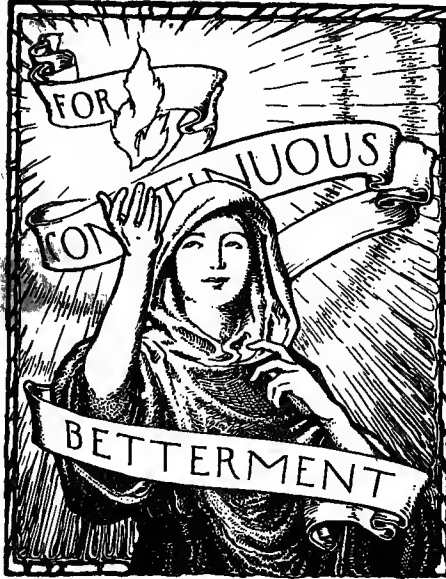


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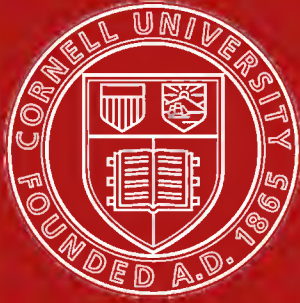
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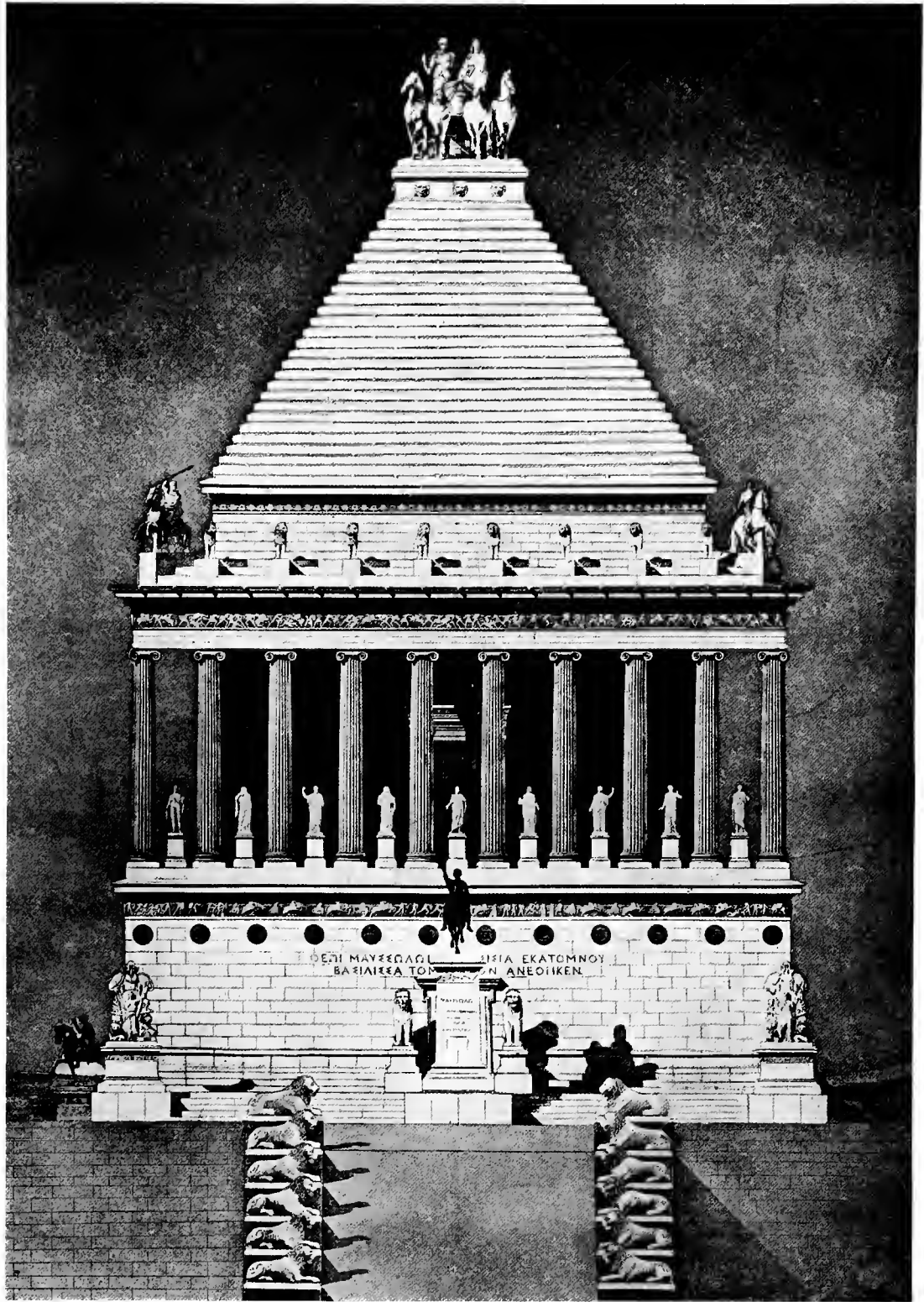
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A RESTORATION OF THE TOMB OF MAUSOLUS, ERECTED IN 353 B. C. BY HIS WIFE, ARTEMISIA,  
AT HALICARNASSUS IN ASIA MINOR

*From "Monuments Antiques": H. d'Espouy*



# MEMORIAL ART

By  
HUGER ELLIOTT

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CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS  
GRANITE MARBLE & BRONZE

1923

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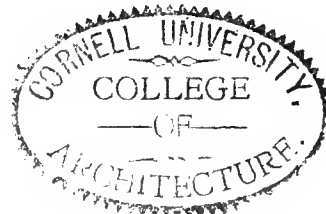
## FOREWORD

*The material contained in the following pages was first published in monthly installments in "Granite Marble & Bronze". In preparing these articles for publication in book form the writer finds himself somewhat troubled by the realization that in those articles—written from month to month with the desire to impress upon the practical man the necessity of serious study of basic principles—he was often dogmatic, over-insistent and, shall we say, flamboyant. Such qualities, while they may pass muster in a periodical, are of doubtful value in a book. Yet to eliminate them means a re-writing of the whole; for this, it seems, the necessary time will never be found. The reader is, therefore, asked to read with forbearance, agreeing when he can, disagreeing when he must.*

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF ELLA BROWN  
AND KATHARINE MIDDLETON HUGER, THE  
EXAMPLE OF WHOSE FRIENDSHIP, ONE  
FOR THE OTHER, WAS AN INSPIRA-  
TION IN THE LIVES OF THOSE  
WHO KNEW THEM

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## INTRODUCTION



WHEN a man tells me that five added to four makes nine, he can, should I doubt his statement, prove it by placing the required number of apples or dollars or headstones together and asking me to count them for myself. But when I tell a man that a certain monument is ugly and another one beautiful, and he does not agree with me, who is to decide which is right? He merely has to say, "Prove it"; and though I might prove it to my own satisfaction there is no guarantee that I shall prove it in such a manner as to convince him. Take that important element of design—proportion. Pages upon pages have been written about it; circles and half-circles, diagonal lines and more diagonal lines have been drawn across photographs or measured drawings of cathedrals and cupboards, mirrors and monuments, and what has been proved? Nothing. It is generally felt that oblong forms are more pleasing than square; that a decorative band placed about the middle of a building or a headstone is not so satisfactory as the same band placed nearer the top; but nothing has been proved. He who will can still say, "I disagree"; and there is the end of it. A few rules concerning the proper use of mouldings can be shown to be founded on logic; reasons why a column should be treated in one way rather than in another can be given; certain sound, constructive principles can be stated; but in the main all questions concerning the really important things in design resolve

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

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themselves into questions of taste. Of all things taste is the most difficult thing about which to write and a matter about which nothing can be proved.

Therefore, he who hopes to find in these pages rules which solve all difficulties is doomed to disappointment. I shall strive to make clear the reason why I consider one monument beautiful and another unbeautiful; I shall hope to give reasons which to most will seem reasonable, to seem logical in my deductions; but to lay down the law is far from my purpose. I only ask that the reader will consider with me the various propositions advanced; should his conclusions differ from mine, who is to say that he is not right and that I am? Above all things, I hope to avoid the agree-with-me-or-be-damned attitude. Since we are discussing matters which cannot be proved I may not say that another is wrong when I cannot advance sure proof that I am right.

When one looks at the monuments being placed, day by day, in our cemeteries; when one sees, month by month, the designs published in the advertising pages of the magazines, one wants to cry out against such ugliness—against the waste of labor and, since memorials are so rarely removed, against the perpetuation of so many unbeautiful objects. One wants to protest, all in one breath, against the raised letters, the rough-hewn crosses, the naturalistic flowers, the tasteless mingling of polished and unpolished surfaces and many other evidences of the average American's utter indifference to artistic fitness.

The man who does the actual work—whether he be a painter, a sculptor or a craftsman (and the first two are, of course, also craftsmen)—seems often to be irritated by the criticisms of the man who merely theorizes. "Well, I should like to see him do it," he remarks,

*Ten*

## M E M O R I A L A R T

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and perhaps does not stop to consider that the ability to judge justly has little to do with the ability to execute a given piece of work. Being able to do a thing with the greatest amount of technical skill is no guarantee that the worker will also have the clearest vision of what should and what should not be done. The critic must, of course, know the limitations and possibilities of the art of which he speaks; but the fact that he cannot, with his own hands, do the perfect piece of work does not, in any way, prevent him from recognizing the excellence or the fault in work done by another. No one demands that the umpire in a ball game shall be able to make the brilliant plays he judges; the best coach for a football team is not necessarily the man who can actually do the things he expects of his men. So the worker should judge the critic not by what he can or cannot do but by the justice of the reasons he puts forward when praising or condemning the work of others. Often the critic (being merely human) substitutes personal likes or dislikes for clear-headed reasoning; then the worker may, with justice, discredit his criticisms.

So much for a clear understanding of the spirit of these discussions. The term "memorial art" as used in this volume includes all the forms which may be erected as receptacles for or memorials to the dead. Since these range from wall-tablets and headstones to tombs and public monuments many elements—mouldings, columns, ornament, etc.—are more or less common to all. It is, therefore, fitting to discuss these before considering the individual types.







ENTABLATURE FROM THE BASILICA, ULPIA, ROME

From "Monuments Antiques": H. d'Espouy

*The central member, the frieze, is decorated with a rich anthemion pattern. Below this is the Architrave; above, the Cornice. This consists of the Cornice proper, crowned with the Cymatium, and supported by the Bed-moulds (a quarter-round, ornamented with the Egg and Dart, a band of Dentils and a cyma reversa enriched with the water-leaf ornament).*

CHAPTER I  
MOULDINGS



MOULDINGS are used to increase the interest of an object, relieving its plain surfaces by the play of light and shadow. Where severity and simplicity are desired mouldings should be used sparingly or not at all; if richness and lightness are demanded the effect can be obtained by the lavish use of mouldings of delicate profile.

Much of the stern dignity of the temples of Egypt is due to the simplicity of the cavetto and torus mouldings used by the Egyptian builders, while the delicate brilliance of the work of the early Renaissance architects was achieved by the use of many mouldings of great richness (see Plate XVIII). Large mouldings of simple profile, giving few and well-defined masses of light and shade, give an effect of strength. Grace and delicacy may be obtained by the use of groups of small mouldings catching many lights and casting small and broken shadows. Compare the entablature of the Parthenon (Plate II) with that of the Pantheon, the western doorways of St. Sernin, Toulouse, with those of the Cathedral of Bourges and these points will easily be seen.\*

In an analysis of mouldings it is convenient to use the terms "rule" and "law", but it is to be borne in mind that in matters of design there are no laws—merely theories which are based upon the

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\*See Appendix

## MEMORIAL ART

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study of existing works of art. Reason and that indefinable thing called the sense of beauty must guide us.

Glancing at the accompanying drawing (Fig. 1) it will be noted that the mouldings are divided into three groups; that a fourth group deals with combinations of mouldings; and that arrows are extensively used. These are introduced to emphasize direction of movement, suggest lines of force, etc. It will further be noticed that from the numberless mouldings in use, past and present, only a few typical examples have been selected and these shown in their simplest form.

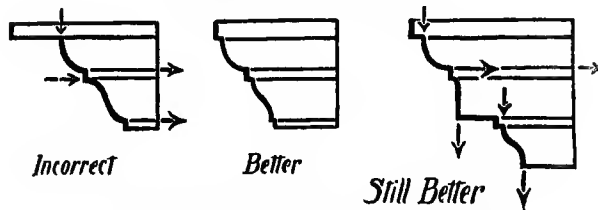
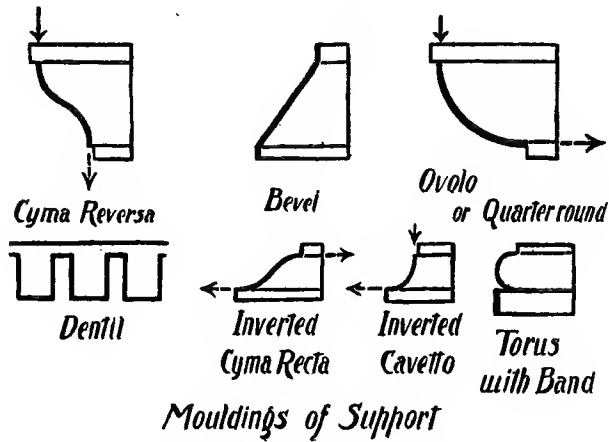
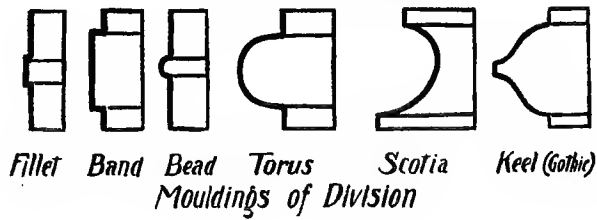
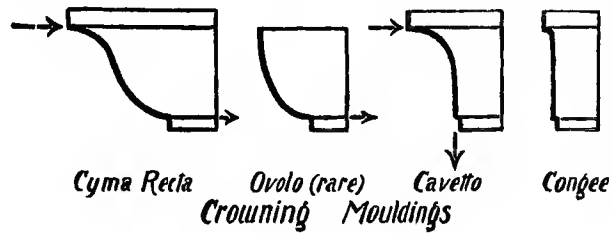
An analysis of the profiles will make clear the reasons for these divisions.

The *cyma recta* (an ogee moulding, composed of lines of double curvature) has horizontal tangents; that is, at the top and at the bottom of the moulding the profile ends with horizontal lines or tangents, as indicated by the arrows. A fillet is usually placed above and below the moulding. Being thin at the top, the *cyma recta* is not formed to bear weight. If above this moulding a heavy mass were placed its line of force would be downward; but since the tangent at the top of the *cyma recta* is horizontal there would be a sudden change in the line of force, or weight, from vertical to horizontal, therefore a lack of harmony. Having a horizontal line at the bottom the *cyma recta* rests firmly upon its supporting member; having there no vertical line it is distinctly a crowning moulding (Plate I). The ogee curve gives a greater play of light and shade than any other. It is, therefore, employed where an effect of richness is desired. Its use is almost universal in classic and Renaissance structures and developed into the keel moulding in late Gothic buildings. The architects of the Parthenon evidently sought a cer-

*Fourteen*



# M O U L D I N G S



## *The Combining of Mouldings*

FIG. 1

A diagram showing the principal mouldings

## MEMORIAL ART

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tain quality of severity. There the *ovolo* was used as the crowning member of the entablature—a somewhat rare procedure.

The profile of the *cyma recta* is variously treated. The Greeks gave it a very subtle curvature; in certain Roman and Renaissance structures it is formed of two quarter circles, the effect of which is a trifle hard and uninteresting.

The *cavetto*, always finished at the top with a fillet, is also a crowning moulding, its thinness at the top not fitting it for a weight bearer. Being simple in profile its effect is more severe than that of the *cyma recta*; having a vertical tangent at the bottom it cannot well be placed above projecting mouldings as can the *cyma recta*. Its vertical tangent calls for a continuous vertical bearing surface, interrupted, perhaps, only by a moulding of division. This arrangement is practically universal in the temples of Egypt.

The *congee* is not a true crowning moulding; with its accompanying fillet it is a graceful finishing touch given to any plain vertical surface. Its relation to the mouldings usually found with it in the column will be discussed later.

In the second group, the mouldings of division, it will be noted that the profiles interrupt a continuous bearing line, with the exception of the *scotia*, which is drawn with the profile most commonly used—that is, as a member of the base of the classic column. Other exceptions may be noted: that the *fillet*, for example, is a part of certain mouldings and is placed between mouldings, as between the two ogees in the keel moulding, or between two channels in the classic column; that *bands* are placed one upon another as in the architrave (the lowest member) of the classic entablature. But the fact remains that in general these mouldings do not change the direction of the line of force; they merely interrupt it.

*Sixteen*

## M O U L D I N G S

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The difference between the fillet and the band, as between the torus and the bead, is one of relative size. In the architrave of a colossal Roman temple there is a fillet more than nine inches wide; the corresponding bands are from four to five feet in width. The sunk fillet, or small channel of rectangular section, is often used. The *torus* moulding was extensively used by the Egyptian builders; it is also very characteristic of Romanesque work. As the architectural style which we call Gothic developed from the Romanesque the use of the torus was in great measure abandoned, various ogee mouldings separated by the scotia being used to give a rich play of light and shadow (see Plate V). It may be mentioned in passing that a clear analysis of Gothic mouldings is not easily possible. The general principle is like that which governs the use of mouldings in classic work—a contrasting of shadowed surfaces with sharply cut projecting mouldings which catch the light. One wishing to use Gothic forms should make a careful study, from photographs and from measured drawings, of such buildings as the cathedrals at Amiens, Beauvais, Chartres, Paris and Rouen and some of the smaller churches and monuments of France.

The mouldings of support form the third group to be considered. It will be noted that nearly all of these have a vertical tangent at the top; they are designed to bear weight.

Of these the *cyma reversa* is perhaps the most important. (An easy way to fix the two cymas in the memory is to recall the fact that *recta* sounds like erect, but that, contrary-wise, the erect or up-standing *cyma* is called *reversa*.) This ogee moulding has vertical tangents top and bottom. It is, therefore, designed to bear weight and to transfer that weight to the surface below. It is found among the bed-moulds of the classic entablature, bearing the weight of the

## MEMORIAL ART

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projecting cornice (see Plate I) and is also much used, in the reversed position, as a base moulding. It is best used, in this latter position, where there is a suggestion of great weight above it; for the base moulding of small monuments the inverted cyma recta or inverted cavetto are better. As in the other cyma, the profile varies greatly. It is often "quirked"—that is, the top, instead of having a true vertical tangent, is curved inward and the bottom curved outward and then returned with an upward, inward curve to the fillet, leaving a sharp edge, giving great brilliancy and refinement.

The *ovolo*, or "quarter round," is also an important supporting moulding. Having a vertical tangent at the top it is a proper weight-bearer. The horizontal tangent at the bottom allows it to rest well upon its supports and fits it to be used among overhanging mouldings, as there is no vertical tangent at the bottom to suggest downward pressure (Plate I).

The Greek designers, always searching for refinement of profile, rarely used a true quarter-circle for the *ovolo*. This moulding should never be used in the reversed position; that is, with the horizontal tangent at the top. One has only to make a drawing of the *ovolo* using it in this manner to realize its awkwardness.

The *bevel* is almost as much a moulding of division as of support. It is distinctly harsh in effect and should be used with great care, yet its simplicity makes it suitable for use in heavy weight-bearing groups of mouldings. The *dentil* moulding, a series of small blocks which recall the ends of the ceiling beams of the original Greek structures, is purely a moulding of support. When used with a band, or plinth, below it, the torus may be included among the mouldings of support. It should be noted, however, that the plinth must project

*Eighteen*

## M O U L D I N G S

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far enough to bring its face on a line with the greatest projection of the torus.

Finally, we come to the two *inverted* crowning mouldings—the cyma recta and the cavetto. The inverted cyma recta should never be used as a base moulding in a tall structure. Having a horizontal tangent at the top, the change from the vertical line of force to this horizontal is too abrupt to be harmonious. As a moulding of support for a small structure it may be used with discretion; the horizontal tangent at its lower end makes it suitable for use in a wide-spreading base (see Plate XIII). A good example of this moulding so used may be seen in the pedestal of St. Gaudens' "Sherman" in New York City. The inverted cavetto, having a vertical line of force which is brought down upon it, is well adapted for use as a bearing moulding. The severity of its profile, however, makes it appropriate rather for simple than for elaborate structures.

The combining of mouldings should next be considered. The first general rule is that curved mouldings should not be placed next one another; they should, at least, be separated by fillets.

A succession of curved mouldings, even when separated by fillets, gives a certain monotony in the character of the light and shade, whereas the effectiveness of a group of mouldings consists in obtaining contrasts of masses of light and surfaces in shadow. When, as in the base of the classic column, a scotia is used between two torus mouldings this contrast is obtained even though we have a succession of curved mouldings; and the same effect was gained by the Gothic builders when they separated projecting keel mouldings by deeply cut scotia. As has been stated, it is difficult to formulate laws governing Gothic mouldings; in classic work, however, the principles are fairly simple. There is usually an alternation of flat

## MEMORIAL ART

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and curved mouldings, projecting masses to receive the light and to cast balancing shadows, and these shadows variegated by reflected light caught by projecting surfaces of minor mouldings. A designer should study not only the profiles of his mouldings but also the shadows cast by them, making careful drawings with the lights, the shades (the effect of reflected light on surfaces over which a shadow is cast) and the shadows themselves. Thus only may he properly determine the necessary projection of his mouldings that he may obtain the effects of grace, strength or severity which he desires. The volumes of rendered drawings edited by H. d'Espouy are invaluable for such study. In many cases a library which does not own these works—"Fragments d'architecture antique," "Monuments antiques" and "Fragments de l'architecture du moyen age et de la renaissance"—can borrow them from another library.

The decorating of mouldings should finally be considered. The general principle is that the ornament should echo the profile. The *cyma reversa* usually bears the "water leaf" ornament, the main lines of which repeat again and again the lines of the profile. On the ovolo the "egg and dart" (see *Egyptian Ornament*, page 48) is used, the lines which enclose the "eggs" continually recalling the curve of the moulding. The difference between the Greek and the Roman manner of carving this ornament should be carefully studied (Plates I and XIII). The fillet is rarely, if ever, decorated, but the band is often enriched with vertical channeling, the Greek fret (which should never be used on a large scale) or a "wave pattern". This last, though composed of curved lines, is flat in effect and, therefore, suited to the flat band. The *guilloche*, a decorative motive consisting of interlacing bands woven about small circles, may be used on flat surfaces, but is particularly adapted to the torus (see

*Twenty*

## M O U L D I N G S

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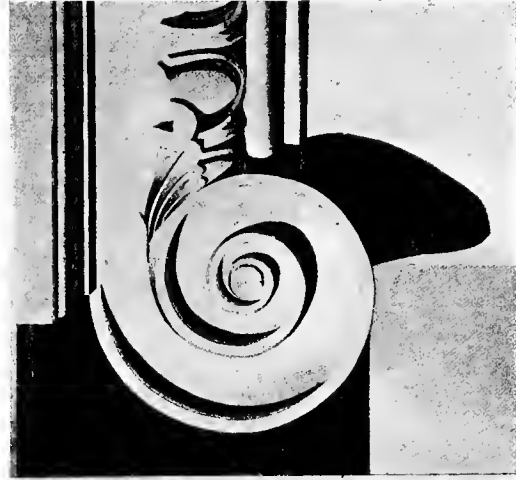
Plate XIII). This moulding is often decorated with reeding or with conventionalized leaves bound with fillets, the lines of the fillets recalling the profile of the moulding.

Rarely, if ever, should one part of the moulding in a group of moldings be polished and the rest left unpolished. All or none is the safest rule. An effect of tasteless vulgarity is immediately obtained by the mingling of surfaces so differently treated (see Chapter XIII).

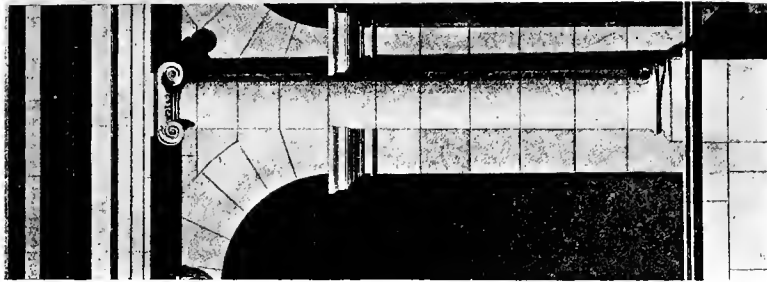




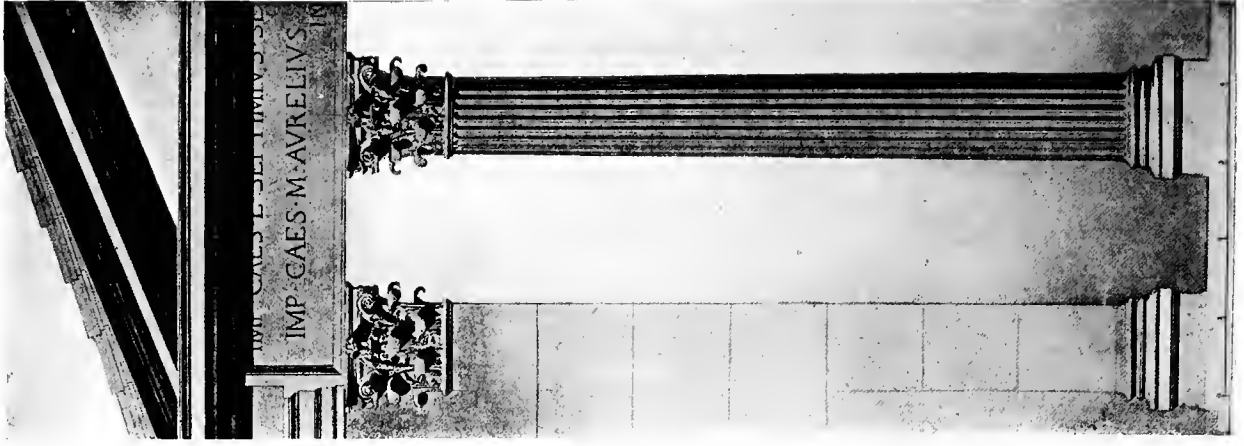




ROMAN IONIC  
THEATRE OF MARCELLUS  
ROME



GREEK DORIC  
THE PARTHENON  
ATHENS



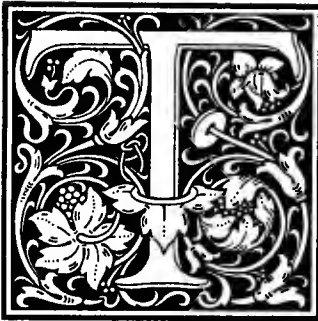
ROMAN CORINTHIAN  
PORTICO OF OCTAVIUS  
ROME



EXAMPLES OF "THE ORDERS"

## CHAPTER II

### THE COLUMN



THE column is a free-standing weight bearer. In the best periods of Greek and Roman work certain forms were evolved perfectly suited to this use. These consist of cylindrical shafts, with or without bases, having ornamental forms at the top to mark the transition from the vertical bearing member to the horizontal member which is borne. Centuries were needed for the perfecting of these forms; we should be sure that we have reason on our side before we venture to change them.

The classic column, its special capital and its distinctive group of mouldings above, comprise what is called an "Order". These are: The Tuscan (merely a heavy type of the Roman Doric), the Doric—and the differences between the Greek and Roman forms must be carefully noted—the Ionic, the Corinthian and the Composite. These are accompanied by the differing entablatures, or groups of mouldings borne by the columns, which will be mentioned later.

In the best period the Greeks used the column as a direct weight bearer. Where the entablature returned against a wall they used not a part of a column but a pier (see Plate III), a rectangular mass projecting from the wall, called an *anta* (plural, *antae*). The Romans often used the column in an incorrect manner, sinking a quarter or a third of it into the wall, forming what is known as the

## MEMORIAL ART

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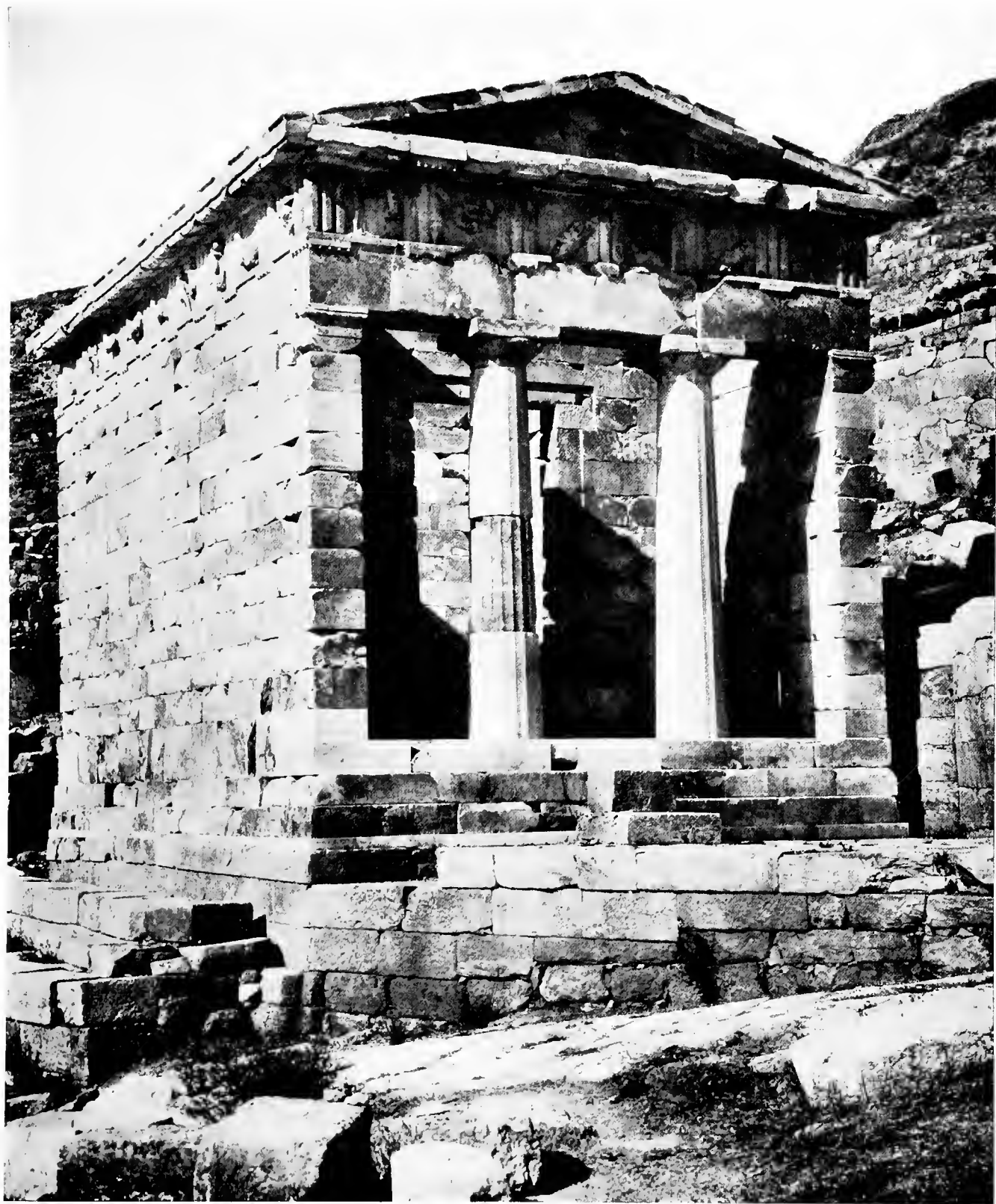
three-quarters or engaged column (Plates II and XV). This incorrect use of the column is, unfortunately, so common that particular attention must be called to it. The reasoning designer will not fall into this old-established error.

