and in time it grew to be an unquestioned right.

The ordinances are similar to those of other Guilds with which we have already dealt, and include such matters as the election of Wardens, who were to be fined for refusing office, while a formal suit of clothes, or Livery, was prescribed to be worn by members, every member failing to do so to be fined 6s. 8d. Members were also fined twelve pence if they refused to attend Mass on the Feast of the Quatuor Coronati (8th November), and there was also a salutary provision that no one was to be admitted to the freedom of the craft by the Wardens until examined and proved "cunning."

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The Masons' Company had their documents destroyed in the fire of London in 1666, but there are two old charges of theirs still preserved bearing date 1686, with the Royal Arms of James I., as well as the arms of the Company and those of the City of London, upon them. One of these documents is in the Library at Freemasons' Hall, London, while the other is in the possession of the Lodge of Antiquity, No. 2, which it obtained many years ago from a body known as "The Worshipful Society of Freemasons of the City of London," and it is signed by its clerk, Robert Padgett. (See illustration on page 132.)

The story of this Society is told in Conder's "Hole Craft and Fellowship," a history of the Masons' Company, which, we may add, obtained a new charter from the Crown, requiring it to supply Masons to enable the King to erect castles and fortifications, while its other official duties were to inspect stonework executed within seven miles from London and Westminster. These duties, like those of the sister body of the Carpenters' Company, died a natural death in the days of George III., when official District Surveyors were appointed to inspect building work in London.

There was also a Masonic Guild at Newcastle-on-Tyne, which had ordinances dated 1st September 1581, requiring the members to meet yearly to appoint two Wardens; and it also appears that whenever the miracle plays were performed on

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Corpus Christi Day they had to take part in their play, which was called "The Burial of our Lady St. Mary the Virgin." As in other North Country Societies, no Scotsman was to be admitted apprentice under a penalty of 40 shillings, but if he did thus pay his way as apprentice, he was not eligible, when out of his articles, to be a member of the fraternity. It was also provided that at the marriages and funerals of members the whole were to attend, and that half the fines received by the Guild should go towards the maintenance of the great bridge over the Tyne, while the other half was to go to the fellowship.

As an illustration of an old Building Guild we may cite the still existing Ancient Guild of Purbeck Marblers, which claims to trace its descent from the days of the Normans, and that only the members of the Guild have the right of working in the marble quarries in the Isle of Purbeck. The apprentice, who must be a quarryman's son of the age of 14, is indentured for seven years, so that when he becomes 21 he can be admitted as a Freeman of the Guild, the annual meeting being held on Shrove Tuesday at the Town Hall at Corfe, when the new Freemen are admitted, for which they pay a fee of 6s. 8d., a tankard of ale, and a penny loaf.

There were numerous other Building Guilds in various parts of England, but

as their functions as practical Trade Unions ceased, they admitted outsiders to their ranks, who allegorised the buildings, from which they drew moral lessons, thus turning the Guild into a society which kept the trade name of Freemasons, but whose members worked with their heads rather than with their hands.

There were many of these operative Masons' Guilds in Scotland, whose history we deal with in our chapter on "Scotch and Irish Guilds."

It was an old fiction that in the erection of the early Abbeys the Abbots themselves acted as their own architects, and that the stonework was carved by the monks, but the history of the Masons' Guilds disproves this. Contemporary references in current literature also bear out the case of the Guild craftsmen acting as the masons for stonework, as, for instance, Langland's "Piers the Plowman," written about 1370—

"I made tools for every craft,
For carpenters, carvers, and the compasses
for masons;
Taught them level and line."

It is certain that in early days there was no architect who drew the plans, and was responsible for the co-ordination of the whole building from start to finish, for, had there been, mistakes could never have occurred such as in the nave at Lincoln Cathedral, where the nave lines did not meet. There

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was a head mason, undoubtedly, who managed, so far as he could, these points, and the State Papers are some guide as to when the architect became a prominent feature of the building trade. The King from time to time appointed a chief Mason, but in Elizabeth's days we first find someone appointed who is called Surveyor; and when in the days of James I. Inigo Jones, undoubtedly an architect in the modern sense of the term, appeared, he was called Surveyor of the Works, though the first of that title was his predecessor, Simon Basill.

The Scottish architects always used the letters "M.M." after their names, meaning "Master Mason," and at Holyrood Palace is the inscription of the architect, Alexander Mylne, in this fashion. He died in 1643, and even on his tombstone in Holyrood Abbey Church he is not described as an architect, but as "a Worthy Man and an ingenious Mason"; which in Latin reads "*clarissimum virum, lapicidam egregium.*" The Abbey itself was built by King David I. of Scotland in 1128, who sent to France and Flanders for "right Crafty Masons" to design and build it.

