

control the first three fingers of the left hand should be placed on the blade in such a fashion that they may play a considerable part in the guiding and controlling of the tool. As a rule the tool should be held in a position but slightly removed from the horizontal, but when cutting round an outline it is held perpendicularly. Should it deviate from either of these positions it has a tendency to run too far into the wood, and cause it to split in a most exasperating fashion.

Take your flat gouge, and holding it perpendicularly, cut firmly and cleanly, but not deeply, round the lines A A A A. Then, holding the tool in a slanting position, cut another line to meet this. Do the same thing with the lines B B B B and the lines C C. Now take one of your curved gouges and begin to waste away the wood in the spaces within the lines you have just cut. Level it down with a flat gouge, and if necessary use the router, but not to excess. The ground must be lowered to a depth of 3-16th of an inch all over, uniformity of depth being obtained by trying it at intervals with the router, which must first be properly set. Cut the centre button vertically with a gouge which will just fit the curve. Now with a V-tool cut the incised lines X X X X with a free sweep, and allowing full play to the wrist. The punching to the ground is done either with one of the punches sold for the purpose, or even with a blunt pointed wire nail. The beginner should not be discouraged if the first attempt meets with disaster. Failure will probably come from the splitting away of the wood about the intersecting circles, or from the failure to produce a clean

knife-like edge. In this case I should advise the starting it entirely over again from the beginning. Care must be taken in finishing off to leave all the acute angles and the intersections of the circles clean and sharply cut. This can be accomplished with the aid of the skew chisel. The concentric cuts on the sunken ground may, as suggested, be cut with the V-tool, but some of them may be produced more readily by the aid of gouges of various sizes, the first cut being given with the tool held perpendicularly and driven down with a sharp tap of the mallet. The second cut is made in a slanting direction, and must just meet the bottom of the first cut, so as to bring out the minute section of wood cleanly and leaving no broken splinters behind it.

Unless your panel is to be hung up on the wall (and even in this case), you will find that as it is cut out of soft "white-wood" it will readily soil and become unpresentable. You can adopt one of two means to obviate this necessity—that is to say, you can either stain or varnish the work. If you decide on the former course, take a little of Stevens' stain—for your purpose, walnut is perhaps the best—and dilute it quite freely with water. Then, with an ordinary hogs'-hair brush, lay it on, working always with the grain of the wood. When the coat has dried give it another, and after that a third, or even a fourth if the desired depth of shade has not been attained. Now take a little boiled linseed oil, and with a soft rag rub a *very little* of it well into the wood. This will fix the stain and prevent it coming off on to the fingers when the panel is handled. You may prefer a rather higher

degree of polish though in the case of the panel described. I should not advise it, as there is too little of the natural surface of the wood left. Should you wish it, however, you can take equal parts of linseed oil and turpentine and brush it over the wood, polishing afterwards with a stiff brush. Or a mixture may be made of beeswax and Burgundy pitch in the proportion of two to one, heated over the fire in a vessel placed in a pan of hot water and thinned down with turpentine. It must be used slightly warm, and brushed thinly over the work, and when dry, well polished with an ordinary nail-brush. Specially prepared lacquer for finishing "white-wood" work is also sold by the colour merchants, but I should not advise its use. Its advantages are simply that the wood can be left its natural colour, and cleansed from finger marks with a damp-duster.

I have now, I think, given hints and suggestions enough for a beginner to learn at all events how to handle the tools. Common-sense must fill in the necessary blanks; and experience after all is the best teacher. In these days, too, there are few places where, with a little pains, a practical wood-carver cannot be found who, even if he does not care to directly teach the tyro, will at all events allow the latter to watch him while at work. Half an hour of this is worth pages of description.

In another paper I shall offer some remarks on design as applied to wood-carving, which I trust will be of value not only to the beginner but to those who have already attained a greater or less degree of proficiency in the art.

HORACE TOWNSEND.

UNINTERESTING PEOPLE.



WONDER sometimes if girls know what they miss by avoiding the society of "uninteresting people." How often one hears such a remark

as this: "I can't get on with Miss Brown, she is so dull;" or, "I can't endure Mrs. Smith, she is so hard and unsympathetic." It does not occur to us when young to so "forecast the years" as to imagine what we shall be like when *we* grow old, or, what is still less interesting, middle-aged; what effect a few years of living alone would have on *us*, or a great many years spent under trying circum-

stances. Yet if our imagination is so deficient, we bid fair to be very "uninteresting people" when we grow old. Suppose we resolve that whenever we meet a disagreeable, odd, uninteresting person, we use whatever knowledge we have of them to piece together their life's history, and then consider whether, if called on to undergo a similar experience, there would be much brightness, or sparkle, or tenderness left in the surface of our characters. We may rest assured that no novel one ever reads is half so interesting as a study in real life.

