

THE INTERDEPENDENCE  
OF THE ARTS OF DESIGN

RUSSELL STURGIS



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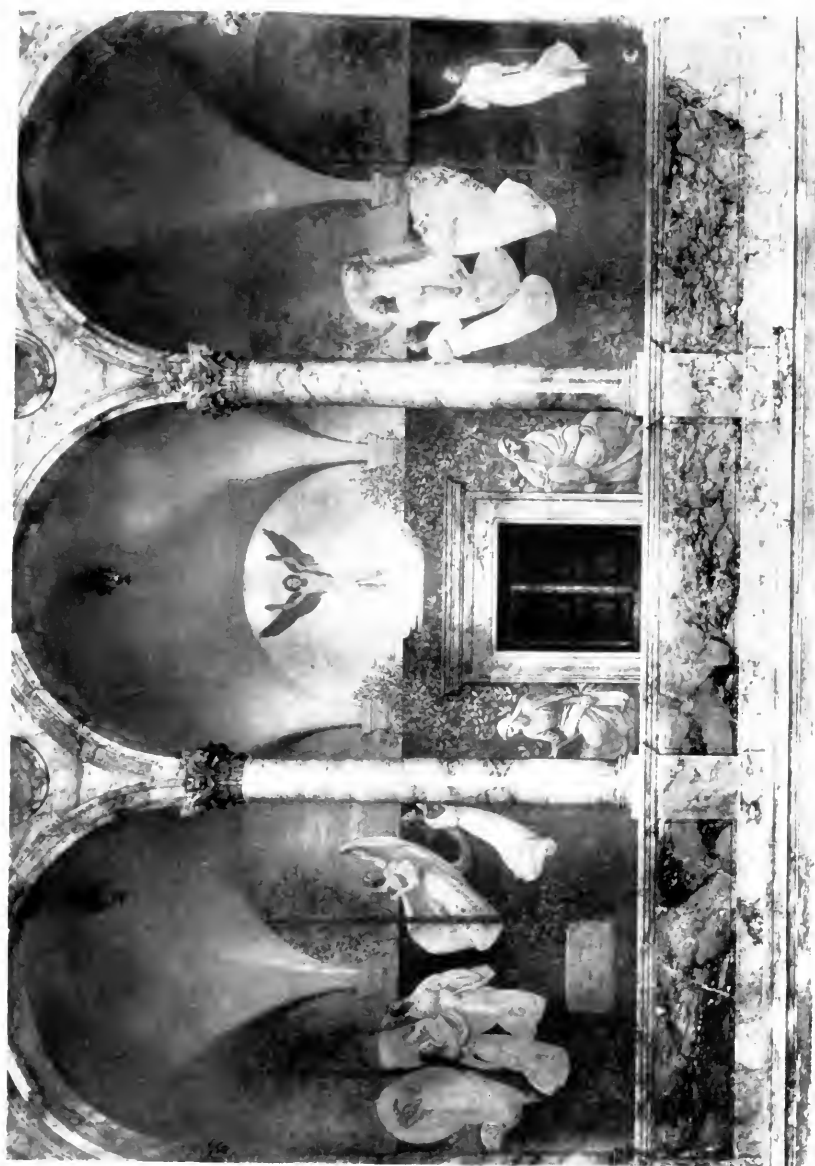




THE INTERDEPENDENCE  
OF THE ARTS OF DESIGN



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THE MUSES RISING TO GREET THE ASPIRING SOUL

Painting on wall of Boston Public Library. Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1894)

THE  
INTERDEPENDENCE  
OF THE ARTS OF DESIGN

*A SERIES OF SIX LECTURES  
DELIVERED AT THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO*

*Being the Scammon Lectures for 1904*

BY

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"THE APPRECIATION OF SCULPTURE," ETC.

*WITH ONE HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS  
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS*



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A. C. McCLURG & CO.