In 1671 there was a Chief State Architect in Scotland, Sir William Bruce, who was designated His Majesty's Surveyor-General, who reconstructed Holyrood Palace, and under whom worked Robert Mylne, His Majesty's Master-Mason, a descendant of the Alexander Mylne already referred to.

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The friendly connection between the Guilds of the Carpenters and those of the Masons may be noted from the ordinances of the Carpenters' Guild at Norwich, dated 1375, which have a note at the end to the effect that certain Masons of Norwich had kindly provided at the church of the Carpenters' Guild two torches to burn at the high altar.

A change was to come over the spirit of these Guilds, for as the Masons were the elite of the working classes, in course of time intelligent outsiders did not disdain to join them, and so we get a class of educated men whose interests would rise above the ordinary trade affairs, and whose minds, trained in mystic and religious subjects, tended towards the contemplation of allegory. They symbolised the tools before them, framed moral lessons and precepts from them, and metaphorically bent their swords into plough-shares; thus, discarding the everyday uses of their tools, they allegorised them and made them teachers of high and noble lessons, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. In other words, their practical art became a speculative and symbolic science.

But why, it may be asked, was this confined to the building trade alone, and what was the reason that other trades did not do likewise? Agriculture was then perhaps the most extensive trade in the land. Why did

not the Farmer idealise his plough and his sickle, and learn lessons of making rough natures smooth and of reaping harvests of golden virtues instead of golden grain? Why did not the Armourer form a society where the working tools would be the breast-plate and the sword; and why did not the Farrier idealise his forge, and teach lessons pointing out the difference between pure and base metal, and the moral influences of purifying fires? The answer to these questions is, we think, simple, looking at the age we are referring to. It is that the other avocations were not governed so closely by Guilds as the Masons, in which there were regular degrees, from the labourer who carried the materials for the workman, to the Master Mason who carved and sculptured in stone; and what perhaps settled the point ultimately was the fact that the Mason who built Churches and Cathedrals lived in a temporary hostel or lodge while doing so, and thus came into close contact with the learned monks and priests who influenced him to nobler modes of thought, and taught him the scriptural facts which were afterwards embodied in well-known Ancient Charges.

Gradually the lodges of operative workmen in England were leavened by the admission of outsiders, as in the well-known case of the Lodge at Warrington, Lancashire, to which Elias Ashmole was admitted in 1646, and which at that time appears to have been entirely composed of speculative members.

It has often been asked, "How can the modern Freemason prove his kinship to the old working mason of the Trade Guild?" and we will try to answer the question.

(1) There is some direct evidence afforded by the Minute Books of some of the old Masonic Guilds or Lodges of Operative Masons, particularly in Scotland, which have survived as Lodges of Freemasons.

(2) The old Ancient Charges of the Trade Guilds of Masons have an important bearing on the matter, and are read into the craft ritual of the present day.

(3) The old Trade Guilds had an oath and obligations to bind their members to keep the secrets of the Society, and doubtless the form used by the Operative Masons was similar to that which we have quoted as used by the Mercers, which in its turn has several resemblances to the ritual used in the early days of modern Freemasonry.

(4) The Trade Guilds had two formal ceremonies, one for the Apprentice and another for the Craftsman, and in 1717 there were only these two degrees. Later on, between 1725 and 1730, a third degree was established, which was derived from some other source, and has no relationship to the Guilds.

(5) The Apprentice had to possess the freedom of the town or city where he worked,

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and the modern system proceeds on the assumption that the Apprentice is a free man.

Dealing with our point as to the historical continuity of the two bodies, we can call in evidence several of the old Operative Lodges, some English and some Scotch. Of the English we will first mention the Operative Masons of Durham, which were under the Palatine Government of the Bishop of the Diocese. Here several Trade Guilds or fraternities sprang up, whose beginnings are well marked, for in each case they applied to the Bishop for a Charter of Incorporation, which was granted, and a record of each of them is in existence. The Weavers came first in the 13th century, and in 1411 followed a Society of "Rough Masons, Wallers, and Slaters," which obtained a Charter in 1594. In 1609 their byelaws were confirmed, when they were styled "Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviers, Tylers, and Plaisterers." Finally, in 1638, they obtained from the Bishop another Charter, styling them "The Company, Societie, and Fellowship of Freemasons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviers, Plaisterers, and Bricklayers," the title being, as will be observed, a comprehensive one so as to comprise all branches of the building trade. The Charter was followed by the byelaws, twenty in number, dating from 1657 to 1678, in which is no trace of a secret society or the use of a ritual; in fact,

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the only reference to anything secret is in the 11th byelaw, in which it is provided "that no brother shall disclose or reveal the council or secret of his fellow brethren, nor anything that is spoken at any of their assemblies or meetings," under a penalty of four shillings, which we may fairly presume was intended to preserve trade secrets only.