George Elliot says: "I at least hardly ever look at a bent old man or a wizened old woman but I see also with my mind's eye that past of which they are the shrunken remnant; and the unfinished romance of rosy cheeks and bright eyes seems sometimes of feeble interest

and significance compared with the drama of hope and love, which has long ago reached its catastrophe, and left the poor soul like a dim and dusty stage, with all its sweet garden scenes and fair perspectives overturned and thrust out of sight."

I once knew a middle-aged lady who lived with her father, and nursed him through his long last illness with loving care. After his death she lived alone, and appeared to the world depressed, reserved, almost repellent. Suddenly this cold, hard Miss Jones took a journey, and returned, to the surprise of her neighbours, with an aged lady, a distant relative, whom she established at her fireside, and tended with the utmost devotion. The society of friends, which she had never sought on her own account, was now welcomed for the old lady's sake, and it was seen that Miss Jones, instead of being stern and unsympathetic, was love and tenderness itself. It also transpired that, having heard indirectly that her aged relative was suffering from an incurable complaint, she had fetched her to her home, determined to soothe and brighten her declining days. This act brought its own reward, for it helped to dispel the sorrow which had been her constant companion since her father's death.

Now suppose that some of those bright young girls who met Miss Jones at church or Sunday-school, and who had voted her "uninteresting," had used those lively imaginations of theirs to fill in the possible details of her life. What they saw before them was a middle-aged woman, quiet, suffering from bereavement, but claiming no sympathy. Did it never occur to any of them to picture her when young; to see in her face traces of past beauty; to imagine the time when she, perhaps the eldest of a large family, began to grow prematurely serious, and to accept more and more of the responsibility which was becoming

too great a burden for a delicate mother; to fancy the determination and self-denial it required to launch the boys in life; to give the girls greater educational advantages than she herself had had; to help them to settle in happy homes, never realising that the years were fast slipping by in which the opportunity of such a settlement was likely to come to her? Can we not fancy that the younger members of her family, accustomed to her unselfish care, scarcely reckoned it at its true value; that while ready to share their troubles with her, they did not always ask her to share their joys; that they got the impression that "Mary" was such an old sobersides, she was happier at home with the old folk than joining in any gaiety or fun?

Well, as I said before, if the young folk of her acquaintance had exercised their bright wits in some such way, don't you think that by a magic touch of sympathy they would have contrived to bring a ray of sunshine to her life at a time when it was sorely needed? For the period when a lull comes in a life of great activity and overstrain, and when hands, once too full for holding, must perforce lie idle, is also the time when the brain is apt to prey upon itself, and when loving sympathy is a boon indeed.

Don't imagine we have to go far from home to find beauty, poetry, or romance. The daisy was enough for Burns, a bed of daffodils for Wordsworth, a skylark for Shelley. Surely we can find some poetry in our daily lives. What is the essential difference between the poet and the artist and the average man? Chiefly this—that the poet and artist see in ordinary things a beauty and a charm invisible to the ordinary beholder. Emerson says: "Art is nature passed through the alembic of man's genius." And Carlyle tells us that the poet has the power of making all subjects interesting.

"The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is for ever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand he discerns no comeliness. Home is not poetic but prosaic. It is in some past, distant, conventional, heroic world that poetry resides." But the true poet has never far to seek. "The elements of his art are in him and around him on every hand. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives till Burns became a poet in it and a poet of it; found it a man's life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battle-fields remain unsung; but the wounded hare has not perished without its memorial. A balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies because a poet was there."

If girls are artistically inclined they need not spend their lives in search of the picturesque. The lace on their mother's cap, their pet dog lying on the hearth, the kettle on the hob, the very fender and fire-irons, may afford scope for their powers, and the same imaginative faculty

may transform the most uninteresting person who crosses their path into a fellow traveller claiming sympathy and love.

