

is then outlined by means of black tracing-paper, which may be filled-in in ivory-black with a fine camel's-hair brush. The colours for this should be those sold in tubes by the artists' colourman. These common pots can also be decorated, without the preliminary coats of paint, on the light-red clay foundation of the pot, which must be well rubbed with sand-paper, and then brushed clean from dust, and all roughness removed. The designs most suitable are trailing sprays of ivy, Virginian creepers, or branches and fronds of fern. They may be drawn as described, and then filled up with green, or shaded in white and black. If these pots are to be very hardy used, they should be varnished, and the last-named can be permanently fixed by baking at a pottery.

The water bouquet is an old fashion of drawing-room decoration just revived. It consists of flowers, leaves, and buds immersed in water beneath a glass

shade, which owes its peculiar beauty to the sparkling appearance which the vegetable forms assume, and the lovely effects of the refraction of light. In addition to the glass shade, a plate must be provided to fit the bottom of the glass shade exactly. In the centre of this the bouquet is arranged, tied to a stone to give the needful weight and prevent its rising to the top of the glass. A tub of water is procured, in which the plate with the bouquet is placed, and the glass shade is introduced into the water sidewise, so as to leave no air within it, and placed in position over the flowers. The whole is then lifted from the tub, when, as there is no atmospheric pressure from within, the shade will remain full of water, which will not flow out, although a little water should be left round the edge of the glass to keep it thoroughly air-tight. This bouquet remains beautiful for about a week in summer and for ten days in the winter.

DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.



ENTERING THE DRAPERY TRADE.



In these latter days, when every avenue of existence is densely crowded, in the midst of the "trampling, crushing, elbowing, and treading on each other's heels which," as John Stuart Mill wrote, "form the existing type of social life," it is difficult for Paterfamilias to find openings in business

for his sons and daughters as they attain to years of discretion. The selection of a calling is restricted, too, by the aspirations of his fledglings. Without doubt there is a feeling of repugnance to the drapery as a trade, but why there should be this feeling in the minds of so many passeth knowledge. Drapers are a wealthy and very influential body of tradesmen. The work demands some education, and more intelligence, but it is not nearly so laborious or exacting as many other pursuits; nor are the duties so destructive of finer feelings as in many other stations of life to which young ladies are called.

However, it is not our purpose here to combat prejudices or conjecture causes, but to offer for the consideration of Paterfamilias some facts concerning the drapery as an advantageous opening offering facilities for either his son or daughter, and to give him some hints as to the best manner of placing them in it.

Primarily, we say, do not be led away by the repute of a large establishment to the detriment of a smaller one. The fact is, each has its own peculiar advantages. Large houses must necessarily be under a rigid system to secure order amongst the little army of assistants, and the sphere of the apprentice is very limited. Even when he advances in knowledge he will be attached to some single department, instead of gaining groundwork in all, as he would where the size of the concern allowed him to *serve through*, as it is called—that is, where each assistant serves a customer with all she requires, instead of supplying her with goods of one department only, and passing her on to another if she needs other articles.

Another point in apprenticeship may be treated as a question of profit and loss. Short periods of service are much in vogue; instead of the arbitrary term of seven years once imposed, only one of two or three years is now entered on. With a short apprenticeship the employer generally requires a premium, as he soon loses the advantage of the training he has had to impart; with a longer period the premium will not only be dispensed with, but a small salary frequently given for the concluding term of service. With the longer period there is undoubtedly a fuller opportunity of being thoroughly grounded in trade knowledge, instead of having only a superficial smattering sufficient to tide the apprentice over into a situation as assistant. Strictly speaking, indentures are not necessary at all.

An ordinary agreement to that effect is fully binding; and since all trades were thrown open by Sir John Russell's Municipal Reform Act of 1835, apprenticeship is no longer the highway of business. It is only in a few limited and strictly-preserved trades that they are made compulsory. Trades-unions have, in nearly every instance, bye-laws enforcing observance of this ancient custom, at the infraction of which the councils of these formidable bodies are obliged to wink. An Englishman seems to find great comfort in parchment, and indentures are general; when once undertaken, they are obligatory upon the contracting parties, and can be enforced by law.

