

apparent unwillingness to go as far as some English railway managers have already done in the introduction of larger locomotives and cars.

But leaving aside the small portion of the volume devoted to a discussion of technical matters, we have an entertaining book, that enables us at the hands of a genial critic to see ourselves and our commonplace industrial life in a most gratifying and picturesque light.

FRANK HAIGH DIXON.

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE.

Artisans français. By FRANCOIS HUSSON. Paris: Marchal & Billard, 1902. *Les Serruriers*, 12mo, pp. 270; *Les Menuisiers*, pp. 275.

IN these volumes M. Husson traces the progress of the locksmith and of the joiner from earliest times to the present. He sketches briefly the primitive man who closed the opening to his hut with a rude door and fastened it with a thong, the workers in iron and wood among the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and the artisan of the Merovingians. The value of the "studies" begins with the description of the workmen of these two trades—masters, apprentices, and journeymen—in the thirteenth century. Here the fortunes of these French workmen may be followed as they—like many of their fellow-laborers—related the unwritten laws of their trades to Etienne Boileau, the provost of Paris, and received them from his hands as the legal statutes of their corporations; as they petitioned successive kings for their revision and re-enactment; as they fought interminable legal battles with other trades over alleged encroachments upon their field of labor; as they struggled to meet the ever-increasing and arbitrary demands of the crown for money. In no circle of life is there a greater contrast between past and present conditions. Whether locksmith or joiner, the artisan of the Middle Ages was circumscribed at every point by the law. He could make only certain articles. He must make them as the law prescribed. He had to submit to inspection at unexpected hours by the wardens of his trade. If, through ignorance, carelessness, or fraud, his work fell short, he had to pay a fine, and perchance see his condemned lock broken, or his defective chair burned before his door. In some cases he was ordered to replace it at his own expense. He might

not work at night, if he so desired, unless by command of a member of the royal family or of the bishop. In Paris especially he was at the mercy of the king's call, and must give his work precedence over all other.

In the days of St. Louis feudalism still showed its hold when the king conferred these trades as fiefs upon officers of his court. For centuries more its customs lingered. The last statutes accorded to the locksmiths—those of 1650—required the wardens-elect to take the oath of office “between the hands” of an officer of the crown. In the opening pages of these “studies” we see the serf emerging gradually into the free artisan, and note his deep attachment to his trade corporation. Toward their close we read of the joy with which its members greeted the overthrow of that same organization. The work of the craft guild of France was done.

M. Husson draws his materials almost wholly from the statutes of the trades, the orders in council, the decrees of Parliament, and other public documents. The statutes, as revised under successive kings, form no inconsiderable portion of the volumes. They show two sections of the locksmiths in 1258—those concerned in building and those engaged in the manufacture of locks. In 1290 they record the separation of the joiners from the carpenters. On the technical side they give many details regarding the tools of earlier days, the advent of machine tools, and the evolution of methods. For the non-professional reader the interest here centers in the strictness of the laws devised and enforced by the trades themselves for insuring honest work, showing a true pride in their arts, and a praiseworthy desire to render faithful service to the public which trusted life and property to the results of their workmanship.

But these statutes have other than technical instruction to give. They reveal the master-locksmith or the master-joiner in his workshop, where, as these same laws required, he labored in the full view of the public; where he sold his wares, trained his apprentices, and directed his journeymen. They show him as he bought his materials—his ancient narrowness in looking upon the man from the provinces, of whom he purchased lumber on the docks of his city, as a foreigner; his hatred of competition and eagerness to gain the right of search in the shops of other trades for articles which he alone should manufacture; his steady struggle toward monopoly, an aristocracy of master-workmen. Yet, side by side with his fear of competition appeared a spirit of emulation that has left behind enduring masterpieces of these arts.

In the statutes are seen the apprentice, bound for a fixed term of years, at first by verbal contract and later by written indenture, an inmate of his master's family; and the journeyman, chosen sometimes in earlier days to a responsible office; sometimes punished more severely than his master for a like offense; deprived more and more, as time went on, of any voice in the trade corporation; exerting every faculty, if he were an aspirant for the mastership, upon the *chef-d'œuvre* demanded of the applicant; oftenest of all hopeless of entrance into that privileged class of his fellow-craftsmen. He could not work on his own account, or for the master of another trade. His way was hedged.

Incidentally, these statutes have their value in relation to domestic life in their several periods. The interior finish of the home—its floors and ceilings; its chimney-pieces with fender and andirons, and its wainscoting; the doors, great and small, with their hinges and locks and bolts and bars; the furniture of every room; the jewel casket and the “strong chest,” iron-bound, “the depots of the most precious things for the preservation of the goods of our people”—all these, with hundreds of other features, pass in review. Even the antiquarian may find reference here to many an article that served its purpose and is no longer made.

In the author's treatment of his materials there appear certain limitations. To a considerable extent he leaves the original documents to tell their own history. He writes for the members of the trades with which he deals. “You work much”—so he opens the preface of the earlier volume addressed to the *maîtres et ouvriers serruriers*—“you have little time to read.” Are French artisans, then, always well versed in the history of their country? Is it not the student of economic and social conditions who is the better able to read between the lines? Frequently the explanation of the political causes lying back of royal edicts or of orders in council will seem too brief to the average reader; and—in *Les Menuisiers*—the reproduction of entire sections from the earlier work, generally without mention of the fact, cannot be other than a disappointment. It would be unfair to expect numerous details concerning the past of these trades within the professedly narrow bounds of historical studies. Under such restriction it is natural that the chief city should be the section chosen in the main for investigation—Paris, which by the time of the Revolution “had itself become the entire country.” But was there, after all, within that capital much bungling work-

