



# A Manual of Wood Carving

*Charles Godfrey Leland*

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Skill in wood-carving, as in every other art, is to be attained only by thoroughness. Let the pupil therefore bear in mind that he or she must be careful to master the first lessons, and to go no further until these can be executed with ease and accuracy. This will be greatly aided if the book is read with care, and not used for mere reference. Teachers will please observe that the work is in a regular series of progressive lessons, the first being extremely easy; and that these lessons lead so gradually one to another that the last are no harder than the first to one who has gone on carefully from the beginning. This will be found to aid teaching and self-instruction greatly. Every item of information will be found under its proper head, and not scattered here and there through different chapters: for every lesson is complete in itself, and from the first the pupil is taught how to produce some satisfactory work of its kind. Thus, indenting or stamping, which can be learned at once, and grooving with a gouge, which is not more difficult, are capable of producing very beautiful decoration even if the worker goes no further. No writer has, indeed, ever seriously considered what valuable and varied results may be produced by these simple processes. Finally, the author has endeavoured in these pages to treat wood-carving not merely as a fine art, whose chief aim is to produce specimens of fancy work for exhibitions, and facsimiles of flowers, never to be touched, but also to qualify the learner for a calling, and what nine-tenths of all practical wood-carving really consists of, that is, house and other large decoration, and of work which is to be perhaps painted, and exposed to the air. There is no reason why the artist should not be prepared to undertake figure-heads for ships, garden gates, cornices for roofs and rooms, dados, door panels, and similar work, as well as mere drawing-room toys, which should have no finish save the delicate touch of the cutting tool. The author would observe as regards this work that he has been under very great obligation to Mr. John J. Holtzapffel, Assoc. M. Inst. C.E., whose name is so well known to all workers in wood and metal, for revisions, suggestions, and addition of the chapter on the use of the saw in carving. He is also indebted to Mr. Caddy, teacher of wood-carving in Brighton for valuable suggestions.

**Tools and Implements.** The first and most important is a strong, and, if possible, a heavy table or bench. If the pupil cannot afford this, an ordinary small kitchen table must be found. It should be used for carving alone, as it will be necessary to bore holes and drive screws into it. But if a table cannot be spared for this, the pupil must make shift by putting a board at least an inch in thickness on a common table and fastening it with clamps. At a more advanced stage he will carve standing up at a higher bench, or with his work on a stand. Pupils in wood-carving "shops" often carve standing from the beginning.

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