

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Craft Gilds, by W. Cunningham

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Craft Gilds

Author: W. Cunningham

Release date: February 19, 2014 [EBook #44966]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Chris Curnow and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net> (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive)

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CRAFT GILDS ***

A PAPER ON CRAFT GILDS,

Read by

The Rev. W. CUNNINGHAM, D.D.,

At the Thirteenth Annual Meeting
of the Society for the
Protection of Ancient Buildings.

1890

A Paper
ON
CRAFT GILDS,
READ BY
THE REV. W. CUNNINGHAM, D.D.,

*At the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Society for the
Protection of Ancient Buildings.*

There is, as I understand it, a double object in the work of this Society; it interests itself in the preservation of ancient buildings, partly because they are monuments which when once destroyed can never be replaced, and which bear record of the ages in which they were made and the men who reared them; and in this sense all that survives from the past, good and bad, coarse or refined, has an abiding value. But to some folks there seems to be a certain pedantry in gathering or studying things that are important merely because they are curiosities, a certain fancifulness in the frame of mind which concentrates attention on the errors of printers, or the sports of nature, or the rubbish of the past. And much which has been preserved from the past is little better than rubbish, as the poet felt when he wrote:

"Rome disappoints me much; I hardly as yet understand, but Rubbishy seems the word that most exactly would suit it. All the foolish destructions, and all the sillier savings, All the incongruous things of past incompatible ages Seem to be treasured up here to make fools of the present and future."

Still, the view Clough takes is very superficial; there is a real human interest about even the rubbish heaps of the past if we have knowledge enough to detect it; the dulness is in us who fail to recognise the interest which attaches to trifles from the past or to read the evidence they set before us.

But there is another reason why the vestiges of bygone days claim our interest—not as mere curiosities, but as in themselves beautiful objects, excellently designed and skilfully fashioned. There are numberless arts in which the men of the past were adepts; their skill as builders is patent to all, but specialists are quite as enthusiastic over the work that was done by mediæval craftsmen in other departments. Their wood-carving, and working in metals, the purity of their dyes, the beauty of their glass, these are things which move the admiration of competent critics in the present day. Machinery may produce more rapidly, more cheaply, more regular work, of more equal quality, and perhaps of higher finish, but it is work that has lost the delicacy and grace of objects that were shaped by human hands and bear the direct impress of human care, and taste, and fancy. We may be interested in the preservation of the relics of the past, not merely as curiosities from bygone ages, but as examples of beautiful workmanship and skilled manipulation to which the craftsmen of the present day cannot attain.

Most Englishmen—all those whose opinions are formed by the newspapers they read—are so proud of the vast progress that has been made in the present century, that they do not sufficiently attend to the curious fact that there are many arts that decay and are lost. In this country it appears that the art of glass-making was introduced more than once, and completely died out again; the same is probably true of cloth dressing and of dyeing. It seems to me a very curious problem to examine what were the causes which led to the disappearance of these particular industries. In each single case it is probably a very complicated problem to distinguish all the factors at work—what were the social or economic conditions that destroyed this or that useful art once introduced? But into such questions of detail I must not attempt to enter now. I wish to direct your attention to-day to a more general question, to an attempt to give a partial explanation, not of failure here and there, but of conspicuous success. In the thirteenth and fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a very high degree of skill was attained, not in one art only, but in many. It is at least worth while to look a little more closely at one group of the conditions which influenced the work of the times, and examine the organisations which were formed for controlling the training of workmen, for supervising the manner in which they lived, and maintaining a high standard of quality in the goods produced. There is no need to idealise the times when they were formed, or the men who composed them; the very records of craft guilds show that the mediæval workman was quite capable of scamping his work and getting drunk when opportunity tempted him. But the fact remains that a very great deal of first-rate work was done in many crafts, for portions of it still survive, and I cannot but believe that some of the credit is due to the guilds which set themselves to rule each craft, so that the work turned out should be a credit to those who made it.

