

more than reimbursed the damages by the diligence and application of his remaining apprentices?

Actions at law would be infrequent—the master, having a due regard for his own interests, and knowing that *all* other employers are similarly situated, would, in the selection of his apprentices, call into play that discrimination which now apparently lies dormant.

This system would tend to diminish the number of incompetents annually manufactured and set adrift, many of whom become “buzzards” of the filthiest order, their foulness poisoning the atmosphere in which upright men are earning a precarious livelihood. The uninitiated are easily gulled by such birds—the mere representation of having served an apprenticeship, and the offer to take a “sit.” at a reduced figure, acting like a charm. The sequel comes rather late: the “uninitiated” learns, to his cost, that it would have been better to have paid more and rewarded “competency,” than to have been allured by the tempter.

It is common experience to meet with apprentices who can barely read the plainest manuscript, know nothing of punctuation, (not even the names of the marks,) spell entirely by sound, and divide with less consistency than is displayed by deaf mutes, while marks of reference are beyond their comprehension. I have heard parentheses called *curves*, by a boy who had been four years at the business; others have described semicolons as *dots with tails under them*, interrogation points as *hooks with dots*, called *reglet scantling*, and divided hearse on the *r* and nave on the *a*.

These examples cannot be claimed to be entirely the fault of the apprentices, for in many offices there is no one whose particular business it is to instruct them. When in doubt they ask anyone for information; in many cases misunderstand and are led into error.

A boy may have set the concluding pages of a hurried work, the copy being advanced, in order to avoid delay at the finish. Lo! his proof-sheet is so foul that the short time remaining will not admit of his “fuming” over it, and the swiftest corrector in the establishment is put on the “rack,” the boy thus losing the benefit of the knowledge conveyed by the proof-reader’s pen.

In this progressive (?) age everything goes with a “rush.” The piece hands do not con-

sider themselves the ones to instruct their employer’s *special hands* (and indeed, owing to the lowness of wages, every minute is valuable, and thirty seconds’ delay with an apprentice may cause the loss of a fat take—so they should not be annoyed by apprentices). The weekly hands and the foreman should be consulted on all occasions. Yet the apprentice is apt to meet with drawbacks even here. In many offices those who are so fortunate (?) as to be engaged by the week are expected to get up a certain quantity of matter every week—in no case under wages, but as much above as possible. Some good hands find this impossible on plain matter, while on complicated tables, music, algebra, etc., they can more than double wages. They are much annoyed when the end of the week arrives and the “count” shows them a few thousands behind. Thus uncomfortably circumstanced, close application to case becomes a second nature, and the apprentice meets with a rebuff, where, under more pleasant circumstances, he would have been clearly and judiciously instructed. Thus the apprentice is thrown upon his own resources unless the foreman is one of those exceptions so rarely met with, who takes as much interest in the development of the boy as if he were his own son.

Under the indenture system imperfections would gradually give way to permanent improvements—the number of apprentices reduced, the journeyman more expert and better qualified for the responsibilities of life, and strikes less numerous.

Page-Cord.

A great diversity of opinion exists as to the most suitable material for page-cord. The type-founders use a wiry, ragged hemp twine which retains the shape of the matter when taken from a page of type in a dry condition, and becomes altogether worthless after being wet two or three times. The Government Printing Office at Washington, D. C., uses a rather heavy, closely-twisted cotton twine, slightly waxed and very elastic. It is admirable for the purpose, resisting the sharp edges of new type and brass rule.

In the hurry of business it sometimes happens that the maker-up has the under joints of his fingers cut by the cord as he unwinds it from the ball or gathers it in his hands to break off. Some have the foresight to avoid the possibility of such mishaps by measuring the cord and cutting to proper lengths one at a time before com-