manship which led to so many re-enactments of the minute rules for construction? Did the locksmiths of Paris suffer from the fiscal exactions of Henry IV. as from those of his predecessor? Back of that statute, often renewed, forbidding a workman to leave his employer before his task was finished, was there the practice, complained of by the master-joiners of Bourges—that of making a vacancy by his departure for newly arrived comrades of *compagnonnage*? In the “royal declaration” of July, 1704, all joiners belonging to that fraternity were forbidden “to assemble in any place whatever . . . on pain of corporal punishment.” By passages such as this the author shows the widening breach between master and journeyman. But the regulations of the *compagnons*, professing to be “as well for the profit of the masters” as for their own—even those articles referring directly to the masters—are not given.¹ In *Les Menuisiers* the reader lingers over the rare statutes of the *confrérie* of Saint Anne, but finds no explanation of the interdict concerning feasts; no hint that these joiners displayed exceptional liberality in admitting women to their brotherhood; no assurance that—as seems probable—they again proved their organization an exception among such bodies by admitting *compagnons* to all its privileges. And, now and then, a reader may regret that a little space is not given to the *Confrérie de la Passion*, in which locksmiths and joiners shared with some other trades the honor of producing the Mysteries, and thereby became memorable in the annals of the drama.

Occasionally there is room, perhaps, for a difference of opinion in the interpretation of some passage; as, for instance, in regard to the choice of wardens under Étienne Boileau’s statutes for the carpenters. It is a question, too, if the apprentice of the Middle Ages found in his master’s home that “atmosphere of indulgent affection” pictured in these volumes. It may be doubted whether, even in the fifteenth century, there commonly existed in the family that love and consideration frequently found today. In every century there were masters good and bad, and it is a fact unnoted by the author that the apprentice sometimes missed that instruction which was his just due. As centuries passed, old customs were modified, and here and there

¹ The reviewer has been unable to obtain M. HUSSON’s *Artisans et compagnons*, which, although written earlier, undoubtedly supplements, in a way, these volumes.

the apprentice dined in the kitchen instead of with his master, and made the workshop his lodging.

These "studies" are valuable for the original documents they furnish, for the strong light they shed upon the individual trades of which they treat, for their description of the artistic worth of the masterpieces produced in those organizations, and—especially to the American—for the account of the status of these trades in France at the present day. The author is apparently without strong prejudices. He regrets the loss of friendly intercourse between masters and workmen, and the consequent loss of impetus to art, which followed the abolition of the trade corporations. At the same time, he condemns the tyranny of their statutes which hindered the advance of the workmen, and cites with approval Louis XVI.'s scathing denunciation of those "arbitrary institutions." Yet he finds much to praise in those same organizations. Evidently a man such as those he delights to portray, "lovers of their art, alive to the glory of the trade," he is so far from agreeing with Tocqueville that the monopoly of the trades was a detriment to the progress of the arts, as to believe the old familiar relations of master and workman favorable to "ideas both sane and strong, profitable to the art applied to the trades."

His accounts of these trades as they now exist seem almost separate "studies," so widely did the Revolution sunder the old France from the new. The *chambres ouvrières*, whose mission, as he affirms, should be one of peace and not of violence, have no wish at present to take advantage of arbitration in the settlement of differences arising between laborer and employer. "Strikes are the order of the day. They are the work of a band of agitators and politicians who, profiting by the ignorance of the working class, manage their affairs to the detriment of those whom they flatter in order the better to deceive them, and whom they push to misery and despair."² In the work of the *chambres syndicales patronales*, in the liberty they accord, in their commitment to arbitration, in their establishment of professional schools, in their aim for moral as well as material progress, the author finds hope for the future. Upon the present revival of art in these trades, surpassing at times—as he believes—the achievements of the past, he looks with great satisfaction.

The enthusiasm of this writer in his field, himself a locksmith and

² *Les Serruriers*, p. 238.

a descendant of many joiners, must be a spur to any artisan who reads these books. But they should go beyond the confines of the trades. Little considered as were the mass of the folk who followed trades in older times, the facts bearing upon their lives are at a premium in the present sum of human knowledge.

ELLA CAROLINE LAPHAM.

Insurance and Crime: A Consideration of the Effects upon Society of the Abuses of Insurance, together with Certain Historical Instances of Such Abuses. By ALEXANDER COLIN CAMPBELL. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902. 8vo, pp. xvi + 408.

THE author in this treatise, which is rather sprightly despite its prolixity, shows how vicious methods of insurance have added, to the inevitable dangers of the sea, those unnecessary ones due to faulty construction, to overloading, and to actual barratry, while on land the same evil has given rise to incendiarism, graveyard insurance, and murder. To such abuses the insurance companies, according to the author, are indulgent, because the added risk to the public causes more general purchase of insurance, while increased losses are offset by higher premiums charged to all.

One can with difficulty accept this thesis. It is true that higher rates will offset higher general risks and allow the business as a whole to yield profits. But, whatever the premiums, the specific loss is still a loss, and only a loss, to the insurer as well as to society. Experience seems to show that the inevitable outcome, and one of the chief economic justifications, of the organized assumption of risks is that the business tends toward suicide by lessening the very risks on the existence of which its profits depend. Thus, just as the crop reports of grain speculators tend in the long run to remove the uncertainty which makes speculative dealings in grain possible, so fire-insurance associations seek to determine the causes of fire and to prevent their occurrence, even though they thereby lessen the inducement to buy fire indemnity.

The author's remedy for the evils resulting from the abuses of insurance is an extension and rigid enforcement of the principle that insurance is void in the absence of insurable interest. This, together with the development of a better-informed public sentiment, will, according to the author, render other legislation unnecessary.

HENRY RAND HATFIELD.