Herein, as it seems to me, lies the secret of the importance of the craft guilds during the period of their useful activity. They were managed on the principle that "honourable thing was convenable;" that honesty was the best policy; the good of the trade meant its high reputation for sound work at fair prices. It has got another meaning to our ears; a time when trade is good means a time when it is more possible than usual to sell any sort of goods at high prices, and the craft guilds in their later days were contaminated by this lower view of industry. The ancient anecdote of the Edinburgh glazier who was caught breaking the windows of peaceful inhabitants for "the good of the trade," may illustrate the modern sense of the phrase, while the conduct of the stalwart citizen who thrashed him within an inch of his life, and said at every blow "it's all for the good of the trade," was in closer accord with the disciplinary character of mediæval rules.

I trust I have said enough to justify my selection of this topic as one which is not unfitting the attention of this society; the subject is a very wide one, and I think the treatment may be somewhat less diffuse if I draw most of my illustrations from a single centre of industry, and speak chiefly of the craft guilds of Coventry. It is a town which I visited recently, and where, through the kindness of the Town Clerk and Mr. W. G. Fretton, the antiquary, I was able to make good use of the few hours I had to spend. It may be convenient too, to arrange the matter under the following heads:—

I. The introduction of craft guilds.

II. The objects and powers of mediæval craft guilds.

III. The resuscitation of craft guilds.

I. There is a certain amount of assumption in talking about the introduction of craft guilds, because it suggests the belief that they were not a native development. The word gild is, after all, a very vague term, much like our word association, and though we can prove the existence of many guilds before the Conquest,—at Cambridge and Exeter and elsewhere,—their laws contain nothing that would justify us in regarding them as craft guilds. It is much more probable, though Dr. Gross, the greatest living authority on the subject, speaks with considerable reserve, that the hall where the men of Winchester drank their own gild, or the land of the knights' gild at Canterbury, belonged to bodies which had some supervision over the trade of the town—in fact, were early guilds merchant. But I know of no hint in any of the records or histories of the period before the Norman Conquest, that can be adduced to show that there were any associations of craftsmen formed to control particular industries. The earliest information which we get about such groups of men comes from London, where, as we learn, Henry I. granted a charter to the Weavers. It is pretty clear that by this document some authority was given to the weavers to control the making of cloth (and it possibly involved conditions which affected the import of cloth). It is certain that there was a long continued struggle between the weavers' gild and the citizens, which came to a peaceful close in the time of Edward I. There were weavers' guilds also in a considerable number of other towns in the reign of Henry II.; Beverley, Marlborough, and Winchester may be mentioned in particular, as the ordinances of these towns have survived, and there are incidental references which seem to show that the weavers, and the subsidiary crafts of fullers and dyers had, even in the twelfth century, considerable powers of regulating their respective trades. The evidence becomes more striking if we are justified in connecting with it the cases of other towns, where we find that regulations had been enforced with regard to cloth, and that the townsmen were anxious to set these regulations aside, and buy or sell cloth of any width.

So far what we find is this; while we have no evidence of craft guilds before the Conquest, we find indications of a very large number of guilds among the weavers and the subsidiary callings shortly after that date. But there is a further point; so far as we can gather, weaving before the Conquest was a domestic art; we have no mention of weavers as craftsmen; the art was known, but it was practised as an employment for women in the house; but in the time of the Conqueror and of his sons there was a considerable immigration of Flemings, several of whom were particularly skilled in weaving woollen cloth; they settled in many towns in different parts of the country, and it seems not unnatural to conclude that weaving as an independent craft was introduced from the Continent soon after the Norman Conquest.

Institutions analogous to craft guilds appear to have existed in some of the towns of Northern France time out of mind, and some can apparently trace a more or less shadowy connection with the old Roman Collegia. Putting all these matters together, it appears that craft organisation first shows itself in England in connexion with a trade which was probably introduced from abroad; and it seems not impossible that the Continental artisans brought not only a knowledge of the art of weaving but certain habits of organisation with them.