1905

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# NOTE

*THE lectures presented in this volume comprise the second series delivered at the Art Institute of Chicago on the Scammon foundation. The Scammon Lectureship is established on an ample basis by the bequest of Mrs. Maria Sheldon Scammon, who died in 1901. The will prescribes that these lectures shall be upon the history, theory, and practice of the fine arts (meaning thereby the graphic and plastic arts), by persons of distinction or authority on the subject of which they lecture, such lectures to be primarily for the benefit of the students of the Art Institute, and secondarily for members and other persons. The lectures are known as "The Scammon Lectures."*





## CONTENTS

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	PAGE
<i>LECTURE I</i>	
MODERN JUDGED BY ANCIENT ART . . .	11
REPRESENTATION AND SENTIMENT	
<i>LECTURE II</i>	
MODERN JUDGED BY ANCIENT ART . . .	60
DECORATIVE EFFECTS	
<i>LECTURE III</i>	
THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS IN WHICH FORM PRE- DOMINATES . . . . .	85
<i>LECTURE IV</i>	
THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS IN WHICH COLOR PRE- DOMINATES . . . . .	118
<i>LECTURE V</i>	
SCULPTURE AS USED IN ARCHITECTURE . . .	157
<i>LECTURE VI</i>	
PAINTING AS USED IN ARCHITECTURE . . .	194



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## LECTURE I

FIGURE	FACING PAGE
PUVIS DE CHAVANNES' "THE MUSES RISING TO GREET THE ASPIRING SOUL" . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
1. TOMB-SLAB OF HEGESO . . . . .	12
2. DÜRER'S "THE KNIGHT AND DEATH" . . . . .	12
3. DÜRER'S "MELANCHOLIA" . . . . .	13
4. PORTRAIT STATUE OF BEST PERIOD OF GRECO-ROMAN ART . . . . .	13
5. PORTRAIT BUST BY BENEDETTO DA MAJANO . . . . .	24
6. PORTRAIT BUST OF MACHIAVELLI . . . . .	24
7. HEAD AND TORSO OF BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI . . . . .	25
8. PORTRAIT BUST, IN BRONZE, OF ANTIQUE ROMAN TIME . . . . .	25
9. PORTRAIT BUST, IN BRONZE, OF ARCHAIC GREEK TIME . . . . .	25
10. EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF JEANNE D'ARC, BY DUBOIS . . . . .	36
11. GALLAUDET TEACHING A DEAF-MUTE . . . . .	36
12. STUDY OF CLOUDS, MEZZOTINT, BY TURNER . . . . .	37
13. "OSTEND," PAINTING, BY TURNER . . . . .	37
14. "CALAIS PIER," BY TURNER (FIRST STATE OF MEZZOTINT) . . . . .	46
15. "CALAIS PIER," BY TURNER (SECOND STATE OF MEZZOTINT) . . . . .	46
16. "BEN ARTHUR," MEZZOTINT, BY TURNER . . . . .	47
17. "THE PINE TREE," WATER-COLOR DRAWING, BY C. H. MOORE . . . . .	47

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## LECTURE II

FIGURE	FACING PAGE
1. MARBLE FIGURE, BY LUCA DELLA ROBBIA . . . . .	60
2. TWO BRONZE FIGURES, TOMB OF MAXIMILIAN I. AT INNSBRUCK . . . . .	60
3. DÜRER'S "COAT OF ARMS WITH THE COCK" . . . . .	61
4. IDEAL HEAD, BY KLINGER . . . . .	61
5. PORTRAIT OF RUBENS, BY HOLLAR . . . . .	66
6. PORTRAIT OF EDMOND DE GONCOURT, BY BRACQUE- MOND . . . . .	66
7. JAPANESE PAINTING ON SILK . . . . .	67
8. BATTERSEA BRIDGE, ETCHING, BY WHISTLER . . . . .	72
9. MOOR OF ALGIERS, ETCHING, BY FORTUNY . . . . .	72
10. THE MATTERHORN, FROM THE RIFFELBERG (WOOD- CUT, BY WHYMPER) . . . . .	73
11. THE MATTERHORN, FROM THE RIFFELBERG (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH) . . . . .	73
12. "SOUVENIR D'ITALIE," ETCHING, BY COROT . . . . .	78
13. "ENVIRONS DE ROME," ETCHING, BY COROT . . . . .	78
14. DRAWING BY RAFFAELLE, PRESENTED TO DÜRER . . . . .	67
15. ANCIENT VASE, "EAGLE" DESIGN, TWELFTH CEN- TURY . . . . .	79
16. AGATE VASE, PROBABLY ROMAN, TWELFTH CEN- TURY . . . . .	79
17. JASPER VASE, ORIENTAL MAKE, SEVENTEENTH CEN- TURY . . . . .	86
18. MIRROR OF ROCK CRYSTAL, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY	86