The interesting point about this operative body at Durham is that we can clearly trace its transition to a Speculative Lodge of Freemasons, for in 1738, or a hundred years after their last Charter, a Speculative Lodge, known as the "Marquess of Granby Lodge," was founded in Durham, the minute book of which is happily in existence. By comparing this book with the records of the earlier body it is found that the names of the early members of the Freemasons' Lodge are identical with those of the Operatives, and there is no reason to doubt that when the new Lodge had been at work for twenty-one years it naturally absorbed into its ranks those who felt that the new body was the lineal descendant of the early Operative one, originally formed for working masons.

There were, of course, many other Operative Societies in England existing in 1717, and there are some references to one at Oxford which bore the name of "The Company of Freemasons, Carpenters, Joiners, and Slaters of the City of Oxford." Anderson

states that four Lodges joined in the movement for forming a Grand Lodge of Freemasons in 1717, from which some have concluded that only four Operative Lodges were in existence at that time ; but we know better now, and in "The Complete Freemason, or Multa Paucis for Lovers of Secrets," it is stated that the number in London was six, but it is certain that there were even more than that in England.

Alnwick, in Northumberland, was a mining neighbourhood, with stone quarries near to it, and we find that at the village of Wark, close by, there was an Operative Lodge in 1598, though we know little of it beside the name. On 29th September 1701, an Operative Lodge was founded at Alnwick, the records of which have been preserved to us, and are of great interest.

Their Minutes and Ancient Charge are reproduced in the Newcastle Roll of the "Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia," and begin: "Orders to be observed by the Company and Fellowship of Freemasons at a Lodge held at Alnwick, 29th September 1701, being the General Head Meeting Day." The first and second articles ordered that two Wardens should be elected yearly "to receive, commence, and sue all such penalties and forfeitures and fines as should in any wise be amongst the said fellowship," and we find that the Master and the Wardens were regularly elected every year. The fifth

article directed that every apprentice of a member of the Lodge should be entered in the Lodge books, and that the Ancient Charge should be given to him within one year from his apprenticeship, which was always a period of seven years. At the end of this he could be admitted, or "accepted," a full member of the Lodge at the general meeting on Michaelmas Day.

The Ancient Charge is in similar form to others, and is headed "The Masons' Constitutions." There follow two passages of Scripture, from the Book of Ecclesiasticus, in the Apocrypha, the last of which reads, "In the hands of the craftsman shall the work be commenced," with the usual ascription to the Trinity, followed by the Masonic History and the Moral Charges. At the end is a list of the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, in Latin, thus—"*Finis*: Grammatica loquitur. Logica vera dicet. Rhetorica verba colerat. Musica canit. Arithmetica numerat. Geometra ponderat. Astronomia capit astra." This last seems at once a link between the Operative and the Meditative Masons, as they may well be called, instead of Speculative.

Other links are the visits to the Alnwick Lodge by the Scottish members of the Canon-gate Kilwinning Lodge, in December 1755, and June 1756; and we feel at home when we read of the purchase by the Lodge of a sword and a pair of compasses for its work.

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The entries close in 1757, though it is thought that the Lodge lingered on for six years after that date ; but clearly it could not exist without the admission of non-operatives. It took power to admit outsiders by an order of the 27th December 1748, but we fancy this was not largely acted upon. One non-Mason was its Clerk, Nicholas Brown, an attorney, whom it allowed to become Warden in 1754, and in the following year to attain the rank of Master. This, however, was only the beginning of the end, for he had been Clerk for many years, and while the Lodge flourished he was not invited to take rank in its order. Nor was he an expensive Clerk, for all he received was five shillings each meeting, and when the members required a fresh copy of their Charges, in 1749, he made one for a fee of ten shillings.

The Lodge never admitted its allegiance to the Grand Lodge of England, and after 1763 we know nothing of it. In 1779 a Speculative Lodge sprung up in Alnwick, but that eventually died, and it was not till 1867 that the present Alnwick Lodge, No. 1167, was formed.