This probation over, the time comes for an essay into wider waters; and as Young Hopeful has most likely been apprenticed near home, if not in his native town, this may be reckoned as his start in life. Here, again, an advantage is found in seeking a small house at first. The employer or governor, having a personal interest in him, will aid him in seeking a "berth," probably through some commercial traveller; and in this manner an advantageous opening is generally found. In a large house an apprentice would be left to shift for himself, or he might, perhaps, be afforded a place in the house at a small salary; but it is wisest to seek varied experience. It is quite impossible to say what remuneration may be asked or obtained, since so much depends on circumstances; and the drapery trade is so varied in its degrees that not even an approximate table of salaries could be compiled. It is probable, however, that, after a term of four or five years has been served, Mr. Hopeful might readily get £20 or £25 per annum; and as house-room and subsistence are added, this is not a bad commencement. Everything after this depends upon natural aptitude or acquired ability. After a few years' further experience the salary may be from £100 upwards, or a fixed point of £50 or £60 may have been reached. We know of a young lady in a mantle department, not yet twenty-three, receiving £60 per annum, and a buyer in the same house, not yet thirty, being in receipt of £300 a year, but living out of the house. Shop-walkers or buyers rarely ask too much if they have business qualities of the first water. Instances of young men in the drapery commanding salaries of £100 are by no means so uncommon as generally believed, the main thing for them being to know their own worth, and to find people sufficiently of their own opinion to appraise them properly. Considering what is required from buyers, shop-walkers, and other men of primary rank, these salaries are by no means excessive. They must have ready tact, wide commercial and technical knowledge, administrative ability, and unflinching energy. Young Hopeful will soon find his level. Generally speaking, assistants gain ultimately a more intimate knowledge of one particular department, and push upwards through that. To show the fallacy of popular prejudice, it may be mentioned that good haberdashery hands are hard to find, and an assistant with a thorough knowledge of despised small-wares—tapes, cottons, and elastics—need have little fear for his future.

Looking critically at the inner life of the drapery, it is yet harder to understand the inherent and widespread repugnance against entering it. The hours are yet long certainly, but early-closing movements and Sir John Lubbock's Act have taken the sting out of them. Again, business in busy houses and busy seasons is doubtless fatiguing in the extreme, but there are few sinecures nowadays, and the man who will not work, and work hard, shall not eat. As an example of the tale of work required, we give an extract from the published code of rules current in a large middle-class trade:—

DUSTERS.—Must be in the shop at 7 a.m. from April 1st to September 30th, and from October 1st to March 31st at 7.30; and must not leave for breakfast before the bell rings at 8.30; and return to business at 9.45. The first breakfast-bell rings at 8.15. Assistants to be in the shop at 8.30.

HOURS FOR CLOSING BUSINESS are:—From April 1st to September 30th, 8.30 p.m.; and from October 1st to March 31st, 8 p.m.

HOURS FOR ASSISTANTS.—To be indoors at night, 11 o'clock, excepting Thursdays at 11.45 for 11.50; Sundays at 10.30. Young ladies, 10.30 p.m., excepting Thursdays at 11 p.m.; Sundays, 10.30 p.m. Gas to be turned off at 11.15, excepting Thursdays at 12 and Sundays at 10.45.

MEAL LISTS.—*Breakfast:* First party, 8.15; second ditto (bell will ring), 8.30. *Dinner:* Young ladies' first party bell, 1.15; young men's ditto, 1.20. Young ladies' second ditto, 1.55; young men's ditto, 2.0. First party to be at their respective counters, 1.45. Second ditto ditto, 2.30. *Tea:* Young ladies' first party bell, 5.5; young men's ditto, 5.10. Young ladies' second ditto, 5.40; young men's ditto, 5.45. First party to be at their respective counters, 5.30; second ditto ditto, 6.15. *Supper:* Will be on the table for the period of one hour from the time of closing.

SUNDAY'S SPECIAL LIST.—Breakfast on the table from 9 to 9.30. Any requisites to be cooked or prepared for breakfast must be left on the supper-table on Saturday night. The waiter is prohibited, under penalty of instant dismissal, from making any purchases on Sunday morning. Dinner, from 1 to 1.30; tea, from 5 to 5.30; supper, from 8.30 to 9.30.

Domestic comforts are far more considered than of old. There can rarely be found instances of crowded bed-rooms in business houses, or complaints of unwholesome food. If the provisions provided are plain, they are at least good and plentiful. Luxuries are out of the question where so many mouths have to be filled, and individual idiosyncracies cannot be regarded.

Against the morality of assistants nothing can be said. It may be stated, without fear of contradiction, that no class of the community is less open to censure. Good repute is actually necessary to business, and a scandal would seriously affect trade, so that even from selfish purposes the principal uses his best endeavours to keep his hands beyond reproach. Within the house the sexes are strictly separated, generally living in separate buildings, or at least having separate sitting-rooms. Anything approaching sentiment is out of place in business hours, for, apart from anything else, the lover must indeed be dreadfully in earnest who could heave a sigh over a piece of calico, or whisper a vow under cover of reaching down a packet of hose. "Engagements," too, are generally discountenanced between assistants. Rules for home-life and business habits are stringent, and enforced by fines, which, when levied, are generally applied to a library fund. It is certain that any conduct meriting reprehension would soon come to the ears of the principal, and meet with proper reproof or swift dismissal. Another strong deterrent is the reference

system, which is the medium of new engagements, so that a black sheep is effectually kept from readmission into good houses, and a slip once made from the path of rectitude generally leads to final downfall.