The column is composed of a base, shaft and capital. The Greek Doric is an exception, having no base; lacking this feature it is usually placed close to the edge of a step and this, in a measure, serves as a base. The base of the Roman Doric column is composed of a square plinth, a torus (more often two) circular in plan, and a fillet. An inverted congee serves to make the connection with the shaft. The Ionic base usually has two torus mouldings separated by a scotia, but there are many variations. Some of the Greek examples lack the plinth and in one or two rare cases the plinth is octagonal instead of square. This octagonal form should be used only with great care, the purpose of the square plinth being to recall the line of the entablature above. The bases of the Corinthian and Composite columns are much like the Ionic.

These bases are usually about one-half a diameter in height (the diameter of the shaft, just above the congee, is taken as the standard of measurement in all cases) and eight-sixths of a diameter in breadth. The inverted congee at the base of the shaft should be very small. The face of the upper fillet should be a trifle behind the center of the first torus; if two torus mouldings are used with a scotia between, the scotia should never be so deep as to cut into a line drawn from the shaft. (The wise designer will never use any of the well-known classic forms without first making a careful study of drawings and photographs of good examples.)

The shaft comprises the largest part of the column. It is cylindrical and in all cases is given an *entasis* or slight tapering toward

*Twenty-four*



TREASURY OF THE ATHENIANS, DELPHI, GREECE

*Photo by A. Siminottis*



## T H E C O L U M N

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the top. The upper diameter of the average column is five-sixths of the lower. In the Greek Doric examples this entasis or delicate curved profile is continuous from bottom to top; in many of the Roman columns the shaft is almost straight for a third of the way up, after which the curvature begins. Occasionally a shaft will have its greatest diameter a third of the way up, tapering very slightly toward the bottom. This last device for giving lightness to a column should be used with the utmost care; it may so easily be overdone. The columns which surround the upper part of Grant's Tomb in New York City are examples of such over-emphasis.

The shaft is built of drums (almost universal in Greek work) or it may be a monolith. When drums are used they should be less than a diameter in height. This rule should be strictly enforced, else the column will present an unstable appearance suggesting a stack of tomato cans. Another law which should be carefully followed is that the congee and fillet at the top and at the bottom of the shaft must be cut as parts of the monolith or of the top and bottom drums.

The shaft is usually ornamented by cutting vertical channels upon it. In Greek work these are segmental or elliptical in section. In the Greek Doric they are separated by an edge called the arris. In the other "Orders" a fillet separates one channel from another. These channels vary in number from sixteen to twenty-four. Where monoliths are used, particularly if the material is a richly veined marble, the shaft is often left unchanneled. In some cases the shaft is plain for somewhat less than a third of its height and channeled above that point; when a very rich effect is desired the channels are filled, for perhaps a third of the height, with reeds (see Plate XII), occasionally terminating in conventional buds. If the column is to be polished it is safer to polish all parts, save perhaps the capital; as

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## MEMORIAL ART

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has been stated, the mingling of polished and unpolished surfaces is a matter requiring the utmost care and study.

Another method of ornamenting the classic shaft was introduced in the Renaissance period; alternate drums were cut so as to project from the face of the shaft. This was given the name of Rusticated work. It may be permissible in certain massive structures, but should be used, if at all, only when the desired effect can be obtained in no other way.

Concerning the proportional height of the different columns the usual formula is, including base and capital: Doric (Roman) eight diameters high, Ionic nine and Corinthian ten. This is merely a general rule; the designer should vary the proportion of the column according to the effect desired. Short columns give an effect of strength; grace and lightness are obtained by the use of slender shafts. The Greeks and Romans, however, did not vary these proportions without reason. They knew that the flat Doric capital was suited to the short column and that the tall capital of the Corinthian Order was best used to crown a long, slender shaft. There is much greater variation in Greek than in Roman work; one finds Doric columns varying in height from five and a half to eight diameters.

The capital was evolved for the purpose of making interesting the point where the vertical line of support meets the horizontal mass above. It should not be considered a widening of the bearing surface of the column. In many cases it will be found that the *abacus* (the upper member of the capital) has its upper surface slightly beveled off toward the edges so that the actual surface upon which the beam rests is a square whose width equals the upper diameter of the column. This is logical, since the vertical face of the

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## THE COLUMN

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beam should be exactly in line with the face of the column below. (An exception to this rule is found in the Greek Doric Order in which the face of the beam overhangs the face of the column.)

The Greek Doric capital is the simplest, consisting of a square abacus supported by an ovolo moulding—the *echinus*—which is rarely a true quarter-round, but is given a somewhat elliptical profile, and below this are placed some small but relatively deep horizontal channels. This capital the Romans found not to their taste. Their Doric capital has a small cyma reversa moulding crowning the abacus—a quarter-round for the echinus, a band (or necking) and finally a small torus, fillet and congee. These last three mouldings (if the congee, which is here simply a part of the shaft, can be called a moulding) are found on all capitals save the Greek Doric. The Roman Doric capital is about one-half a diameter high.

The most distinctive member of the Ionic capital is the volute or spiral which is placed below the abacus, the Greek example from the Erechthion being a most beautifully wrought piece of work. The Roman forms are much simpler. The Corinthian capital is the most elaborate (or as elaborate as the Composite, and far more beautiful) and, therefore, the most difficult to design and execute. It has a rich abacus below which is a "bell"; about this are placed two rows of leaves and a series of spirals. There are sixteen of these latter forms, two large spirals projecting under each corner of the abacus and two smaller meeting on each face of the bell. There are eight acanthus leaves in each row, the second or larger row having its leaves on axis. The capital is usually seven-sixths of a diameter high.

The most important points which should be noted are: the face of the lower row of leaves should be on the same plane with the face

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## MEMORIAL ART

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of the shaft, and the leaves in both rows should be kept vertical up to the point where they curve sharply outward (see Plate II). If this is not done, if the leaves lean outward, there is danger of making the capital look like a mass of naturalistic foliage and thus losing the severe, vertical quality which is the chief charm of the well-designed Corinthian capital.

The question of the use of the three-quarter or "engaged" column has been briefly mentioned—the statement being made that to sink a classic column part-way into a wall is, clearly, not logical. So common is this abuse of the column that attention is again called to this point. The column should be used as a weight bearer and is designed to be free-standing. When the beam borne by the column returns against a wall, another form, designed as a part of the wall should be used to receive it—not a part of a true column. Such a form is the anta, already mentioned. In the best period of Greek work this was a pier, rectangular in plan, with mouldings at top and bottom. These mouldings in no way imitated the base and cap of the column; they were of the same height, but quite different in profile. When one of the Greek Orders is used the Greek method should be followed.

The Roman architects found this form too simple. In its place they developed the *pilaster* which copied the column in every detail save that it was rectangular in plan instead of circular (Plates II and XVIII). In many modern examples the mistake is made of giving an entasis to the pilaster; this should never be done. Since the beam supported is the width of the upper diameter of the column and since the face of the pilaster should be vertical the lower part will be narrower than the lower diameter of the column. If a column is placed close to a pilaster the plinths should have the same

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## THE COLUMN

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amount of projection; therefore, in such a case, the base mouldings of the pilaster must be broadened out. In the capital of the Corinthian pilaster there should be two leaves on the face in the lower row of leaves; in the second row of leaves one should be placed on the axis of the pilaster and the corner leaves bent so that half a leaf shows on each face.

Mention has been made of the classic *entablature*, or group of mouldings supported by the column. Each Order has its particular arrangement of these mouldings and this should be followed—not because there is any law that cannot be violated, but because these forms were found, by centuries of experiment, to be those best fitted to crown one or another type of column. All have the same general arrangement (see Plates I, II and III). The entablature is divided into three unequal parts: the architrave, plain or enriched with bands, which rests upon the capital; the frieze, a broad band often ornamented; the cornice, or projecting member. This last is divided into three parts: the bed moulds, which support the cornice proper; the cornice, and the cymatium, or crowning member. Lack of space forbids a more detailed discussion of the different entablatures; the designer will, of course, carefully study the classic examples.

The temples and shrines of the Greeks and Romans usually had gable ends. This triangular member is called the *pediment* (Plates II and III). Usually it crowns a group of columns and its use necessitates a rearrangement of the mouldings of the cornice. The architrave, frieze and lower part of the cornice remain unchanged. The cymatium, however, is not carried across the entablature below the pediment; it is used only on the sloping sides of this member.

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## M E M O R I A L A R T

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In Greek work this raking crowning moulding merely rests upon the cornice at the ends of the gable; in Roman examples the fillet which supports the cymatium, or crowning cyma-recta moulding, is, at the ends of the gable, made a part of a fillet which is carried across horizontally as a crowning for the cornice proper. In the cornice of the Corinthian Order ornamental brackets or modillions are sometimes placed among the bed-moulds. When the cornice is carried along the sloping sides of the pediment these modillions should be given vertical side faces with the bottoms and the tops following the slope of the gable; the modillion as used in the horizontal cornice should not be placed on the sloping cornice where its side faces would not be vertical. The stone-joints of the raking cornice should be at right angles to the slope and there should not be a vertical joint at the top where the sloping sides meet.

The classic pediment must be considered as a unit; therefore, the columns which support it should be spaced with approximate regularity. In the small tomb there is a temptation to space the columns irregularly to allow easy access to the interior. This should not be done. A possible solution is to use two columns, as far apart as may be desired, and near these two place antae or pilasters; by this means a certain unity is obtained (see Plate III).

The last point regarding the classic column is its use as an isolated object serving as a memorial. This is a permissible use as a supporting member for a vase or statue. The Romans were fond of this type of memorial and it has been fairly common from that time to the present day. Great care is necessary in obtaining the proper proportion between the column and the object borne; one of the best examples is the Victory column at West Point, N. Y. But a beautifully designed and cut column with nothing upon it is perhaps the

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best solution of this problem. The broken shaft, so pleasing to the taste of 1850, is a thing which should never have been perpetrated.

When we turn to the column as used by the Gothic builders we find such a bewildering variety of forms that scarcely any helpful hints can be given to guide the designer. Plate XVI shows two widely divergent types; one, an early Italian tomb of great beauty and simplicity, the other an equally beautiful structure of the late Spanish Gothic period. In the first, the colum does not differ greatly from the classic form; in the second, the vertical members cannot be called columns, for the arch mouldings are carried down to the base with merely a suggestion of a cap and the flanking forms are really buttresses covered with canopied niches. How the latter developed from the former can be traced, step by step, just as we can trace the connection between the Roman forms and the Gothic columns of the Italian tomb.

When the seat of government of the Roman empire was moved from Rome to Byzantium (Constantinople), two distinct forms were developed from the Roman column—the Byzantine and the Early Christian. The former developed a very rich capital, faintly suggesting the Roman capitals, but with surface carving rather than clean-cut, free-standing foliage and was made wide-spreading to receive heavy arches. The Early Christian builders used Roman capitals, mingling different types in a very interesting way. Then they began to cut rough capitals which varied more and more from the Roman models, and as the style which has been given the name of Romanesque developed the variety became endless. The search was for a form which would bear the arch (the Roman capitals not being adapted to such use). As the vaulted roofs found in the late Romanesque buildings began to give place to richer vaulting forms

## MEMORIAL ART

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in the early Gothic structures—for the Romanesque style merged gradually into the Gothic—the clustered pier was developed and a capital had to be designed for each part of the pier. The capitals became less and less important and in the late Gothic work practically disappeared.

Since the development of these columns and capitals extended over a period of about a thousand years and throughout most of the countries of Europe, it is not strange that the types are many and that general laws concerning their use are few. In Romanesque and early Gothic capitals the foliage is massive and is arranged, after a fashion, in the manner of the leaves of the Corinthian capital. In late Gothic work the forms become more delicate and less formal in arrangement and, it may be added, far more difficult to copy. Gothic ornament being peculiarly individual a designer has to get thoroughly into the spirit of the style before he can achieve beautiful results. Practically every Gothic memorial erected in the nineteenth century looks machine-made and commonplace when compared with original work executed between the twelfth and the fifteenth century. That the Gothic style can be handled in modern times with superb results has been proved by the erection in New York City of St. Thomas' Church, by Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson. The designer who wishes to use this style must so familiarize himself with examples of the best period that he can work in it spontaneously. He must have a feeling for proportion, for fitness—he must have a sense of beauty far greater than is required for the successful handling of classic forms. The Gothic examples which he should study are those which are found in north central France—Rouen, Amiens, Beauvais, Paris, Chartres and Bourges—to mention the best known. There is, of course, some beautiful Gothic work in Spain and in

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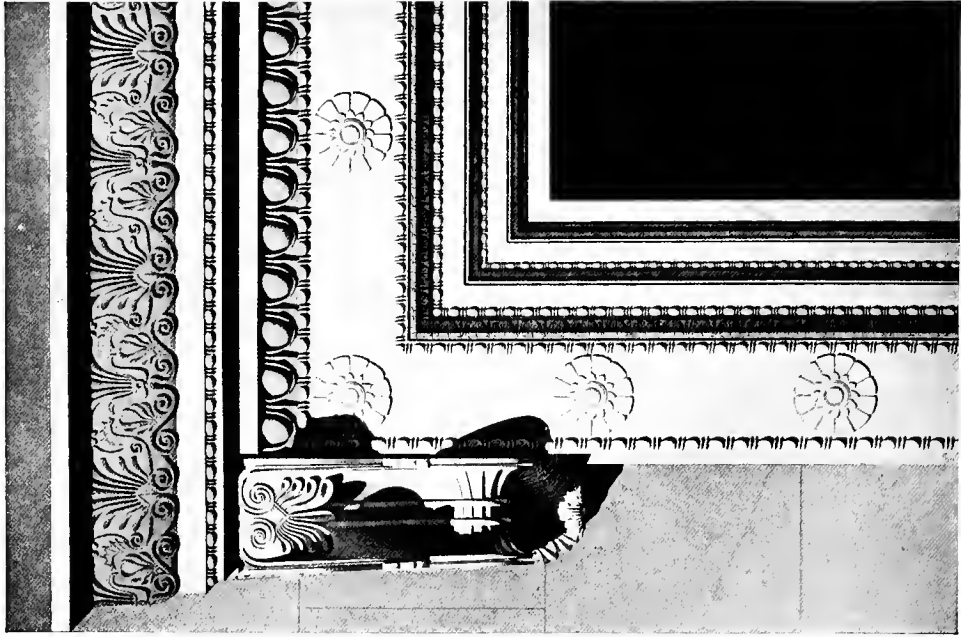
Italy; a little in England. The beginner in Gothic design is advised to learn, and learn thoroughly, the fundamentals which he can best glean from the great examples of the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.



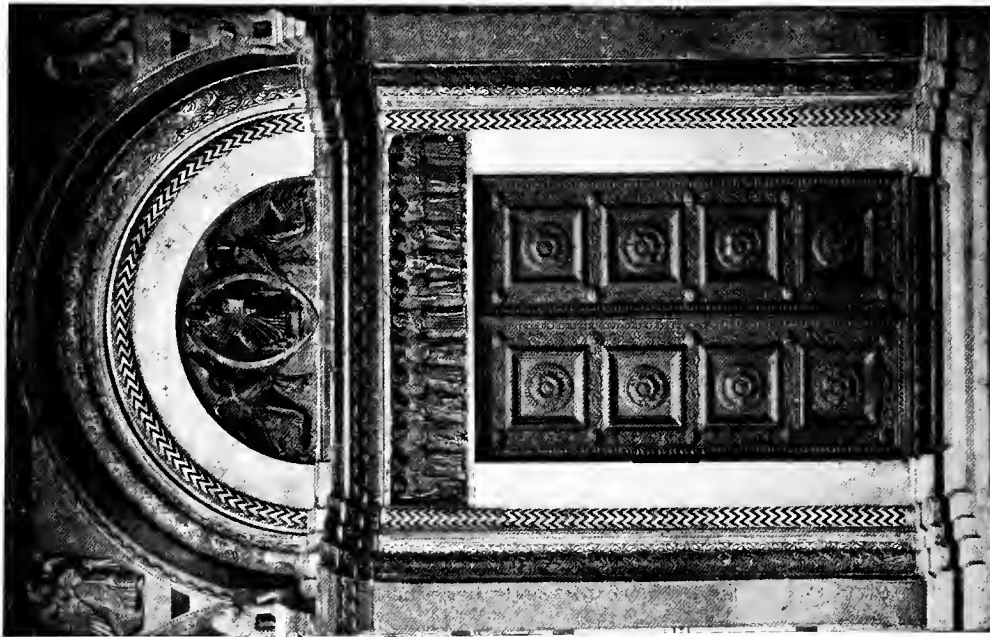




PLATE IV



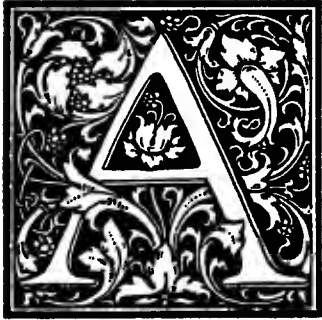
DOORWAY OF THE ERECHTHEION, ATHENS  
*From "Fragments Antiques"; H. d'Espouy*



DOORWAY AND DOOR; CATHEDRAL, LUCCA, ITALY  
*Photograph by Fratelli Alinari*

### CHAPTER III

## A FURTHER DISCUSSION OF ARCHITECTURAL FORMS



ALTHOUGH the arch is somewhat infrequently used in memorial work a few matters concerning it should be mentioned. The first point to be noted is this: the arch should always be "stilted". If the impost mouldings upon which the arch rests are placed on the horizontal line which passes through the center from which the arch is struck, the arch (in the case of a round arch) will seem to the eye to be less than a true semi-circle; and the greater the projection of the mouldings the greater the apparent cutting away of the half circle (see Plate XVIII). The remedy is simple: to place the supporting mouldings a short distance below the horizontal line which passes through the center of the arch, continuing the half circle with vertical lines. This is called stiling the arch. Once the eye has become used to this refinement no unstilted arch seems satisfactory. The Gothic, or pointed arch, should be treated in the same manner, a short vertical line being introduced between the lower end of the curve and the moulding or capital which forms the support.

The next point to be considered is one too often violated in the modern tomb. This is the form of the *voussoir*. An arch is composed of wedge-shaped pieces of stone, each of which is called a *voussoir* (see Plate II: Theatre of Marcellus). The key-stone, used in the segmental, round or elliptical arch, is merely the *voussoir*

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which is placed on the vertical axis. Since the voussoirs transfer the thrust from one to another, all bearing the weight of the wall above, they should be deeper than they are broad; that is, the distance from the inner to the outer edge should be greater than the distance between radial joints. One often sees, in tombs and vaults where the arch is used, the voussoirs incorrectly cut. The effect is not only awkward but weak. Another point which should be noted is that in the pointed arch a vertical joint should be used at the apex of the arch. A key-stone in a Gothic arch is out of place.

The classic arch is usually enriched with mouldings which follow the curve of the arch, forming a moulded band called the *archivolt*. This is much like the architrave mouldings of the classic entablature. The mouldings should not project greatly and the innermost band should be in the plane of the wall. In Roman work the archivolt is brought down to the impost mouldings; in some modern "classic" work there is no break at the spring of the arch, the archivolt mouldings being carried down to the bottom of the opening. The mediaeval builders used a great variety of mouldings in enriching the arch. The methods by which they achieved a play of light and shadow have been discussed in the chapter on mouldings.

A few words concerning doorways and doors may not be out of place. The proportion of width to height in the classic doorway has been much discussed. Two squares high has been given as the ideal proportion, but the effect which the designer wishes to obtain is the only true guide. A broad and low door has a sombre, heavy look, while a high and narrow door will be much lighter in effect. For the solemnity of a tomb it will be found that a doorway only one and one-half times as high as its width will not be too low. In such a case, however, it is advisable to have two valves instead of a single

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## ARCHITECTURAL FORMS

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door; a strong vertical line of mouldings down the center will help to correct what might possibly be a too-heavy appearance. (The designer interested in such matters should draw, side by side, two openings of the above proportions; in one, place a vertical line down the center, flanked by simple rectangular panels, as in the door shown in Plate IV—in the other place five horizontal panels filling the whole space; the difference in effect is surprising). The classic doorway is usually framed by mouldings adapted, as in the case of the archivolt, from the architrave. In many examples this is crowned with a cornice supported on consoles or brackets; occasionally the crowning takes the form of a pediment. A famous doorway is that of the Erechthion at Athens (Plate IV).

The permissible forms for doors are so many that it is difficult to give suggestions concerning their design. Obviously they should explain their structure. Yet even this rule is often violated. A sculptor recently designed doors for a church in New York where rich mouldings surround the panels, but in casting the doors in bronze each was cast in three pieces, the joints cutting through the seeming structural mouldings. Octagonal, circular or elliptical panels should be introduced only after the most careful study and it might also be stated that rectangular panels are best, simply because they echo the lines of the door. An effect of dignity and severity is obtained by use of panels all of the same form. Three, five or seven panels of similar shape and size will make of the door a unit; while three (or more) panels of different sizes will distract the eye and produce a restless, undignified effect. For the final word: the structure of the door should be simple and be frankly shown.

Steps, balustrades and terraces call for mention under the heading of architectural detail.

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A great number of cemeteries are situated upon rolling ground, thus necessitating the use of terraces. When properly handled a terrace (or a series of terraces) is one of the most pleasing forms of outdoor decoration. Too often, however, the beauty of such forms is lost through lack of appreciation of the possibilities. The "architectural" treatment of grounds has not yet succeeded in winning the battle against the informal or "landscape" arrangement. This matter of grounds will be taken up in a later chapter, together with the question of cast-iron chairs, children-under-umbrella fountains and other general considerations; at present the masonry terrace, steps, etc., as parts of the monument or its immediate surroundings, are to be discussed.

Of the stone terrace, there is not much to be written. The rustic, rubble-stone wall should be avoided; a base course is to be recommended and the relative scale of wall and monument should be carefully studied. Where a stone coping is used on a fairly level site it should be simple and structural. Meaningless curves and unnecessary ornament merely detract from the dignity of the place.

Stone balustrades may be divided into three classes: those of a more or less "classic" design—blocks of stone pierced with eight closely-grouped triangular openings, which give the effect of a square partly filled by a vertical, a horizontal and two diagonal bars—three or five of these forms being placed in sequence; those which make use of the Renaissance baluster; and the Gothic type which at times shows little colonnettes supporting tiny arches upon which rests the rail and for richer effects fills the space below with tracery (see Plate V). The form most commonly used is the Renaissance baluster. This is like a short column, with simple base and capital of the Doric type, but having a vase-shaped shaft instead of a

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## ARCHITECTURAL FORMS

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straight one. The forms should be carefully studied and the baluster made massive or delicate to conform with the style of the monument. The space between balusters should be less than the diameter of the baluster, and it is not advisable to have more than nine balusters in a panel. It is well to place half or three-quarter balusters against the piers or pedestals at the ends of the groups of balusters; thus the voids, or spaces seen between the supports, are all alike; also, though this is of minor importance, an odd number of balusters in a panel gives a more pleasing effect than an even number.

Finally—the question of steps. It is, of course, a well-known rule that the height of the rise plus the width of the tread, in inches, should equal eighteen. This is based on a simple question of convenience. If the foot must be raised high (as in climbing a step-ladder) only a narrow bearing surface is needed for the toe; in a flight of steps with a three-inch rise the leg can swing forward easily and resting space for the whole foot is needed. In all exterior work easy grades should be the rule; a rise of more than six inches is inadvisable; five is better and every four-inch rises will not be found too low. In mounting a broad and shallow flight the lack of effort gives one a sense of spaciousness and dignity very different from the effect produced upon one when climbing the attic stairs. Not only should exterior steps be low, but they should be broad and, it might also be said, the more the better. The individual steps should rarely, if ever, be ornamented; never should a name be carved upon them—for this is not only bad from the point of view of design but undignified in placing the name of the dead where it will be scarred by passing feet. The most that should be allowed is a simple moulding or nosing at the top of the riser and this only when the monument is elaborate.

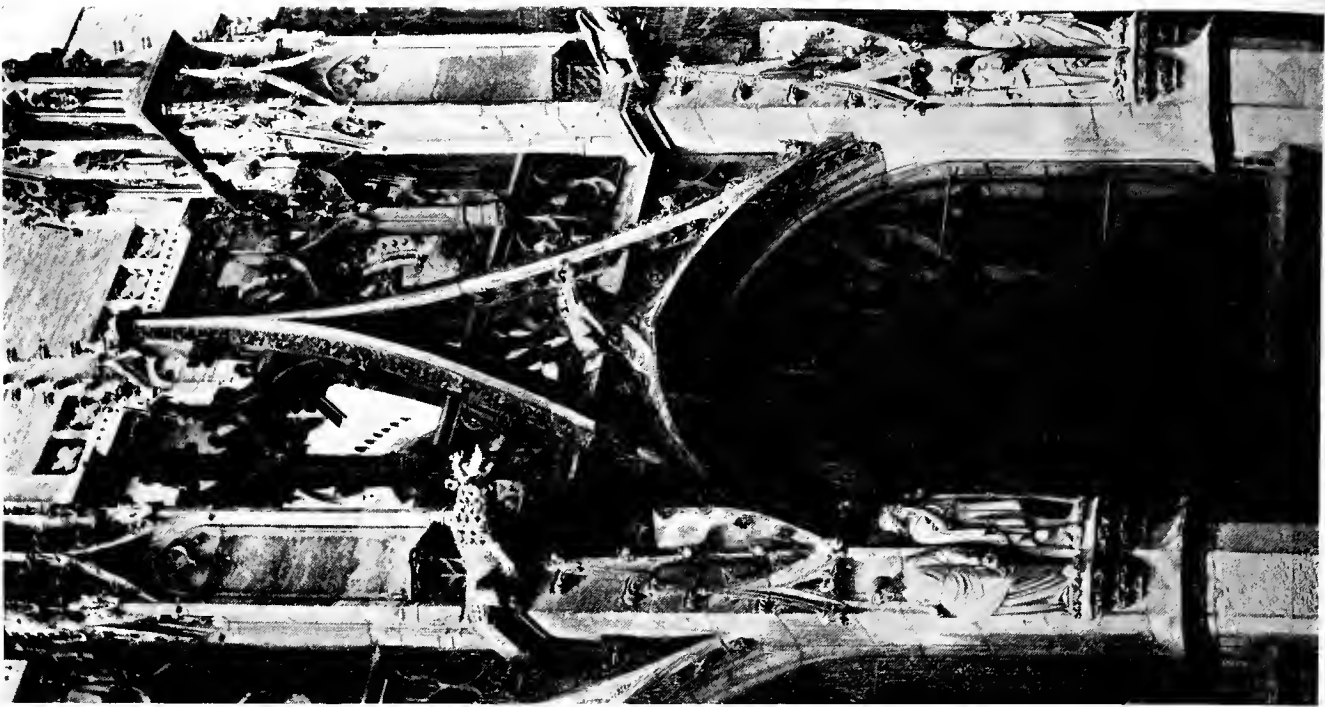
## MEMORIAL ART

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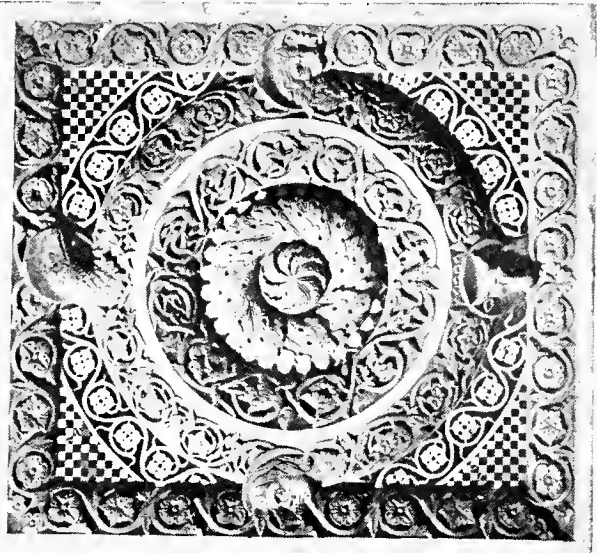
When steps are curved in plan, the coping or balustrade should also be curved in plan; a straight flight calls for straight copings at the sides. Stated in another way one might say that, in plan, the step should meet the coping or balustrade in approximately a right angle. In elevation the protecting parapet or coping should either be rectangular or follow the slope of the steps; there is a lack of a proper harmonious relation between a flight of steps and a coping with a wavy profile; an awkward form often seen.







*Photograph by Giraudon, Paris*



ROMANESQUE ORNAMENT  
FROM THE FONT IN THE BAPTISTRY,  
PISA, ITALY  
*Photograph by Fratelli Alinari*

ROMAN ORNAMENT  
FROM THE  
BASILICA ULPIA,  
ROME  
GOthic ORNAMENT  
FROM THE  
CATHEDRAL; LOUVIERS,  
FRANCE



*Photograph by Fratelli Alinari*

## CHAPTER IV

### ORNAMENT



ANKIND, whether in the savage or the so-called civilized state, has always been fond of ornament. From the earliest times bright stones, glittering metals and complex forms have pleased him. It is a natural liking, but one that should be controlled; as in everything else the artist should be guided in his use of ornament by a sense of fitness, by reason. The clear thinking person feels that a woman should not wear a pearl necklace over a cotton shirt-waist since the rough cloth does not make a suitable background for the delicate shimmer of the pearls; the ornament would be misplaced. He would not place panels of carved marble on a wooden house; such a form of ornamentation would be illogical from the point of view of the proper use of materials; nor would he decorate a stone railroad bridge with bands of fine mosaic—for though this would be a correct use of material it would be a most unfitting form of ornamentation. A reasoned use of ornament is a sure indication of the taste of the user. The savage is extravagant in his use of ornament because he likes it—and there are many who wear the clothes of civilization who are, artistically, savages; the man with a real feeling for beauty is restrained in his use of ornament—not because he cares less for it than does the savage but because he cares more.

The liking for ornament leads the uncritical to admire richly decorated objects which are poor in form or faulty in structure. It

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would seem reasonable, therefore, to discuss form and structure first. But since it is difficult to discuss the form of a headstone and of a tomb at the same time and since the ornament used upon these can best be analyzed in its relation to the particular form, theories concerning ornament in general will first be considered and special application later when the various types of memorials are discussed.