Some sort of organisation was probably necessary for police and fiscal purposes if for none others. Town life was a curiously confused chaos of conflicting authority; in London each ward was an independent unit, in Chester and Norwich the intermingling of jurisdictions seems very puzzling. The newcomers were not always welcomed by the older ratepayers, and they might perhaps find it convenient to secure a measure of *status* by obtaining a royal charter for their gild. Just as the Jews or the Hansards were in the city and yet not citizens, but had an independent footing, so to some extent were the weavers situated, and apparently for similar reasons; they seem to have had *status* as weavers, which they held directly from the King, which

marked them out from other townsmen, and which possibly delayed their complete amalgamation with the other inhabitants.

There is yet another feature about these weavers' guilds; the business in which they are engaged was one which was from an early time regulated by royal authority. King Richard I. issued an assize of cloth defining the length and breadth which should be manufactured.[1] The precise object of these regulations is not clear; they may have been made in the interests of the English consumer; they may have been made in the interest of the foreign purchaser, and the reputation of English goods abroad; they may have been framed in connexion with a protective policy, of which there are some signs. But amid much that is uncertain these three things seem pretty clear:—

1. That there were no craft guilds before the Conquest.
2. That there were many craft guilds in connexion with the newly introduced weavers' craft in the twelfth century.
3. That they exercised their powers under royal authority in a craft which was the subject of royal regulation.

So far for weavers; I wish now to turn to another craft in which we hear of craft guilds very early—the Bakers. There is a curious parallelism between these two callings. In the first place baking was, on the whole, a domestic art before the Conquest, not a separate employment; in the next place, it was a matter of royal regulation; the King's bakers doubtless provided the Court supplies, and they gave their experience for the framing of the assize of bread, under Henry II. and under King John.[2] It may, I think, be said that in both of the trades in which guilds were first formed, there was felt to be a real need for regulation as to the quality of the goods sold to the public; and it also appears that this regulation was given under royal authority. So far the fact seems to me to be pretty clear; and it is at least more than probable that the form of association adopted—analogueous as it was to associations already existing on the Continent—had come over in the train of the Conqueror. These few remarks may suffice in justification of the phrase the "introduction of craft guilds."

II. In the latter part of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century there was a very rapid development of municipal life in England, and the burgesses in many towns obtained much larger powers of self-government than they had previously possessed. They became responsible for their own payments to the Exchequer, and they obtained larger rights for regulating their own affairs; the town of Coventry had indeed possessed very considerable municipal privileges from the time of Henry I., but it shared in the general progress a century later, and the new requirements were marked by new developments. I have tried to show how the earlier craft guilds were formed under royal authority, but as the powers of local self-government increased and were consolidated, there was no need, and there was, perhaps, less opportunity, for direct royal interference in matters of internal trade. We thus find a new order of craft guilds springing up—they were called into being, like the old ones, for the purpose of regulating trade—but they exercised their powers under municipal, and not under royal authority.

One craft guild of this type which still exists, and which is said to have been formed by the authority of the leet in the sixth year of King John, is the Bakers' Guild at Coventry; it still consists of men who actually get their living by this trade, for it does not appear to have received so many love brothers as to destroy the original character of the body; it still has its hall—or, at least, room—and chest where the records are kept. There are, probably not many other bodies in the kingdom that have so long a history, and that have altered so little from their original character during all those centuries. None of the other Coventry guilds, so far as I know, can at all compare with it. The weavers were a powerful body there in later times, but I doubt if there is any evidence of the existence of this and the allied trades in Coventry before the fourteenth century; we may, perhaps, guess that it was one of the places where this trade settled under Edward III. But, apart from the question of origin, the Bakers have a unique position. Of some half-dozen other crafts which still maintain a formal existence, none can trace their history back beyond the time of Edward III., their members have no interest in the craft which they were empowered to regulate, and a tin box in a solicitor's office is the only outward and visible sign of their existence. Such are the Walkers and Fullers, the Shearmen and Weavers, the Fellmongers, the Drapers, the Mercers, and the Clothiers. Of the Tanners I cannot speak so decidedly, as during a hurried visit to Coventry I had no opportunity of examining their books.