Business once over, all thoughts of it may be put away; of responsibility and care assistants know little beyond the proper keeping and prompt disposal of the stock in their charge. In most houses there are libraries, often pianos, and other amusements; while concerts, excursions, debating or dramatic societies, and cricket or boating clubs are frequently organised, and as frequently supported by the principal. Drapery houses are not situated in the Elysian fields; to keep a place in them, constant progress must be made and ready attention to business paid; but when all is said against them that can be said they are, as a rule, by no means undesirable residences.

Naturally every person in the trade looks to something beyond assistancy. Marriage is the obvious outlet for the ladies, and into this province we, of course, cannot follow them. It need only be said that no man will find his wife the worse for the business training and self-denial she may have experienced behind the counter. It may be that, in spite of bye-laws, fines, and other things to the contrary, many young ladies find partners for life amongst their colleagues.

Young men generally look out for businesses for themselves, or enter the wholesale houses. In either case there is more scope for energy. To start in business some capital necessarily is needed, but so keen is competition in trade that with a sum of £200 to start with a beginner can generally obtain credit to three or four times that sum, while at all times he will have, if he has obtained any footing at all, only too many opportunities of extending credit. Into this new venture we may not follow. Success means competency, perhaps wealth; failure implies assistancy over again. It too frequently happens that, on the strength of having obtained a business, marriage is undertaken before the stability of the concern is tested. This may be wise, or the very height of folly. If failure follows, the unfortunate man finds it doubly hard—almost impossible—to obtain a situation when he has a wife dependent upon him. Drapery houses seldom hold married men. They want to live out, at their own homes; but it is cheaper by far to have employés who live with the rest. The cost of keeping one more than a certain number is far less considerable than giving a proper equivalent to one person's subsistence, and in a struggle between sentiment and economy in business it is not difficult to predict which will win.

A BATH AT PENANG.



HE mail-steamer, according to its contract, gives the inhabitants of Penang only a six hours' visit, which, judging from the size of the place, was, one would think, quite sufficient. On arriving here, there is only one thing to be done, and that is to rush on shore, and spend

these six hours—in a bath! After the incessant stickiness of the morning salt-water bath on board ship, one looks forward with supreme delight to getting a dip in these pools at Penang; at all events, the traveller is quite prepared for hoping to enjoy a bathe, the like of which he never even contemplated before; for thus, in his prospectus, the proprietor "trusts that the purity of the water, the seclusion of the situation, the murmuring flow of the crystal streams, and the green enamel of mosses and flowering plants to which the refreshing virtues of the streams give birth, are sufficient recommendation to parties visiting this celebrated fall."

Approaching Penang, or Prince of Wales' Island, the aspect is intensely tropical, and the sloping hills of the numerous islets are richly green with the foliage of the dense woods which reach to the shore.

"Now Morn, her rosy steps in th' Eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with Orient pearl."

Not many vessels are to be seen lying in the harbour, and the town itself appears so flat and small as to

give it the appearance of not being even so large as it really is. Nearly all the houses are covered with red tiles, which, with the scorching sun which all the year round blesses Penang, look most inviting to the heat, and make such a contrast to the bungalows at the sister settlement at Singapore, where the roofs are for the greater part composed of thick thatch. From the harbour, high up on a wood-clad hill, can be seen the waterfall which supplies the town with most fragrant water, and the tributaries of which help in forming these natural baths on the mountain, for which Penang has become so famous. Along the shore runs a fort, and a company of soldiers taken from the regiment stationed at Singapore, aided by a gunboat, protects the colony.

On landing at the jetty, several cabs or carriages, called gharries, are waiting, with minute ponies attached to the comparatively huge lumbering vehicles; but the stranger will evince strong surprise when he sees with what rapidity these ponies can go. All these gharrie-drivers are assailing you at once. Each has a cleaner carriage than the other, each a fleetier steed—such a babel of tongues. "Look here, sar!" sounds from every mouth, and you have no sooner got inside a car than it is off and away. No need to say where you want to go to; only open your mouth, and the driver grins at you instantly with, "Yas, I know, I savais; my go bath—all right." The gharrie rattles along at a high pace, and, passing through the town, one is struck with the intensely firm