The first law is: *Ornament should be subservient to form.* That is, the decoration on an object should not be so important that it catches the eye before the spectator has had time to look at the object as a whole. This would seem to be such an obvious truth that mention of it is unnecessary; yet such violations of common sense are found. Vases are seen where the form is lost under brilliantly colored roses in relief; buildings so lavishly decorated that the structural lines are obliterated, and in our cemeteries one finds headstones where the profusion of ornament quite hides the underlying form. Since ornament is secondary it should be kept so and not given first place.

Next comes the law: *Ornament should be used to emphasize structure.* Form and structure being of greatest importance any decorative details which are used should be so placed that they will assist the eye in grasping these essentials. Imagine a row of columns with no bases and no capitals, but with elaborate enrichments placed half way up the shafts. One has only to picture such an arrangement to realize that the placing of ornament at top and bottom of the column is not done by chance but is a logical use of ornament to emphasize structure. If in his endeavor to devise something new a designer should place upon an otherwise undecorated tomb bands of rich carving running diagonally across the sides he would only make of himself a laughing-stock; and this because we feel, whether we

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have reasoned the matter out or not, that ornament should emphasize the structural lines and that these decorative bands should follow the horizontal line of the top of the tomb. Another way of proving how structure controls the placing of ornament is to imagine a chair with one front leg elaborately decorated and the other plain. Such an object would excite our ridicule; not because we have been taught that such an arrangement is incorrect but because our common sense would tell us that since the structural use of the two legs is the same they must be ornamented in the same way. This is the reason why we find on tombs or headstones so little unsymmetrical ornament and why, when it is found, it is so rarely pleasing. The form and structure of the two sides of the headstone being the same our sense of fitness demands that the ornament used on one side be similar to that placed on the other.

The difference between more or less free-standing sculpture and applied decoration must, of course, be kept in mind. A figure in the round placed at one side of a sarcophagus might—if both were well designed and the composition properly studied—be a thing of beauty, but no one would choose to place on the face of a sarcophagus a decorative panel at the left unbalanced by a similar panel on the right. Ornament can properly be used only to emphasize structure.

The choice of ornament must next be considered. Here the problem which confronts the designer is far more complicated than it has been at any previous time. We have no traditional ornament; we pick and choose from the entire range of historic ornament. The Greek, the Roman, the craftsman of the Middle Ages—even the decorator of the Renaissance period—followed a slowly changing, well-established fashion; each man doing, with only slight varia-

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tions, what his master had done before him. The differences in style so apparent to us developed so gradually that there was little or no conscious choice. But nowadays, thanks to photography, we may, with exactness, copy a Greek stela, a Celtic cross, a Gothic canopy or a Renaissance panel according to our own or our client's whim. And the greater the range of choice the greater the need of careful selection, of clearly reasoned procedure. For the camera is not discriminating; we can buy a photograph of a modern caricature of ornament as easily as we can one of an exquisite classic fragment. This ease of multiplication and distribution of photographs of ugly things has lowered the standard of taste and will continue to do so unless all who have the interest of artistic production at heart join in an effort to uphold that ideal of beauty which is founded on clear thinking.

This does not mean that we should become the slaves of "Historic Ornament". Far from it. But it does mean that whatever decorative features we use must be designed according to the fundamental laws which made the ornament of the great periods works of art. These we must learn and apply in our own work. And in the use of the decorative detail of one or another period we must be consistent. Imagine in a façade an alternation of Greek columns and Gothic piers. It is impossible to picture such a combination. Yet in one of our cemeteries there is a Celtic cross with a large Roman torch carved on the shaft. Ornament is a language and must be used with the same consistency with which we use language. Suppose in this article two or three sentences should be written in French. Such a procedure would strike us as odd—in fact, quite indefensible; yet it would be less incorrect than the perverse use of ornament noted above. When we use ornament of an historic period

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let us reshape it with all the skill at our command that it may conform to our present-day needs, but do not let us mingle the various periods in unreasoned and unbeautiful ways.

The complaint is sometimes made that we moderns have no distinctive type of ornament, unless we consider the often strange forms that are classed under the head of "Art Nouveau" as a style. A distinctive style is probably being developed by us, quite unconsciously; future generations will classify it and give it a name. If we wish to develop a style of ornament which will be praised by those future critics we must not blindly throw over all that can be learnt from the past, devising strange and novel forms for ourselves but must use the best of the old forms, adapting them with clear reasoning; only in this way will a distinctive and beautiful type develop.

The fundamental laws governing the use of ornament have been stated.

We should next consider the ornament itself. First, let us determine that there shall be no more mistakes made in the proper use of material. Realistic books, scrolls of paper, ribbons, anchors and so on, cut in stone are abominations of which we should rid ourselves. Note that the word "realistic" is used. It is *imitation* which must be suppressed. It is entirely proper to carve ribbons binding a garland; but they must not be so designed and cut that they appear to be real ribbons—the object must only be suggested; we should be given an artist's interpretation of the form. This applies to all ornament derived from natural or manufactured objects (see Plate XIX). Floral forms have from the earliest times been used in the development of ornament; in the best periods, however, they were used as suggestions, never imitated. Glance at the Roman panel in Plate V; there the leaf of the acanthus is used—but in no sense is it

## MEMORIAL ART

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copied from nature. The real leaf has given the suggestion: the artist has conventionalized it to bring it into harmony with its surroundings. Since a building, a tomb, a headstone is in no way copied from a natural form, but is an abstract, a formal, geometrical object devised by man, so must floral decoration placed on such an object be formal, conventional, non-natural. If from our future designs we could eliminate all the naturalistic roses, lilies, ferns and other vulgar imitations of plant-life (with the greatest technical skill in the world, man can never successfully *copy* nature) and should substitute conventional representations of these, what a tremendous forward stride it would be! A stride difficult to take—since the average man, knowing what a rose looks like, recognizes it when imitated in stone and feels pleased with himself; when the rose is formalized, made purely decorative, he does not recognize it and, unwilling to believe himself dull-witted, finds the decoration uninteresting. It is not an easy task to make all of our people clear thinkers, to bring them to the point where they will reason that since an object like a headstone has nothing to do with any natural form its decoration, to be harmonious, must be made formal and non-natural.

Mistakes in the use of abstract, geometrical ornament—circles, squares, interwoven bands, etc.—are not so often made, but even here great care is necessary. Such forms can so easily be made to suggest patterns made by kindergarten children (see Fig. 12), jigsaw decoration or the strange eccentric ornament found on the furniture of the Victorian era.

A few general considerations concerning ornament and its use having been given, a brief survey of the characteristics of the ornament of the various historic periods will be of value to the beginner.

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## O R N A M E N T

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The ornament evolved in the different periods has been classified and named and these distinctive names are continually used in discussions of design. It is, therefore, not only desirable but necessary that the designer have a knowledge of the characteristics of the different "styles" and, if possible, be familiar with their historic development.

We should not, of course, be slaves of the "Historic Styles". But if we are to use any of them our knowledge should be so thorough that we can adapt the ornament to modern uses while preserving its essential characteristics. If we are devising forms which cannot be classified historically still more do we need a thorough knowledge of the underlying principles which have made the ornament of the great periods works of art. A new style—the "American Style" of ornament, let us say—cannot be produced to order. It will come, some day, but the development cannot be forced. An individual may invent a recognizable type, but it will do little in establishing a distinctive national, or even local, style. Mr. Louis H. Sullivan of Chicago devised a peculiar form of ornament, quite effective in its way—but it had no influence on the great mass of ornament produced. Not only is it very difficult to free ourselves entirely from the ornament used in the past but it is next to impossible to produce forms which will be new and at the same time beautiful. We must first be clear thinkers; we must be familiar with the beautiful ornament used in the past and know why it is beautiful; we must adapt and combine the old forms with taste—and let our distinctive modern style come when and in what shape it will.

The following brief outline of the sequence of the historic styles of ornament is merely a chronological table where, at a glance, the designer may see the relative positions of the periods. The dates

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## M E M O R I A L A R T

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given are, of course, only approximate. One distinctive form of ornament merged gradually into another; no clear line of demarcation exists. Being prepared for those interested in memorials the development of ornament in textiles, in ceramics, etc., is omitted and, since memorials have always been closely associated with architecture, the table follows the history of architectural styles.

### *Egyptian Ornament: 4500—324 B. C.*

Two plants furnished the distinctive forms: the lotus and the papyrus. The bud and blossom of the lotus, highly conventionalized, were combined in many ways to decorate bands and, with connecting double spirals, to form all-over patterns. Color played a larger part than form.

The sun disk with the conventionalized wings of the vulture was extensively used and the uraeus or cobra, the symbol of royalty, is frequently found.

Chaldea and Assyria furnish us with a connecting link between Egyptian and Greek ornament, the Assyrians using a band decorated with lotus flowers alternating with pine cones which, after centuries of development, appeared in Greek work as the "egg-and-dart" ornament. Through the same channel a modification of the spiral became, in the course of time, the volute of the Ionic capital.

### *Greek Ornament: 776—100 B. C.*

The forms developed by the people of Greece are the purest and most beautiful known to us (see Plate XIII). The Greeks had a sense of fitness, a feeling for beauty in line and form never equalled. A thorough knowledge of Greek ornament is essential to every designer since it is the foundation upon which rests all subsequent European developments.

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## O R N A M E N T

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The anthemion is, perhaps, the most important of the Greek motives. The innumerable variations of this motive should be studied and the beauty of its form as well as the perfection of its placing carefully noted. (See Plates I, IV, X and XVIII). The acanthus, a highly conventionalized rendering of the leaf of the acanthus plant, is next in importance. The truly wonderful variety of ornament achieved by the Greeks, using these two forms, the double spiral and the volute, proves that what the designer needs is not new elements with which to work, but imagination, taste and skill in the use of simple, well-known forms.

The rosette (see the reproduction of the doorway of the Erechthion, Plate IV), derived from Egypt by way of Assyria, and simple forms suggested by the ivy and the grapevine are other decorative motives. (See Plate XIII).

### *Roman Ornament: 735 B. C.—328 A. D.*

The ornament used by the Romans, based upon Greek forms, makes up by great richness for its lack of refinement, though this lack is felt only when it is compared with the best Greek work. The *rinceau*, a running ornament with scroll branching from scroll in endless succession and clothed with acanthus leaves (see Plate V), is the most characteristic Roman development. This form was often doubled about a central axis when used on vertical panels. The Romans made use of a greater number of motives derived from animal forms or manufactured objects than did the Greeks: lions, griffins, ox-skulls (these last recalling the sacrifice of animals upon their altars), vases and shields. They used floral forms in garlands in a somewhat naturalistic manner.

## MEMORIAL ART

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### *Early Christian Ornament: 328—1000 A. D.*

This is a coarser, less formal, rendering of the familiar Roman forms with frequent use of Christian symbols and quaint bird and animal motives (see Plate XIV). It merges with the Byzantine and into the Italian Romanesque styles by almost imperceptible degrees. The most characteristic feature is the use of glass mosaic sunk into marble. This is now generally called Cosmati work from a noted family of workers in this manner.

### *Byzantine Ornament: 328—1453 A. D.*

When Constantine moved the seat of government from Rome to Constantinople (Byzantium) the ornament of the Romans was coarsened and flattened; surface decoration took the place of carving in high relief (see Plate XIV); the guilloche was developed into the interlace and Christian symbols and animal forms became common.

Moslem architecture and ornament, which is omitted in this survey, springs more or less directly from this source.

### *Romanesque Ornament: 476—1150 A. D.*

This name covers a wide field; any form of ornament based on Roman motives can be so called. In Italy it is but a further development of Early Christian work. In England Saxon ornament was founded on Roman work; Celtic motives owe as much to Byzantine interlaces as to the primitive ornament developed in Scandinavia. Norman is merely a local name for Romanesque. In this brief table these various forms can most conveniently be grouped under the one name.

Coarse renderings of Roman forms is the most notable characteristic, with a tendency to modify the anthemion and acanthus until these begin to resemble plant-forms familiar to the designers (see

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## O R N A M E N T

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Plate V). Grotesque heads, fabulous beasts, rich interlacings of plant and animal forms play a large part in the scheme of decoration, and deep, vigorous carving was employed (see Plate IV).

*Gothic Ornament: Italy, 1150—1420; France, 1150—1483  
England, 1150—1558*

Early Gothic and late Romanesque ornament are, of course, one and the same. As the stone carvers became more skilled the undercutting of the floral forms was more and more accented, ornament became lighter and more delicate; the acanthus disappeared and suggestions of local leaf and flower crept in—always highly conventionalized, but with an irregularity of flowing line very different in effect from the severe, orderly arrangement of Roman ornament. Free-standing floral details for the enrichment of architectural forms were developed—croquets, finials, and so forth—and animal motives were much used (see Plates V, XVI and XVII). As in the best Greek work, structure controlled ornament. One of the most characteristic developments was the extensive use of *tracery*—geometrical forms devised for window-openings—which covered panels and blank wall-spaces, forming, with the floral ornament, structural decoration of wonderful richness. Mention has been made of the difficulty of reproducing the subtle beauty of Gothic ornament, but the designer will find no problem more fascinating.

*Renaissance Ornament: Italy, 1420; France, 1483; England, 1558*

The Gothic style did not take firm root in Italy. Of the innumerable churches in Rome, for instance, but one was built in the Gothic manner. Italian Gothic ornament remained Romanesque in

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## MEMORIAL ART

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feeling, although the pointed arch was used. The ruins of Roman structures were before the eyes of the builders and it is not surprising that when the scholars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries revived classic literature the architects and designers should turn to these ruins for inspiration. The Renaissance—the “new birth”—began in Italy and from that country spread slowly through the rest of Europe, with many interesting local modifications.

Italian Renaissance ornament was in the beginning refined and delicate, the characteristic Roman forms being revived and given rare charm and grace. The beautiful Marsuppini tomb, reproduced in Plate XVIII, is an excellent example of the way in which designers of this period used the old elements. Not only did they give delicacy—they gave a free, imaginative touch to the Roman motives and added a wealth of human, animal and bird elements and semi-naturalistic flower-forms, combined and executed with skill and taste. Because of this the ornament of this period is a continual delight and inspiration (see Plates VII, XIX, XXI, XXII).

Beginning with the sixteenth century the Roman forms were copied with greater exactness and the ornament became uninteresting; soon it degenerated into the extravagant and eccentric style which has been given the name Baroque or Rococo.

In France the mingling of Gothic and classic motives in the early work (“Style of Francis I”) produced interesting results. This was followed by a period of formal copying of Roman ornament—then, as in Italy, came a reaction. The acanthus was given long, flowing lines somewhat suggestive of the leaf of the palm; the cartouche, or shield, was developed into an ornamental feature and swags or garlands of leaves and flowers were extensively used.

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## ORNAMENT

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In England the style developed slowly and the ornament of the Elizabethan and the Jacobean periods, though interesting, lacked the beauty of the corresponding period in France.

In the other countries of Europe the story was the same; a certain charm and vigor at the start—a formal period—followed by a decline into Rococo lack of restraint.

The ornament used in the colonies in the New World was, in all essentials, that to which the settlers were accustomed in the mother country. Our colonial art closely followed the Renaissance forms developed in England under Anne and the Georges (see Plates XI and XII).

### *Classic Revival: 1775—1850*

The rediscovery of the beauties of Greek architecture and ornament caused a reaction from the extravagances of the Rococo period and cold, formal imitations of Greek ornament became the fashion.

### *Gothic Revival: 1830—1890*

Close upon the heels of one revival came another, but the mechanical copying of Gothic work was even less successful than the supposed reproduction of Greek beauty had been.

“*L’Art Nouveau*”—the new art—with its spineless, undulating lines and meaningless forms is merely a modern development of the worst of the Baroque ornament and is a clear indication of the depth to which we have sunk in the decorative arts.







A B C D E  
F G H I K  
L M N O P  
Q R S T V  
X Y Z

ALPHABET DESIGNED BY MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE FOR USE ON THE PUBLIC  
LIBRARY OF BOSTON

## CHAPTER V

### LETTERS AND LETTERING



WHEN a man feels a thing deeply he is likely to express his opinions with emphasis. And the more emphatic he becomes the less disposed are his hearers to accept his opinions. No one enjoys being lectured—being told that he knows nothing and that the speaker knows everything. Usually the well-meaning enthusiast is irritating rather than convincing.

This is particularly true when matters of taste are being discussed. After long study—after much comparison of what seems beautiful with what seems more beautiful—a man may decide that this type is good and the other bad; he then begins to write down his opinions as laws to guide his fellow-men. And, naturally, his fellow-men ask by what right he sets himself up as a dictator concerning the beautiful. An engineer can say without fear of contradiction that a certain stone will be strong enough to span an opening in a tomb; when the artist says that the effect of the stone will be bad, how is he to prove it? Feeling very sure that the effect will be bad he becomes excited in trying to make others see as he sees; makes sweeping statements and often leaves his case worse than he found it. The path of the enthusiast in matters of taste is not, as a rule, one strewn with roses.

When the question of lettering arises the writer usually becomes somewhat emphatic; he is confronted at every turn with so much

## MEMORIAL ART

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bad lettering. "Bad lettering?" asks the reader, "who says that it is bad?" And there we go; an endless discussion—unless there be some reason on one side and a good deal of patience on the other.

A nameless grave is usually mentioned as one of the most pathetic of sights. Evidently, then, the name is the important part of a monument. By the same token, lettering is the art in which the designer of memorials should be most skilled. And yet, as one goes through our cemeteries one is soon convinced that lettering is the least understood part of the designing of memorial stones or tombs, so many are the violations of taste. Heavy, coarse letters standing up from the surface of the stone; letters highly polished showing against a dull ground; "ice-waggon" lettering with heavy cross bars and corners cut with forty-five-degree lines; strange Gothic characters—in fact, one finds in the inscriptions upon our memorials an appalling amount of labor and ingenuity equalled only by the tastelessness of the results.

"Ah," says the reader, "why do you say that these lack taste—they seem pretty good to me." And the enthusiast tries to calm down—to find reasons—to compare and contrast, that this all-important subject may receive the attention it deserves.

The first point mentioned concerns that type of letter which stands above the surface of the stone. Why is this condemned? In the first place, it does not give as pleasing an effect as the letter which is incised. Take ten photographs of good incised lettering from Roman or Italian Renaissance monuments or from tombs designed by such men as McKim, Mead and White, Carrere and Hastings or Henry Bacon and compare these with ten examples of raised letters—there can be little doubt as to which is the more beautiful. This, however, is mere feeling, not reasoning. From the

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DETAIL OF TOMB OF LEONARDO BRUNI, CHURCH OF SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE: BY ROSSELLINO

*Photograph by Fratelli Alinari*



## L E T T E R S   A N D   L E T T E R I N G

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point of view of reason can it be proved that one is better than the other? Readily. To leave letters standing above the surface of a stone it is necessary to cut away a large amount of stone—labor which is wasted, since an equally effective result can be obtained by incising the letters. And to realize that unnecessary labor has been expended upon an object is to feel that its artistic worth has been lessened. In the perfect work of art one does not think of how it has been made. That there has been labor is taken for granted; if one is conscious of the labor—if one is troubled in thinking of the amount of labor—the object is no longer a work of art; it is merely a piece of work. So the raised letter, clearly indicating unnecessary labor, should be avoided. Further, a raised letter, like a moulding, suggests a structural form; yet letters have nothing to do with structure. Again, from a technical standpoint it is far more difficult to cut raised letters which have refinement of proportion and beauty of form than to incise beautiful letters.

And the writer wonders how many years it will take to persuade others to think as he does; how many long years before the raised letter will have vanished from our monuments.

All rules (if the above be rules) have exceptions. Panels of raised letters appear on the back of the Shaw monument in Boston and the effect is pleasing; they would be just as effective, however, had the letters been incised. On Celtic crosses and especially when used in bands paralleled by bands of rich Gothic ornament raised letters are not only permissible but very effective.

Bronze letters may either be inlaid in stone, with flush surfaces, or (the more usual method) raised above the surrounding surface. Here the raised letter is, of course, reasonable.

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## M E M O R I A L A R T

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In the chapter on mouldings the general statement was made that the mingling of polished and unpolished surfaces requires the greatest care and restraint. But how often one sees on an unpolished stone raised letters, unrestrained as to shape and fairly blazing with polish, informing one with greater insistence even than an advertisement in a street-car that here lies So-and-So. Why should the name of the dead be thus emphasized? A memorial should convey information—not perpetuate self-glorification. From the artistic point of view the polished letter very rarely harmonizes with its surroundings. It is too emphatic; it first catches the eye, so that the part is noted before the whole is seen; unreasonable as well as tasteless.

Mention has been made of the “ice-waggon” form—the crude, blocky letters so often seen not only on these conveyances but also on bill-boards, store-fronts and even in the advertising pages of magazines. A stone superbly designed, cut with astonishing skill, would be rendered quite worthless were letters of this coarse type placed upon it; letters which seem to have been suggested by sections of lead pipe or formed from the building blocks of children. That every letter must have some portions wider than others; that serifs (the enlargements which are used to emphasize the free ends of letters) are necessary if the letter is to have any beauty of form—these and a dozen other considerations are so simple that one feels that the ugly letters we see must be so made by intention; it seems impossible that the makers of these strange forms should consider them beautiful.

In taking up the question of the shapes and proportions of the individual letters the Roman capital and the Italian Renaissance capital derived from it will be the type discussed; all other forms

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# L E T T E R S   A N D   L E T T E R I N G

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are variations or distortions of that type. The accompanying sheet of letters (Fig. 2) will serve to make clear some of the points. The writer does not pretend to be an expert in the designing of letters;

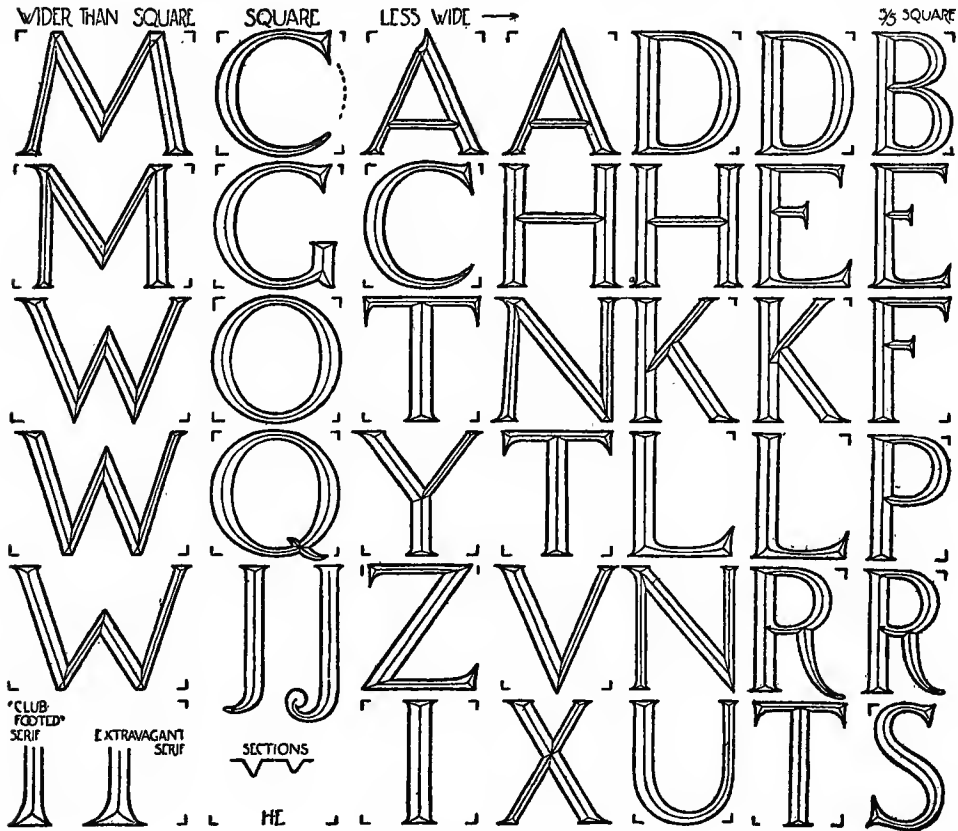


FIG. 2  
Study-sheet of the classic alphabet

certain faults may be seen at a glance. The top of the "M" in the first line is ugly; the vertical of the first "T" is too wide; the right-hand member of the "W" in the fourth line should be wider, and so on. For letters designed by masters the reader is referred to John-

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## MEMORIAL ART

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son's "Writing, Illuminating and Lettering," and to the books on lettering by Lewis F. Day and Frank Chouteau Brown. This sheet is merely an aid to the text.

The first matter to be taken up is the question of the relative widths of the various letters. The letter "O" is the standard; it should be as wide as it is high. It must never be wider than its height; where space is limited it is sometimes made narrower. If in this latter case an upright ellipse is used instead of a circle the relative widths of all the other letters should be reduced. "Q", of course, is like the "O"; "C" and "G" should be formed on the circle (note dotted line near the first "C"). These four letters are placed in the squares. Only two letters, "M" and "W", are wider. All save these six should be less wide than high. It will be noted, in Plate VI, that the "M" is rather narrow; the letter appears to be heavier than the rest.

Immediate exception may be taken to so sweeping a statement. "T", "N" and "Z" are often made to fill a square; even, at times, "Y" and "H". It is a good deal a matter of the relative sizes of surrounding letters and, more than all, a matter of taste.

The fifth row beyond the square shows letters ("I" and "J" omitted) which may occupy but three-fifths of the square and yet not seem too narrow. The "F" and possibly the "P" could be still narrower. In the intervening rows it will be noticed that the same letter is given different widths; this is done to assist the reader to form his own opinions and to make more emphatic the oft-repeated statement that in matters of taste there can be no rules. The writer prefers the second "A" to the first, the second "E", the second "L", the second "M"—and so on. Laws cannot be formulated; the designer must learn the possibilities, the limitations of each letter and

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then treat each letter as a separate problem in relation to the letters about it and to the proportions of the inscription of which it forms a part.

Next come the general "rules" concerning the forms of letters. All verticals are wide (save in "M", "N" and "U"); all horizontals are narrow—no exceptions here.

In those letters which are formed with slanting lines, the lines which slant down to the right are always wide, without exception; all the lines slanting down to the left are narrow, save in the case of the "Z", where the left-hand sloping stroke is wide. It is easy to see why this exception is made; were this not done we should have a letter formed of three narrow lines and such a letter would not harmonize with the other forms. The letter "N" is a good example of how one rule is broken in favor of another. In "M" and "U" one vertical is thin and the other thick; in "N" both verticals are thin. But the "N" has a line slanting to the right, which is thick; and two thick lines should never be allowed to meet. (In the "Y" it is more of a bending of the thick line than a meeting.)

Those letters which are curved at top and bottom—"C", "G", "O", "Q", "S", "U"—should be made to extend a trifle above and below the boundary lines; otherwise they will appear shorter. "O" between "F" and "E", for instance, will have but one point as high as the horizontal tops of the others; to appear to be as high, it must really be higher. The same reasoning applies to those letters ending, above or below, in points. The point of the "A", the "V", and of "M", "N" and "W", if these are given points, should extend beyond the lines which bound the other letters.

Finally, the general statement concerning the *serif*—the emphasis given the free ends of letters. It is possible to design a classic

## L E T T E R S   A N D   L E T T E R I N G

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alphabet without serifs, but it will be severe and almost ungraceful. An enlargement at the free ends of letters (and in certain cases at points where two parts of a letter join—left-hand top of the “N”, for instance) gives a certain touch of lightness and beauty. The serif varies in size and shape in different alphabets; as far as possible there should be no variation in a single set of letters. The serif should not be too large nor yet too small; one must remember the reply of the cook, who, when asked how much butter she put into a certain cake, said, “Oh—just enough”; so with the serif. The shape must be beautiful; the awkward, “club-footed” serif being almost as bad as the heavy, square, cross-bar serif common to the “ice-waggon” type of letter.

The serif of the curved letter may be given more variations than that of the straight. The serif and the point are sometimes interchangeable; the “A” may have a point or a serif, so may the upper left-hand junction of “N”. It should be noted, however, that the lower right-hand junction of the “N” must in no case be given a serif and the same is true of the bottom of “W” and “V”. Should the center of the “M” be brought to the lower line it should end in a point and not be loaded with a serif. In two-part letters the serif should be smaller on the inside than on the outside. The four outer serifs of the “H”, for instance, should be larger than those which face inwards; the same thing holds good for letters like “M” and “V”. At the lower ends of the verticals of “K” and “R” the serifs should be smaller on the “inside”—the right-hand side. At the upper and lower ends of slanting lines the serif is made longer in the direction of the slope; that is, the inner serifs of “A” and “X” are much shorter than those facing outward. It is, in fact, quite per-

## L E T T E R S   A N D   L E T T E R I N G

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missible to omit the inside serif of slanting lines; note the form given the second "M".

The general considerations having now been disposed of the individual letters may be studied.

"A"—Better too narrow than too wide. Bar should never be above center of inner space. If serif is used at top it should swing only to left. Note in first "A" that curve at top begins where inner line of right leg meets outer line of left leg. Care should be taken that the angles of the two legs are equal; the letter must not tilt to one side or the other.

"B"—Upper loop always smaller than lower, both in height and width. Vertical may curve into bottom of lower loop (see also lower parts of "D", "E" and "L"); better a right angle at the top. "B", "E" and "R" have least wide verticals.

"C"—Lower point should be brought far enough to balance serif of top; it is very easy to tilt the letter one way or the other. The relation between the widest and the narrowest part must be carefully considered; also the relation in a set of letters between the widest parts of "C", "G" and "O" and the widths of the slanting lines of "A", "M" and "W" and the verticals of the simple letters. The "C" in the second line is drawn on the ellipse—the effect is not as pleasing as the first. It will be noticed in Plate VI that the "C" lacks serifs.

"D"—The curve should be practically the same above as below.

"E"—The upper horizontal should be shorter than the lower. To relieve the letter of too great mechanical quality, the serif of the center bar may be cut slightly off the perpendicular; this center bar should be somewhat above the actual center. Curved top line of lower horizontal adds to grace of letter.

## M E M O R I A L A R T

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“G”—The form of the stem varies greatly.

“H”—In some examples the cross-bar is placed in the exact center; placing it slightly above the center helps to give a suggestion of stability. As there are two verticals in this letter it is wise to make them each narrower than the vertical of “L”, “T” or even of “E”.

“I”—Widest vertical.

“J”—As we have no classic example the first form given, approximating the “I”, is preferable.

“K”—In some alphabets the two slanting lines meet the vertical in a point. (Note the “K” in Plate VI.) This gives an appearance of weakness, yet is, perhaps, better than the second “K” in the drawing.

“L”—Length of horizontal very variable; long when followed by “T”, shortest when followed by “A”. Vertical next in width to “I”.

“M”—A difficult letter. “Verticals” often vertical, more often slightly inclined as in second “M”. Note that serif of left-hand vertical curves in such a manner that the sloping line is not cut into.