Another Operative Lodge, whose history has recently been written, is the Gateshead Lodge, No. 48, which existed before 1717, but the exact date is not certain, though the first authentic record of its meetings is in 1725. The evolution of this Lodge from Operative to Speculative is clearly defined, for we find

that on 24th June 1733 some fresh Penal Orders were agreed to by the Society, dealing with the admission of non-working men to the body. The rule as to outsiders provides that any gentleman, or other that was not a working mason, should pay a fee for his admission, to be fixed "according to the majority of ye company." This rule was obviously a diplomatic one, for it allowed of a sliding scale, to be adjusted according to the extent of the pocket of the new member, who had no right to join except by the goodwill of the legitimate members.

As a corollary to this, strict etiquette had to be enjoined upon the new member, who might spurn to appear as a working mason, and the very next rule, dated 27th December 1734, deals with this matter: "It is agreed by the Master and Wardens and the rest of the Society that if any Brother shall appear in the assembly without gloves and aprons at any time when summoned by the Master and Wardens he shall for each offence pay 6*d.* upon demand."

Another Lodge of the same character was held at Greenwich, and is supposed to have been formed, about 1696, by the Operative Masons engaged in building Greenwich Hospital, the foundation-stone of which was laid by Sir Christopher Wren and Evelyn, the diarist, in that year. It subsequently became a Speculative Lodge, and obtained a warrant from Grand Lodge in 1723, Sir James

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Thornhill, the painter, being the Worshipful Master in 1725. This Lodge, when the Hospital was finished, in 1736, was removed to London, where it was known as "The United Traders' Lodge," but it ceased to exist in 1800.

It must not be supposed that the meetings of the former practical Masons and their non-practical friends were hidden from the eye of the outside world, for there are quite a number of references to them by writers during the 17th century. The principal are by Izaak Walton in his "Compleat Angler," written in 1657; by Dr. Plot, the Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, in his "Natural History of Staffordshire," 1686; by Randle Holme, in his "Academy of Armoury," 1688; by Aubrey, in his "Natural History of Wiltshire," 1692. The last writer we must mention is Steel, who, in 1709, has another reference to these small Societies of Freemasons in the pages of "The Tatler." Up to the last date these were scattered Societies, who each had their own meetings, which were conducted in their own manner, and, as some think, with some resemblance to a ritual, beside the reading of an Ancient Charge and the oath on the Bible to preserve the secrets of the order.

In 1717 there were several of these Lodges working in London, and in that year four of them joined together, and had a meeting at the "Goose and Gridiron Ale House,"

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St. Paul's Churchyard, 'on 24th June, when they confederated and called themselves a Grand Lodge of Freemasons. This body has continued from that day to this, and has now become an influential association, the methods of which have been copied by nearly every other nation in Europe, and which has extended its influence to all parts of the world.

CHAPTER VII.

SCOTCH AND IRISH GUILDS.

Scotland was a country in which industries thrived, particularly in some of the towns such as Aberdeen, Perth, Dumfries, Dundee, and of course in Edinburgh, and there were Guilds in these towns with regulations somewhat like those of the English bodies. It must be remembered, however, that the entire population of Scotland only amounted in 1556 to 600,000, while Glasgow was only a village, and did not attain to the title of "burgh" till 1636. In Edinburgh the craftsmen and their wares were to be found gathered together in the High Street, near St. Giles Church. It is to be noted of these Guilds that the title of "Deacon" was substituted for Warden, and there were obviously many Guilds existing in 1425, when a statute was passed giving handicraftsmen power to elect a Deacon to preside over them, but this was afterwards thought prejudicial to the country, and the power was rescinded, although in 1556 this power was again given to the Guilds by Charter of the Queen Regent. About the year 1600, in the reign of James VI. of Scotland, who was afterwards James I. of England, express regulations were made as the relations between such bodies and the authorities of the towns.

In Scotland architecture pursued a different course to that of England, and there are only two styles found there, the early and late pointed styles, both resembling our Early English. The Abbot of Kilwinning Abbey, in Ayrshire, seems to have got together a School of Masonry, which gave rise to many operative Guilds of Masons in various parts of the country. In course of time a Grand Master Mason was appointed head of these operative Guilds, the best known of whom was William Schaw, Master of Works at Dunfermline Abbey. In 1475 the Guild of Wrights and Masons was incorporated in Edinburgh by Charter.

James III. of Scotland is described as a dreamy King, who delighted more in music and building than in the government of his realm, and his pet architect, or master mason, was Robert Cochran, whose work he appreciated so much that he actually created him Earl of Mar in 1480.