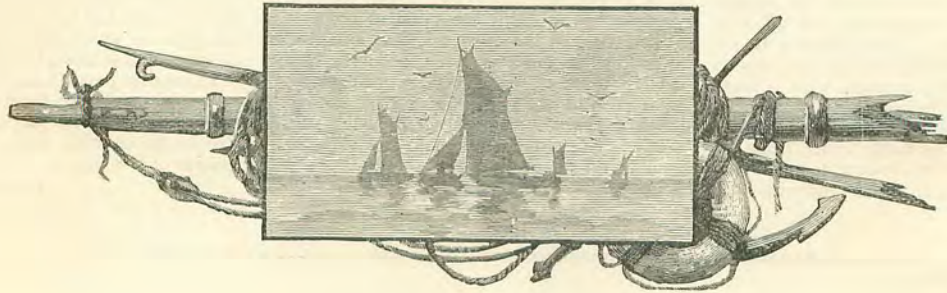
Let us try to comprehend the "interestingness" of old age, to realise the long vista of experience which has led up to the quiet evening time. Thus understood, the most garrulous old veteran must find a willing listener. Let us remember how rare our chances may be of hearing of the days of stage coaches from one who travelled in them; of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, of the Emancipation of the Slave, from one who took part in those struggles; of the Crimean War or the Indian Mutiny from one who lived in those stirring times. How often one has to exclaim, in reference to someone who is gone: "I wish I had asked him more particulars;" "I wish I could repeat that tale he told so often." But the opportunity is gone; no question and no answer can pass between us now.

Let us try, too, to realise the pathos of old age. A true poetess has expressed it:—

"Lord, I am old; and wearing to life's goal;
Closed are the issues of my captive soul;
Dim eyes, dull ears, faint touch, and failing
speech,
A memory which too far outspans the reach
Of any left to listen: still and lone
I sit as in a monument of stone.

"I hear my household name, and looking
round,
I see another answer to the sound.
No wealth have I wherewith I may requite
The charities which make my burden light.
What hand still loves to linger clasped in
mine?
What eye my thoughts unspoken would
divine?

"Lord, I am old; but soul of love and truth,
In Thee I find again my vanished youth;
For Thee I am a child—more dear maybe
Than when I lisped beside my mother's
knee;
To others worn and wasted, pent and old—
To Thee a lamb returning to the fold."



WEST DENE MANOR.

By J. A. OWEN, Author of "Candelaria," etc.

CHAPTER XV.

FOR OLD FRIENDSHIP'S SAKE.

"Friend of mine! whose lot was cast
With me in the distant past—
Where like shadows flitting fast,

Fact and fancy, thought and theme,
Word and work, begin to seem
Like a half-remembered dream."

—*J. G. Whittier.*

MR. EUSTACE sat in his study one evening a few days after that interview with Helen. It was past his usual hour for retiring to rest, and his servant was seriously concerned at this unwonted behaviour on the part of his master. He had ventured to remind him once or twice of the time, but so peremptory had been the command on the last occasion to be off and mind his own business, that he had hastened downstairs quaking in his shoes.

The oak writing-table was littered with old letters and papers, and two or three tin boxes from which they had been taken were scattered about the floor. Some of the letters had not seen the light for years, and many of them brought back strange memories.

At last he found out the packet for which he had been seeking, and unfastening it, began eagerly to read its contents. A softer look stole over the stern face as he read, and its gloomy austerity

vanished under the influences of these blessed memories of the past.

"Ay, Warham, we were like David and Jonathan in those days," he said aloud, with a sigh. "Who would have thought how soon it would end. Forty years ago, and the quarrel was never made up. Well, Warham formed other ties. I daresay he ceased to think of it after a time; but I—I do not think I have ever really forgotten that friendship." He took up a little daguerreotype lying amongst the letters. It was a picture of Richard Warham as he had known him forty years before, when it seemed as if nothing would ever disturb the friendship they had formed.

"She is like him," he said, looking at it intently. "She has his eyes, ay, and his manner too, the manner that used to charm so in days gone by. Yes," he added, musingly, "it would be well perhaps to help his children for his sake."

Strange memories came back to him as he sat there amongst his faded letters. Helen was right in supposing his heart to be not wholly hard. Her appeal had touched a soft place in it, and these recollections of the past were helping to melt some of the ice of selfishness that encrusted it. His life stood vividly before him—the life he might have made so much of, but of which he had made so little.

Thirty to forty years before, Reginald Eustace had been a youth of brilliant promise. His father was then a man of great wealth, and had destined his only son for the Bar, where, in the opinion of many, he was sure to make his mark.

In one day all these hopes were dashed to the ground. A bank failure reduced his father to almost utter poverty. There was nothing for the son to do but to go into business. Fortunately, his father had good connections, and he was placed in an influential and wealthy firm. He rose step by step, and twenty years after entering it he became its head partner, and as wealthy a man as his father had been before he failed.

Absorbed in money making, he forgot all else, and yet he was far from accepting his success in a grateful spirit. Talented as he was in business matters, at heart he disliked the work still. He never forgot the shattered dreams of his youth. He became morbid, gloomy, cynical, shunned society, and seldom went anywhere. His former friends fought shy of him; he got the character of being a miser, which, however, was undeserved, for he gave money away largely but in his own eccentric way.

The bitterness with which he viewed life had been increased by his quarrel with Richard Warham. The two had been fast friends from the days when