## LECTURE III

1. CABINET, FRENCH, SIXTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	87
2. CLAY MODELS OF FURNITURE . . . . .	87
3. SIDEBBOARD, FRENCH, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	94
4. PIECES OF COLOGNE STONEWARE . . . . .	94

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE	FACING PAGE
5. KNEADING-TROUGH AND BREAD-CAGE, FRENCH, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	95
6. SIDEBORD, BY ALEXANDRE SANDIER . . . . .	95
7. ARMOUR OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	102
8. ARMOUR, EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	102
9. WROUGHT-IRON SHEARS, ON STAND, FRENCH, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	103
10. SILVER COVERED GOBLET, GERMAN, LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	103
11. SILVER COVERED GOBLET, FRENCH, EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	103
12. GLASS VESSELS OF GRECO-ROMAN MAKE . . . . .	110
13. GLASS VESSELS OF VENETIAN MAKE . . . . .	110
14. GLASS VESSELS OF ORIENTAL MAKE . . . . .	111
15. REPOUSSÉ WORK IN LEAD . . . . .	111
16. DECORATIVE SCULPTURE IN LEAD . . . . .	111

## LECTURE IV

1. GLAZED POTTERY VASES, FRENCH . . . . .	120
2. LACQUERED TRAY, JAPANESE . . . . .	120
3. IMARI PORCELAIN, JAPANESE . . . . .	121
4. INLAID BOX, JAPANESE . . . . .	121
5. ENAMELLED SCABBARD, STEEL WEAPON, AND SMALL BRONZE VASE . . . . .	128
6. TOP OF BOX, INLAID LACQUER, JAPANESE . . . . .	128
7. ENAMELLED POTTERY, FRENCH, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	129
8. CABINET, ENGLISH, ABOUT 1870 (OPEN) . . . . .	136
9. CABINET, ENGLISH, ABOUT 1870 (CLOSED) . . . . .	136
10. INLAID PAVEMENT, FLORENCE CATHEDRAL . . . . .	137
11. DETAIL OF VAULT, MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA, RAVENNA . . . . .	137

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE	FACING PAGE
12. LAVABO, SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE . . . . .	129
13. PAINTED STATUE, GREEK . . . . .	146
14. FRAGMENT, PAINTED STATUE, GREEK . . . . .	146
15. BUSTS, CALLED SEVERUS AND CARACALLA, ROMAN, THIRD CENTURY A.D. . . . .	147
16. POLYCHROMATIC BUST, BY CORDIER . . . . .	147
17. POLYCHROMATIC STATUE, BY CORDIER . . . . .	147

### *LECTURE V*

1. TOMB-SLAB OF DEMETRIA AND PAMPHILA . . . . .	158
2. TOMB-SLAB OF DEXILEOS . . . . .	158
3. SLAB, TOP OF A STELE RECORDING A TREATY . . . . .	159
4. CHARTRES CATHEDRAL, FROM THE WEST . . . . .	159
5. CHARTRES CATHEDRAL, SOUTH PORCH . . . . .	166
6. REIMS CATHEDRAL, WEST FRONT . . . . .	166
7. REIMS CATHEDRAL, MIDDLE PORCH . . . . .	167
8. MARBLE RELIEF AND SHIELDS OF ARMS . . . . .	167
9. PONTE DI PARADISO, AT VENICE . . . . .	174
10. LUNETTE, AT FLORENCE . . . . .	174
11. THE MEETING OF SAINTS DOMINIC AND FRANCIS . . . . .	175
12. FRONT OF THE OPERA HOUSE, PARIS . . . . .	175
13. FRONTISPIECE ADDED IN 1903 TO CHURCH OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, NEW YORK . . . . .	184
14. DETAIL OF THE FRONT OF SAME . . . . .	184
15. TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, DETAIL OF THE GREAT PORCH . . . . .	185
16. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, FOOT OF GREAT STAIR . . . . .	185