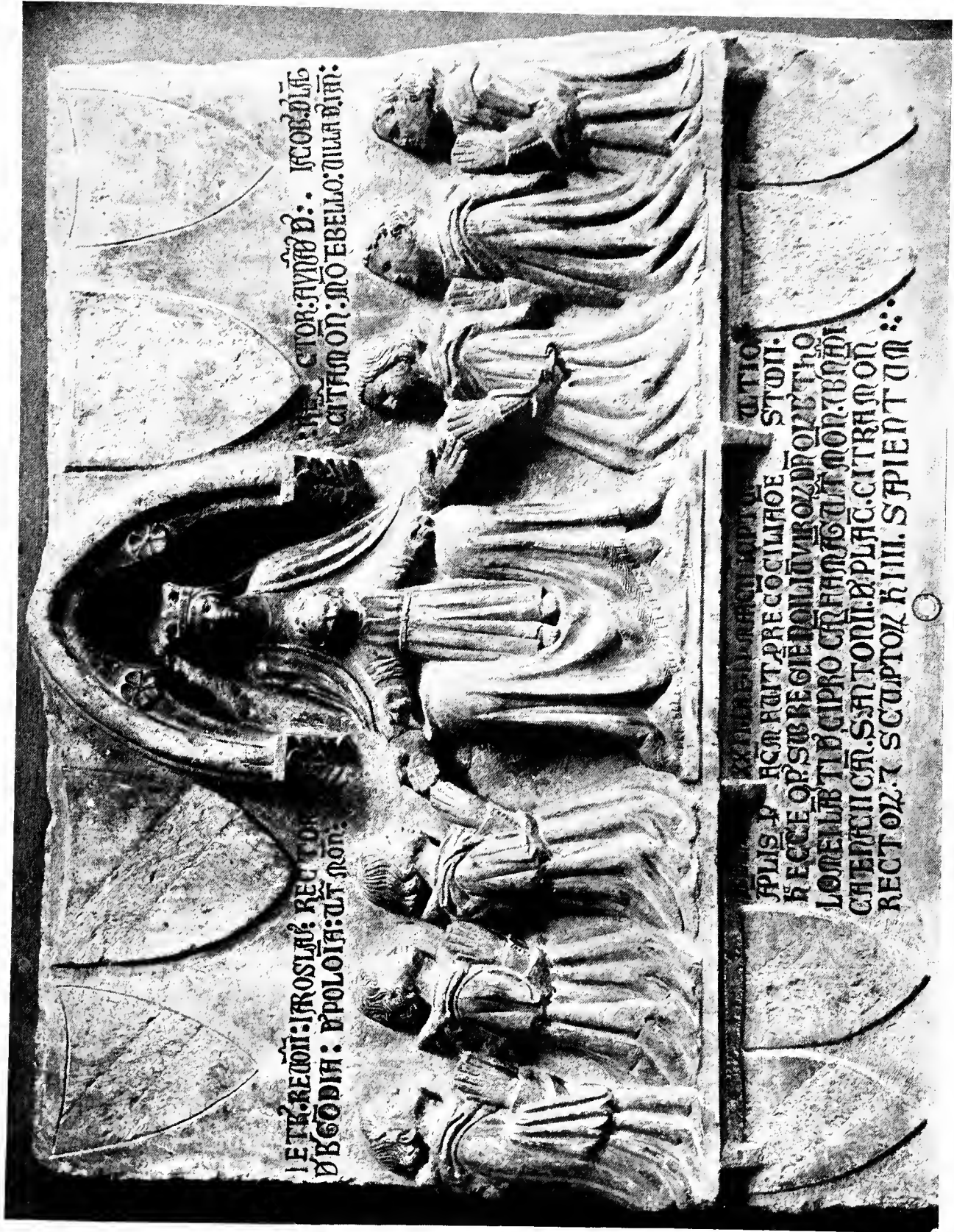
“N”—Right-hand vertical always perpendicular; left-hand sometimes given slight inclination. Note particularly absence of serif at lower right.

“O”—Narrowest part often put at upper left and lower right-hand points, suggesting a diagonal axis, as in Plate VI. If this is done, “C”, “G” and “Q” should be similarly treated.

“P”—Loop should occupy a trifle more than half the upright. In Plate VI the lower part of the loop does not touch the stem.

“R”—(Second “R” gives the appearance of tilting slightly to right; tail not long enough).

*Sixty-four*



І ЕТ К Р Е Ч І И : І Р О С Л А В : Р Е Ч І  
 В С Ъ О Д І Н : В Р О Л О І А : Д Т М О Н :

С Т О Р : А Н Т І С Т В : І С О В : Д І А  
 С І Т Т М О Н : М О Е В Е Л Л О : Д І Л Л А Д І Т М :

Р П І С П А С М Е К И Т П Р Е С О С І А Ш А О Е С Т О П И  
 К Е С Т Е О Р С У В Р Е Г І Е Р О Д І И В І Р О З Д Р О З Е Т О  
 Л О М Е Л Ъ Т І О С І П Р О С Т Р А М С О Д А Т М О Р : В Р А Д І  
 С Ч Е Н О И С Я . С А Н Т О Н І Е П Л А С . С І Т Т Р А М О Н  
 Р Е С Т О З 7 С С А П Т О З К И И . С П І Е Н Т Д А :

TOMB OF COSTANZA ZAGNANI, BOLOGNA





## L E T T E R S   A N D   L E T T E R I N G

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“S”—Perhaps the most difficult of all the letters. Very easy to tilt one way or the other. Upper section should be a little smaller than lower.

“T”—One of the most easily varied in regard to width. Horizontal may be a trifle wider than upper horizontals of “E” and “F”.

“U”—For very formal work the classic “V” is used.

“W”—Always composed of slanting lines; two inner having equal slope, two outer lines equal in slope—but the two slopes not necessarily the same. Occasionally the central slanting lines cross, as in the “W” in the word “wider” above the first “M”.

“X”—Upper part a trifle smaller than lower.

“Y”—Note that lower line of right arm meets vertical at point where it is cut by upper line of left arm.

“Z”—Slanting line should meet horizontals in points, not in blunted forms. (Note how awkward such a form is in first “M”.) The upper horizontal always shorter than the lower.

The cross section of such letters is usually a simple “V”; occasionally the bottom is slightly rounded and, to give a special touch of refinement, the channel given a broader face on the right than on the left.

It should be noted that the Romans did not use “J”, “U” or “W”. For modern work these are to be preferred—the word Julius written IVLIVS is not easily read.

The designer beginning the study of lettering should draw the simple classic alphabet; as he learns the possibilities of the letters he can introduce such variations as appeal to his sense of beauty. The experienced designer—the man of taste—will give his individual touch to the letters he designs, producing more varied and interesting forms. In Plate VII we have quite a “personal” use of the classic

## M E M O R I A L A R T

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letter; the difference between thick and thin strokes being slight and the spacing being unusually decorative.

The forms of the individual letters having been discussed the relation of letter to letter—that is, spacing—and the influence of its position upon a letter must next be considered. A hint of this was given in the detailed statement concerning the letter “L”. This letter, which leaves an unoccupied space above to the right, often makes a serious break in a line of letters. When followed by “A” this space is increased; here, therefore, the horizontal should be very short. When followed by “T”, “V” or “W” the horizontal of the “L” may be long and overhung by the projecting parts of these letters. In drawing or cutting a series of letters the designer, fortunately, has a simpler task than the typesetter, since the blocks which carry the type have fixed widths, making variations difficult. The designer is free to vary the interspaces and the forms themselves at will and much of the beauty of an inscription depends upon the skill with which this is done. A wide “N” will look better between “O” and “C” than between “H” and “L” and in the former position its verticals may be made a trifle wider than in the latter grouping. Letters with verticals—“H” followed by “E”, for instance—should be separated by a wider interval than that left between “O” and “G”; for almost every group of letters a suggestion might be offered concerning such variations in the letters and in the spacing, but the designer can easily discover these for himself.

The Roman capital is not the only form which may be used in an inscription. The memorial slabs of the eighteenth century abound in delightful examples of the combination of capitals, small Roman letters (the ordinary “lower-case” letters in which these words are printed) and italics (see Plates XI and XII and Fig. 3). These

*Sixty-six*

## LETTERS AND LETTERING

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forms should be introduced only after serious study of good examples; to obtain a proper relation between the capitals and the small letters is no easy matter. An analysis of the small Roman alphabet is somewhat difficult; a few hints may, however, be of use to the student. Here again "m" and "w" are the widest; the "o" should be circular and fixes the form of "b", "c", "d", "e", "g", "p" and "q". The rising lines of "b", "d" and "t" should not be as tall as those of "h", "k" and "l", and of this group "l" may well be the highest. The rules concerning thick and thin strokes given for the

Here lyeth the Body of  
William Jalloꝝ Esq<sup>r</sup>  
who died the 3<sup>d</sup> of May  
*Anno Domini 1763*

FIG. 3

Roman small letters, italics and numerals as used in eighteenth century inscriptions

capitals are, in a measure, followed in the Roman small letters; the form of the serif varies much more than is the case with the capitals.

Concerning the *italic*, whether capitals or small letters are used, the general considerations hold good. The slanting of the letters introduces, of course, certain easily seen variations, but the principles are the same.

The question of numerals next claims our attention. The Roman numerals are used for very formal work, but as these are

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## MEMORIAL ART

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not easily deciphered the Arabic numbers are given preference. It is a simple matter to make such a date as MDCCCXCIIII conform to the classic letters of an inscription since each symbol used is a letter of the alphabet; but it is far easier to read the date when given as 1894. To design these numerals in such a way as to harmonize with the classic alphabet is, however, a difficult matter, and suggestions as to the forms which may best be used are not easily given. Eccentric or odd forms should, of course, be avoided; as far as may be the straight line and the circle should be the foundations; "2", "3", "5", "6", "8" and "9" should approximate the circle in the curved lines employed; true circles should be used in "6", "9" and "8", and in the latter number the upper circle is made a trifle smaller than the lower. The upper lines of "3" and "7" should be true horizontals as should the lower stroke in the number "4"; in this latter the bar should be kept well down toward the bottom of the figure. The figure "3" made like a partial figure "8" does not conform to the classic letter as well as does that with a straight top—the upper part of the numeral being much like the upper part of the letter "Z".

Numerals may be made in the sloping or italic manner; such forms should be used only when there are italic letters in the inscription. A study of Colonial tombstones will be found most useful in developing a feeling for fine numerals.

The term "Gothic" was applied in Renaissance times to any form of European architecture or decoration which was not "classic"; and as the word then meant "barbarous" it was used, more or less, as a term of contempt. Modern criticism has given this style a place of honor; the name, though not the contempt, remains. In the matter of lettering the term can mean almost any letter which is not

*Sixty-eight*

## L E T T E R S   A N D   L E T T E R I N G

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strictly Roman. Mr. F. C. Brown in his book on lettering has grouped these non-classic forms under two heads—Round Gothic and Blackletter. While convenient for a discussion of printed matter the latter name cannot well be used for inscriptions cut in stone. Here the term Gothic will be kept for the angular letters, those with clean-cut verticals and sharp, forty-five-degree forms top and bottom, while “Round Gothic” will cover all the other mediaeval forms—capital letters which vary only slightly from the Roman—“Uncials”, another variant of the classic letter, “half-uncials”, and so on.

The Gothic letter demands a square, not a V-shaped, cross section; it is, therefore, more effective when raised. Furthermore, the letters should be closely spaced and as a Gothic inscription thus forms a surface of its own there is no reason why this compact mass should not stand up from the general surface of the stone. When a Gothic inscription can be used as a long decorative band—around the upper part of a sarcophagus, for instance—the ground about the letters can be sunk and the surface of the letters be on the plane of the enframing mouldings. The effect thus obtained is one of great richness; this procedure is not, however, suited to short inscriptions where several lines of letters are placed one above the other.

In the Round Gothic letter (the type shown in Plate VIII), closely akin to the formal Roman letter from which it was developed, the capital is almost always used; the incised form is, therefore, suitable. In the old tombs these letters were often filled in with a black paste and on funerary brass tablets this and the Gothic forms are found; in the latter case the letters are incised and filled with red or with black cement. Lettering thus used in decorative bands is most effective.

## MEMORIAL ART

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In studying the Gothic letter the chief emphasis must be laid on the forms of the small letters. The capitals vary to such a degree that it is hardly possible to devise any "rule" concerning their structure. Many examples can be found in the books on lettering; two points only should here be noted. The capitals used in an inscription should be all of the same type, and an entire word should never be written in Gothic capitals—the effect is exceedingly clumsy.

The simplest method of designing the small letters is given in the accompanying drawing (Fig. 4). That uniformity may be obtained the letter should be divided into three parts: a small, flaring mass at the top, a straight stem, as far as possible exactly alike in all the letters, and at the bottom another flaring mass. These flaring masses are joined by diagonal lines as demanded by the individual letter, and in these joinings the rule of heavy strokes down to the right and thin strokes to the left should be carefully observed.

In the word "forty-second" here shown the upper drawing gives only the vertical strokes of the letters to emphasize the fact that closely spaced vertical masses form the important element in Gothic characters. The flaring masses top and bottom are diamond shaped, placed to the left of the stem at the top (as in the letter "r") and to the right at the bottom, this giving the suggestion of a heavy stroke diagonally to the right. The stroke down toward the left is always thin; in printed forms this may be only a line; in the letter cut in stone it must have some width, but should be as thin as the skill of the stone-cutter will permit. It should never, however, lose its flat upper surface—be reduced, that is, to a mere ridge; a uniform level surface is one of the beauties of this type of letter.

Only a single, severe type is illustrated; this may be taken as the basic form. As the designer acquires skill and taste (based on care-

*Seventy*

## L E T T E R S   A N D   L E T T E R I N G

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ful study of the best fifteenth-century models) endless variations can be introduced. It is impossible in Gothic work of any sort to formulate "rules"; as has before been noted in these pages, the Gothic style is an unusually personal style and can be successfully revived only by the designer who has thoroughly mastered the spirit which pervades the work of the best period.

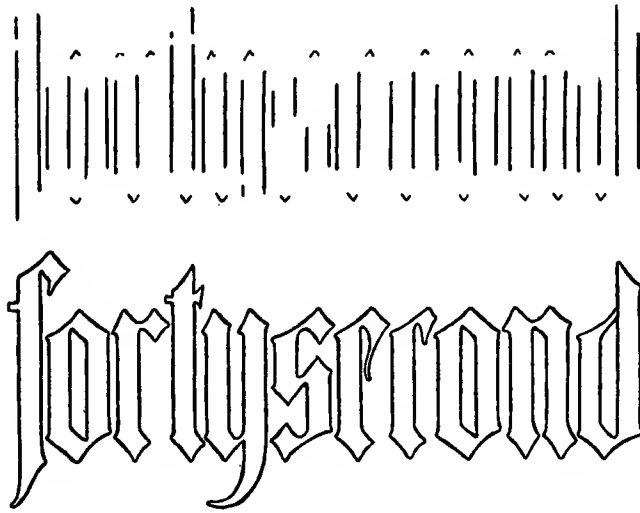


FIG. 4

Gothic small letters. The same word partly drawn and completely drawn, showing the importance of the vertical line

The many varieties of letters found on mediaeval monuments which are variants of classic forms or suggest rounded types of Gothic letters may in this brief survey be grouped under the head of Round Gothic. Such letters are peculiarly adapted to memorials which suggest Romanesque originals, since for this style the classic letter is too severe and the Gothic inappropriate. They should,

*Seventy-one*

## M E M O R I A L A R T

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therefore, be studied by the designer. For these letters it is even more difficult to suggest "rules" than for the Gothic letter. The forms vary greatly; yet there are a few general considerations which may help the student. The letters are usually much narrower than the Roman and a few differ greatly from the classic letters from which they were developed. Those most changed are "A", "C", "D", "E", "G", "H", "M", "N" and "Q". The accompanying drawing (Fig. 5) shows Round Gothic letters from a memorial stone in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The rich decorative quality of these letters will be felt at a glance; the effect is, of course, much better when the letters are grouped in words. Those forms which vary most from the classic type, particularly the letter "D", may be slightly changed that the inscription may be easily read; but the change should be made with great care since the beauty of these inscriptions lies in the harmonious relation of letter—not, as some suppose, in the fact that they are hard to read. In the photograph of the tomb from Bologna (Plate VIII) the inscription is not easily read since here, as in so many mediaeval monuments, the words are abbreviated. Short dashes will be noticed over some of the words; these bars represent letters which have been omitted. These shortened words were as easily read by the people of that time as are the abbreviations of the names of the months now in use read by us.

A just criticism has often been made of the Gothic letters—that they are not easily read. Yet if the memorial is to be Gothic in character the use of the corresponding lettering is imperative. Lack of taste is shown when Gothic characters are used on a monument which is classic in form; and Roman letters on a Gothic monument are equally out of place. There will always be need of the Gothic

*Seventy-two*



EARL  
NASH  
EARL  
NASH

Absolute alignment (above) seems to be unbalanced; apparent balance (below)

OLIVE  
HURST  
OLIVE  
HURST

Absolute alignment and apparent balance. Note how much the Lower "O" overhangs the lower "H"

JOHN  
LANE  
JOHN  
LANE

Diagram showing the superiority of apparent balance. Note: Rarely, if ever, is it permissible to place given name over surname, as is done in these diagrams. Such an arrangement is used merely for the sake of simplicity; the principles hold true for all inscriptions.

HELEN  
TYLER  
HELEN  
TYLER

The lower diagram seems balanced though the upper is absolutely aligned. The letter "T" at the end of a line must always project to gain apparent balance.



## L E T T E R S   A N D   L E T T E R I N G

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letter and if it is designed with care there is no reason why it should not be as easily read as any other form and have, besides, a beauty not surpassed by the most perfect specimen of classic lettering.

Having discussed the individual letter the inscription as a whole must next be studied—the relation of letters and of words one to another and the relation of the inscription to the monument.

First, the important “don’ts”. The name of the dead should never be placed upon step or plinth, it should not appear on the

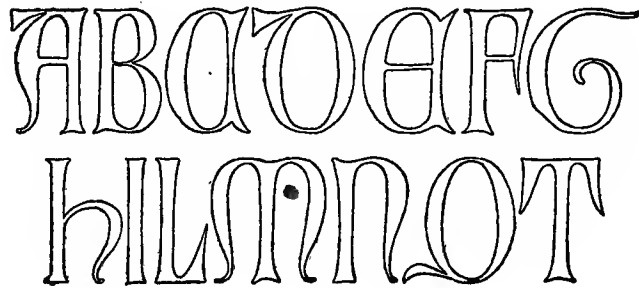


FIG. 5

Round Gothic letters, from the tomb of the Abbess of Santa Patricia, Naples, 1438; now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

architrave or frieze of a tomb and only rarely will the surname look well isolated on the face of a sarcophagus. In the case of a public monument it is another matter; on the die of a pedestal bearing a statue of our first President the one word “Washington” is appropriate and sufficient; in the private memorial the surname alone is insufficient.

The designer should do his best to discourage the use of such isolated words as “Father” or “Mother” and the use of terms of en-

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## M E M O R I A L A R T

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dearment, "To My Darling Son", "To Our Precious Baby", and so on. While sincere grief is a beautiful and sacred thing it loses much of its beauty and a great deal of its sacredness by being flaunted in the face of the public. One of the most impressive funerary monuments in the country—with a wonderful nameless figure by St. Gaudens—placed in a secluded spot in Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, bears no inscription of any kind, yet conveys a deeper sense of love and grief than could a stone covered with sentimental inscriptions. The sorrow and affection of those erecting the memorial should speak through the beauty of the monument; the inscription had best be confined to statements of names and dates. In such matters the designer cannot, of course, dictate; he should, however, do his best with tactful advice or suggestions.

The form of the memorial controls the size and placing of the inscription, therefore no general statement can be made which will cover all cases. That it should be neither so large as to suggest an advertisement nor so small as to be unreadable goes without saying; just how best to avoid either must be determined for each memorial.

When the lettering is placed in a panel the inscription may fill the space, the letters being placed close to the edge; where no panel is used—the letters being cut into the plain face of the memorial, as in the simple headstone—a liberal margin must be left between the edge of the stone and the ends of the inscription, otherwise an effect of weakness will be given.

In the headstone where the vertical element is predominant, the mass of letters will be more effective if placed on the upper part of the stone; on a side of a sarcophagus or on the die of a pedestal a more centralized position is appropriate—though even here it is well to lift the block of letters a trifle above the true center. And

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## LETTERS AND LETTERING

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inscriptions, if at all formal, should be carefully balanced about a central axis. In the Colonial headstones, where we have the informal inscription, "Here lies the body of Prudence Ashton, who departed this life on the tenth day of May", and so on—the character of the wording necessitates an all-over arrangement (see Plates

SACRED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
HEZEKIAH BORDEN  
✠ AND OF HIS WIFE ✠  
REBEKAH ERIDOWN  
1769-1853      1792-1861

FIG. 6

Sketch for an inscription showing the rectangular form proper to the Classic letter: the two small crosses introduced to preserve the straight line of the mass. Note the larger letters used for the proper names, giving prominence to these without disturbing the unity of the whole; lines 3 and 5 highest, then line 1, line 2 and finally line 4 lowest. The differences are very slight.

XI and XII). When this type of inscription is not used the axial treatment is imperative.

Concerning this placing of words about a central axis it must be borne in mind that what is desired is a seeming balance. In the words, "EARL NASH", shown in Plate IX in two arrangements, the upper shows *actual* balance, the end of the letter "L" being exactly

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## MEMORIAL ART

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above the outer vertical of the “N”—but the effect is poor, since the space to the right of the “L” gives the word the appearance of being off center. The second arrangement shows *seeming* balance, although the end of the “L” overhangs the lower word. Other contrasting arrangements are shown to emphasize the fact that the

Garred  
to the memory of  
Maria Barnwell Hale  
who departed this life  
July 1-1903  
aged 91

FIG. 7

Suggestion for effective composition of an inscription cut in Gothic letters

appearance of balance is the thing desired—not an absolute alignment. Curved letters at the ends of lines must also be carefully placed, the curved letter overhanging the straight to secure a balanced effect, as in the name “OLIVE HURST”. These few hints, with the accompanying drawings, will perhaps indicate the care with which the designer must study the placing of letters.

*Seventy-six*

## L E T T E R S   A N D   L E T T E R I N G

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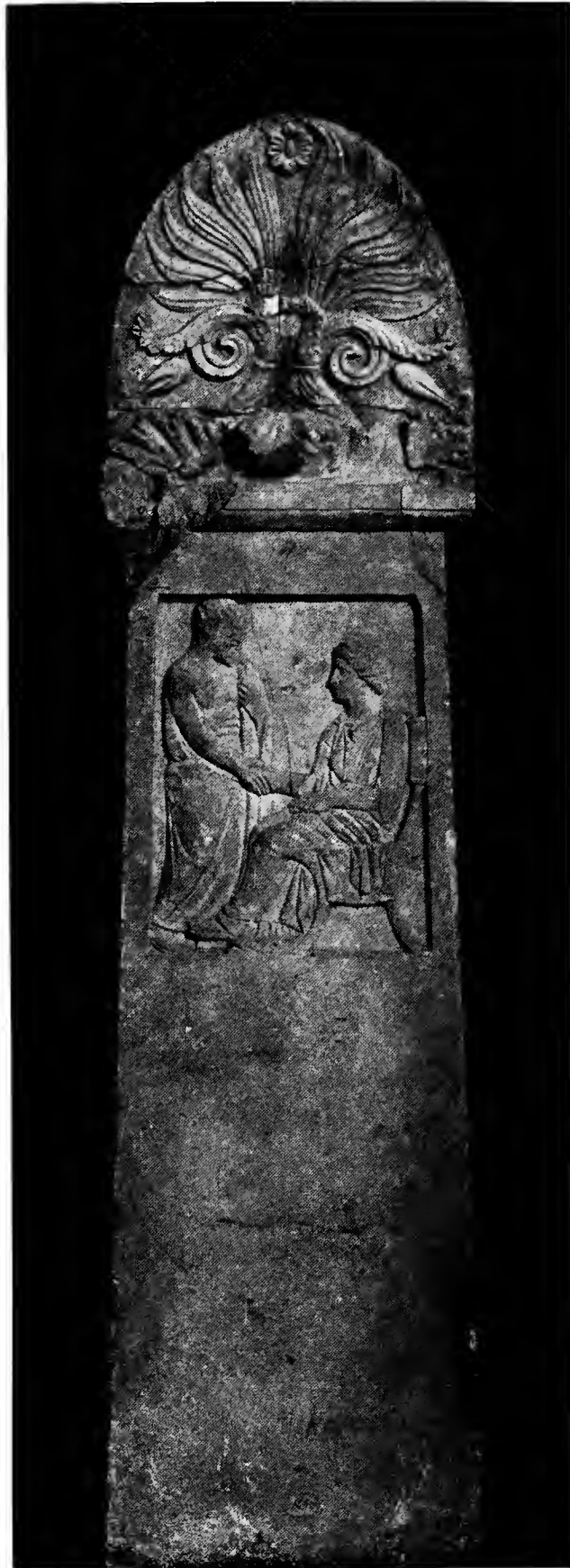
Another point which should be considered is the relative size of words in different lines. While it is permissible to use a somewhat larger letter for the name of the dead than for the rest of the inscription, it is unwise to indulge in too great a variety of sizes. The safe rule is to have as few variations as possible (see note under Fig. 6). It goes without saying that different types of letters should rarely, if ever, be used on the same monument. Gothic and classic forms should never be mingled. If the Colonial type of inscription is used capitals and small letters and even italics can be used together, as in Fig. 3.

In the arrangement of the inscription cut in classic letters a rectangular mass should be sought, while with Gothic letters a diamond-shaped mass may well be used, as in the inscription in Fig. 7. Curved lines of letters should never, under any circumstances, be permitted. Alternation of long and short lines should, wherever possible, be avoided; such an arrangement gives a restless effect, seriously interfering with the dignity which should be an essential part of every inscription.









GREEK HEADSTONE OR STELA, NATIONAL MUSEUM,  
ATHENS

## CHAPTER VI

### THE HEADSTONE



GENERAL considerations which more or less affect all memorials having been discussed we may now take up in detail the different types of funerary monuments. The simplest of these, the headstone, will first be considered. Since headstones outnumber all other forms combined it is greatly to be desired that they be beautiful. No one, it is to be supposed, makes what he considers an ugly headstone. Yet many of these memorials are, to the writer, distinctly unbeautiful. It is, of course, a question of taste, and, as was observed many centuries ago—there's no disputing about taste.

In considering the headstone the designer or the critic must first ask himself—for what purpose is this thing made? Next—how can the desired result best be obtained?

A headstone is a (more or less) permanent slab erected to mark a grave and to bear information concerning the dead. It should, therefore, be of materials which will best resist the action of the elements and should have name, dates and other matters so cut as to be easily read. Incidentally, it is desirable that it be dignified and a thing of beauty.

What general considerations will be helpful in the gaining of these results?

The question of material must be left to the expert in these matters; here the color of the material will be discussed theoretically.

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## MEMORIAL ART

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White is, of course, the prevailing note in our cemeteries; it is a "safe" color—always dignified. But it is by no means the only color that may be used. In cold climates where there is much snow and a lack of brilliant sunlight warmer tones prove more satisfactory. Cold greys produce an unnecessarily mournful effect while "hot" colors—such as are obtained with polished red marbles, for instance—are too insistent, attract to themselves too much attention, and are, therefore, apt to lack dignity. Veined marbles, save for paneling, are difficult to manage and are unsuited, as a rule, to bear inscriptions unless the veinings are delicate and the lettering of bronze. White and the warm pinks, buffs and greys are to be recommended.

Next come structural questions. The ideal headstone is a single slab, fairly thin in proportion to its width, in height rarely less than its width, but often as much as two and even, in Greek stelae, three or more times as high as wide. When not much more than a square high the sides may be vertical; as the height increases a batter or entasis on the sides is necessary. Also, as the stone becomes narrower in proportion to its width the greater is the need of a crowning feature or an enrichment of some sort at the top.

The simple stone should rise directly from the ground, giving the sense of its being a single stone set upright. The usual modern practice is to use a plinth, but this gives a built-up quality which destroys the desired effect—the suggestion that the headstone is a stone partly buried in the ground. When the memorial is complicated in design and crowned with rich ornament a plinth may well be used to balance the richness above. But the fairly simple headstone should have no plinth. If, from motives of economy, a plinth must be used it should be but little larger than the stone above and its top should be flush with the ground. Those for whom custom

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COLONIAL HEADSTONE. GRANARY BURYING GROUND, BOSTON, MASS.



## T H E H E A D S T O N E

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has made the plinth seem a necessity should study the beautiful Colonial headstones which are to be found in the cemeteries of the Atlantic states; the justness of this argument will, perhaps, be felt.

In the definition of the headstone given above height, breadth and thickness have been mentioned. The matter of proportion is of the greatest importance—yet no laws can be formulated. A comparatively thin stone is more effective than one in which the spectator is

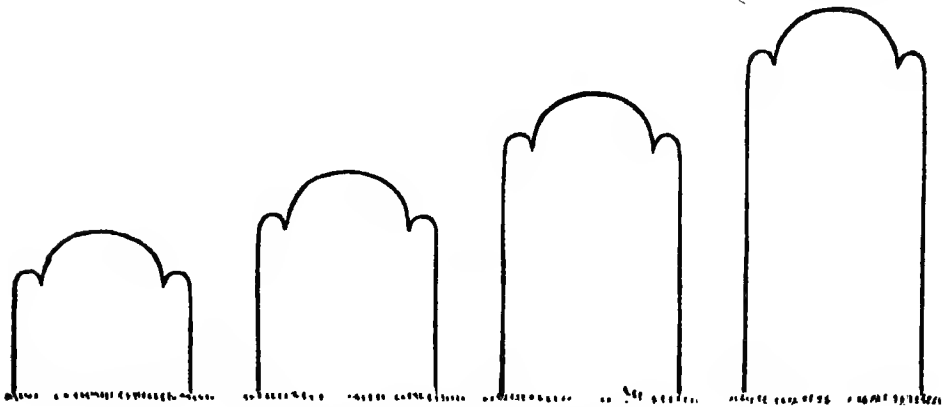


FIG. 8—STUDY IN PROPORTION

The same width and crowning feature used, the height changed. Which stone is the most pleasing?

conscious of thickness as well as of breadth. The effect of a slab is desired; the face of the stone is the important thing, and only so much thickness as will give the suggestion of sufficient strength is necessary. Yet what this depth should be to avoid an appearance of “fatness” or heaviness cannot be stated in general terms; each case must be decided upon its own merits. The same thing is true of the proportion of width to height. Vain rules have been formulated; the width should be two-thirds of the height, three-fifths, seven-

*Eighty-one*

## MEMORIAL ART

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elevenths (the "laws" of proportion seem always to deal in odd numbers); but no rule can hold good in all cases. The placing of the inscription, the character of the ornament (if any is used), even the color of the stone—each has its influence. No hard-and-fast rule is possible.