In looking more closely at the powers of mediæval craft guilds, it is necessary to distinguish a little; a craft guild was a guild which had authority to regulate some particular craft in a given area. I do not, therefore, want to dwell on the features which were common to all guilds, and which can be traced in full detail in the admirable volume edited by the late Mr. Toulmin Smith for the Early English Text Society. I desire to limit consideration to the powers that were special to craft guilds. Like other guilds they had a religious side, in some cases strongly developed, and the members engaged in common acts of worship, especially in common prayers and masses for departed brethren. Like other guilds they had the character of a friendly society, and gave loans to needy brethren, or bestowed alms on the poor. Like other guilds they had their feasts, when the brethren drank their gild, and they had hoods, or livery, which they wore at their assemblies. Like other guilds they took their share in civic festivities and provided pageants at considerable cost; but all

these common bonds, important as they were in cementing men into a real fellowship, and in calling forth such different interests and activities among the members, were of a pious, social, or charitable character. There was no reason why such associations should not be multiplied on all sides; even when a gild consisted of men who followed the same craft it was not a craft gild. The case of the journeymen tailors in London who assembled at the Black Friars Church may be taken as conclusive on this point. A gild was not a craft gild unless duly empowered to regulate a particular craft; it might be called into existence for this purpose, or an existing gild might be empowered to exercise such functions, much as the brotherhood of S. Thomas à Becket was changed into the Mercers' Company. The important thing about a craft gild was that it had been empowered to exercise authority in a given area and over certain workmen, as the weavers' gilds had been empowered by charter from Henry I., and as the bakers were empowered by the Court Leet at Coventry, in the sixth year of King John.

Two points were specially kept in view in framing any set of regulations. They were, first, the quality of the goods supplied; and, second, the due training of men to execute their work properly—admirable objects certainly. The machinery which was organised for attaining these objects was also well devised; the men who were thoroughly skilled, and were masters in the craft, had the duty of training apprentices, and the wardens had the right of examining goods exposed for sale, and of making search in houses where the trade was being carried on—again, an excellent arrangement where it could be satisfactorily carried out. And on the whole it seems as if the scheme had worked well, for this simple reason—that while it was maintained, so much work of excellent design and quality was executed. I wish to lay stress on this, because the historian of craft gilds is apt to overlook it. When craft gilds appeared on the stage of history, it was because something was out of gearing, and the institution was working badly. One is apt to infer that since they worked badly whenever we hear of them, they also worked badly when we do not; but I am inclined to interpret the periods of silence differently, and to regard them as times when the organisations were wisely managed, and when the craft gilds enjoyed the proverbial happiness of those who have no history.

There were, however, three different dangers of disagreement, and possible quarrel:—(1) Between a craft gild on one hand and the municipal authorities on the other; (2) between one craft gild and another; (3) between different members of a craft gild.

1. It is obvious that the gilds, if they were to exercise any real authority, required to have *exclusive* powers within a given district; it is also obvious that these exclusive powers might be misused, so as to be mischievous to the consumers of the goods; a craft gild might take advantage of its monopoly to the gain of the members and the impoverishing of the citizens. The feeling of the citizens would be that the goods supplied by the members of the gild were bad and were dear at the price. It was therefore of the first importance that the citizens should be, in the last resort, able to control the gild, and resume the privileges which their officers exercised. There is a well-known case, which is detailed in Mr. Toulmin Smith's book, which shows how the tailors of Exeter enjoyed a charter from the Crown, and how much trouble they gave to the local authorities under Edward IV.; but it was a matter of common complaint that in many places the gilds had charters from great men which exempted them from proper control.^[3] Even in Coventry, where there does not appear to have been interference from without, it was necessary for the leet to keep a tight hand on the craft gilds. An ordinance of 8 Henry V. runs as follows:—"Also that no man of any craft make laws or other ordinance among them but it be overseen by the mayor and his council; and if it be reasonable ordinance and lawful it shall be affirmed, or else it shall be corrected by the mayor and his peers."^[4] At a later date we have another entry of the same kind:—"Also that the mayor, warden, and bailiffs, taking to the mayor eight or twelve of the General Council, to come afore them the wardens of all the crafts of the city with their ordinances, touching their crafts and their articles, and the points that be lawful, good, and honest for the city be allowed them, all other thrown aside and had force none, and that they make new ordinances against the laws in oppression of the people, upon pain of imprisonment." In some other towns the craftsmen had to yield up their powers annually and receive them back again from the municipal authority; this was the case with the cordwainers at Exeter,^[5] but the Coventry people did not insist on anything so strict.

