

pianists become familiar with the classics, and strive to acquire the sympathy and rapid perception necessary for playing with the strings.

An old writer* says—"A fiddler is, when he plays well, a delight only for them who have their hearing; but is, when he plays ill, a delight only for those who have not their hearing." This, of course, does not apply to learners. No one pretends that their first scrapings are otherwise than painful to others' ears. The tyro must be shut up in an attic, or some retired spot—the more retired, the faster is he likely to get on. But the real secret of progress is, as I have said, home encouragement. So soon as the beginner has fairly mastered his scales, and attacked some simple melody, let him play that melody at home accompanied by a competent relation or friend (not the master) on some other instrument. Even the scales may be accompanied, for an arrangement by Rolla has been published. But my point is—early familiarity with playing in concert. It begets a feeling for time, an ear for intonation, and a love of harmony—a grand trio which, when possessed, will have already made the learner an actual musician.

Arrived at this point, there lies before him a field of

music very vast and most rich, enough to last him for life. Some simple duets by Pleyel for two violins form a good first course. He should avoid the many arrangements for violin and pianoforte of operatic and popular airs, which are often compiled by those who have no technical knowledge of the violin, and which retard his progress, even if they do not corrupt his taste. But he may safely take some of the easiest of Mozart's sonatas, and in time go on to Beethoven's first trio in E flat for piano, violin, and 'cello, if the last instrument is available.

Quartets are the Paradise of the fiddler, and when our student succeeds in reaching that goal, his reward is great. In Haydn, Pleyel, Mozart, Cherubini, Beethoven, Spohr, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, he has friends who will require of him nothing but attention, and will encourage with their confidence his advances. They have to be cultivated, studied, respected; there must be no self-assertion in the player, and his mind must be directed to the common task of interpreting his composer-friends' thoughts. When he attains this, he commands a source of enjoyment which is one of the highest and purest this earth has to give.

F. CLARK.

A GOSSIP ON HAND-TURNING.



TECHNICAL education is one of the tough subjects with uncompromising names which, to the world in general, offers few attractions; yet, without doubt, it is a topic of the day that has much to do with promoting the welfare and happiness of the million, and as such is worthy of some consideration.

Government, our learned societies, and other ruling bodies have turned their attention with much advantage in this direction; and among others, some of the City companies, who, with princely incomes and with every means at hand for lavish hospitality, hold much power in their hands. It is, however, only to one of the minor branches of the great system—viz., hand-turning—that I would at present refer.

The Worshipful the Turners' Company are by no means one of the richest of the City guilds, they have not so much as a hall of their own, and yet by their means a great incentive has been given among the artisans to this art of hand-turning, more especially in wood, pottery, and diamonds; for every year they offer a series of prizes for the best specimens; the first prize winner receiving the freedom of the company. The prizes are open to workmen, journeymen or apprentices; and Baroness Burdett Coutts, who is a member of the company, gave an additional fifty pounds towards the prize fund this year past.

It was really a pretty and interesting sight when, one sunny day at the end of autumn, a large company assembled in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion

House, to witness the distribution of these awards in the forenoon. The Lord Mayor presided, the Lady Mayoress gave the prizes, and the master and wardens of the company were present, as well as the judges, who were all men of note. The works of the competitors were placed on a long table in front of the chairs of state, and the company, a large one, were scattered about the hall, filled as it was with tables, as for some civic feast. In each of the departments, one of the judges gave a short address on the several branches, and there was a great deal to learn by what was said—a great deal that made me think the art of hand-turning did not meet with so much attention as it deserved, more especially as any one with a lathe and a well-trained hand and eye can do the work.

The chief aims to be attained are beauty of design, symmetry of shape, utility, and general excellence of workmanship; all parts being exact, shining, well finished, not thick; and to insure this, there is no better method than copying and studying the models of antiquity, to which no modern designs ever come up. Men had more leisure in the good old days, loved their labour for its own sake, and apparently had their minds more free to dwell on the one interest on hand than we have now, when in good truth we live through a year of such quiet existences as they led in a single day.

Exactness in reproducing two things alike is another great merit in turning, as also fitness of the work and design for the purpose proposed.

Among the rules which the Turners' Company lay down, is that all the competing work must be produced in the lathe without special rest or tool

* Stephens: "Essays and Characters." 1615.

apparatus, yet many of the specimens shown were exquisitely carved to all appearance, the work being really wrought with the lathe, as for example a small tazza in light wood, the stem representing claws, all finely worked.