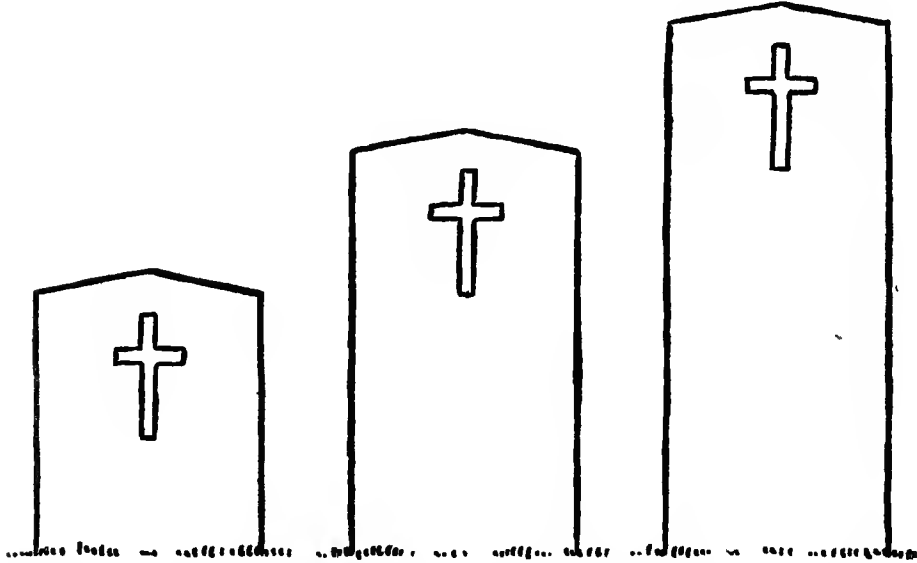


FIG. 9—STUDY IN PROPORTION

The same width and ornament used, the height being varied. Which is the best proportioned? In which is the proportion of the cross to the stone most pleasing? Note that the tall stone demands a batter or entasis. This is not needed in the short one.

The surface of the headstone should always be comparatively smooth. The rustic, rough-surfaced stone with a carefully finished panel to receive the inscription is a tasteless abomination which no self-respecting designer should consent to touch. Lettering is a necessary part of a memorial, and a letter is a formal thing. Therefore the stone, to harmonize with the lettering, must be formal—

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## T H E H E A D S T O N E

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and there is no formality about a boulder or stone elaborately hacked to suggest rough-hewn ashlar.

The headstone with polished or smooth face and rough-hewn sides should be done away with, since the stone should count as a unit and there can be no unity where there is so great a difference in texture between front and sides. Reason will show that the right and the left-hand sides of the face of a headstone must be similar and that ornament should be balanced about a central axis. This will throw out all the unbalanced, column-on-one-corner freaks, as well as rid us of the spray of flowers cut with artful carelessness on one corner of a panel. That such debased forms have become popular is an indication of the lack of taste—which is a lack of clear thinking—among our people.

The question of the placing of the inscription should next be considered. Here again it is difficult to suggest rules which will cover all cases. The many-worded inscription of former times—“Here lyeth ye body of John Smith who departed this life on ye second day of September . . . . .” and so forth—seems to have gone out of fashion, and the panel of lettering with the proper name in capitals, so effective in the old stones, is, therefore, rarely possible. But the careful arranging of names and dates to form a rectangular mass of lettering is possible. There should be no curved lines of letters; a strict balancing of the inscription about a central vertical axis is imperative; and such undignified antics as cutting names and dates on a scroll (to mention one of the many tasteless forms of which we are guilty) must, of course, be avoided. On headstones which are fairly simple the mass of letters is best placed above the centre with no mouldings about it; the panel, whether raised or sunk, is better suited to elaborate memorials. One unfortunate

## MEMORIAL ART

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custom which is very prevalent is the placing of the surname on the plinth—not only of headstones but of other forms as well—which is undignified and bad from the point of view of the composition of the memorial as a whole. The letters should be incised (unless letters of bronze are used—and they are very effective) and only the best Roman forms should be employed.

The form given to the top of the stone is a matter about which it is difficult to write in general terms. For the simplest stone the square top is appropriate; yet it is uninteresting and unnecessarily severe. A gable form, a curved top or a crowning of more or less architectural character is equally appropriate and somewhat more pleasing. The type of Greek headstone, or stela, shown in Plate X, is a form well adapted to use in modern work. (Originally these were slabs or cylinders set up as boundary marks, mile-stones, etc.; later they were developed as memorials.) The tall shaft is crowned with a group of mouldings above which is a graceful “floral” ornament—a combination of the anthemion and the acanthus leaf—and in spite of the mutilation its beauty is apparent. The panel in low relief adds much to the charm of this memorial stone, but this detail would present many problems to the modern sculptor. Symbolic figures (not figures in modern costume) might be used; a better solution would be to substitute an inscription filling approximately the same space (but not sunk in a panel). Renaissance stones are often crowned with classic pediments; the Colonial forms, usually curved and unmoulded, are based on architectural elements. A general—and obvious—rule is that the low stone should be crowned with a feature whose main lines are more or less horizontal, whereas for the tall headstone a more upright ornament is needed.

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COLONIAL HEADSTONE. GRANARY BURYING GROUND, BOSTON, MASS.



## T H E H E A D S T O N E

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Ornament, if used, should be reserved for the upper part of the stone, not scattered over its surface. The writer remembers seeing a stone of dark granite with a highly polished, heart-shaped panel covering almost the entire surface, in which panel the inscription was placed; anything more unbeautiful can hardly be imagined. Another example had a panel in which were carved small realistic flowers and leaves, inappropriate for a formal stone and much out of scale, more suited to a painted chair than to a large memorial. Ornament should always be used sparingly, should be formal and conventional—never naturalistic—and suited to the form of the headstone; that is, appropriate to a thin piece of stone set upright.

An effect of richness may be gained by the use of polished surfaces, but the greatest care is necessary when such surfaces are combined with unpolished stone. An effect of commonness, of vulgarity, is usually the result. The polishing of a few carefully selected details, so placed that they will emphasize the general lines of the design, may be carried out successfully; in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the result will be tawdry. The best rule, when polished surfaces are considered, is—all or none.

The difficulty with polished surfaces is not only that the designer is working with two colors instead of one but also that he is working with two textures—a dull and a reflecting surface—greatly complicating the problem and opening the way for easily made mistakes. Yet there is an almost unexplored field in the use of color in headstones. Combinations of colors, of textures; the use of panels of rich marble or of bronze; the introduction of ornaments of bronze set into the stone or of bands or panels of stone mosaic; for the imaginative designer with taste there are possibilities almost limitless. It may be that some day we will develop these possibilities and prove to

*Eighty-five*

## MEMORIAL ART

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an admiring world that even a cemetery may be a place where beauty is found—an achievement greatly to be desired.

The desire for novelty for its own sake shown in so many of our productions is to be regretted. This is the cause of much of our poor work. The client, having no standard of beauty and no power of reasoning about what he sees, chooses a memorial merely because it is different from anything he has ever seen; not realizing that just because it is different it is almost certain to be unbeautiful. This does not mean that nothing new can be beautiful. Such a thing is possible—but the history of civilization proves that objects of beauty have been evolved very slowly. One generation would make slight changes for the better in inherited designs—the following generation would improve just a little upon these, and so on until a climax was reached; then with a lowering of the standards of taste there would follow a long descent and then a slow rise of some new form of beauty. (The history of ornament, from the perfection of the Greek period to the perfection of the Gothic style is a good example of such a rise and decline and a new, and different, arising.) True beauty is never dependent on novelty. A beautiful woman is not so considered because she can exhibit to our enraptured gaze two noses, or an extra eye placed in the middle of her chin—she has only the features of her less fair sisters, but each perfect of its kind and in its relation to the other features.

So with a headstone. It is not something new and undreamt-of which we want; merely the old forms developed with perfect proportions, perfect lettering, ornament of exactly the right type, beautifully cut; a piece of work which will delight the trained eye. The average buyer, however, will see in it little to distinguish it from a dozen other headstones and since there is nothing novel, nothing

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## T H E H E A D S T O N E

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startling about it, will refuse it, preferring something more "showy". Therefore, the designer must be an educator—must train the taste of his client, turning him from his liking for illogical vulgarities by assuming that he dislikes the stones which please the average man and can tell a good design from one that is less good.

It is a simple matter to condemn the many illogical forms which meet our eyes. It is not so easy to make clear the difference between a design which has no glaring faults, but which is not entirely satisfactory, and one which is wholly admirable. The designer must study each design—making series of drawings (such sketches as are shown in Figs. 8 and 9) and comparing the same scheme varied in its proportions and in the placing of the lettering and ornament and selecting that which seems to him the best. He should avoid meaningless forms (some memorials suggest piled-up building blocks—see Fig. 11); he should have his mouldings clean-cut and serving a definite purpose of support or of crowning, avoiding rounded forms which look as though they were made of chewing-gum (Fig. 12); and all ornament used should be consistent in style and correct in scale and placing. Ornament should never be made up out of the designer's head (see Fig. 13); beautiful ornament of all periods should be studied and adapted to present needs; any other procedure means artistic failure.

Crude as is the ornament used in the two Colonial stones shown in Plates XI and XII, it is, nevertheless, pleasing—good in scale and based on easily recognized Renaissance motives. The stonecutters of that day did not try to invent new motives; they reshaped their inherited ornamental forms with all the skill and taste at their command. It is to be hoped that modern designers will follow their example and instead of searching for novel effects will do again that which has been done before, but, if possible, do it a little better.

*Eighty-seven*





## CHAPTER VII

### THE CROSS, THE OBELISK AND OTHER FORMS



ALMOST from the beginning of Christianity the cross has been used to mark the graves of the followers of Christ; symbols of faith; decorated, decorative crosses, objects of dignity and beauty. In recent times the use of the large, bare stone cross has been common—a clear indication of the tastelessness of the age. And we find not only large, bare, uninteresting crosses but crosses of stone carved to represent tree-trunks; rustic crosses draped with naturalistic passion flowers; crosses with polished faces and rough hewn sides; the symbol sacred to many is, one might almost say, desecrated by us—we who have greater knowledge and less true appreciation of beauty than the people of any former age.

The free-standing crosses of the Romanesque period are almost unique examples of large crosses used, before the nineteenth century, to mark graves; these are unusually rich and superbly decorative. Occasionally, in other periods, big, bare crosses were used, but it remained for our inartistic age to prove that a cross could be made into a thoroughly ugly object. The cross as used throughout the earlier centuries was usually cut upon a vertical or a horizontal slab, with beautiful enrichment; it was a symbolic decoration placed upon headstone, sarcophagus or wall tablet; the symbolic, the decorative idea was predominant and the cross always made beautiful.

*Eighty-nine*

## MEMORIAL ART

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If we wish to improve the artistic quality of our memorials we must sweep from our cemeteries these unfortunate signs of our lack of taste—these badly proportioned, commonplace, unimaginative, un-beautiful crosses and put in their places symbols which will indicate the taste as well as the faith of those who erect them.

It is supposed that in the wooden cross upon which Christ was crucified the upright above the cross-beam was short when compared with the length of the arms; but such a form cut in stone is not logical—it is distinctly a wooden design. It is difficult to obtain pleasing proportions unless the upper vertical member is at least as long as the arms; if the upper member is longer the effect is still better. These proportions will be found in the Celtic crosses—the Irish and the Iona types. In these another beautiful and typically stone feature is the aureole or circle which binds the rectangular parts together—a device which should rarely, if ever, be omitted where a large cross is cut in stone. The lower vertical member of a cross should be at least twice the height of the upper; one is tempted to say three times. There is a beautiful Gothic example in the churchyard at Iffley, England, where the lower member must be at least six times the height of the upper. A very different type of the free-standing cross developed in the British Isles is a variant of the Maltese, or equal-armed cross, placed in a circle and this resting on a small base or plinth.

In the matter of scale the cross must dominate or be merely an incident in the decoration—no middle ground can be taken. In the drawing reproduced in Fig. 10 the design in the center is neither a cross on a pedestal—since the cross does not dominate—nor is it a stone decorated with a cross; for ornament must be subservient to

*Ninety*

## THE CROSS AND OBELISK

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the general mass of the thing decorated—here the ornament overpowers the stone below.

When the cross is incised or carved in low relief upon a stone there are inexhaustible opportunities for creating beauty awaiting the designer. Crosses in circles, in squares, in oblongs; plain crosses and crosses richly decorated—the possibilities are limitless. Un-

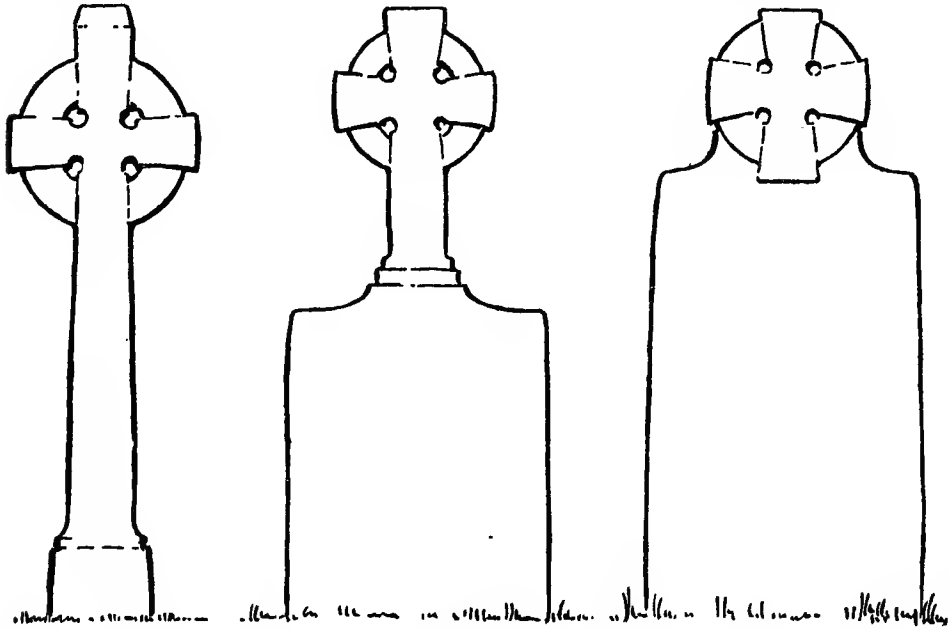


FIG. 10

On the left, the cross dominant; on the right, the cross a decorative feature; centre, a badly proportioned stone—the cross too small to dominate and too large to be considered as an ornament. Note: Study each stone by itself (covering the other two), then compare the three.

fortunately, the possibility of making ugly crosses is equally unlimited. An example of an illogical and, therefore, ugly combination which may be seen in one of our cemeteries is: a rough-hewn headstone with a Celtic cross in low relief upon the roughened sur-

## MEMORIAL ART

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face; this combination of rustic and severely formal elements produces an effect little short of comical.

A discussion of the horizontal stone naturally follows that concerning the upright.

The finest examples of these horizontal gravestones are found in the older churches of Europe. In mediaeval times, when burial under the floors of churches was permitted, this type was extensively used. Being under cover the ornament could be deeply cut and a variety of materials employed—mosaic, bronze and brass as well as every kind of marble. A low relief of the figure of the dead and this sometimes framed by a border of mosaic is a typical Italian form. In Spain we find figures cut in slate or some dark stone while the face and hands are of white marble inlaid in the slab. The effect of these latter is somewhat startling, but in the old stones, where the marble has been toned by time, not unpleasing. The English, during the Gothic period, often covered the grave with a plate of brass upon which was engraved the figure of the departed, the lines being filled with a black paste or cement. Occasionally intricate borders were added, red paste being used with the black to give greater richness.

When placed out-of-doors the problem of the horizontal stone is not easy of solution. Deep cuttings are out of the question, but the inlay of bronze is possible and this can be very effective.

A variation of the horizontal stone is the "table-tomb"—a flat slab raised on short columns. An odd form occasionally found has a fifth leg or column placed under the center of the slab. Although these table-tombs have a picturesque quality when one sees them in old churchyards, it is not a particularly logical form and is, therefore, little imitated. One point which should be made in this con-

*Ninety-two*

## THE CROSS AND OBELISK

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nection is that the supporting members should be carefully designed for their purpose—following the general form of the baluster. Modern examples exist where the supports look like classic columns cut in half; the effect is squat and clumsy.

In certain Christian churches the “mensa” or table is used instead of the “altar”—one consisting of a slab placed on legs, the other being a more or less solid mass. These differences are found in the tombs named for them (see Plate XXII). The “altar-tomb” sometimes suggests a sarcophagus almost as much as a table-tomb; the typical form is a low, heavy canopy placed close over the grave. It is often difficult to decide, in modern monuments, whether the designer meant to make an unusually flat-topped sarcophagus with deeply paneled sides or an altar-tomb. It is not necessary, of course, that we should be able to classify our monuments; if, however, such classification is desired, we might say that the sarcophagus must have a definite lid (see Plate XIII)—an unnecessary feature in an altar-tomb. Further, a sarcophagus must be large enough to contain a body; the altar-tomb may be comparatively small, merely an ornamental grave-covering.

A “bed-tomb” is a form occasionally seen. It is hardly a tomb; merely a stone coping outlining the grave—headstone and coping being designed as a unit. The surface of the grave is usually planted with grass; if the space surrounded by the coping is covered by a stone it may be the top of an underground tomb. Perhaps in this connection mention might be made of a strange grave marker in St. Michael’s churchyard in Charleston, S. C., where a mahogany bedstead was placed about a grave, with the inscription cut on the headboard; though now nearly a hundred years old it is still in a fair state of preservation.

## MEMORIAL ART

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The question of the single column used as a memorial has been mentioned. The term "shaft" is often employed to designate any tall monument. Architecturally speaking, a shaft is that portion of the column between base and capital; no other use of the word is strictly correct. But it is indiscriminately applied to the large stela, to the obelisk and to that form best described by the term "pylon". An obelisk is usually square in plan, is tall and narrow, with inclined faces and is capped with a small pyramid; a pylon, on the other hand, may be oblong in plan, is fairly thick in proportion to its height, has vertical or slightly battered faces and is finished at the top in various ways—sometimes flat, more often crowned with sculpture.

The use of the obelisk as a symbol dates back to remotest antiquity; only in comparatively modern times has it been used as a monument to mark a grave. These monoliths, often of colossal size, erected by the kings of Egypt in front of their temples were symbols of the Sun-god and were dedicated to him. They are well-proportioned and are decorated only by hieroglyphics ("sacred carvings" or writings) cut in the otherwise plain faces.

The Roman emperors transported many of these obelisks to Rome as evidence of conquest, using them to beautify their public places. Overturned by earthquakes, they were re-erected in the Renaissance period, mounted high upon ornamental pedestals. The largest in existence is that which stands near the church of St. John Lateran in Rome, brought from Thebes in 357 A. D. It is of red granite, is 105 feet high (with its pedestal 154 feet) and weighs over 430 tons. Another very large Egyptian obelisk stands in the Piazza before St. Peter's in Rome. Its re-erection, in 1586, interested all Europe, since the successful completion of the difficult task was re-

*Ninety-four*

## T H E C R O S S A N D O B E L I S K

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garded as a symbol of the revived power of the Roman church after the famous sack of Rome. London, Paris and New York are among the cities possessing ancient Egyptian obelisks. The Washington monument in Washington is a built-up structure of this form, impressive because of its great size and absolute simplicity.

In designing an obelisk the matter of proportion is, as always, of the first importance. If the faces are broad in proportion to the height an unpleasant "dumpy" effect is produced—though such proportions are permissible when the obelisk is used on a small scale as an ornament. If the obelisk is tall and the faces narrow it will appear weak. The inclination of the faces towards the center must be carefully studied—also the pitch given the crowning pyramid (the slender obelisk demands a steeply-pitched crowning member and vice versa); but here, as elsewhere, no absolute rules can be laid down. A refinement that should be noted is the use of the entasis. In the classic column what appears to be a straight line from bottom to top of the shaft is, in reality, a curve. The use of this subtle curve, the entasis, gives to the column its beauty and refinement. This should be employed in the obelisk. If the faces are plane surfaces the obelisk will have a slightly concave appearance; this can be avoided by giving each face a very delicate outward curve from top to bottom. This, of course, must not be so great as to be noticeable.

Successful ornamentation of the obelisk is rarely achieved. In the Egyptian examples the picture writing covers the entire surface and thus does not disturb the unity of effect. In some modern examples the beauty of the stones has been destroyed by badly placed and obtrusive ornament or by decoration inharmonious in scale and character. There has recently been erected in a New England cemetery a large obelisk on each of the sides of which are cut delicate

*Ninety-five*

## M E M O R I A L A R T

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garlands of naturalistic flowers—ornament much better suited to the walls of a boudoir.

Although the elaborate pedestals designed by the Renaissance architects to bear the re-erected obelisks of Rome are, in many cases, effective it is better, as a general rule, to use the simplest form of plinth. A type of pedestal which consists of a wide-flaring, inverted cavetto is an unfortunate device since it tends to counteract the vertical element which is the chief characteristic of the obelisk.

The name pylon may be given to any structure which is fairly high in proportion to its mass and which is too large to be grouped with the "pedestal forms". Its use as a memorial is somewhat rare; it is more often found forming the chief element of a large monument, flanked by and crowned with sculpture. A well-known example is the Gambetta monument in Paris. It should be mentioned that the name is derived from the great entrance gateways which stand before the temples of Egypt.

Another form of memorial which should be considered is the wall tablet—the memorial placed upon the wall of church or public building. Such tablets are, however, so diverse in character, style and proportion that it is difficult to formulate any suggestions by which the designer may profit. It goes without saying that the shape of the tablet must be adapted to the space it is to enrich and to the style of the building in which it is to be placed; that the lettering must be the best of its kind and properly composed; that the ornament must be suited to the material used. These are fundamental rules which are accepted by all designers; but what more specific can be said? Helpful criticism might be given with a group of wall tablets before one; as, this border is too heavy for the field it encloses: these letters are too large and those not refined enough in character:

*Ninety-six*



## T H E C R O S S A N D O B E L I S K

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this ornament is suited to bronze rather than granite: such sculptured decoration is too realistic—and so on. Lacking the individual examples the observations given above must suffice. One plea may be made: that in our memorial tablets we make greater use of color. In Italian examples one may see frames of white marble enriched with delicate carvings touched with gold, enclosing a lettered field of pale green or straw-colored stone; bands of glass mosaic (Cosmati work) rich with gold and purple and green surrounding the inscription; cartouches with ornaments of gilded bronze and porphyry panels. Beside such memorials our tablets of white marble or severe bronze seem dull and unimaginative. Our Colonial predecessors had more imagination; some of their productions, in black and white marble, are very effective.



## CHAPTER VIII

### A DISAGREEABLE CHAPTER



IN modern cemeteries one finds numerous monuments which are too thick to be classed as headstones and yet are not large enough to be sarcophagi. Although the majority are not designed to support objects of any kind, they may, perhaps, be most easily discussed under the general heading "pedestal forms", the most pleasing examples suggesting the pedestal used by the Romans to bear statues, vases or columns.

These pedestal forms are found in almost infinite variety—and are as ugly as they are numerous.

This is a sweeping statement; yet those accustomed to study the relative proportions of solids, whose eyes, therefore, are trained to appreciate beauty of form, will agree. In how few of these not-to-be-classified forms do we find pleasing proportions! Every kind of odd shape is used—real boulders, boulders imitated with the chisel, masses that suggest in miniature the boxes in which upright pianos are packed; rectangles too thin for their length, stones that are almost and yet not exactly square; curious piled-up, poorly related elements with, as like as not, a large marble figure (of the type one sees made of sugar and placed on wedding cakes) posing at one corner; the distorted imaginings of untrained minds following no precedents—striking out blindly in search of something new.

*Ninety-nine*

## MEMORIAL ART

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Well, it may be asked, is not this a hopeful sign—does not mere imitation mean stagnation?

Certainly. We must advance; we must not be bound by precedent; we must sweep aside the old rules when—and this is the point to be emphasized—*when* we have something better to take their place. When we are familiar with all the beautiful things which have been made in the past—when we know why they are beautiful, then, but not until then, may we invent. A great musician may sit

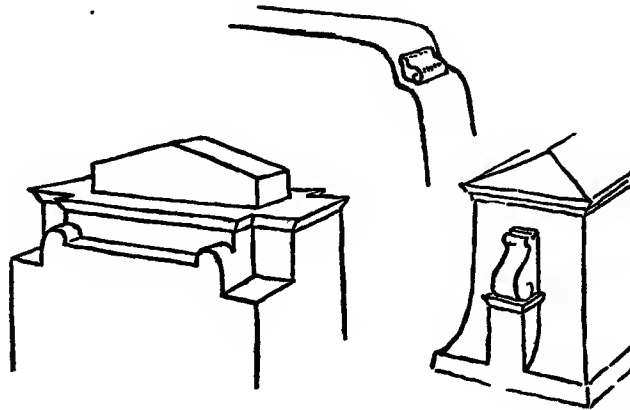


FIG. 11

Structural forms poorly related

at a piano and, with his extensive musical knowledge and his superb technical skill, invent new harmonies whose beauty will thrill the listener. But place a child of three upon the piano stool! He will have a good time and thoroughly enjoy his performance; but will his production be beautiful—will it please anyone else?

Just so with the “new and unusual designs” for memorials produced, one would imagine, by the office-boy.

*One Hundred*

## A D I S A G R E E A B L E C H A P T E R

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Technical skill has been mentioned. One can hardly imagine an untrained newcomer in a stoneyard being given a chisel and set to work upon a headstone of even moderate cost. No—he must first acquire skill, for even the average customer can tell a fair piece of stone-cutting from a badly botched job. But when the *design* of the memorial is to be considered—anyone, it would seem, no matter how little training in the principles of design he may have had, can make a design. For though he may violate every standard of taste the “man in the street” will not be aware of the fact—will probably prefer “something striking and unusual”.

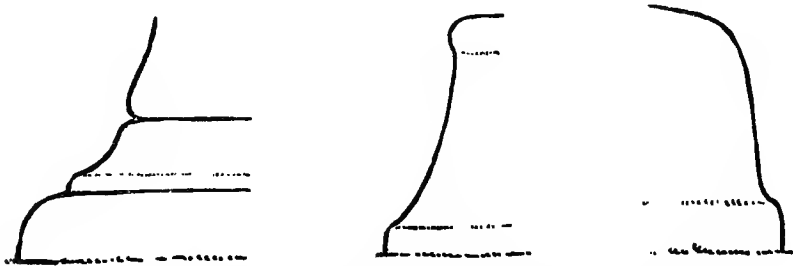


FIG. 12—UNSTRUCTURAL FORMS AND MOULDINGS

Soft looking, rounded contours and profiles should be avoided. Clean-cut, geometric forms and mouldings designed to serve a definite purpose should be used

The desire to create something new is commendable; the result is usually pathetic. A savage from Borneo might work out a new and successful scheme of government for a modern state; it is probable, however, that we should choose for such a task a man familiar with the theory of government as developed through the ages. So with the designing of even so simple a thing as a headstone; he who knows the whole range of memorial art and works with that background of knowledge is more likely to produce a thing of beauty

## MEMORIAL ART

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than the man who scorns knowledge and wishes only to design something entirely original.

Independence is a good thing—artistic as well as political independence; but in one, as in the other, the throwing overboard of everything that man has learnt through centuries of effort results in anarchy. The “artistic anarchist” is asked, not to obey laws—merely to reason clearly about all that he wishes to do and to do nothing without a good reason for it. The contempt for precedent, the desire for novel effects, the modern restlessness and love of change; these are not bad in themselves—but unless controlled by reason and a sense of beauty nothing good can come of them. If we are logical we will not have naturalistic tree-trunks draped in ivy, all of stone; nor polished horizontal rolls, set upon plinths, looking like sausages or sofa pillows out of place. We will no longer have foliated ornament oozing out of the edge of a monument like the filling squeezed from a cream puff; polished hearts, armless hands holding scrolls, and all other products of unreason will vanish from our cemeteries.

When one looks through a set of photographs of the temples of Egypt one is struck by the fact that for more than two thousand years scarcely any change in the form is to be found. A satisfactory type of building having been developed no desire for change for its own sake impelled the architects or their clients to depart from the established form. Unprogressive, surely; yet in these days of lightning-change artists and designers the thought of those two thousand changeless years is somewhat restful. The Greeks did better. For three hundred years or so their architects developed one type of temple; but each generation refined the proportions of the mass and of the details until in the Parthenon they achieved a struc-

*One Hundred Two*

## A D I S A G R E E A B L E C H A P T E R

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ture the perfection of which has rarely been equalled. Here was progress—progress with a definite end in view; no mere striving after novelty, but a clear and reasoned effort to perfect the given type.

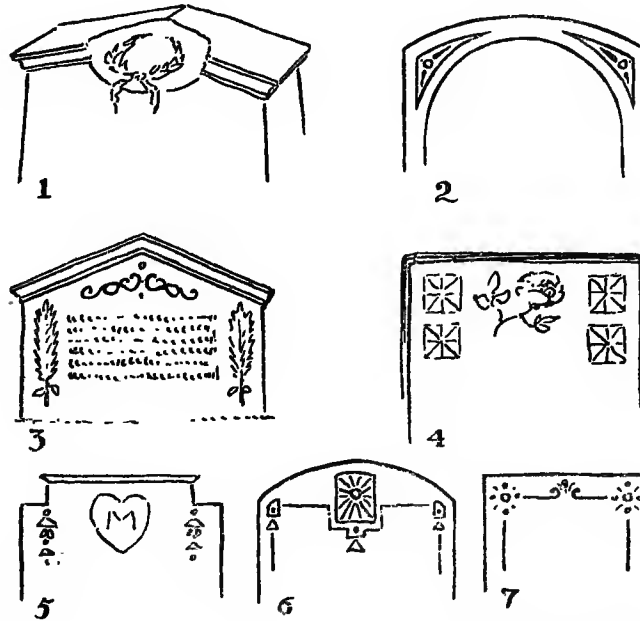


FIG. 13—EXAMPLES OF ILLOGICAL ORNAMENT; TAKEN FROM EXECUTED WORK

1—Ornament not only has no relation to structure, but cuts into structural lines. 2—Relation between form and ornament inharmonious. 3—Abstract scroll-form unrelated to naturalistic palms; ornament badly placed. 4—Lack of scale between floral and geometric ornament—both unrelated to form. 5-6-7—Little relation between ornament and form. Ornament meaningless and childish.

This is not the modern method. Consider the churches built in the last seventy-five years. What an astonishing variety we find. Gothic and imitation Gothic (and such imitations); classic churches

## M E M O R I A L A R T

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and Colonial churches and churches which pretend to be, but are not, Colonial; Egyptian, Early Christian, Mission and every other imaginable style and no style of church; in no period of the world's history can such frenzied restlessness be paralleled. The same thing is true of our memorials; here also we find anarchy rampant. Instead of the Greek willingness to perfect a chosen type the desire for originality seems now to be the only motive; in our cemeteries each stone is as different from the next one as the invention of the designer permits—the one thing they have in common is their ugliness. This is severe, but hardly an overstatement of the facts. There *are* beautiful modern memorials but they are lost in the overwhelming mass of commonplace and vulgar stones.

This does not mean that all memorials must belong to one or another of the recognized types. Let us have pedestal-forms or any other forms—even though they cannot be classified—so long as they are beautiful. But the headstone which is low and thick and polished (one is tempted to say “fat and greasy”) and, therefore, not a true headstone; the rustic boulder, the slab tilted at an angle of forty-five degrees and labeled “Johnny” or “Mamie”; the indescribable oddities which comprise three-fourths of the memorials to be found in our cemeteries—these things are not beautiful. Though the fact that a memorial belongs to a well-known type is no guarantee that it is well designed, when we learn that a monument cannot be classified we can be almost sure that it is ugly. Beauty must grow—it cannot be invented; and the wise designer will analyze the beautiful memorials of past times, learn why they are good and follow their silent teaching, letting the foolish experimenter waste his time making up designs “out of his head”.