2. The difficulties between one craft gild and another might arise in various ways; as time went on or trade developed there was an increasing differentiation of employment, and it was not always clear whether the original gild had supervision over all branches of the trade. Thus in London the weavers' gild claimed to exercise supervision over the linen as well as over the woollen cloth manufactures, and this claim was insisted on on the ground that the two trades were quite distinct. In Coventry the worsted weavers, the linen weavers, and the silk weavers were one body, in later times at any rate, though the arts cannot be precisely similar. In other cases there was a question as to whether different processes involved in the production of one complete article should be reckoned as separate crafts or not. Thus the Fullers were organised in independence of the Shearmen in 1438; and during the fifteenth century the sub-division of gilds appears to have gone very rapidly at Coventry, as there were something like twenty-three of them at that time; at the same time from the repeated power which is given to the Fullers to form a fellowship of their own,^[6] it appears that they were from time to time re-absorbed by the parent gild. Perhaps an even better illustration of the difficulty of defining the precise processes which certain gilds might supervise would be found in the history of the leather trades in London—Tanners, Cordwainers, Saddlers, and so forth. But enough may have been said to show how easy it was for disputes to arise between one or more craft gilds as to their respective powers.

3. There were also disputes within the guilds between different members.

(a) There was at least some risk of malversation of funds by the Master of the craft guild; and strict regulations were laid down by the Fellmongers and Cappers as to the time when the amounts were to be rendered and passed, but a much greater number of the ordinances deal with the respective duties of masters and apprentices and masters and journeymen.

(b) The question of apprenticeship was of primary importance, as the skill of the next generation of workmen depended on the manner in which it was enforced. There are a good many ordinances of the Coventry Cappers in 1520. No one was to have more than two apprentices at a time, and he was to keep them for seven years, but there was to be a month of trial before sealing; nobody was to take apprentices who had not sufficient sureties that he would perform his covenant. If the apprentice complained that he had not sufficient "finding," and the master was in fault, the apprentice was to be removed on the third complaint, and the master was handicapped in getting another in his place. Once a year the principal master of the craft was to go round the city and examine every man's apprentice, and see they were properly taught. The Clothiers, in regulations which I believe to be of about the same date, though they are incorporated with rules of a later character, had a system of allowing the apprentice to be turned over to another master if his own master had no work, so that he might not lose his time—this was a system which was much abused in the eighteenth century: the master was to teach the apprentice truly, and two apprentices were not to work at the same loom unless one of them had served for five years. No master was to teach any one who was not apprenticed, and he was to keep the secrets of the craft; this was a provision which constantly occurs in the ordinances. Some such exclusive rule was necessary if they were to secure the thorough competence, in all branches of the art, of the men who lived by it. In the case of the Coventry Clothiers there is an exception which is of interest; the master might give instruction to persons who were not apprenticed as "charity to poor and impotent people for their better livelihood."

(c) The limitation of the number of apprentices, though it was desirable for the training of qualified men, was frequently urged in the interests of the journeymen. There had been frequent complaint on the part of journeymen that the masters overstocked their shops with apprentices, and that those who had served their time could get no employment from other masters, while they also complained that unnecessary obstacles were put in the way of their doing work on their own account.

One or two illustrations of these points may be given from the Coventry crafts; the Fullers in 1560 would not allow any journeyman to work on his own account. The Clothiers in the beginning of the sixteenth century ordained that none shall set any journeyman on work till he is fairly parted from his late master, or if he remains in his late master's debt; journeymen were to have ten days' notice, or one cloth to weave before leaving a master; their wages were to be paid weekly if they wished it, and they were to make satisfaction for any work they spoiled. Similarly the Cappers in 1520 would not allow journeymen to work in their houses.