There are many traces of these Masons' Guilds in Scotland, where they were governed by a code of regulations drawn up in 1598 and known as the Schaw Statutes, whose author was William Schaw, just referred to. These were regulations for the government of the Scotch Operative Masons in general, but there were others, dated the next year, for the Operative Lodge at Kilwinning, Ayrshire. By the former there were to be two grades

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of members, consisting of Apprentices and Masters, the latter being designated Fellow



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Crafts. When a workman was made a Master Mason he was given a Mason Mark to use as a distinguishing signature to affix to the book of members and also on his work; and after exhibiting some proofs of his skill, to the satisfaction of the members, an oath was then administered to him to keep the secrets of the Society, whereupon he became a full member. The head of each Lodge was called a Deacon, though this title was afterwards altered to the English one of Warden. The Scotch Operative Lodges, like the English ones, in course of time likewise admitted outsiders as members, though it seems as if the Scotch Lodges retained the distinguishing characteristic of operatives longer than did the English ones, and resisted the inevitable transformation to speculatives for a longer time.

The earliest regular records of a Scotch Operative Lodge take us back to the year 1526, when we know that the Scottish King, James V., granted a Charter to some monks

to form a harbour at Aitchison's Haven, which was near to Musselburgh, in Midlothian. The harbour was to accommodate ships to carry the coal which was dug in the neighbourhood, and it obviously needed skilled builders for its construction. Thus we find gathered together a band of operative workmen, who formed themselves into an Operative Lodge. There are in existence two of their minute books, dating from as early as 1598, and the records extend to 1852.

The first is entitled "The Book of the Acts and Ordinances of the Noble Masters and Fellows of Craft of the Lodge of Aitchison's Haven." Apprentices in the trade, as we find from the minute book of the Society, were generally apprenticed, not only to the Master, but, in case he died before the articles expired, were also bound to the Master's wife. The Lodge fee payable was one shilling and eightpence, or £1 Scots, and, in addition, each Master present at the Lodge had given to him by the newly-made apprentice a pair of gloves. The Lodge usually met once a year only, on St. John's Day in winter, 27th December, but it apparently held emergency meetings when required.

As in England, so also in Scotland, the exclusiveness of the Operatives gradually gave way, and in course of time distinguished strangers were admitted to the Aitchison Haven Lodge, for we find that, in 1672, Alexander Seaton, brother of the Earl of Wintoun,

subsequently W.M. of the English Lodge at Rome, was admitted a member.

“The Company of Aitchison’s Haven,” as it was called, was admitted to the roll of the Scottish Grand Lodge, but removed in 1737, though it was afterwards re-admitted. It continued, obviously, at all events, until 1852, as a Speculative body, and nothing can be clearer to trace than the transition stages of this Operative Lodge. First, we start with actual builders in an organised society. Secondly, we have the existence of Ancient Charges, for in one of their minute books are written not only the well-known Schaw Statutes of 1599, but also a copy of some Ancient Charges dated 1666, referred to in the minutes under the old style of a “buik.” Thirdly, we have the admission of outsiders to the building trade as members, and so gradually we get to more modern days and a ritual. In common with other Scottish Trade Guilds, the Lodge was first presided over by a Warden and a Deacon, and it is not till 1825 that we find the ruling officer is designated as the Master.

We can trace the Lodge of Mother Kilwinning, No. 0, back to 1598; St. Mary’s Chapel, Edinburgh, to 1475; while there are two at Dundee, called Operative and Ancient, the very names of which bespeak their origin.

Ireland was not in the days we treat of rich in industries or buildings, and we are not surprised to note an absence of Trade Guilds in the towns, except a few in Dublin.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD CONTINENTAL GUILDS.

England, from earliest times, seems to have been the birthplace of trade, and in the same way she was certainly the mother of Trade Guilds, for those on the Continent are undoubtedly later in date than the English ones, though both originated from the primitive Frith Guilds. Some of the earliest of the last-named we find existing in Denmark, with regulations mainly referring to the violent acts of men who caused the murder, or manslaughter, of members of the Guild, and penalties were provided in such cases. Similar Guilds were in existence in the West of Europe in the days of the great Charlemagne, who started his reign in the year 768, but he had occasion to object to these Guilds as interfering with his authority, and endeavoured to suppress them by the vigorous methods of scourging, nose-slitting, banishment, with other like punishments, and, in particular, he forbade the administration of the oaths used by the Guilds.