I never realised, till I saw this collection displayed, all that turning could produce, and I was so convinced thereby what an artistic occupation it is, that it seems to me it opens out a wide field to many art-lovers, which has hitherto been much neglected. In plain wood there were vases of exquisite shape, and among other things a thick circle, which proved to be a great test of skill, for it was most exactly formed, and had a tube and cone fitted into it. It reminded one a little of a Roman lamp, and in this utilitarian age it seemed a pity that it had not been adapted to some specific purpose. Then there were banisters of various forms, but mostly favouring such patterns as one finds in old Elizabethan houses; and candelabra with many lights, the different branches so delicately formed, I mistook them for ormolu in the distance. But it was in the mixtures of woods that the designers showed special art; for example, some white vases with lignum vitæ stems, the actual vase itself enclosed in a leaf of a darker kind; candlesticks of white wood with darker rims upon them; inkstands in the form of a ball, set on a circular plate of light and dark wood; oval frames, watch-stands, and small photograph frames of a star-shape, made of light wood tipped with dark.

The pottery was all unglazed, and consisted chiefly of terra-cotta vases of good antique mould, offering seasonable hints to the wood-turners, who showed more feebleness in form than in aught else.

Diamond-cutting found less response than the other branches of the extensive art of turning, and the first prize was not awarded at all. The recent discoveries of diamonds at the Cape have given a new impetus to the work here. English stones 100 years ago were considered the best in Europe; then our trade fell off, and the Dutch began to carry away the palm; but now the Clerkenwell factories are once more busy, and it is hoped our ancient prestige may return. The perfection of diamond-cutting consists in symmetry of form and proportion, and perfectness and polish of facets, the edge being even throughout, and polished up sharp.

Turning can be applied to pretty well every solid substance—metal, wood, pottery, stone, ivory, coral, jet, and alabaster—the term really meaning cutting and fashioning these substances while they revolve on an axis. It is one of the most ancient arts, immortalised by Virgil, the Greeks and Romans excelling in it; indeed many of the fine designs in relief on the vases which have come down to us from those periods were wrought with the lathe, lathes being the principal requirements in turning. These are of various kinds—the potter's, which, consisting of an iron beam and two wooden wheels, is the simplest form; the watch-maker's, known as a turn-bench, the smallest; and those worked by steam, for iron, the largest. According to a useful Hand-book of Turning published by Saunders

and Otley, which a learner of the art would find invaluable, the necessary tools, &c., are as follow:—Gauges, chisel, scrapers, side tools, point tools, moulding tools, inside tools, planes, drills, a hatchet, mallet, hammer, files, vice, hand-vice, gimlets, saws, screw-driver, pincers, compasses, rule, callipers, T-square, brace and bits, screw and milling tools, oil-can, glue-pot, sand-paper, chalk, glue, isinglass, pumice-stone, and nails. But with a very limited amount of all this, an amateur could make brooches, studs, earrings, chessmen, thimbles, cups, rings, pen-holders, pincushions, needlecases, vases, and many of the articles I have specially enumerated as the work of the competitors for the prizes of the Turners' Company, with the hope that they might suggest hints to the would-be turner.

The chalk is used when required to make some articles adhere to the chuck; the sand-paper is applied to the wooden articles for polishing; and pumice-stone in the same way for metals. The glue should be steeped for some hours in cold water, and then dissolved by placing the vessel containing it in a pan filled with water on the fire till it melts, thereby obviating all chance of its being spoiled by burning. It should be applied evenly and thinly, the wood being subsequently placed beneath a weight.

The different uses of the tools should be mastered as a preliminary, and care must be taken that they are kept sharp. It will be found a good plan to have a special rack above the lathe for them; it is also advisable to have all the handles, as far as possible, about the same size; the hand thereby gets accustomed to them, and so manipulates them the better.

The woods best suited for turning purposes are the beech, often boiled to make it more durable; elm; chestnut, sometimes made to resemble mahogany by dipping in alum and brushing over first with a hot decoction of log-wood, and then with one of Brazil-wood; walnut; holly, the whitest, and most closely resembling ivory; box, the hardest and toughest, capable of taking the highest polish; and such soft woods as sycamore, cherry, yew, laburnum, hazel, maple, and pear, which will not bear much ornamentation. Foreign woods are generally preferred, such as cocoa, calamander, ebony, and African thorn; but they have to be kept in a cool place, and occasionally rubbed over with oil, or they are apt to spoil. Our English woods are often deftly dyed to imitate the more expensive foreign kinds, and the manual to which I have referred gives a collection of receipts for carrying this out; care being necessary that when several applications are required, the wood is well dried between. The little volume also gives a variety of patterns, and practical directions for many kinds of turning which I have not space even to touch upon. I will only say that the lathe should be chosen deliberately, and be neither too high nor too low; that with patient industry the art can then be soon mastered, and well repays the preliminary trouble, being a useful and healthy employment for leisure hours, adding many "things of beauty" to our surroundings, and furnishing many acceptable gifts.

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