Some of the most interesting evidence in regard to the grievances of the journeymen comes from the story of a dispute in the weaving trade in the early part of the fifteenth century. "The said parties—both masters and journeymen—on the mediation of their friends, and by the mandate and wish of the worshipful Mayor, entered into a final agreement." The rules to which they agreed throw indirect light on the nature of the points in dispute. It was evidently a time when the trade was developing rapidly, and when an employing class of capitalists and clothiers was springing up among the weavers. It was agreed that any who could use the art freely might have as many looms, both linen and woollen, in his cottage, and also have as many apprentices as he liked. Every cottager or journeyman who wished to become a master might do so in paying twenty shillings. Besides this, the journeymen were allowed to have their own fraternity, but they were to pay a shilling a year to the weavers, and a shilling for every member they admitted.^[7] On the whole it appears that the journeymen in this trade obtained a very considerable measure of independence, but this was somewhat exceptional, and on the whole it appears that the grievances and disabilities under which journeymen laboured had a very injurious effect on the trade of many towns, and apparently on that of Coventry, during the sixteenth century. There was a very strong incentive for journeymen to go and set up in villages or outside the areas where craft guilds had jurisdiction, and there is abundant evidence^[8] that this sort of migration took place on a very large scale. I should be inclined to lay very great stress on this factor as a principal reason for the decay of craft guilds under Henry VIII., so that Edward VI.'s Act gave them a death-blow. They no longer exerted an effective supervision, because in so many cases the trade had migrated to new districts, where there was no authority to regulate it. This is, at any rate, the best solution I can offer of the remarkable manner in which craft guilds disappeared, as effective institutions, about the middle of the sixteenth century. Their religious side was sufficiently pronounced to bring them within the scope of the great Act of Confiscation, by which Edward VI. spoiled the guilds; but there was an effort made to spare them then, and I cannot but believe that if they had had any real vitality a large number would have survived, as some, like the Bakers and Fullers at Coventry, actually did. At the same time, it appears to be true that these cases are somewhat exceptional and that the craft guilds, as effective institutions for regulating industry, disappeared. Part of the evidence for this opinion comes from Coventry itself, for we find that a deliberate and conscious effort was made to resuscitate the guilds in 1584. It is of this resuscitation, involving as it does a previous period of decay, that I now wish to speak.

III. The disappearance of the craft guilds appears to have been connected with one of their accidental features, as I may call them—their common worship. The attempted resuscitation at Coventry was due to another—to the fact that each craft provided a certain amount of pageantry for the town. I suspect that the so-called "Mystery plays" were the plays organised by the different "misteries" or crafts. The Chester plays, the Coventry plays, and the York plays,^[9] have been published, and they present features which force comparison with the Passion Play which is being given this year at Ober Ammergau; and they were most attractive performances. The accounts of the various trading bodies show that these pageants were continued through the sixteenth century; they were suspended for eight years previous to 1566, and again in 1580 and three following years, when the preachers inveighed against the pageants, even though "there was no Papistry in them"; revived once more in 1584, they were finally discontinued in 1591.^[10]