Trade Guilds must have sprung up on the Continent shortly after this time, for we find them in Worms about the year 1020, though they were then in a very primitive state, for the villeins were working not only on the land, but also in handicrafts, which was not

considered quite the thing to do in England. In Flanders also there were Guilds, comprising villeins amongst their members, which bodies the lords felt called upon to suppress, upon the ground that such workmen tended to become too independent of their masters. In France, after Charlemagne's time, the Guilds were also under a ban, because it was alleged that in their feasts they were guilty of gluttony, and that pagan rites were observed by them; but these charges sound like those raised in after days, without much warrant, against the Templars. In Paris, the members of the Trade Guilds appeared yearly on the Feast of Corpus Christi, in a miracle play which they performed in the West Gallery of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. It seems clear that in Germany Guilds were formed for the benefit of workers on the land, as well as for those in trade, for Henry I., known as "The Fowler," who reigned in 919, ordered the Guilds to hold their meetings in the towns, where they could be better supervised than in the villages. This town life was obviously the beginning of a new phase in the existence of the Guilds on the Continent, and eventually led up to the adoption of Guild officers as the rulers, not only of their own body, but also of the town in which they traded. We have a very clear instance of this in Paris, where the government of the city was given to the merchants, who were not only members of the Merchant Guild there, but also carried their goods to other parts of France, by boats on the River Seine, for they are called

“*Mercatores aquæ*,” or Water Merchants. In a similar way, at Cologne, in 1050, the terms burghers and merchants were synonymous, and we naturally expect to find a great many officials of the Guilds taking part in the government of the town.

Coming to the 13th century, we find that Trade Guilds had become strong at the towns of Cologne, Strasburg, Basle, Ratisbon, and Spire, at all of which places there ensued a deadly struggle with the lords, and in Cologne the craftsmen were nearly reduced to a condition of serfdom, while at Brussels the merchant could and did ill-treat the workman in trade, who was described as “a man without heart or honour, who lived by his toil.”

Wagner in his opera “*Die Meistersinger*” most happily introduces the Trades Guilds of Germany, the members of which appear to the strains of a march.

As illustrating the methods of the German Trade Guilds in guaranteeing the quality of the work we may quote from Carlyle’s “*Frederick the Great*,” who, writing of the material required by the German army in the year 1760, gives a list of it as follows:—“For bed ticking, 13,000 webs; of shirts ready made, 18,000; shoes, I forget in what quantity, but from the poor little town of Duderstadt, 600 pairs—liability to instant

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flogging if they are not honest shoes ; flogging and the whole Shoemakers' Guild summoned out to see it."

By the end of the year 1400, victory rested on the side of the Guilds, though the lords were strong enough to divide the rule of the towns with the latter bodies, of which they often found it expedient to become members themselves, as in England had been done by Edward III., who became a member of the Linen Armourers' Guild. In England the Guilds enjoyed the right of self-government, and always appointed their own Wardens ; but, though we find a similar course being pursued in Flanders and Cologne, in many towns on the Continent, including Basle, the appointment was made by the Bishop, and this mode of cutting off the powers of the Guilds was particularly noticeable in the case of the smaller Guilds which governed inferior trades. At Magdeburg, in 1157, the right of appointment was possessed by the Archbishop, probably because of the religious element in the Guilds, but he magnanimously agreed to allow one of the smaller bodies, that of the Shoemakers, to elect their own Wardens ; though in France a quite different spirit prevailed in 1321, when Charles IV. deprived the Parisian craftsmen of their powers in this respect, and later on, in 1408, the King actually appointed one of his valets to the post of Warden of one of these Guilds. This, however, was the high-water mark of interference with such powers, and the end

of the struggle in France was the same as in other Continental towns, for it resulted in victory for the workmen. With regained powers, the Guilds were able to exercise their old powers, and were proud to again possess a Court of their own, to do justice to their own members. This we see in its fullest glory in 1275, when the Warden of the Guild of the Masons, who were engaged in building Strasburg Cathedral, held a Court for trying such cases in great state, sitting under a canopy in the open air.

In face of the dangers to which they were from time to time exposed it is not surprising to find that a feeling of sympathy, and a desire for union, should grow amongst the various Guilds, and, as happened in modern days amongst the modern Trade Unions, they made a confederation, especially in the building trades, amongst the members of whom we find, in 1454, four central Lodges created at Strasburg, Cologne, Vienna, and Zurich, the head man of all being the overseer of works at Strasburg Cathedral, who was denominated the "Chief Judge of Stonework."

In course of time, membership of the Guilds began to become expensive, and some of the members, finding themselves short of capital, resorted to the time-honoured plan—void, it is true, of all originality, but also fraught with many dangers, both to themselves and their workmen, we mean, of course,

resort to the aid of moneylenders. In 1340, the Guild of Tailors at Vienna made an ordinance forbidding their members to carry on their trades with borrowed capital. This want of money by a trader, freshly starting in business, was accentuated in Germany by the fact that he was expected to give a sumptuous dinner to his fellow traders, which was an expensive affair, and frequently caused him to start his new career in debt. The ranks of the members were also jealously guarded, and, if an outsider wanted to gain admission, he had to pay a heavy fee to do so, which brought from the Emperor Sigismund of Germany the reproach that "membership of the Guilds had to be grossly bought." The membership, however, generally descended from father to son, and we find that, after 1450, the Guilds of France became as exclusively hereditary as those of England and Germany.