*One Hundred Four*



## A D I S A G R E E A B L E C H A P T E R

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Some day, let us hope, the buyers will develop a sense of fitness—a feeling for beauty. Then, perhaps, these many strange forms will disappear. Our designers will all be skilled men incapable of devising ugly forms or of misplacing ornament; our cemeteries will be filled with artistic triumphs, and memorial art . . . . . however, this glorious time will not arrive for a year or two yet, so the end of the sentence may wait.



## AN INTERLUDE



IN one of those essays\* in which Dr. Crothers so delightfully combines wisdom and humor, this passage occurs: "There is one thing that a man knows about his own business better than any outsider, and that is how hard it is for him to do it. The adviser is always telling him how to do it in the finest possible way, while he, poor fellow, knows that the paramount issue is whether he can do it at all." Yet Dr. Crothers does not say that advice should not be given; he merely warns the giver of advice not to be impatient when his words of wisdom are not followed.

He divides those who give advice into two general classes: the Idealist and the Doctrinaire. The latter is "one who theorizes without sufficient regard for practical considerations"; the former "a seeker after the highest beauty and good".

This essay has given the writer pause. Are these chapters the work of an idealist, or are they theoretical discussions which have no regard for practical considerations? An unbiased answer can scarce be expected from the writer; he can only hope that some will believe him a seeker after the highest beauty, the highest truth—and that his definition of the truth is not that of the doctrinaire: "A truth is that which has got itself believed by me."

In these discussions practical matters are certainly dealt with; but the ideals stated may be questioned by many. What the writer

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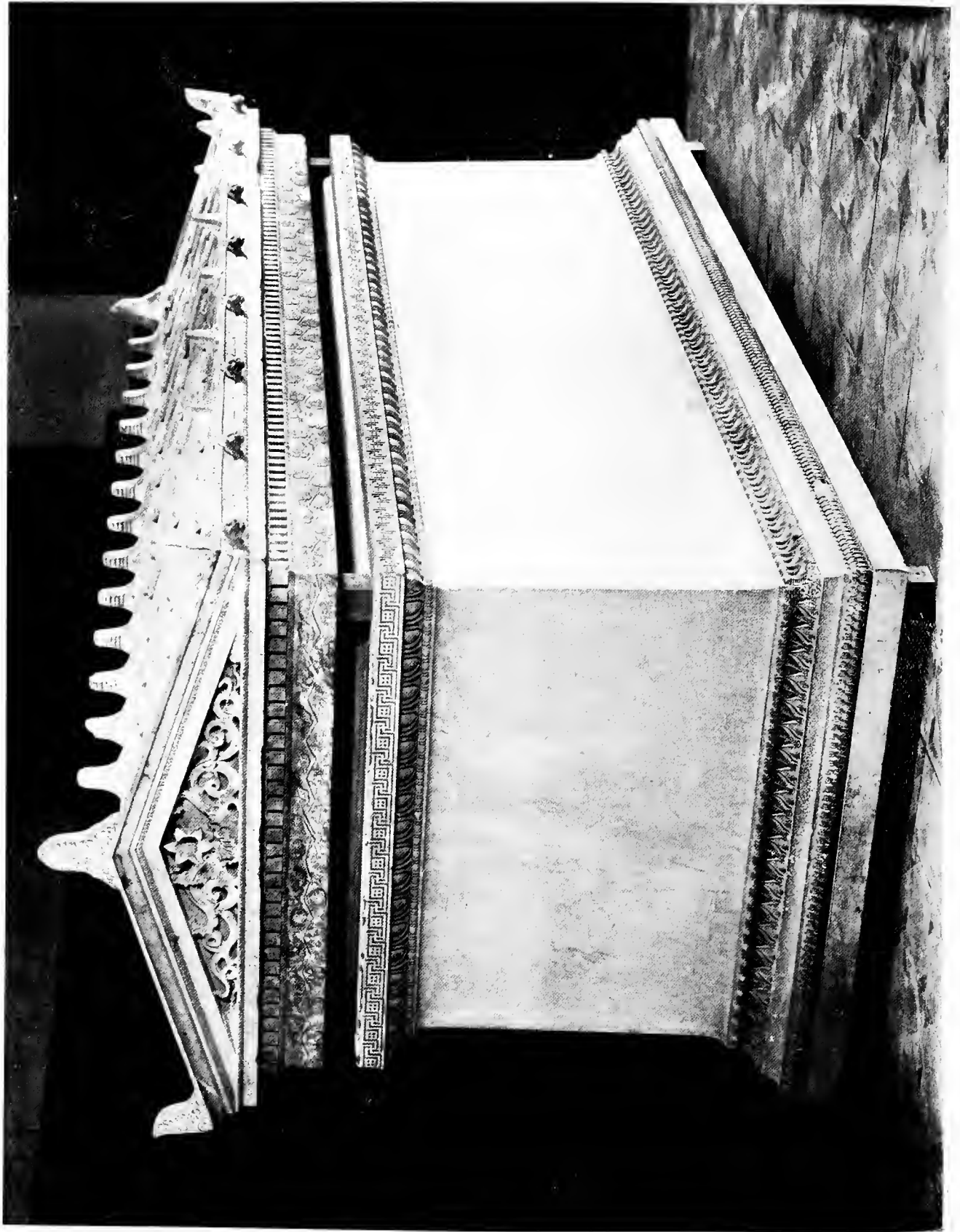
\*On Being a Doctrinaire, from "By the Christmas Fire"; Samuel McChord Crothers.

## M E M O R I A L A R T

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considers truth may not appear to the reader to be truth; and there is no possibility of settling the question as to which is right. The most that can be hoped for is that such discussions may lead those who read and disagree to be sure of their reasons for disagreeing. If they reason honestly and logically—no matter what conclusions they reach—the greatest possible good to be gained by the writing of this book will have been accomplished. Only, the reader must be careful not to prove himself a doctrinaire: one of those—again to quote Dr. Crothers—“who identify the highest beauty and truth with their own theories. After that they make no further excursions into the unexplored regions of reality, for fear that they may discover their identification to have been incomplete.”





SARCOPHAGUS FROM SIDON. IMPERIAL MUSEUM, CONSTANTINOPLE

## CHAPTER IX

### THE SARCOPHAGUS



IN the preceding chapters those memorials which have no direct connection with the disposal of the body of the dead have been discussed. Of all the forms devised to mark the last resting place of the dead or to contain the body itself none has received a greater diversity of appropriate and beautiful treatment than the sarcophagus.

Among civilized people from the dawn of history to the present day the stone coffin has been used and in practically every instance—save in recent years—it has been made a thing of beauty. This is not surprising, since one of the requirements of beauty is suitability and it is difficult to design a sarcophagus which does not express the purpose for which it is made. The word means “flesh-eating” because a certain kind of stone used for coffins was supposed to absorb the body placed within it. Though stones which have no absorptive power are, in the majority of cases, used the name has become the common one for the form without regard to the material employed.

The Egyptian sarcophagi are usually simple rectangles—though the mummy-form is also found—and the elaboration is placed on the interior rather than on the exterior. Those of the Greeks are perhaps the most beautiful. A particularly splendid group was found at Sidon; a reproduction of one of these is given in Plate XIII. It will be seen that this sarcophagus is treated in an architectural man-

## MEMORIAL ART

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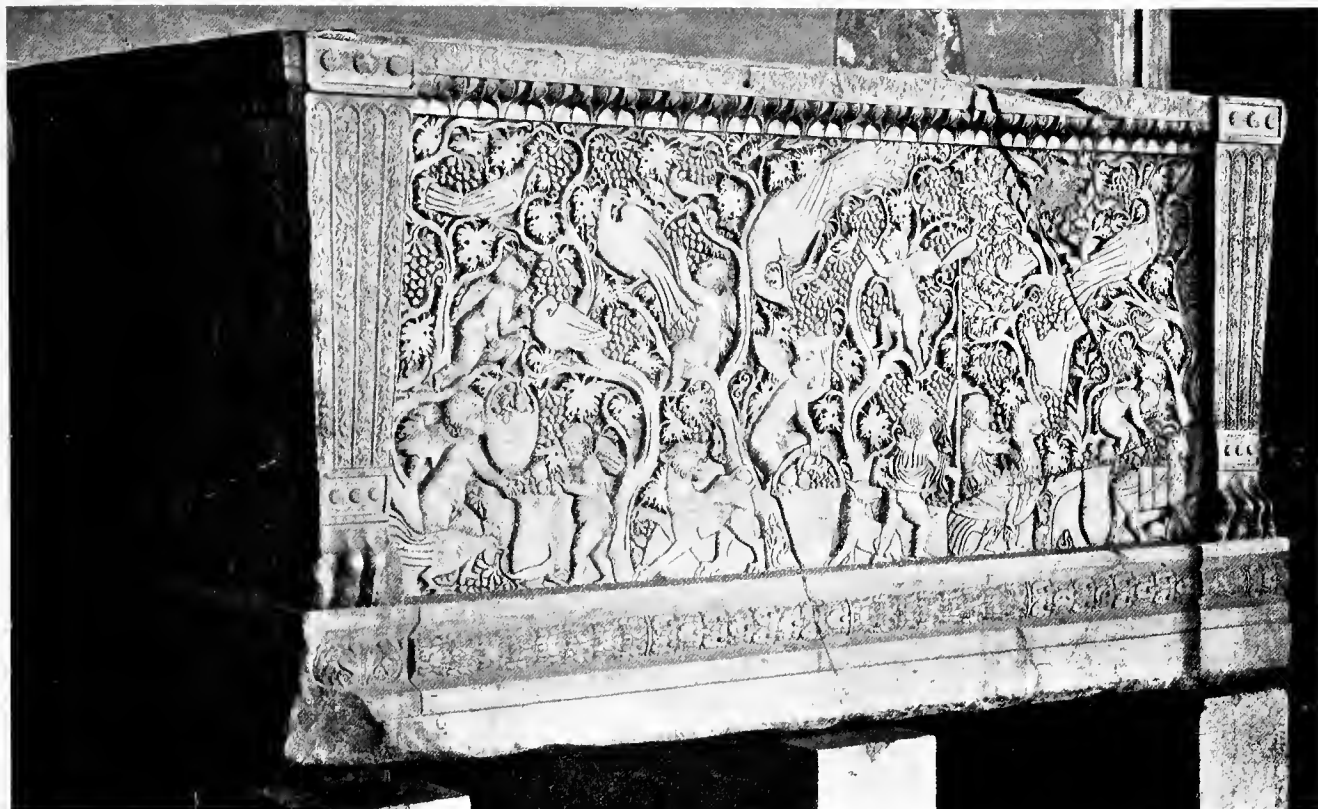
ner with wonderfully rich and refined detail. Although the effect is somewhat marred by the fact that, in the photograph, the lid is shown raised, the fine proportions and beautiful workmanship should be a source of inspiration to modern designers. The way in which the roofing tiles of a temple have been suggested without being realistically imitated, the relation of die to mouldings and the composition of the ornament in the low gable are beyond all praise.

Although the Greeks produced many interesting sarcophagi the Romans were even more varied in their productions. Some show plain dies; others have medallions in the center of the panel with delicate channelings occupying the rest of the field—the channels having a slight double curvature from top to bottom. A type often used has intricate figure-groups filling the entire front. Some of these are masterpieces of unified composition. An often imitated sarcophagus is that of Scipio, now in the Vatican. This has a Doric entablature and on the top is a member which rises at the ends and turns under in scroll-forms suggestive of the treatment found in the Ionic capital. Some examples are slightly oval in plan—but it is impossible without numerous illustrations to indicate all the variations devised by the Romans.

The sarcophagi shown in Plate XIV are Early Christian and Byzantine derivations from Roman forms. That of the fourth century, from Rome, is still thoroughly pagan, though in the representation of the gathering of grapes the allusion is to the "Vine of Life". The highly conventional treatment of the subject, the flatness of the planes, gives the rich, decorative quality of an all-over pattern and yet is more interesting than a repeating pattern could be. While the figures which crowd the panels of some of the Roman examples are far better from the standpoint of sculpture the purely decorative

*One Hundred Ten*





EARLY CHRISTIAN SARCOPHAGUS, ST. LORENZO BEYOND THE WALLS, ROME. FOURTH CENTURY

*Photograph by Fratelli Alinari*



BYZANTINE SARCOPHAGUS, SAN APOLLINARE IN CLASSE, RAVENNA. (677-688)

*Photograph by Fratelli Alinari*



## T H E S A R C O P H A G U S

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treatment of these grape-gathering children is more suited to the purpose; the ornament does not interfere with our appreciation of the form of the object as a whole.

The sarcophagus from Ravenna is a good example of Byzantine decorative art with characteristic Christian symbols. The mouldings are coarse imitations of Greek or Roman work, but in perfect harmony with the type of ornament used. It is much to be desired that our designers should make themselves familiar with the decorative motives of the Early Christian, Byzantine and Romanesque periods, as they are better suited to exterior work than the more delicate ornament of the Greeks or of the craftsmen of the early Renaissance period and have a richness sadly lacking in most modern work.

The sarcophagi of the Romanesque period are variations of the types mentioned above. In the Gothic period the sarcophagus, when used, tended to become a minor part of an elaborate tomb-structure (see Plate XVII). In the reproduction of the tomb in Verona (Plate XVI) the richly decorated sarcophagus is an interesting Gothic development of the sarcophagi of the Romans. In this period, as has been noted, there is a merging of the sarcophagus and the altar-tomb. Stone coffins are also found—usually simple affairs with often beautiful crosses decorating the lids.

Among the achievements of the early Renaissance period in Italy—that remarkable time when the decorative arts were developed with such freshness and beauty—wall-tombs take an important place and in many of these the sarcophagus is by no means the least interesting feature (see Plate XXII). In Plate VII the tomb of Leonardo Bruni is reproduced. The sarcophagus is rectangular; a panel bearing an inscription and flanked by angels forms the deco-

*One Hundred Eleven*

## MEMORIAL ART

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native motive. Above it is the figure of Bruni, supported by eagles, and the purely decorative treatment of these and of the drapery which hangs from the bier teach a much needed lesson in the proper non-naturalistic rendering of form. The famous Marsuppini tomb is shown in Plate XVIII; the sarcophagus, a free development of Roman examples, has served as a model for many later erections.

With the more formal imitation of Roman structures in the High Renaissance period came a corresponding formality in designs of sarcophagi (compare, for instance, the two last mentioned with those used by Michaelangelo in the Medici tombs). The succeeding phases of Renaissance art produce few examples unusual for beauty or form or ornament. The huge sarcophagus in which lie the remains of Napoleon is a good adaptation of the classic type. But the tastelessness which is characteristic of the "artistic Dark Ages", which stretch from 1825 to 1890, and beyond, left its mark upon this branch of memorial art as upon everything else.

Another kind of memorial which calls for mention is the cinerary urn. The Romans have left us many beautiful examples of vessels designed to receive ashes of the dead; some modern solutions of this problem are equally fine. Let us hope that the sanitary practice of cremation will become more and more a common custom (this would not mean that there would be no more gravestones or tombs—a last resting-place is as much a necessity for the ashes of the dead as for the unpurified body) and add another to the many forms used by the designer of memorials.





THE "PILLAR OF ABSALOM" IN THE VALE OF THE KINGS, NEAR JERUSALEM. SECOND CENTURY, A. D.

*Photograph by P. Bergheim*

## CHAPTER X

### THE TOMB



WHEN the great church of St. Peter's in Rome is mentioned, we think of its size, remembering that it is the largest church in the world; we think of its soaring dome which mounts to a height of 404 feet (to the top of the cross 435 feet); then when we realize that it could be put inside the Pyramid of Cheops, only a small part of the nave projecting, we begin to get some idea of the vastness of that tomb of the Egyptian king. This first of the "Seven Wonders" of the ancient world is the largest structure raised by the hand of man. This tomb, built 2700 years before the birth of Christ, was 482 feet high (31 feet of the top having been destroyed, it is now only 451 feet high) and the base 768 feet square. Save for the small tomb chamber and the narrow passages it is a solid mass of masonry; it is hard to realize its enormous bulk save by comparison with other large structures.

This great tomb is, however, not interesting from the designer's point of view. The "Mastaba" tombs of the Egyptians and their rock-cut tombs whose long tunnels, richly decorated with wall paintings, plunge far into the depths of the mountains are more worthy of study. Of much greater interest is another of the Seven Wonders—the tomb of Mausolus, king of Caria, at Harlicarnassus in Asia Minor, built by his widow in the year 352 B. C. A restoration of this tomb—of which but a few fragments remain, now in the British

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Museum—is used as a frontispiece to this volume. From this it will be seen how imposing was the monument which has given the name mausoleum to subsequent structures of this kind. It consisted of a high rectangular podium or basement, bearing a colonnade, and this, in turn, was surmounted by a stepped pyramid which probably bore a Quadriga, or four-horse chariot, in which stood figures of the king and his consort. It was adorned with splendid sculpture and the beauty and perfection of the details were characteristic of the best Greek work.

This tomb set the fashion in such structures. The great tomb of Hadrian, in Rome, converted into a fortress in the Middle Ages and now known as the castle of St. Angelo, is the most famous of these. Upon an enormous square basement rose a circular mass, 240 feet in diameter, surrounded by a colonnade, with statues placed between the columns and the whole crowned by a stepped pyramid. Grant's Tomb, in New York City, is reminiscent of the general scheme of these two structures.

The Romans built many free-standing tombs. The Pyramid of Cestius, in Rome (116 feet in height), is a comparatively small imitation of the pyramids of Egypt. The tomb of Caecilia Metella on the Appian Way, near Rome, is a variant of the tomb of Hadrian; it, also, was converted into a fortress in the Middle Ages. Lack of space forbids mention of the many other Roman tombs still in existence. In Ravenna, Italy, there stands a most interesting sixth century structure, the tomb of Theodoric, a two-storied building crowned with a low dome, cut from a single stone, 36 feet in diameter. The Moslem rulers built tombs, often of great size and beauty, the Taj Mahal, at Agra, being the most noted.

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The tomb shown in Plate XV, the so-called "Pillar of Absalom", is a second century variant of the general scheme of the mausoleum of Halicarnassus. It is shown as an example of one of the few ancient tombs still existing which, in a measure, is comparable in size with the modern free-standing tomb. For this form is a distinctly modern development. From the sixth to the middle of the eighteenth century one searches Europe in vain for notable free-standing tomb-structures. In Italy the canopied sarcophagus is occasionally found placed in the open (see Plate XVII); here and there one finds small structures which suggest the altar-tomb. But from the fall of Rome up to the time when burial in churches was discontinued those who could afford to build costly monuments erected wall-tombs in church or cathedral and the tomb as a structure built in the open was the exception rather than the rule.

In the United States the tomb—the word is here used to signify a free-standing structure which can be entered—is of recent date. The tomb of Washington at Mt. Vernon is a burial vault. Such vaults were not uncommon in the early days of the Republic. In the French and Spanish colonies the walls of the cemeteries were frequently composed of long ranges of superposed vaults; picturesque, but uninteresting from the point of view of design.

Although not so numerous as other forms of memorial structures, free-standing tombs, by their mere size, attract more attention. For this reason they should be designed with the greatest care; not that they are more worthy of care than the smallest headstone but because, being larger, their faults, if any, are more noticeable.

Before discussing the designing of tombs it should at once be stated that no one who lacks an architectural training should undertake such a task. With walls and roof, doorway and door (the

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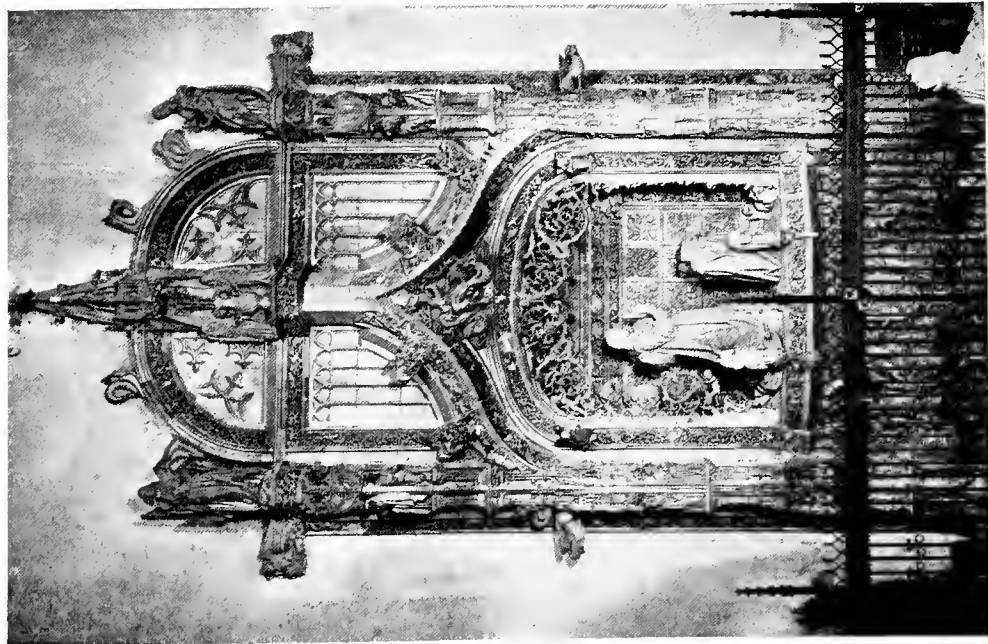
fewest possible necessities) we have architectural elements which cannot be handled successfully by the amateur. Tombs—dozens of them—are built by untrained men with the result that those who have knowledge of architecture walk through our cemeteries with, literally, their teeth on edge. And the sad part of the matter is that those who build these monstrosities are blissfully unaware of their failings. It is strange that a man who would not dream of getting up in public and, without any previous knowledge of the instrument, attempt to play a solo on the violin, will not hesitate to design a tomb for all the world to see—his only claim to fitness being that he can cut and place stones. He would probably smile pityingly at the man who tells him that “the boss has went down town”; but his own errors in the grammar of architecture he would be unable to see. Since our general public knows nothing about architecture—the majority of our newspapers will praise any new building, no matter how many architectural faults have been committed—those who order tombs will give the designer no assistance in self-criticism, and monumental art will continue to move on a lower artistic plane than advertising or the designing of automobiles.

Of course, there are many trained designers of memorials, but their work, as has been noted, is lost amid the mass of commonplace stuff and one wonders how any raising of standards is to be effected. The public will not help; the public cannot, being ignorant in such matters. There is little or no criticism of the designer's work. The painter and the sculptor send their work to exhibitions, and those productions which are poor get their just deserts. The architects are, in their schools, trained in self-criticism, and the standards of their exhibitions and publications are unusually high. But the work of the designer of memorials is too often taken from showroom to

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TOMB OF THE DUSSAINI FAMILY, CHURCH OF SAN  
PIETRO MARTIRE; VERONA, ITALY  
*Photograph by Fratelli Alinari*



TOMB OF INFANTE DON ALFONSO (BROTHER OF  
QUEEN ISABELLA), BY GIL DE SILGEE;  
BURGOS, SPAIN  
*Photograph by J. Laurent y Cia.*



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cemetery; his fellow designers do not see it or when they have such an opportunity will not criticise it adversely. Should a friend of the man who erects the memorial happen to know something about architecture and venture on an adverse criticism it would probably be regarded as an affront offered to the dead. Therefore, continued and unwearied study of the principles of design, of photographs and measured drawings of noted monuments—continual self-criticism must be the rule for those who have the advancement of the profession at heart.

The problem of designing a tomb is one which calls for a thorough knowledge of architectural forms, a feeling for proportion, a keen sense for the proper use of materials and a familiarity with the causes and characteristics of the various historic styles. The designer must know what mouldings combine well with certain other mouldings; how the columns should and should not be treated (particularly the latter); he must know what combinations of materials result in pleasing effects and in what measure it is safe to use polished and unpolished surfaces. He must know the difference between Roman and Greek forms before he can (as is entirely proper) safely mingle them; and the fundamental differences between classic procedure and the methods of Romanesque or Gothic designers must equally be familiar to him. That is, he must be a trained architect. The fact cannot be shrugged aside—artistic failure awaits the untrained designer of tombs.

The attempt has been made in these pages to give those who have had no opportunity for architectural study some insight into the reasons for or against certain procedures. Under the headings of Mouldings, Columns, Doors, etc., these architectural forms have been discussed and in studying the matter of tomb designing, these

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sections should be re-read, since many of the points mentioned in this chapter are based on the reasoning there given somewhat at length.

When a tomb is to be built the first question to be decided is the architectural style which shall be employed. At once it may be asked—why not build a tomb without any dependence on historic styles? The answer is that we have no modern style, as yet; and if we use merely a group of mouldings about the door and another at the eaves, such mouldings will inevitably suggest Egyptian or classic or Gothic or Moslem mouldings, and the very shape of the structure will thereby be established. Judging by past history a style is being developed in these days; but we are still at the stage of development where we must, more or less consciously, base our work on the proved excellences of some former period. Therefore, if the group of mouldings has a Gothic quality the tomb must take a form which will harmonize with Gothic mouldings; if the mouldings chosen are classic in profile quite another form is demanded. The mouldings used by Greek or Gothic builders were, through long periods of experimentation, developed to harmonize with certain structural forms and in transplanting them to alien forms one is merely throwing away the knowledge laboriously gained by generations of skilled artists. Because they did not grasp this fundamental truth the workers in the Gothic Revival period, for instance, designed structures which now seem to us ridiculous; they covered with Gothic detail buildings essentially classic in form.

The following of a historic style is, therefore, almost a necessity. Such choice depends upon the personal taste of the client. Some feel that a tomb which suggests a Moslem origin (and a very interesting domed tomb based on Moslem traditions has been designed by Mr. Sullivan of Chicago) is inappropriate for Christian burial—

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yet Egyptian or classic forms are no more incongruous. If one is to be strict in such matters the Christians must reject any classic structure and use only the forms distinctive of Christianity—Early Christian, Romanesque or Gothic. Fortunately, however, in the fine arts there are no creeds and the Christian should not object to a pagan tomb nor a Hebrew to a Gothic one.

The choice having been made the designer must next study the proportions of the proposed tomb. Here no general theories or proportional tables of width, height and depth will be of much use. Anyone can prove that a classic tomb which measures fourteen feet across its façade and is forty feet long will be odd in appearance, but who can say whether the ideal length will be sixteen or seventeen and a half or twenty feet? Further, the proportions of a beautiful Greek structure will be no guide in establishing the relative proportions of a tomb designed in the Gothic style. As has been noted again and again—proportion, the most important of all considerations confronting the designer—is a matter about which nothing can be stated definitely.

It is, of course, impossible to generalize about correct architectural procedures irrespective of style. Therefore, for the sake of clearness, the styles will be taken up in their historic sequence.

Present-day tombs in the "Egyptian" style have little in common with anything Egyptian save the details used. A structure of classic proportions is, as a rule, furnished with Egyptian mouldings and columns; the results are sometimes not bad. The chief practical difficulty lies in the fact that the flat roof of Egyptian structures is unsuited to latitudes where there is much rain or snow. The ordinary classic gable cannot be used above the heavy Egyptian cornice; therefore the pyramid is the only available roof-form and great

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artistic skill is necessary to obtain with this even moderately pleasing results. A quaint Roman tomb where such a roof is used still exists at Dana, Syria.

As in other memorials the placing of the name of the dead in large letters on any part of the tomb gives it an aspect of vulgarity entirely out of keeping with the dignity which should mark a last resting-place. The advertiser's methods seem to have invaded the field of memorial art and the names of probably quite modest persons gleam forth in our cemeteries with more insistence than do those of makers of patent medicines or breakfast foods upon our billboards.

The structure reproduced in Plate III shows a type of Greek building well adapted to form a basis of discussion of the classic tomb. This is a small building erected, about 480 B. C., by the Athenians as their treasury, or storehouse for votive offerings, at the famous shrine of Delphi. It has been much mutilated, the roof is gone, the cymatium crowning the raking cornice is broken, the walls have been badly damaged and only fragments of the original columns are in place—one entire shaft and part of the other are restorations and one capital has been partially restored. Even in this ruined state the beauty of its proportions and the perfection of its detail can be appreciated.

This structure consists of a small room entered through a portico. The side walls of the building are extended so as to enclose the ends of the portico and on the façade are finished, top and bottom, with mouldings, thus forming the Greek prototype of the Roman pilasters—called *antæ*—serving to bear the ends of the entablature and harmonizing with the two Doric columns which form the other points of support.

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TOMBS OF THE SCALIGERS, VERONA, ITALY. GOTHIC, FOURTEENTH CENTURY

*Photograph by D. Anderson, Rome*



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A practical difficulty in the designing of a small tomb having a portico is found in the necessity of placing the columns far enough apart to allow of dignified passage of the coffin and its bearers. To gain the necessary width some designers, when using four columns, place two close together on each side of the entrance. This should never—the point cannot be made too emphatic—be done. The fundamental idea of a series of columns bearing an entablature is that these points of support should be equidistant, or apparently equidistant. Where four columns are used the central void may be slightly greater than the voids on each side of it but the difference should not be so great as to be noted in a casual glance. The group of columns should count as a unit, whether there are four, six or eight.

In the chapter dealing with the column the use of the “engaged” or “three-quarter” column is condemned, since the sinking of a portion of a column (designed as a free-standing weight-bearer) in a wall is unreasonable. The pilaster of the Romans differs from the anta of the Greeks in that it merely copies the cap and base of the column—it is less logical than the Greek anta which has special mouldings suited to it as a part of the wall from which it projects. Where an architrave rests upon a wall or where enrichment is desired—as on the side of a tomb—nothing more nearly suggesting the column than the pilaster should be used; in spite of Roman procedure the engaged column should be avoided. Because the Romans were illogical and because many Renaissance and modern architects have followed them is no reason for perpetuating this unreasoned feature.

The foregoing paragraphs might seem to imply that columns are a necessary part of a “classic” tomb. This, of course, is not the

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case, but the problems which arise when columns are used are so important that this emphasis has been laid upon them. When the tomb is without columns there remain the questions of the correct use of entablature and pediment. The designer must be very sure of himself before venturing to vary the forms and the proportions of the classic entablature. Not that any unbreakable laws exist; but since these groupings and proportions are the result of long and serious study by designers whose equals have rarely been found, only an equally skilled designer will succeed in any attempt to change them. In our modern tombs many variations will be found; here an architrave omitted—there a frieze far overhanging the shafts of the supporting columns—in another the cornice heavy and badly proportioned; changes which may, of course, be made by anyone who cares to do so, with results doubtless satisfactory to the ignorant but unbeautiful to those with an appreciation of architectural forms. These remarks apply equally to the classic pediment. This is often given a pitch so low that the harmony of the structure is lost; again, the pitch is so steep that Gothic rather than classic proportions are suggested—the result being even more inharmonious. The mouldings of the raking cornice are at times given strange profiles, destroying the beauty of the classic pediment. Stone-joints are found illogically placed—cutting, for instance, through the meeting-point of the raking cornice and the horizontal mouldings from which it rises; and this in a Roman pediment where the fillet must, at this point, be continuous. At the top of the pediment the cap-stone of the roof is often allowed to project vertically and the beauty of a clean-cut silhouette is lost. Even more unfortunate is a feature occasionally seen: an angelic figure poised on the apex of the gable. In such a position a figure, large or small, must be out of scale and,

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therefore, out of place. It is hard to decide whether such a figure or a name, cut in large square letters in a frieze, gives more directly the touch of vulgarity to a tomb.

