
For The Love of Wood

Been doing a lot of reading lately, both for school and beyond .. ran across this passage in a story that I just had to capture so I could return to it...

Of all the handicrafts in the world there is none cleaner, pleasanter, and more fragrant than that of the carpenter. He works in friendly stuff. If he knows it well enough and can feel its qualities, it yields readily to his working and takes the outward shape of his thought - chair or table or bed, window-frame or shelf or beam.

Well-seasoned lumber he wants, that it may not warp. Knots and cross-grains trouble him, like original sin in man; but he takes note carefully, and avoids or conquers them. He judges his material with his eye before he measures it with square and foot-rule. His mind guides his fingers; his fingers fit his tools; his tools work his will in wood.

What good odors rise around him as he labors! From each tree its own fragrance: the resinous smell of the terebinth and the cypress; the delicate scent of the wild-olive with its smooth, curly texture; the faint, dry sweetness of the orange-yellow acacia with its darker heart; the clean odor of the oak with its hard, solid grain; and on rare days, the aromatic perfume of some precious piece of the cedar of Lebanon, king of trees.

Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, was proud of his trade.....

Henry Van Dyke, from "Even Unto Bethlehem"

Ah yes, the carpenter of Nazareth (though we tend to think more about his little boy..) .. a good read this little story .. and well timed reading as I hit around the midpoint of Advent. Good story indeed...

---Jim