The influence of the priests was always felt in the Guilds, and it may well be that, although we find no trace of anything approaching a Trade Union referred to in the Bible, we do find the mention of hospitality amongst members of the same trade in Acts xviii. 3, "And because Paul was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought: for by occupation they were tentmakers." It may possibly be that a priest instilled this idea into the minds of some Continental guildsmen, but certain it is that so as to aid the true workman, and to cement the interests

of those in the same Guild, a very interesting and helpful plan of hospitality was efficiently carried out in Thuringia, in 1628, where the Guild of Shoemakers established an Inn for their travelling journeymen. Here the man in search of work was required to stay, if he desired to obtain employment, for it was a labour bureau, where he could enquire for work, which he could obtain in no other manner. The charge for a night's lodging was only a halfpenny, while the meal cost $2\frac{1}{2}d.$, and, so as to make him feel at home, the host and his wife had to be addressed as "father" and "mother," while the daughters and maid servants were called "sister," and the sons and male servants had the familiar title of "brother," and the traveller was subject to a fine if he called them by any other name. The Guild itself met every fortnight, when, as in England, the box belonging to the body was solemnly unlocked with several keys, and the regulations of the Association were produced and sometimes read. The Lodge was now duly opened, the first business being a religious service, and after the necessary business had been transacted, a loving-cup was handed round, from which everyone took a draught. At the close of the meeting dues were collected for charity, $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ being contributed by the new member, while the regular attendants each contributed $\frac{3}{4}d.$ every fortnight, with an additional $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ at each quarterly meeting, which would possibly take place on a Saint's day. The regulations, which, let us hope, were strictly observed,

directed the members to keep strict morals, while gaming, dice and drunkenness were to be punished. The regulations, however, went another step in the direction of good manners, and required the members not to insult each other, and concluded, in a still higher strain, by requiring them to go about the town clad in decent clothes, so as apparently to be in harmony with the fashionable boots made by the members themselves in the course of their business.

It is almost sad to think that such useful and interesting institutions should have ever come to an end, but we know that, in England, their death-knell was rung by Henry VIII. at the time of the Reformation, and, though the conditions were different on the Continent, the Guilds in Germany began to close their activities about the same time, the cause for which was apparently bound up with their religious characteristics, which naturally suffered with the decay of the Roman Catholic religion there. In France, for some reason, the Trade Guilds went on a little longer, but, in 1614, the State resolved upon their suppression, and so in time they likewise came to an end there. They must somehow have come to life again, however, for we find that during the French Revolution in 1790, the National Assembly, or Tiers Etat, amongst other orders, decreed the abolition of all Guilds of the professions, arts, or trades, and for a second time the Guilds went under in that country.

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The example of the English Guilds in admitting outsiders, who did not practise the trade of the other members, was followed in other countries, and among them by Italy, but here there was a sound reason for this course, as the Guilds took an important part in politics, and to belong to one was to gain a franchise. The Government of Florence was almost in the hands of the Guilds there, and to make them of more power by admitting men of wealth and position, a law was passed in 1295 that admission to a Guild of a member who did not exercise the trade it governed gave such member the full political rights of such body. Dante the poet had a desire to join the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries at Florence, which he did, and from the year 1296 to 1301 his name is found in the minutes of that body as a politically active member of the Guild, though not as one practising its arts.

In this same city during the 14th century there were twenty-one Trade Guilds, the seven most important being known as *arti maggiori*, the members of which were entitled to the rank of magistrates of the city.

The Guilds on the Continent did not enjoy the placid times of their English contemporaries, and were exposed at times to armed resistance from the jealous men-at-arms who envied the wealth of the industrious guildsmen engaged in the quiet trades of peace. In illustration of this we may adduce the

example of the Merchant Guild at Valenciennes in North France, the members of which were ordered by the Guild to always bring with them to the market, where they exposed their goods for sale, their weapons, and also to ride to distant fairs in armed companies so as to be able to give a good account of themselves to armed foes.

It is curious how one can sometimes cull an impression of the past from words alone, and in this connection we can recall the flagons and flasks and drinking scenes of the old German Guilds, when we remember the name for their meeting day, which is "Krugtage," the word "krug" being the equivalent of our word "jug," and may thus be freely rendered as "drinking day."