I have lately seen the originals of the dialogue of the Weavers' Pageant, with the separate parts written out for the individual actors. During the fifteenth century, these pageants were performed with much success, and several of the smaller trades appear to have been united for the purpose of performing some pageant together. In 1566 and in 1575 Queen Elizabeth visited Coventry, and the pageants were performed, and with the view of reviving the diminished glories of the towns considerable pains were taken to reorganise the old crafts; thus the Bakers and Smiths joined in producing a pageant in 1506.^[11] The Fullers appear to have been reorganised in 1586, and there was a very distinct revival of the old corporations about that time. This same element, the manner in which the crafts had contributed to the local pageants, was noticeable in connection with the organisation of the bodies at Norwich; and I cannot but connect the resuscitation of some of the Coventry Guilds at this time with the desire to perpetuate these entertainments; certain common lands had been enclosed by the town to bear another part of the expense.^[12] Though the interest in the pageants marks the beginning of this revival at Coventry, it yet appears that during the seventeenth century it continued. There was some general cause at work connected with the condition of industry which called out a new set of efforts at industrial regulation, but the power which called these guilds or companies into being was no longer merely municipal; they rely, as in the earliest instances, on royal or Parliamentary authority. It is by no means easy to see what was the precise motive in each case of the incorporating of new industrial companies in the seventeenth century. The Colchester Bay-makers introduced a new trade, so, perhaps, did the Kidderminster Carpet-weavers, but the movement at this time appears to be connected with the fact that industry was becoming specialised and localised. I am inclined to suspect that the companies of the seventeenth century differ from the craft guilds of the fifteenth, partly, at least, in this way, that whereas the former were the local organisations for regulating various trades in one town, the latter were the bodies, organised by royal authority for regulating each industry in that part of the country where it could be best pursued. It was at this date that the Sheffield Cutlers were incorporated, and indeed a large number of organisations in different towns. Several of the Coventry guilds, notably the Drapers and the Clothiers, were incorporated by royal charters during the seventeenth century, and if we turned to a northern town like Preston, we might be inclined to say that this was the real era when associations for industrial regulation flourished and abounded.

It is no part of my purpose to speak of the decay of these newly formed or newly resuscitated companies as it occurred in the eighteenth century. I have endeavoured to indicate the excellent aims which these institutions set before them, and the success which attended their efforts for a time. At the same time, it is a significant fact that they failed to maintain themselves as effective institutions in the sixteenth century, and when they were resuscitated they failed to maintain themselves as useful institutions in the eighteenth. Partly, as I believe, for good, and partly, as we here recognise, for evil, business habits have so changed that whatever is done for the old object—maintaining quality and skill—must be done in a new way. The power which we possess of directing and controlling the forces of nature has altered the position of the artisan, and made him a far less important factor in production. The maintenance of personal skill, the unlimited capacity for working certain materials, is no longer of such primary importance for industrial success as was formerly the case. There is another—perhaps a greater—difficulty in the diffusion of a wider and more cosmopolitan spirit; the sympathies of the old brethren for one another were strong, but they were intensely narrow. No town can be so isolated now, or kindle such intense local attachments as did the cities of the Middle Ages. There has been loss enough in the destruction of these guilds, but we cannot, by looking back upon them, reverse the past or recreate that which has been destroyed through the growth of the larger life we enjoy to-day. Let us rather remember them as showing what could be accomplished in the past, and as pointing towards something we ought to try to accomplish in some new fashion to-day. When we see that the mediæval workman was a man, not a mere hand; that in close connexion with his daily tasks the whole round of human aspiration could find satisfaction; that he was called with others to common worship, called with others to common feasts and recreations, and encouraged to do his best at his work, we feel how poor and empty, in comparison, is the life that is led by the English artisan to-day. But if there is a better and more wholesome life before the labourer in days to come, if new forms of association are to do the work which was done by the guilds of old, we may trust that those who organise them will bear in mind not only the successes, but the failures of the past, and learn to avoid the mistakes which wrecked craft guilds not once only, but twice.

Footnotes

- [1] Richard of Hoveden, Rolls Series, iv. 33.
- [2] Cambridge University Library, Mm i. 27.
- [3] Rot. Parl., II. 331.
- [4] Leet Book, f37.
- [5] Toulmin Smith, "English Gilds," p. 332.
- [6] Leet Book, f. 400; May 3, 1547. Quoted by Mr. Fretton, Memorials of Fullers' Guild, page 11.
- [7] Leet Book, f. 27.
- [8] Worcester, 25 H. VIII. c. 18.
- [9] Recently edited by Miss L. T. Smith for the Clarendon Press.
- [10] T. Sharp, "Pageants" (1815), p. 12, 39, and 39.
- [11] Fretton, "Memorials of Bakers' Gild," Mid-England, p. 124.
- [12] Sharp, "Pageants," 12.

Transcriber's Note:

Minor typographical errors have been corrected without note.

Irregularities and inconsistencies in the text have been retained as printed.

The cover of this ebook was created by the transcriber and is hereby placed in the public domain.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CRAFT GILDS ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR

BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable

donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.