

TRADES, AND HOW TO LEARN THEM.

CABINET-MAKING.

In this way I kept on gradually advancing in knowledge and skill, and learned to make sofas and chairs, bedsteads, chiffoniers and wardrobes, and tables of various kinds. In short, I went through the whole range of a country cabinet-maker's business; and mahogany, rosewood and satinwood, became as familiar to me in the end as pine and beech had been at first. And so my seven years' term came to an end; and I was free to work as a journeyman on my own account.

There is now something to be said on another part of the subject. As a rule, I think it best for a boy to learn his trade in some country town, for the reason, that in a country shop he will do many matters connected with the trade, which he never sees in a London shop. A country journeyman can turn his hand to many things, and get a living, where a Londoner, who, as is usually the case, knows but one line of work, would starve. In my own case, for instance, I learned paper-hanging, and something of upholstery. I could stuff and cover a chair, or sofa, make mattresses and cushions, and hang curtains. The ability to do these things has been of the greatest use and benefit to me since; and even had I never been called on to attempt them, the knowledge of such things always increases a man's value as a journeyman, and improves his chances of becoming a master. It is true that what a Londoner does is often well done; but he can do only one thing; and it is notorious, that in country shops a "hand" from London is looked on as a clever, though not very useful addition to a workshop.

I, therefore, recommend that a boy should learn his trade in the country, and finish off with a year's work in London, to improve his knowledge of style and method. In choosing a country master, however, some pains should be taken to ascertain that he has business enough to keep his apprentice fully employed; for nothing is so fatal to a youth's character and success, as a dawdling habit of work.

Another point to be considered, is the master's own character. However promising the advantages may appear, do not place your son with any man whose character will not bear close investigation. Have nothing to do with a Sabbath-breaker, or one who spends his evenings at the public-house, or who uses profane language. When a master signs an indenture, he thereby undertakes to become the parent's representative; and any parent who does not satisfy himself that the master entertains proper ideas on this head, neglects his duty with regard to his son.

Another point for consideration, is to shorten the period of apprenticeship. Seven years are by far too long for the learning of any trade. Most trades may be learned, and learned well, in three years, so, if the term were made for five years it would generally be found sufficient. If a boy does not learn his trade thoroughly in five years, in most cases it will be the master's fault. I know that boys will be wilful and idle, and think work a hardship; but they may, nevertheless, be made to learn their trade by proper discipline. I would therefore say to parents: bind your boy for five years; and let him have the two additional years for schooling at the beginning, or for improvement at the end of the seven years between fourteen and twenty-one.

The premium paid on apprenticing a boy to a cabinet-maker, varies greatly. Some small masters will accept £40; other masters will not take less than £100; and some of the first-rate London houses require £150. In all ordinary cases it would be fair to reckon the amount at £10 a year; which for five years would be £50; and so on in proportion. This is for an in-door apprenticeship. An out-door apprentice receives, or ought to receive, pay from the day he is bound; beginning at two shillings or half-a-crown a week, rising year by year to ten or twelve shillings a week in the last year. All these particulars should be clearly stated in the indenture.

The indenture is a sheet of parchment, bearing a printed form and a stamp, the cost of which varies with the amount of

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