

CRAFTSMEN SURVIVE FLYING SAUCER AGE

HAMBURG.—Back in the middle ages, a guild craftsman humbly doffed his cap when a knight rode by and trembled at a glance from that superior being. Now the knights are dust, leaving only rusty armour in museums. Yet guild craftsmen, in Germany, at least, have survived into the flying saucer age, clinging to their medieval traditions.

Among the most faithful are the carpenters.

A 14-year-old boy, who decides he would like to be a carpenter, must first report to the elder of the Local Carpenters' Guild. If he approved of the lad's character and potential ability, the boy begins three hard years as an apprentice to a master carpenter.

Once that is over, he advances to the rank of journeyman. It is a big day. With the few marks he has saved he must buy traditional journeyman's clothes. His hat must be slack and broad-brimmed like a cowboy, or else shaped like a bowler or high hat.

His new suit is of black velvet or corduroy, and the bell-bottom trousers are twice as wide at the ankle as at the knee. The shoes and tie are black, the shirt is white. The tie is a journeyman's "honour" when it bears the guild pin, showing a hammer, axe, saw and compass.

The young man's comrades present him with "atenz," a walking stick, preferably corkscrew in form, and richly carved. Other gifts include a "charlottenburger," a colourful cloth for wrapping up his belongings, and a "berliner," an oilcloth for protecting the whole bundle when it rains.

Besides this, some tool-maker supplies an assortment of his products in a bag, stenciled with his name.

His mother, or sister takes a long silken cloth—red, blue, green, or whatever is his favourite colour—and embroiders it with his name, birthplace, birthday, and date of advent as a journeyman.

This gay streamer, an "einwanderungaband," is hung up in the local guild house until it disinte-

grates with age.

As a journeyman, Hans must wander for three years and a day, never returning within 35 miles of his hometown in that period unless there is a death or serious illness in his family. Then the guild pays his fare.

During the wandering, he may not halt for more than six months in any community.

The morning he sets out is as frolicsome as Mardi Gras, regardless of season.

He adorns himself, if possible, with long gipsy ear rings, hangs a silver watch chain or two across his chest, and lets a procession of youngsters accompany him to the town limits, carrying his bundle with a bottle of brandy attached. If there is money enough, a keg of beer is rolled along, too. Everybody gets a drop.

As he ventures into strange villages, looking for work, he lets his saw or axe handle stick out of the bundle so as master carpenters

will spy it.

If the settlement has a guild hostel, he stops 100 paces from the entrance, extinguishes his pipe if he is smoking, buttons his jacket, and lets his walking stick drag in the gutter.

Word is thus spread that he is available for employment. Perhaps the hostel father already has some help wanted notices on file.

After hanging his hat on the hostel rack and putting his stick in a corner, clear indication that he intends to stay, he turns over his journeyman's book to the hostel father, and the latter finds there a complete history of his life and career.

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In the evening, guild members gather at the hostel, barring laymen from their talk, songs, and dances. Guildsmen, in technical discussions, speak a language of their own.

After six months in a town, a forgetful journeyman is reminded to move on by finding his walking stick leaning against his door. This hint from the hostel father cannot be ignored.

"Guild rules are strict, requiring obedience, discipline and honesty among all members. Serious violations are punishable by a ban on hiring withdrawal of tie and pin, and forfeiture of guild book for a long as four years.

No master carpenter of the guild would think of employing a journeyman during this period of disgrace.

When the journeyman completes his three years and a day of wandering he may settle down wherever his pleases. Like as not he has fallen in love on the road, and so goes back to his sweetheart's town instead of his own.

His journeyman's book is sent to guild headquarters in Hamburg for filing, and he is now a master of his craft.

If he marries, the guild stages a big festival out of its own funds. One custom is to roll the bridegroom back and forth on the banquet table until his guildsmen are tired and thirsty. Tradition says this makes his flesh soft and his bones flexible for the nuptial bed.

When death comes to the carpenter, all funeral expenses are paid from guild funds, too. Members arrive from towns many miles distant. The coffin is borne by six young journeymen in their medieval dress.

The elder reads from the journeyman's book, then tears it to pieces and scatters it over the coffin. A guild spokesman recites:

"Everywhere you went you were industrious and honest. You have done your share of work. Rest in peace."