The door and its framing has been discussed. The framing of the window—when such a feature is introduced—should consist of simple mouldings harmonizing with those about the door. Slightly roughened white glass (for the sake of its harmonizing texture) should be used, set in lead or bronze—the metal lines following the classic “fish-scale” pattern or the simple mesh of vertical, horizontal and forty-five-degree lines used in the pierced stone screens of classic architecture. Pictorial windows, in rich colors, are out of place in classic structures; if color and devices are demanded nothing more elaborate than symbols or conventionalized classic floral forms, wrought in white glass with touches of blue and green or green and yellow, should be allowed. If, in spite of expert advice to the contrary, the client insists on “stained glass” in the window, at least the external appearance of the tomb should not be marred by the use of irregular patches of opalescent glass—a practice indulged in by many glass-workers, much to the detriment of the appearance of the buildings where such windows are permitted.

Finally comes the question of the scale of the stones used and the correct placing of stone-joints.

For some reason the use of large pieces of stone seems at present to be the fashion in the building of tombs. If an entire side wall, or an architrave supported by four columns, or a whole roof can be cut from one piece it is so cut and those in charge seemingly take great pride in the achievement. From the technical point of view it may be an achievement, but from the standpoint of design the results are usually unpleasing. A wall is more satisfactory when it is clearly a

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built-up structure and the horizontal and vertical joints are needed to give scale. The architrave should be jointed above a column—otherwise the supporting member loses its reason for being. A single stone used for the roof destroys (save in rare instances) the scale of the tomb; it is really appropriate only for a sarcophagus. A built-up structure is far more effective if the stones used are relatively small. A side wall built of blocks extending the full length of the tomb not only has no scale, but it lacks the structural sense which is a part of the charm of a well-designed building. Tall and narrow stones may be used for columns—and occasionally even for door-jamb—but in no other case. In interior work a veneer of marble, with panels higher than they are wide, is permissible, since it is clearly a wall covering—but in exterior work the greatest dimension of the blocks should extend horizontally that a feeling of stability may be given.

Whatever the cause—whether it is supposed that the big stones give an appearance of richness or nobility—whether it is more costly so to cut them or less expensive than the use of small pieces—it is to be hoped that a more reasonable use of masonry will soon take the place of this unstructural, unarchitectural fashion in the designing of tombs.

When a free-standing tomb in the Romanesque or the Gothic style is desired the designer has no easy task before him. There are few historic examples which will help him; he must devise a structure which will serve his purpose and be in harmony with the details characteristic of the chosen style. He can study the baptistries and small chapels built during the thousand years from 500 A. D. to 1500 A. D. and the canopied tombs and the wall tombs which are mentioned below will give him valuable suggestions. But he must forget, for the moment, all that he knows about the forms and pro-

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MARSUPPINI TOMB, SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE; BY DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO

*Photograph by Fratelli Alinari*





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portions of classic tombs. He should imagine himself a worker in the twelfth or the fifteenth century who had never seen a classic building nor a classic moulding—he must think of his building as a Romanesque or a Gothic builder would have thought. If the designer cannot, in a measure, do this the results will be no better than those obtained by the men of the “Gothic Revival”—at which time, as has been pointed out, Gothic detail was placed on structures essentially classic in form. Only in very recent years have a few designers been able to give to such structures some of the true mediaeval aspect—serious men who are willing to study and who are, besides, gifted with imagination.

The general principles underlying the design of Renaissance tombs differ little from those which must be borne in mind when tombs in the classic manners are designed. The Renaissance tomb should be lighter and more ornate; the capitals most often delicate variations of the Corinthian capital of the Romans; the pilasters ornamented with arabesques in low relief. There is great opportunity for individual treatment when Renaissance motives are used—much greater charm is obtainable and, it goes without saying, the chances of combining forms in illogical or unbeautiful ways are more numerous than is the case when the designer keeps to the simple Greek or Roman models.

The free-standing canopied tomb is a form which has been used for many centuries—the actual grave or sarcophagus being covered by a roof borne by columns or arches. An interesting Romanesque example is that of Roger of Sicily—who died in 1154—in the cathedral at Palermo. The Scaliger monuments, reproduced in Plate XVII, are perhaps the most noted Italian structures of this type, although numerous variations are found throughout Europe during

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the Gothic period. The tomb of the Count de Castlebarco, also in Verona, has an impressive setting; some interesting forms are found in Bologna. Other very elaborate canopied Gothic tombs are those of Marguerite de Bourgoyne in the Cathedral at Bourg, France; Aymer de Valence in Westminster Abbey, London; the Chantry of Prince Arthur in the Cathedral at Worcester, and at Tewksbury Abbey the elaborate Warwick chapel and the over-decorated Wake-man Cenotaph.

Free-standing canopied tombs are occasionally met with in the Renaissance period, but the Renaissance wall-tombs furnish us with some of the most interesting of funerary monuments.

The temples of the ancients were rarely, if ever, used as burial places. The Christianized descendants of the Romans continued for some centuries to bury their dead in cemeteries beyond the walls of their cities, far, of course, from the churches; then gradually the custom of burial within the sacred precincts arose. In this way the altar-tomb, the richly carved slab covering the grave beneath the floor of the church and the sarcophagus placed in a niche were developed—the latter arrangement giving us the Gothic and Renaissance wall-tombs which are so numerous and in many cases so beautiful. The only direct help which these can give the designer is when a cenotaph is to be erected; but indirectly they are of the greatest value. The beauty of composition, the perfection of detail to be found in these monuments, make them a most useful source of suggestion and of inspiration.

The Gothic examples range from the sarcophagus within a simple niche—such as may be seen in the old Cathedral, Salamanca, Spain; in Chaucer's tomb in Westminster Abbey, and in a hundred other European churches—to the elaborate form given the tomb of *One Hundred Twenty-six*

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Alfonso of Spain in the Carthusian convent at Burgos (Plate XVI). Two interesting Italian examples are those of Clement IV in the church of S. Francisco, Viterbo, and of Honorius IV in the church of S. M. in Aracoeli, Rome. A somewhat unusual form of wall-tomb is found in Venice, in S. S. Giovanni e Paolo, where the sarcophagus of the Doge Morosini is placed in a niche high up in the wall surrounded by elaborate carved and painted decoration.

Splendid as are the Gothic wall-tombs, the sculptors of the Early Renaissance in Italy have left us the most thoroughly satisfactory group of these monuments. From the famous Marsuppini tomb, reproduced in Plate XVIII, one can get an idea of the general arrangement of these tombs, though that of Count Hugo in La Badia, Florence, by Mino da Fiesole, is perhaps the most beautiful.

The development of the Renaissance style in the other countries of Europe produced elaborate wall-tombs, such as that of the cardinals of Amboise in the cathedral at Rouen, France, and that of Lord Marney, in Layer Marney church, England. The early Renaissance forms were succeeded by more pompous, but not more beautiful, monuments. Beauty of form and proportion gave way to cleverness and freakishness and quite astonishing technical skill was wasted on designs which may nowadays interest the unthinking but which are beneath contempt as works of art. We find monuments supported by figures of black marble which are draped in garments cut from alabaster; skilfully wrought skeletons lifting slabs and aiming darts at the realistic figures of the departed; huge angels with wildly fluttering drapery poised in mid-air holding up curtains cut from stone of a different color; innumerable tasteless absurdities which are, unfortunately, not altogether things of the past. The cold, classic forms employed by Canova and his school were a pro-

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test against these frivolous productions of the early eighteenth century. But the designer should turn to Italy when a Renaissance tomb is being considered; the years between 1400 and 1550 will supply him with inspiration which will last him a lifetime.





"IL MARZOCCO," FLORENCE, ITALY; BY DONATELLO (1386-1466)

*Photograph by Fratelli Alinari*

## CHAPTER XI

### SOME SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING PUBLIC MEMORIALS



THE statesman, forgetful of self, labors that his fellow citizens may live more happily; the educator, wise and patient, sifts the knowledge of the ages that the rising generations may acquire wisdom; the soldier risks his life that the ideals of his people may be safely established. Were we called upon to select those who should help these men in their tasks it is probable that we would pick and choose with great care. It is not likely that we would appoint an actor, no matter how fine his character or how great his skill, to advise with the statesman. A lumber king who has worked his way up from the bottom would not, however upright and worthy as a man, be our choice when looking for an assistant for an educator whose work was of national importance. In deciding who could best help the warrior in his campaigns we should not, probably, select an illustrator even though his work delighted the eye and his life were irreproachable.

When the statesman dies we erect a monument to him; men of eminence—churchmen, physicians, jurists—are honored by memorials and, above all, the man who has died fighting for his country has his memory kept green by a monument built at the public expense.

But what of our procedure when such a testimonial is proposed?

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It seems strange that practical people who would not think of selecting a committee composed mainly of house painters and ask that the statesman allow them to dictate his policies—who would not suggest to a college president that he engage as advisers the sea-captains from the neighboring port, though good fellows all—or ask a general to be guided in the disposition of his forces by a group of bakers and bankers, excellent citizens though they might be—that a people who would do none of these things do not hesitate to put the selection of designs for our public memorials in the hands of men who are ignorant of the simplest matters pertaining to the Fine Arts. We realize that expert advice is necessary in matters of statecraft—in legal or financial matters; but when the Fine Arts are in question the Man in the Street (judging by our usual procedure) is as well able to give advice as the most highly trained architect or sculptor. If one of us is about to invest twenty-five thousand dollars he will cheerfully pay fifty or a hundred dollars or three times that amount to have the advice of an expert that he may be sure that the investment is a wise one. But when we are about to spend twenty, ten or even but five thousand dollars on a monument to our honored dead, do we gladly give a small percentage of it for the services of a trained adviser that the fund may be wisely invested?

By no means. Why should we? Cannot the mayor and the oldest veteran and the leading citizen make a perfectly satisfactory selection? Why waste fifty or a hundred and fifty dollars on getting an architect or sculptor of national reputation to pass upon the designs when the leading citizen knows what he likes and, therefore, feels sure that his fellow-townsmen will like it, too? We are careful in the investing of public funds in stocks and bonds because these things really matter; when investing in a public memorial we seem

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to lose our common sense—probably because the appearance of a mere monument matters so little to the majority of our citizens.

In a public lecture given in one of our larger cities the writer referred, in gently sarcastic terms, to the Soldiers' and Sailors' monument which occupies the center of the chief public square. After the talk a veteran of the Civil War approached the lecturer and said, regretfully: "You don't admire our monument? We worked hard to get the money for that and we are mighty proud of it." That is the pathetic part of this matter; the affections of those who had to do with the building of these memorials blind them to the crudeness so often found in the designs and to the lack of excellence in the execution.

Save for a few isolated examples our public has little opportunity for seeing really good memorials; it is, therefore, not surprising that the average civic monument now being erected is unworthy of the place it occupies. In the case of our memorials to the heroes of the Civil War, for instance, this does not apply only to those erected a generation ago; some of the more recent are just as commonplace as those of the 'seventies; the compositions as uninteresting, the figures as doll-like, the execution as poor as ever. Few persons, it is probable, will be found who can say that the contemplation of our public memorials gives them pleasure. The monument is erected, unveiled with appropriate ceremonies—then the natives of the town never look at it again and the visitor glances at it but to scoff.

This would seem to be an unwise expenditure of money. Why erect a monument at which no one looks with pleasure; why attempt to honor the dead with structures which merely display the lack of taste of the living?

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We do these things because the general public does not care how commonplace and unbeautiful the monument may be. Furthermore, never having seen a monument which gave them pleasure the majority of our people do not realize that such structures can be things of beauty; that the monument should be to the city what the jewel is to the costume of the wearer—the focus and final note of beauty.

When a large sum of money is to be spent upon a public memorial (and this occurs only in our great cities) expert advice is obtained and, in the majority of cases, a work of lasting beauty is erected. But in the smaller places, where eight or ten thousand dollars is the utmost that the town can afford, the matter is left in the hands of citizens who are eminently worthy—as citizens—but who in all that concerns the Fine Arts are, as a rule, densely ignorant. These excellent persons, did the matter concern legal, medical or financial affairs, would, as a first move, secure professional advice; when it is merely a question of art they do not for a moment doubt that they can supply all the wisdom necessary.

Our people are at present engaged in the fitting task of raising memorials to those who lately gave their lives for the cause of liberty. These will take many forms. We read of plans for a great hospital here, a public auditorium there and in a third place a memorial arch is contemplated. These are in large cities where there is an abundance of money for such purposes and where, possibly, the public will, from established habit, seek the aid of experts. But there are innumerable small places where a memorial of some kind is greatly desired—a tablet or monument in the town square—and where the available funds will scarce rise into the thousands.

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## PUBLIC MEMORIALS

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It is for those who must solve the problem of how to obtain the best results from a modest outlay that this chapter is included in this book.

The first point to be made is that a work of art must be obtained—something of lasting beauty; if the matter is wisely handled the amount spent on it will make no difference. There is no reason why the memorial costing but a thousand dollars should not be as beautiful as that which costs fifty times that amount. It is not a question of money; it is a question of taste.

If a committee insists upon having three life-size figures, with their setting, for five thousand dollars, artistic failure will result. No sculptor of ability would accept such a commission knowing that it would be impossible, even though he made no charge for his services, to produce a work of art. Should the committee, on the other hand, select an architect of note and ask for a memorial of granite or marble, without figures, the structure, though small, would (or should) be a thing of beauty. It cannot too strongly be insisted upon that where only small sums are available figure sculpture should not be thought of. The number of sculptors who can conceive and execute memorial figures worthy of public erection is not large; unless beautiful and inspiring figures can be obtained our public places are better without any statues at all. We have already too great an array of dreary, dull, unbeautiful statues; do not let us add to their number.

Above all things let us avoid, save possibly in bas-relief, the modern costume. In the hands of a genius it may result in an artistic triumph; in the majority of cases the coats and trousers of our honored dead, reproduced in bronze or marble, are more ungainly than anything in the whole history of sculpture. If a likeness of the great

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man is demanded let us, by all means, have a bust of him; but if figures are desired let them be symbolic that, freed from the restrictions of the dress of the period, the sculptor may create beautiful forms.

The larger number of the committees who select our public memorials must be sadly lacking in imagination. A figure on a pedestal seems to be their first thought. If this is too costly they turn to that inexcusable form—a tablet of bronze affixed to a boulder. There their inventive resources stop.

Yet there are so many beautiful forms from which to choose. The obelisk is always impressive. A simple column—without an eagle atop—if well cut and rightly placed has dignity. A properly designed pylon may be a thing of beauty. Small canopied structures; fountains, large or small, with endless possibilities for effectiveness; Greek stelae; flag-poles with ornamental bases; sun-dials, simple or complicated; Celtic crosses; urns of bronze or colored marble upon graceful pedestals; exedra; tablets properly placed in architectural framework (a most pleasing example of this type of memorial, by R. Clipston Sturgis, has recently been erected on the Common in Boston); lions, erect or recumbent; there is no limit to the number of appropriate and beautiful structures which may be used whose cost would be comparatively small. Artistic judgment is, as always, necessary. Any one of these forms may, in unskilled hands, prove most unbeautiful; but the same is true of groups of figures or of triumphal arches.

Plate XIX shows one of the small but effective public monuments erected in Florence in the fifteenth century. Much of its effectiveness is due to the fact that it was designed and executed by a great sculptor—Donatello. A seated lion supports a shield bearing  
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the lily of Florence. The pedestal upon which it rests has unusual charm. It consists of a central block at each end of which are placed two baluster-shafts, beautifully proportioned and enriched; these bear a carved frieze. The more famous Lion of Lucerne is naturalistic and in effect extremely sentimental; in Donatello's lion there is sentiment without sentimentality and it is highly conventional. This latter quality, as has so often been insisted upon in these pages, is an essential if a work is to endure. No lion or eagle or human figure which closely follows the appearance of nature will ever rank as a work of art; it must be conventionalized—otherwise it is mere imitation and can have no lasting appeal.

When a memorial is contemplated the following procedure is suggested. The committee in charge should secure, either as designer or adviser, the services of the best architect within reach. He should be told the sum which has been appropriated and be asked to present two or three designs from which the committee may make its selection; he should be paid the fees established by custom and the execution of the design left entirely in his hands. If he is paid a fee simply as an adviser the various designs secured by the committee should be presented to him and his choice should be final. If the available sum is great enough two or three sculptors working in collaboration with architects might be asked to submit preliminary designs which should be paid for. Two or three experts should be asked, for a stipulated fee, to select the best design; the winners should then be unhampered in its execution.

It might seem to some that in these suggestions the word "fee" has been rather frequently used. But physicians are not asked for free advice, nor are lawyers; why, then, expect other professional

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men whose advice is invaluable to serve the public without compensation?

The trouble is that such advice is not, by the general public, regarded as invaluable. And a glance at the vast majority of our public monuments shows the results of that attitude.





A GREEK FRAGMENT. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON



## CHAPTER XII

### A CONSIDERATION OF SCULPTURE



ALTHOUGH a plain memorial, well proportioned and with properly designed lettering, may be entirely satisfactory, it must be admitted that some form of enrichment adds to its interest. This usually takes the form of decorative carving. The word “decorative” applies to both carving and sculpture—since all ornamental forms must serve as decoration; but where to draw the line between these forms which might properly be referred to as “carving” and those to which the name “sculpture” may be given is not easy. As far as processes are concerned both are carved, or modeled and cast in metal. There are, however, many carved or modeled forms which could not be referred to as sculpture. As a general rule, we may limit the use of the latter word to figure work, occasionally including the higher animal forms, such as the lion and the horse, when these, by themselves or used with a human figure, become individually important.

By “carving”, then, we will mean all decoration applied to mouldings, all geometric motives—such as the fret and the guilloche; all forms derived from plant life, and animal and human motives when these are used in subordinate positions.

The necessity of using conventionalized floral and animal forms cannot too strongly be emphasized. Naturalistic carving has no place save in a museum of natural history. Lilies, roses, ferns and

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such-like floral elements must be rendered in a purely conventional manner. Exact imitation of these is impossible; why, therefore, waste time and energy in attempting to do something which is sure to result in failure; pathetic failure from the standpoint of the botanist; deplorable failure from the artistic point of view? The slightest exercise of common sense should convince anyone that since the headstone, the cross, the tomb are abstract forms—forms not derived from any suggestion in nature, but products of man's imagination—ornament placed upon them must, to secure harmonious results, be treated not naturalistically, but imaginatively; the flower or leaf not imitated, but used as a basis for a more or less formal design. Only by this method may artistic results be achieved. Those who persist in demanding or executing naturalistic flower or animal forms are proving themselves lacking in common sense as well as in artistic judgment,

Why, it might well be asked, if such contempt should be heaped on those who like realistic roses and ferns cut in stone, do we find numerous examples of these things? The answer is twofold. First, because unimaginative people like that which they can recognize at a glance. The realistic stone rose, however badly cut, however lacking in true decorative quality, they see is meant to be a rose and they pass on, satisfied with their powers of perception. If the flower is conventionalized they are puzzled by it—made to feel ignorant—and, having no feeling for decoration (although pleased by imitation), dislike the thing for which they have no standards of recognition or appreciation. The second reason concerns the producer. Imitation is merely a matter of skill; the trained stone-cutter can, with an actual rose before him, achieve some kind of semblance of form. But to conventionalize leaves and flowers one must have a

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trained mind—trained artistic conceptions—one must have a knowledge of design and be familiar with the best decorative work. Judging by the work in our cemeteries we still have with us some few who have not as yet attained these qualifications.

Should all floral forms be conventionalized, may we then be assured that the decoration will be artistically satisfactory? Unfortunately, no. Leaves and flowers may be non-realistic and yet so composed that the relation of one motive to another and of the decoration to the object as a whole is unpleasing. It is just as essential that the motives chosen be well composed as that they should be conventionalized.

The matter of technique—of the skill of hand of the modeler or carver—plays an important part in the effect of a piece of decoration, yet should not be over-emphasized. We are too much inclined to praise a thing which shows skillful handling and neglect the more important considerations of design. It is far better that ornament be well designed and poorly cut than that it should be technically perfect and yet fail when considered from the point of view of artistic fitness. If we can have technical excellence coupled with beauty of design, so much the better; but we should never lose sight of the fact that the latter consideration is very much the more important. The perfection of Greek workmanship cannot be too highly praised, yet were the designs not beautiful the skill expended in cutting them would represent wasted effort. The same may be said of the skill shown by the sculptors of the Renaissance; in those things which we admire the thought, the feeling which inspired them is of value, though we rejoice that the technical excellence was such that the artistic quality is not marred by poor workmanship.

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When we approach the question of sculpture the matter becomes more complicated. How is one to lay down rules the following of which will produce figures of artistic merit? Of course there is the fundamental requirement that the figure must be decorative, and it cannot be truly decorative if it is treated in a realistic manner. But how far should one go in making the figure non-realistic? The figure must, in certain respects, conform to nature. It must have the proper features and limbs; drapery, when used, must suggest actual drapery; as in the case of the lily or the fern, however, there should be *interpretation* and not *imitation*. This is one of the things most difficult of attainment. There are further complications of emotional expression, of design and composition. It is no easy matter to suggest emotion, to express sentiment, and not have the figure too emotional or sentimental; but no rules can be given which will enable the designer to gain the desired feeling and avoid the undesirable or the commonplace. The sculptor can strengthen his instinctive impulses by continued study of the best which has been produced, but in the final analysis it is the spirit within him which will make his work distinctive or otherwise.

The emotional suggestion which is to be conveyed will control the design—the composition. Here again no general laws can be formulated. Take a simple case—a free-standing sarcophagus, the effect of which is to be enriched by the introduction of a symbolic figure. It goes without saying that the figure should not be poised on one foot nor seated cross-legged on the top of the sarcophagus—but the choice of the attitude which will best suggest the desired emotion must be determined by the sculptor. If he desires to suggest deep feeling he will, it is obvious, avoid extravagant pose and gesture. What more can be said? In the matter of composition no

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general rules will help him to determine whether the figure had best be placed at one end of the sarcophagus, at the center on one of the long sides or at a spot between these two positions. Concerning the figure itself, what can be said of the management of the drapery, for instance? Merely that it should be carefully studied, that harmonious flow of line is desirable and the balancing of broad, simple planes by masses of shadow-casting folds; that each plane and each fold should be so placed that it plays its proper part in the design; obvious general suggestions, of little value save when the critic could apply them in specific cases.

To return to the matter which can be discussed in general terms—the question of conventionalization. The student in sculpture should, as a part of his training, model directly from life, following as closely as he can the figure before him. (Even in this he must treat conventionally certain elements. The most realistic sculptor has to find some means by which to suggest masses of hair, for instance—it cannot be *copied* in clay or stone.) The serious sculptor remains a student all his life, of course; but when the period of training under a master is past and he becomes a creative artist, he must, as the word implies, create and not copy. A high degree of technical skill is needed by the man who models in wax and colors according to life lay figures for the show windows. But we do not rank him as a sculptor nor would we give the name to the maker of the dress which clothes the figure. Neither can we call a sculptor the man who copies nature as closely as does the maker of the wax figure and rivals the dressmaker by imitating in stone the textiles which she uses. Such a man is a clever technician, but he is not a sculptor.

The sculptor moves on a higher plane. He is a creator of beautiful forms which, secondarily, may suggest certain emotions but

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which, primarily, are expressions of beauty of form as he, within his own soul, feels it. He is not a copyist or an imitator of nature; he does not belong to the "Horse-blanket School of Sculpture"—those who drape a model in a heavy garment and copy what they see. He is one who designs his figure with a definite aim, who designs his drapery so that every line and fold will play a determined part in the composition. He is not the imitative slave of nature, but a master who makes nature serve his artistic conceptions.

We prize Greek sculpture above all other sculpture because it is creative and not imitative, because the Greek sculptor gives us his conception of the supreme loveliness which might be obtained by the human form instead of the chance beauty of a particular model. He does not dispose the drapery of his figure in folds which would be impossible in the actual material, but he does not limit himself to the mere copying of some accidental arrangement. In a lesser degree these observations are true of the best work of the Italian Renaissance sculptors (see Plate XXII). Their figures are less ideal, more emotional, more obviously decorative. Because they are less abstract, approach more closely the everyday human type than do the figures of the Greek sculptors, they are, to many, more appealing. But early Renaissance sculpture is not realistic in the degree in which some of the figures of our modern men are realistic. Although human, although suggesting, possibly, the personality of some favorite model, these figures are, nevertheless, conventionalized.

Plate XXI shows the upper part of the niche which contains the tomb of James, Cardinal of Portugal, in San Miniato, Florence—the work of Antonio Rossellino (1427-1478). Attention is called to it at this point because of its superb decorative quality and its human appeal, coupled with an entire lack of realism. The floral wreath,

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the angels with fluttering drapery, the charming Virgin and Child, are suggestive of real flowers, real garments, real human beings, and yet how far they are from being in any degree imitative! Garments might be so arranged, models might take such poses, but what we have is not the sculptor's faithful imitation of accidental actuality but his interpretation of one or another form to serve a clearly conceived artistic purpose. It is unlikely that Rossellino argued with himself that since these forms must serve a decorative purpose and were to be closely related to abstract architectural forms, such as niches and tombs, they must be kept abstract and conventional—but by tradition and training he thought of sculpture as a part of the architecture which framed it and unconsciously conventionalized his figures. He probably thought of himself as a close follower of Nature; could he see some of the realistic sculpture of the present day he would realize how far (luckily for his fame and our enjoyment) he was from belonging to the naturalistic school.

Great works of art are produced almost, one might say, unconsciously. The moment one becomes conscious of the fact that he is trying to express himself in a certain manner or to produce a work of art according to rules formulated by another the results show his lack of conviction—of sincerity. This can be seen in the sculpture of Canova and his followers. Classic sculpture was the ideal; but the outward forms were copied and the spirit which produced the ancient masterpieces was lacking; cold, dull formalism was the result. He who earnestly desires to produce decorative sculpture (and all sculpture save that in an exhibition of wax-works or in a museum of Natural History is made for purposes of decoration) must so thoroughly absorb the ideals of the best decorative periods that he finally can think in no other manner. When his brain and hand instinc-

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tively refuse to handle form in any but a decorative way—then, if he has imagination, a sense of beauty and technical skill, he will become a great sculptor.

He should live in constant companionship with masterpieces. As he cannot get originals let him buy two or three casts of superb Greek figures and a like number of casts of the best work of the sculptors of the Renaissance. He should have photographs of all the master-works, ancient and modern. Using these not as a copyist would use them but as sources of inspiration he may live in a world of high artistic ideals and in time make them his own.

In any consideration of sculpture the question of ideals must be the chief one. If a marble figure in low relief has been ordered for a memorial it goes without saying that the figure is to be beautiful—is to measure up to an ideal of beauty—but to whose ideal? Who is to set the standard of what is and what is not beautiful? In one way it might be reduced to a practical question—one of dollars and cents. If a client could afford a sum sufficient to secure the services of, let us say, Daniel Chester French, the matter would be satisfactorily settled; we could be confident that the figure would be beautiful. Yet this would only mean that the ideals of that eminent sculptor would be the standard—and still no standards or ideals of beauty in general would have been defined. In the final analysis the question becomes one of personal or collective standards of taste.

Taste, fortunately, can be trained. We are all, in fact, all the time unconsciously training, or at least exercising, our artistic judgment—when buying a necktie as much as when erecting a memorial. The only difference is that lack of judgment in the matter of a public memorial may seriously affect a great number of people, whereas an unfortunate choice in a necktie is not a public calamity.

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DETAIL: TOMB OF JAMES, CARDINAL OF PORTUGAL, CHURCH OF SAN MINIATO, FLORENCE. BY ANTONIO ROSELLINO



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The reader is asked to study the fragment shown in Plate XX, a bas-relief in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, reproduced that the beauty of Greek work may be appreciated. It is not, perhaps, of the greatest Greek period yet it is worthy of close study.

At first glance it might seem to be quite unimportant—only the lower part of a draped figure; of it one might make the remark made by the young woman who was asked if she did not think the “Winged Victory” beautiful. “She might be; on the other hand, she might not. It leaves you doubtful, not having the head.” Miss Sidgwick, the author of the novel in which this observation appears, is to be thanked for giving us this point of view. To the enthusiastic lover of sculpture the fragmentary state of a masterpiece interferes in no way with its enjoyment and it is difficult for him to realize that there are many to whom a Greek fragment is merely a piece of broken stone—beautiful, possibly, when whole, but being broken, of no value or interest.

This Greek relief might be used as a test. Show it to a stone-cutter; if he finds something in it to admire he has the soul of an artist; if his mental attitude is that of the young woman quoted above he is a stone-cutter and nothing more and would never develop into a sculptor though he carved figures to his dying day.

Perhaps the first quality which impresses one in this relief is the feeling of refinement which pervades it.

This is not a matter of the treatment of the surface. A figure may be wrought to the highest degree of perfection of finish and yet lack this quality (as may be noted in many of the works of the followers of Canova), whereas in Michaelangelo's smaller David—a figure never completed, merely roughed out of the block—there is great beauty and refinement. This quality lies in the spirit in

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which the sculptor works; it is a question of ideals and not of technique.

How can the doubter be convinced of this? The matter cannot be reduced to arithmetical terms; it is appreciated by one man and not by another; there, perhaps, the matter ends. The power of appreciation can be trained, but the individual must train himself; artistic appreciation is not a purchasable article.

Technical excellence, of a kind, is easily perceived. A highly polished surface will be generally admired, but few there seem to be who know when it is appropriately used and when it is misplaced. In this relief the texture is exactly suited to the subject; a less finished surface would mean a loss in the delicacy of the forms; a smoother surface would vulgarize it. Yet such seems to be the state of popular taste—judging by the average public monument or private memorial—that this relief would have a greater popular appeal were it polished like an agate. The technical skill required for that would be recognized; the skill of brain (if the term may be used) needed to lead the sculptor to give just the correct surface to his figure is felt only by those who have artistic perception.

In this fragment nothing remains of the figure save the legs, about which the drapery falls leaving the feet bare. The management of this drapery is superb. It is in no way naturalistic, yet there is not a fold which might not be found in an actual garment. It is not photographically true, possibly, but there is in it artistic truth—that is, while the garment might never be seen to fall in such a manner, these beautiful folds can be imagined as being possible—and artistic truth is always beautiful. It is not a contradiction of nature but a realization of what nature might be but rarely is.

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Every fold of this drapery takes its proper place in the composition. The width of a plane or the depth of an undercutting are not matters which just chanced so to be; they are matters of design. The sculptor did not necessarily reason out each detail in advance, but being highly gifted with artistic intelligence wrought perfection without conscious thought. When we listen to a great piece of music we realize that it owes its beauty to the fact that this note follows that and that to change their order would be to destroy the beauty of the air. We do not assume that the composer constructed it mathematically and in cold blood. He was "inspired"—but was subconsciously guided by the store of knowledge which he had absorbed and made his own. In this relief, as in the piece of music, one could scarcely change a detail without injuring the effect of the composition as a whole. This stress is laid on the feeling for design shown in Greek drapery since in so much modern sculpture there seems to be an entire lack of the decorative feeling which should control the use of drapery—of costume.