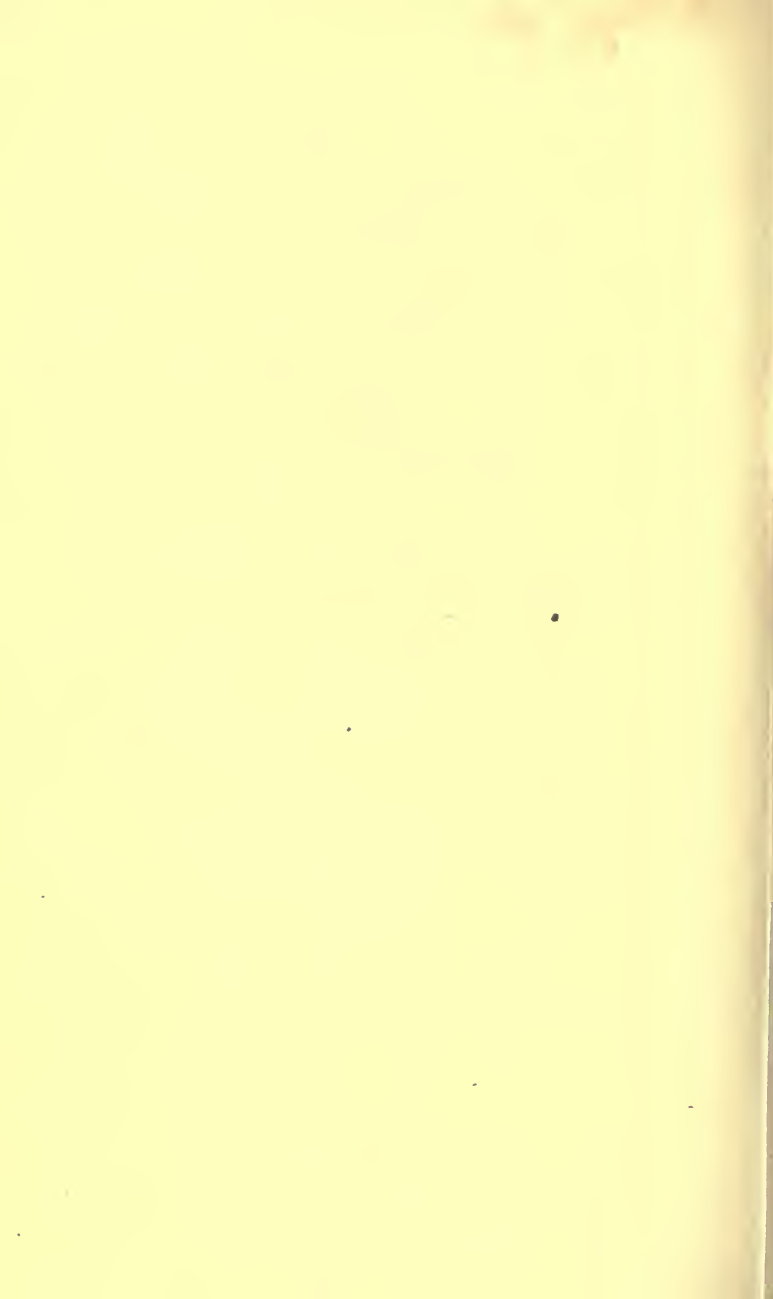
There were many Guilds in Belgium, and two churches there have interesting souvenirs of their activities. The one is at the Church of Notre Dame in Antwerp, where the Gunsmiths, or Arquebusiers' Guild have their chapel, which is adorned by a painting of Rubens representing their patron saint St. Christopher. Rubens received no payment for that valuable work, which he gave to the Guild by way of compromise for legal proceedings taken against him by them for building part of his house on their ground.

The other is at Bruges Cathedral, where the Bootmakers' Guild have built a chapel at their own expense, which has a very old oak

screen across it, bearing bas-reliefs of angels carrying the arms of the Guild.

The old Trade Guilds of Belgium in 1470 are referred to by Sir Walter Scott in his novel of "Quentin Durward," one of the characters in which is described as the head of the "gallant Skinners' Guild of Curriers" at Liege, and Scott relates that a peculiar whistle was used to call the members together, each of the crafts having a different signal among themselves.

At Ghent in the 15th century was a Guild of Painters of which Van der Goes was Master from 1473 to 1475. How such people as artists, with their individual tastes and celebrities, managed to join together in such a Guild, and who were the members of it, will always excite the curiosity of antiquarians.



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