The work of Augustus St. Gaudens should be studied in this connection. In handling modern costume he achieved the impossible, one is tempted to say; he made coats and trousers interesting, almost beautiful. His "Sherman" and "Farragut," both in New York, are particularly fine in this respect. It might be held that he ranks with the greatest of the sculptors of the Renaissance since he solved so successfully such difficult problems, harder than any ever presented to them. What would the sculptors of that period have made of our garments! Fortunately nothing so ugly as a pair of trousers clothed the men of the Renaissance—much less the gods and heroes of the Greeks. Would that we might have the reproduction in bronze or marble of coats and trousers forbidden by law; that being out of the

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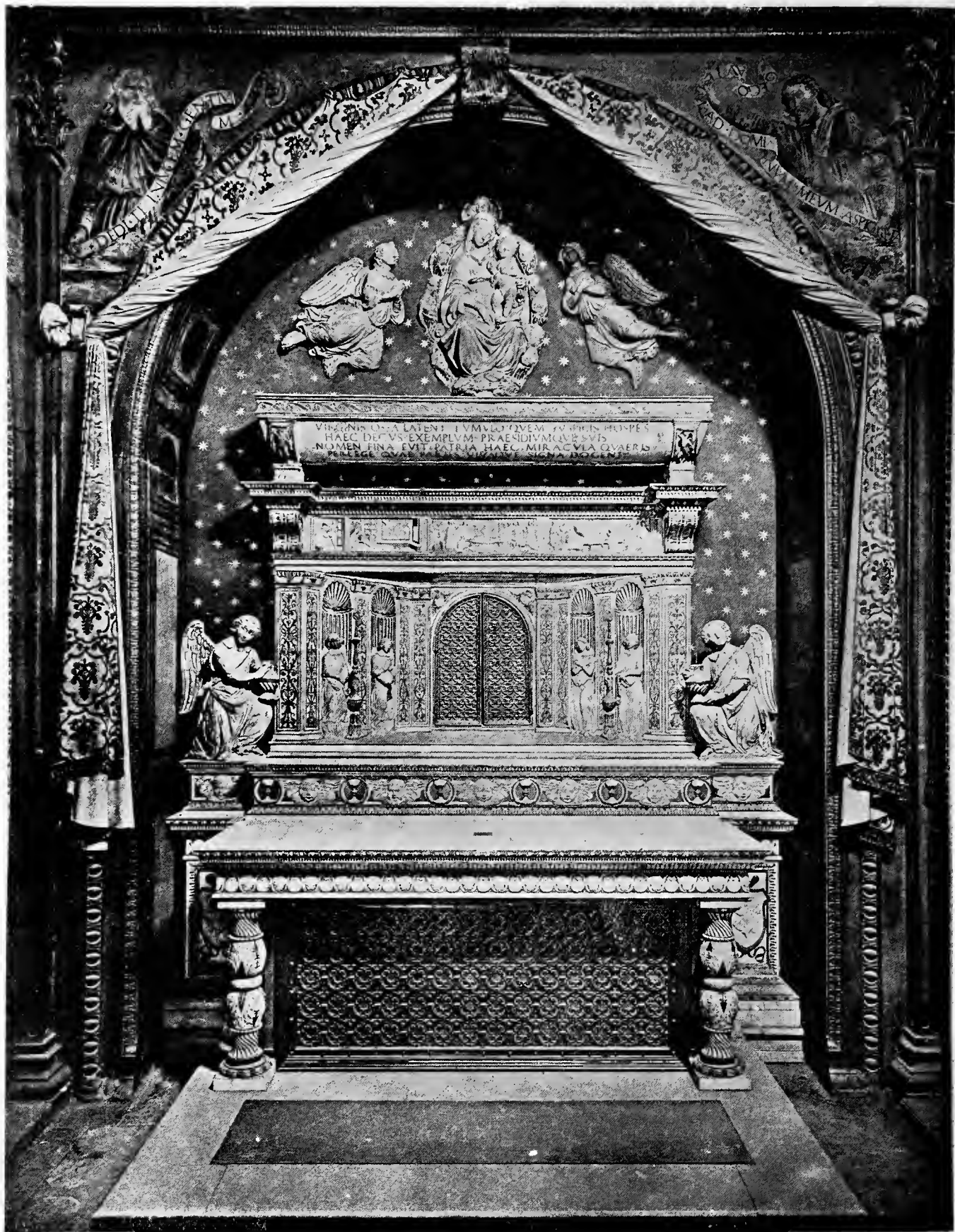
question, public taste must be trained until such unsightly objects will, by popular demand, be swept away. Often, however, when in modern work the sculptor has only "classic" drapery to deal with he seems unable to learn the lesson so brilliantly taught by the Greeks, and gives us unmeaning masses of stone or bronze in place of beautifully designed, expressive drapery.

Again examining this relief the subtle way in which the legs are suggested under the garments should be noted—an art of which the Greeks were past masters. If only every man who handles a chisel could be induced to study this detail of Greek procedure until he had thoroughly absorbed the principles which underlie the as yet unsurpassed sculpture of the Greeks!

The delicacy and refinement of the feet are in keeping with the beauty of the rest of the relief. But if a discussion of the wonders of Greek sculpture as shown in their rendering of the human figure is commenced the patience of the reader will be exhausted. And words are not needed; enough to say—look, and look and then again, look.

One last point concerning the relief; the beautiful and highly conventionalized garland should be noted. The treatment of these flowers and leaves is so simple and so little suggestive of actual flowers and yet so thoroughly satisfactory. Could any realistic rose or fern be so effective? Again, this relief teaches the lesson that forms must be adapted to the material in which they are wrought. Further, that what is wanted is not imitation, but interpretation. A simple creed, indeed.





ALTAR-TOMB OF SANTA FINA, LA COLLEGIATA, SAN GIMIGNANO, ITALY. BY BENEDETTO DA MAJANO (1442-1497)

Photograph, F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich



## CHAPTER XIII

### CONCERNING THE USE OF COLOR



HERE and there in the preceding pages mention has been made of color. One usually thinks of our cemeteries as places filled with white headstones and tombs. White is, of course, the prevailing note. It suggests purity and cleanliness, hence its extensive use. It also has the advantage of being a "safe" color—one cannot go far wrong in using it. It is not, however, necessarily the wise choice. The slate headstones characteristic of the older burying grounds along the Atlantic coast give to these places a quiet charm too often lacking in the modern cemetery with its many gleaming monuments. One feels, at times, that the use of white is carried too far. There are certain types of memorials which preclude the use of white. The Celtic cross, for instance, is more effective in warm gray or pink stone. But, after all, white is the safe color to use. One of its great advantages should not pass unmentioned by one who has suffered from the procedure so generally followed when non-white material is used; it gives little or no variation in color when parts are polished.

A large number of the artistic mistakes found in our memorial work can be placed under the heading "The combining of polished and unpolished surfaces". Although this point has already been mentioned, the (artistic) danger of reckless use of polished surfaces cannot be too strongly emphasized and can most appropriately be taken up when the question of color is being considered.

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Concerning the use of polished surfaces one is tempted to make a sweeping rule—polish everything or nothing. Such a rule, however, while greatly reducing the number of mistakes made would mean the discarding of much possible beauty. Discreetly handled, the combining of dull and reflecting surfaces with their color variations can give, at relatively small cost, varied and beautiful results. The sculptors of the early Italian Renaissance were adepts in such matters, having an instinctive feeling for design and varying the surface of their monuments with delicacy and discretion. Reproductions of the tomb of Leonardo Bruni and the Marsuppini tomb are given in Plates VII and XVIII. In both of these monuments the drapery which covers the bier is made to suggest rich brocade, the pattern being polished, relieved against a roughened background. The textile is merely suggested, not imitated, and the play of color is delicate and very beautiful. Certain designers of memorials nowadays, however, seem to lose all sense of fitness when once they begin to introduce polished surfaces and this and that and the other detail is made to stand forth, dark and shining, till the final result is as spotty and distracting as the patchwork quilt of fifty years ago. Have we not all seen stones so treated?—the sides rough-faced, the front covered with a jumble of panels, names, crosses and meaningless “ornament” polished here and polished there—excusable in the decorative attempts of a child of five, perhaps, but unworthy of anyone having the faintest pretensions as a designer. Such strange concoctions in two colors must appeal to a certain class. They must, to the uncultivated eye, represent beauty and richness, but each one produced means a lowering of the standards of public taste.

As is so often the case it is easy to condemn wholesale these things which few, if any, of us can admire. But to state in exact terms just  
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how far one should go in introducing the changes of color which are obtained when granite and some of the colored marbles are polished is not easy. One might, for instance, say that four-fifths of the given surface should be of one color—that is, the major portion of the design of one color—the other color being more or less incidental. But even with such a general rule a tasteless designer could distribute his one-fifth of contrasting surface in such a manner that an unmeaning, spotty effect would result. Unity of effect should be aimed at; simplicity, or apparent simplicity, should be the watchword. Simplicity does not mean bareness. In the hands of an artist a monument which at first glance seems beautiful because of its simplicity may, upon closer study, prove to be complex in design and rich in ornament; but the contrasting colors of the plain surfaces and the polished ornament will have been used with such skill that the general impression is one of quiet refinement.

It is, in the long run, not the designer who needs the training, but the public. There will, for many years, be among us those who prefer a stone whereon a polished heart stands out gleaming against a dull background (with some realistic flowers thrown in) to a memorial whose characteristics are refinement and simplicity. Following the mistaken idea that the public must be given what it wants, men of little vision continue to produce these unbeautiful objects. The wise and far-sighted man knows that the public takes what it is given; that its taste is slowly improving, and that ultimate success will depend not only on fair dealing but on artistic production as well.

Mention has been made of the relation between design and color, which, of course, includes material and texture. The Celtic cross owes a great part of its charm to the richness of "color"—that is,

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light and shade—and the somewhat coarse texture of the stone from which it is cut; its sturdy impressiveness would be to a great extent lost were it cut in fine-grained white marble. The delicacy of the Greek stela, on the other hand, demands a white, or a nearly white, stone. Such considerations of material and color are inseparable from the design. That which is suited to gray slate is not suited to pink granite, nor will a design which has proved effective in white marble be equally effective in red—truths so obvious that it seems a waste of time to state them.

The color notes in our cemeteries are, at times, a little startling. After a long succession of white or drab monuments one comes suddenly upon a polished sarcophagus of a bricky-red hue—and one wonders what could have induced designer or client to select such a color. Our feeling for color is not, at the present day, highly developed. We avoid color, in the main; when we attempt to use it the failures are more numerous than the successes. Men's clothing is practically colorless; yet a hundred years ago men wore green and bright blue, purple and even scarlet. The young man of today occasionally indulges in a pink shirt, a green hat or sports purple socks; the majority of us satisfy our craving for color only in our neckties. Naturally, therefore, having had for generations no opportunity for exercising our judgment in the matter of color combinations we know little about color and when we attempt any extensive use of it we make mistakes. In the matter of dress women are more fortunate than men, being at liberty to wear what colors they choose. Their color sense should be fairly well developed. Perhaps when more of them enter the field of memorial art we shall have a more general use of color in our monuments.

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For a greater use of our resources should be made. There are so many colors to give us pleasure when used properly; the various gradations of pinks and dull reds—the yellows and buffs—the greens; these used individually or in harmonious combinations open a field of artistic endeavor almost untouched in modern times. In Italy, particularly in Roman times and in the Gothic period, colored marbles and other stones were extensively used in exterior work. Although the expert might point out certain varieties which cannot survive exposure in our rigorous climate, there would still remain enough durable vari-colored material to allow the designer a wide range for his imaginative faculty.

As in the matter of varying colors in a given material by polishing some parts of it, so in combining stones or marbles of different colors an unusual amount of skill and taste is required. There are possibilities of great beauty; also exceptional opportunities for making mistakes. Some of the latter were clearly shown when the Albert Memorial was erected in London. It is rich in stone and marbles of various colors, mosaics, bronze ornaments and statues of marble and of gilded bronze; nothing is lacking except taste. Properly used, however, color would add greatly to the interest of our places of burial. Panels of porphyry set in creamy white; green-veined marble framed in buff; tawny yellow outlined with a fillet of green-black set in gray-pink granite—the variations are limitless; the possibilities unbounded.

It is difficult to write of color without being misunderstood, so great is the confusion in the definitions of color. To one “gray-pink” may suggest a cerise ribbon rescued from the ash-bin, to another fire-lit smoke; yet neither “dull-pink” nor “warm-gray” would, to the writer, indicate just the shade required in the above-mentioned

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combination. The only sure method would be illustration by means of plates printed in color.

An unpleasant type of color combination occasionally seen is that where a figure of white marble—usually life-size and almost always poor—poses in a sentimental attitude beside a block of gray or pink stone, no attempt being made to harmonize the contrasting colors. The basic idea has possibilities of great beauty—but the figure must be a piece of sculpture and not a putty-like doll hewn from stone, and there must be a carefully worked out balance, in composition and in color, between the two elements of the design.

An appropriate means by which color may be introduced has been mentioned—the use of glass or stone mosaic. Of the latter there are two kinds, the “Roman”, in which, as in glass mosaic, the pattern is built up of tiny bits more or less square (the “Cosmati” work of mediaeval times) and the “Florentine”, where comparatively large pieces of marble are cut in the desired shapes and fitted together. An example of this type of mosaic, used in conjunction with carved ornament, will be found in the reproduction of a panel from the font in the Baptistry at Pisa (Plate V) where a pattern of yellowish-white is relieved against a background of dark green marble. The contrast between the flat design in two colors and the broken light and shade on the ornament in relief is most effective. The range of color in stone mosaic is necessarily limited; with glass mosaic brilliant effects in color and gold may be obtained.

Panels or bands of such decorative color might well be used where sumptuous effects are desired. If handled with the restraint and decorative sense shown by the Italian craftsmen from the sixth to the sixteenth century this practice would add much to the beauty of our monuments.

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Another form of decoration much in vogue in Florence and Siena during the same period consisted in drawing on white marble a design planned to cover a large part of the given field, cutting away the background and filling with a durable black paste or cement the space thus obtained; really an inexpensive form of inlay. It is possible that a cement which, so used, would stand exposure in our climate could not be found.

The use of ornaments of bronze as a means of enriching memorial stones will, it is to be hoped, come into more general use. Occasional examples are found in this country, a notable one being the monument to Peter Cooper, in New York City, by St. Gaudens and McKim, Mead & White—a photograph of which, it might be suggested, should be in every designer's portfolio. Varied and beautiful effects can be obtained by the use of panels, scrolls and foliated borders of bronze and changes or color introduced by employing a green patina or by gilding the metal. The latter procedure has many points in its favor, particularly since the gold in weathering assumes subtle variations in color. Those who have seen the gilded bronze figure of Alma Mater, by French, in front of the library of Columbia University in New York City, will recall its beautiful patina.

The gilding of portions of the stone itself, that is, emphasizing details of the ornament by applying gold-leaf to them, was much practiced by the sculptors and decorators of the early Italian Renaissance. This might not prove feasible in exterior work in this climate. When properly handled effects of subdued richness, in every way delightful, have been so obtained.

Plate XXII shows the altar-tomb of Santa Fina, in the church of the Collegiata in the little hill-town of San Gimignano, Italy, by

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Benedetto da Majano (1442-1497). Beautiful in composition, superb in execution, it sets a standard for all workers in the field of memorial art.

Many of the points mentioned in former chapters are here exemplified. Properly to illustrate this chapter it should be reproduced in color, since the employment of partly gilded creamy-white marble, colored marble and bronze is wonderfully effective. The cherubs' heads and chalices in the band just above the altar have backgrounds of colored marble; the details of the mouldings, altar supports, shields and the design upon the "curtains" are gilded. Unfortunately these touches of gold show as black in a photograph so that much of the delicacy and charm of this masterpiece is lost.

There is a field for the bold experimenter in glazed and colored terra-cotta. This material was used for funerary monuments by the early Greeks and the Etruscans, the predecessors of the Romans. In Renaissance times the della Robbia family (1339-1529) produced superb architectural embellishments of terra-cotta and their polychrome reliefs, exposed to the air for four centuries, are as lovely, if not lovelier, than when first put in place. Our architects are using this material more and more. There is no reason why, if handled with proper regard for its limitations, it should not prove an interesting addition to the materials at the disposal of the designer of memorials.







THE ANCIENT GRAVEYARD. STAUNTON LACY, ENGLAND



IDEAL USE OF A FLOWERING BORDER, BACKED BY A  
CLIPPED HEDGE. HOLME LACY, ENGLAND

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CEMETERY



F men should hesitate to suggest improvements of one kind or another for fear that their advice might not be heeded civilization would progress more slowly than it does. Merely because conditions seem hopeless is hardly a reason for not pointing out methods of bettering them. The seeming impossibility may prove to be easily possible, the one thing necessary being that a sufficiently large number of people should be convinced that the improvement is desirable. If enough desire it the change will soon be made.

It is probable that the majority of those who enter our cemeteries are satisfied with conditions as they find them. They wish the roads to be good and the place properly looked after. But that the gateposts are made of rubble-stones held together by a generous use of mortar; that within the entrance there are flower beds formed to suggest anchors or crosses, neatly planted with alternating rows of red and pink geraniums, colias and salvia; that the mortuary chapel is a vulgar example of Victorian Gothic architecture with jig-saw carvings and a roof ornamented with zig-zag patterns in red and green slate; that the avenues are bordered with tombs, headstones and shafts of every conceivable shape, size and color; these things cannot offend the majority of our people. They must be satisfied, else they would set to work to change them. We see such cemeteries on every hand and those who look upon them evidently accept

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them as a part of the established order of things; not only not to be changed, but not needing change.

To persuade our public that ugliness need not be tolerated and that some of the above-named objects are ugly is, apparently, a hopeless task. We are so surrounded with ugly buildings, ugly telegraph poles, ugly trolley-cars and ugly clothes that to hope that ugly cemetery gates and flower beds and monuments be disapproved of seems almost too visionary.

However, one can at least point out the path toward betterment and trust that some may be persuaded to tread it.

The most effective plan for a cemetery will vary according to the character of the site chosen.

If the ground is practically level a severely formal scheme should be adopted. There should be a central focal point from which avenues might radiate, these being intersected by a series of concentric roads. The unimaginative "gridiron" plan should be avoided; we have too much of it in the cities of the living.

In the majority of cases rolling or broken ground is selected for a cemetery. Here a formal plan is not desirable unless great terraces can be constructed—a most effective scheme if properly handled. A few examples of this type are found in France and Italy. But unless a large initial outlay is possible it is wiser, on an undulating tract, to plan for roads which shall wind about the hillsides following the contour with easy gradients.

However informal may be the general scheme there should be, at the main entrance, some suggestion of formality.

Many cemeteries lose in effectiveness because of the haphazard placing of chapel, tombs, roads and flower beds at the point where some suggestion of dignity and orderly planning is needed. In rare

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cases, especially in old, small burying grounds, one finds irregular, chance groupings which have much picturesque charm. But the greater number of our informally planned cemeteries have, as one enters them, neither formal nor informal beauty—no effectiveness of any kind. Objects are spotted about with no sense of composition; they lack focal points; there is an entire absence of repose.

The space within the entrance to a place of burial should be restful to the eye—a spot suggestive of peace. Broad stretches of lawn, unmarred by flower beds and framed by high clipped hedges should make a quiet fore-court—level and with formal outline. Where the driveways pierce the hedge evergreens of symmetrical shape may flank the openings; well-designed benches of stone or marble could be placed at regular intervals along the paths which border the roads and urns of severely classic form, upon high pedestals, may stand against the hedges (see Plate XXIV). If near a trolley line or much frequented road this fore-court should be screened from the traffic by wall or hedge.

Such a place, no matter how small, would have its immediate effect. Though the rest of the place might be quite irregular in plan the visitor would carry away with him the impression created by the ordered dignity of the fore-court; it would linger in his memory like a strain of lovely music.

If something more ambitious were desired a vista might be arranged on axis with the gate-way, having as its focal point a chapel or an important monument, thus carrying the formal part of the scheme further afield. Two or even three such vistas, long or short, could be used, each with a fitting terminal—a tomb, an exedra or a view.

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When one enters a large department store the eye is confused by the multitude of scattered objects all equally claiming attention; there is no unity of effect. From the standpoint of the owner this is, probably, the very impression which should be produced. He has no wish to create an atmosphere of peace and quiet—rather one of bustle and barter; to suggest purchases by the display of articles suited to every need. At the entrances to many of our cemeteries there is somewhat the same confusion produced in the mind of the visitor by the number of objects presented to view, no one of which has a clearly planned relationship to its neighbor. Here a tree, there a flower bed, three or four roads, each with its distracting appeal; to the right a shaft, to the left a chapel; no scheme which presents itself as a united whole. Yet in such a spot the impression produced should be one of peacefulness; this can be secured only by simplicity and order. It would be a simple matter, in existing cemeteries, to construct such formal entrance courts—and at so small a cost that the dignity gained would be worth many times the sum expended.

It has been necessary to discuss, in connection with the general plan, the ground immediately within the gates, though it would seem more logical to speak first of the gates themselves.

The desirability of screening the fore-court has been mentioned. This is advised that it may be quiet and gain in dignity by being shut off—a place apart, dedicated.

Such an idea, however, is rarely found to be acceptable to the modern American; he prefers publicity; he wishes the passer-by to see all that is to be seen. This desire is based on a misunderstanding of human nature. A court which may be seen at a glance will not arouse in the public the wish to stop and look again. But a high wall pierced by gates in which are small openings through which but

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THE DIGNITY OBTAINED BY FORMAL PLANTING; VILLA ALBANI, ROME

*Photograph by D. Anderson, Rome*



CLIPPED HEDGES AND ORNAMENTAL TREES IN  
BOXES. GARDENS OF THE PETIT TRIANON;  
VERSAILLES, FRANCE

*Photograph by F. Helaine, Paris*





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a partial glimpse of what lies beyond can be had will cause even the least curious to desire to see more. Therefore, not only from the point of view of solemnity and peace within but also from the standpoint of arousing interest of the public a wall between the grounds and the highways is advisable.

The style and material of the entrance wall and gates may be infinitely varied. In this country one finds examples of all the architectural styles—Egyptian and classic, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance—and forms (like the rubble-stone posts before mentioned) which defy classification. It goes without saying that the entrance-way should be severe and dignified. The materials need not be costly; a wall and piers of simple red brick, if well designed, may be far more effective than elaborate cut-stone affairs of vulgar form.

The type of gate, the position of the keeper's lodge, of the chapel and other buildings which may find place within the walls cannot profitably be discussed in a brief chapter. All that can be said is that they should be beautiful and in harmony with the gateway.

The subject of flower beds has been touched on. The average taste in this matter, in our parks as well as in our cemeteries, is not above reproach. The placing of beds of flowers here and there, quite at random and without any relation to the surrounding objects; the shaped beds suggesting stars, crescents and emblems of one kind or another; the filling of these with ranked lines of gaudy and often inharmonious plants; there is evidently a childish delight taken in these things which, artistically, are on a plane with colored paper pinwheels and the sugar-candy decorations on wedding cakes. Flowers have a finer purpose than to be used to imitate mosaic or oil-cloth. It is entirely proper to arrange flowering plants in rows

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and to contrast color with color (see Plate XXIII) ; but these rows should not be tortured into geometrical forms and the plants should be allowed space in which to develop their natural, free growth—without which they cannot attain their fullest beauty.

In connection with the use of plants there is an odd popular liking which seems to be allied to that enjoyment felt by the unthinking in witnessing feats that are physically difficult. The trick rider who does “stunts” on a bicycle entertains some because by his skill he defies the laws of gravity and stability. His actions can hardly be called beautiful; in fact, they cannot be beautiful since what he does is contrary to the laws of nature. Very different is the effect of a dive from a springboard. A run, a leap to the end of the pliant board; the clean-cut figure is shot up and out and with a fine sweeping curve plunges into the water—the action beautiful because made in complete harmony with natural forces.

In northern lands it is physically difficult to induce palms, banana trees and rubber plants to grow in the open air, even through a hot summer. If, by the skill of the gardener, Nature’s laws are defied and these can be made to flourish where they were never intended to grow, the performance is admired—not because the result is beautiful but because the accomplishment flatters man’s sense of power. It is proper that man should “triumph” over nature for useful ends; he only achieves beauty when he works in harmony with her laws.

Palms in a northern setting have no relation to their surroundings; they are, and look, unnatural and out of place. How much more sensible it is to cultivate the native growths, plants which, with the minimum results, will be in entire harmony with the landscapes they adorn.

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It is bad enough when exotic plants are bedded out; it is still more unfortunate when they are placed in cast-iron vases mounted on high pedestals. This is true of native growths as well. In the formal gardens at Versailles (Plate XXIV) the gravel walks are ornamented, at regular intervals, with trimmed orange or bay trees in great boxes. These being obviously movable objects and the trees themselves not unlike those which grow nearby, are pleasing. But to see a palm, surrounded by geraniums, planted in a poorly designed vase and this perched on top of a pedestal—a popular method of supposed ornamentation—is as unpleasing to one who loves beauty as is a huge, shimmering diamond on a hand which terminates in uncared-for finger-nails.

The shape usually given to common flower-pots (a section of a cone, inverted)—especially as used in the large Italian examples—is suited to growing plants. Ornamental vases and urns should not be filled but should be treated as parts of the architectural setting.

Fountains do not often form a part of the decorative scheme of a cemetery. We have, for the most part, outgrown the liking for the spouting swan or the two children under the cast-iron umbrella. Pools and splashing fountains may be delightful features when properly related to their surroundings; if jets of water are used it is best to avoid sculpture unless a figure of artistic merit can be procured.

Cast-iron chairs and sofas should be thrown into the discard with the iron vases and the iron dogs. These things may indicate in the users a desire for beauty, but they prove that the artistic level of those who tolerate them is still near that of the savage. Simple benches of classic form—a long slab upheld by massive supports—of stone or of concrete (permissible, though not advised) are little more

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costly than cast-iron seats and have a dignity which can never be approached by the metal absurdities (see Plate XXIV). The rustic seat which, though made of stone, pretends to be cut from a section of a tree trunk with the bark on is, with the cross which makes the same pretense, so indefensible that merely to mention it should be enough to condemn it.

Our city planners and architects have striven, almost in vain, to regulate by law the height and color of the buildings which line our streets—laws enforced in many of the larger cities of Europe. Boston has been far-seeing enough to impose strict limitations as to height, but the color of the structures is left to individual choice. The streets of our cities present a chaotic appearance—occasionally picturesque but rarely beautiful.

The same lack of harmony mars the appearance of our cemeteries. No regulations as to the shape, size or color of the monuments are in force, with the result that our places of burial, which should, above all other places, suggest peace, are as unrestful to the eye as are the streets of our cities. Occasionally one finds an old graveyard where great trees overshadow low, unpretentious memorials to the dead; the sweet peacefulness makes one wish that he might some day rest in such a spot (see Plate XXIII).

The average modern cemetery has no such charm. Pink and brown, white and red and gray—the monuments stand closely ranked; tall stones and flat stones; square masses and oblong masses—the beauty of one marred by the vulgarity of its neighbor; the average burying-ground presents a depressing exhibition of flaunting egotism and uncultivated taste.

What can be done? Nothing presumably, in existing cemeteries. But it would be interesting to watch results should some re-

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former plan a place of burial with restrictions as to form and color along the different avenues; here only tombs of classic design; there, slate headstones of Colonial type; one section for red and another for white monuments, and so on. Once established, the effect of these restrictions upon the taste of those erecting memorials would doubtless be surprising.

A step which might well be taken would be the abolition of the rule, in force in many cemeteries, that hedges may not be placed about the lots. The reason given is that the trimming of these is costly and that it is difficult to cut grass in their vicinity. Clipping privet hedges does call for a large expenditure of time and labor—but if slow-growing evergreens like hemlock, box and yew are planted the labor of clipping them is not great and even when unclipped the effect of such dividing walls would greatly improve the general appearance of the grounds. At least the matter might be left to the owner of the lot; if he chooses to pay for the upkeep of the hedge he should be permitted to plant it. In the matter of grass cutting: if hedges interfere with the grass—and this is possible only in small lots—plant a substitute. There are numbers of low-growing evergreen vines and creepers which will mantle the ground with close-packed verdure, giving, in restricted areas, results which will be more satisfactory than those obtained by the planting of grass. To forbid the use of hedges or of anything else which may give some little sense of privacy seems unjust as well as unwise.

He who has read thus far may feel that the writer is unduly severe in his criticisms of existing conditions. But the artistic standards in our cemeteries are low. The most pleasing owe their beauty to nature; more often nature has been wantonly defaced. The only hope is that those in authority will free their minds from

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the bondage of tradition—sweep them clear of accepted conventions—visualize the ideal which might be achieved; then set to work to prove that the seemingly impossible is, after all, possible.

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## APPENDIX

### BOOKS OF REFERENCE

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### HALF-TONE REPRODUCTIONS

The University Prints, published at one cent each, by the University Prints Company, 11 Boyd street, Newton, Mass., are very useful in spite of their small scale. If the reader will purchase those listed below and, when reading about any particular feature, examine the plates as listed, the text will be found much more interesting.

ARCH—Archivolt, G. 86, 101, 216, 349; Gothic, G. 270, 271, 295, 322, 368; Stilted, G. 84, 88, 156, 172, 176, 186, 203, 246, 251, 255, 257, 297; Voussoir, G. 99, 101, 105, 211, 321, 341.

BALUSTRADE—G. 229, 232, 244; Gothic, G. 201, 303, 452, 469.

COLUMN—G. 41, 46, 48, 52, 53, 58, 229, 242, 429; Base, G. 42, 48, 58, 60, 70, 98, 126; Shaft, G. 52, 70, 87, 95, 234, 344; Capital, G. 43, 48, 54, 60, 61, 70, 74, 87, 88, 95, 98, 126, 129, 214, 232, 343, 349; Early Christian, G. 129; Gothic, G. 378, 457; Antae, G. 52; Engaged, G. 74, 84; Pilaster, G. 84, 88, 213, 226, 234; Development of Gothic pier from (in order given), G. 94, 129, 112, 115, 199, 200, 314, 196, 308, 172, 368, 369, 166, 357, 319, 289, 252, 260, 382, 449, 271.

DOOR—G. 214.

DOORWAY—G. 49, 73, 223, 227.

MODILLION—G. 87, 98.

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- MOULDINGS**—1546, 1557, 1560, 1576 B, 1580, 1613, 1615, 1616, 1703, 1723, 1737, 1774, 1830; Architrave, G. 70, 98; Bed-moulds, G. 98; Bevel, G. 256, 300; Congee, G. 64, 126, 129; Contrast of, G. 8, 41, 70, 87, 98, 214, 259, 322, 336; Dentil, G. 70, 98; Egyptian, G. 8, 19; Entablature, G. 41, 53, 70, 74, 84, 95, 98, 232, 234, 244; Gothic, G. 246, 256, 259, 269, 271, 287, 299, 300; Torus, G. 181, 368, 458.
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