### *LECTURE VI*

1. CHURCH OF SANT' APOLLINARE NUOVO, RAVENNA, SIXTH CENTURY . . . . .	196
2. CHURCH OF SAN VITALE. MOSAIC OF ABOUT 550 . . . . .	196

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE	FACING PAGE
3. LUNETTE, MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA, RAVENNA	197
4. INTERIOR, MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA, RAVENNA	197
5. LABYRINTHS, FROM EARLY CHURCHES . . . . .	200
6. DETAIL OF PAINTED CEILING, MESSINA CATHEDRAL, SICILY . . . . .	200
7. WEST FRONT OF CATHEDRAL, LE PUY, FRANCE . . . . .	201
8. TOWER OF CHURCH AT CLERMONT-FERRAND, FRANCE	201
9. TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, FROM THE SOUTHEAST . . . . .	206
10. DETAIL OF NORTH FLANK OF FLORENCE CATHEDRAL	206
11. CLOISTER OF SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE . . . . .	207
12. DETAIL OF PAINTING IN SAME . . . . .	207
13. FRESCO, SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE . . . . .	210
14. THE SUPPER IN THE HOUSE OF LEVI, BY PAUL VERONESE . . . . .	210
15. CONCORD BRIDGE. IN MEMORIAL HALL, BOSTON . . . . .	211
16. WALL OF A DRAWING-ROOM, NEW YORK . . . . .	211
17. WALL OF SITTING-ROOM, NEW YORK. . . . .	218
18. PANEL FOR MURAL DECORATION, BY COLEMAN . . . . .	218
19. PANEL FOR MURAL DECORATION, BY COLEMAN . . . . .	225
20. HALL IN LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON . . . . .	219
21. CORRIDOR IN LIBRARY OF CONGRESS . . . . .	219
22. MURAL PAINTING IN PUBLIC LIBRARY, BOSTON, BY SARGENT . . . . .	224





THE  
INTERDEPENDENCE  
OF THE  
ARTS OF DESIGN

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*LECTURE I*

MODERN JUDGED BY ANCIENT ART  
REPRESENTATION AND SENTIMENT.<sup>1</sup>

There is constant demand for critical treatment of contemporary fine art,—a demand which takes strange forms and is sometimes peremptory. Writers on the principles of fine art are continually asked to stop discussing the arts of old times and to consider those of the present day. There is, however, a very serious hindrance to one who would gratify that demand, and here lies the difficulty: very recent works of fine art have not yet become well known to any one.

<sup>1</sup> Delivered April 19, 1904, at Fullerton Memorial Hall, The Art Institute of Chicago.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

Take an extreme instance,—the works of James Whistler, who died a few months ago. It was my business to obtain such analysis of his work as could be had by artists, especially by painters. We have in the United States a number of painters who write admirably well on matters of painting. Seven or eight names arise at once in the memory of one who is conversant with the whole field, names of men who are simply excellent critics in this, the most approved and most popular form of the arts of design. And those men, though they feel themselves unable to speak of a brother painter while he is yet alive,—of him or of his works,—will yet consent to write or speak about the works of him who has gone, and who is beyond the reach of injury by any possible jealousy or personal disapproval. But in the case of Whistler there was this insuperable difficulty to be met on the threshold—the difficulty that not one of the painters whom I consulted had seen enough of Whistler's work to dare to speak of it. His black-and-white productions, his etchings, his



TOMB-SLAB OF HEGESO

Athens Museum

LECTURE I. FIGURE 1



"THE KNIGHT AND DEATH"

Print from engraving on copper by Albrecht Dürer

LECTURE I. FIGURE 2



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

dry points, and his lithographs, even some of his smaller chromatic work (not color work exactly, as you will understand, but work in more tints or in more hues than one),—those were accessible, and the painter who did not know that class of Whistler's productions might put himself in the way of knowing it rather soon. The paintings, however, the larger works, the canvases, were not accessible. My friends, the artist-critics, were of New York and lived in the centre of things there; but they had had no sufficient chance to study Whistler's painting. One artist had seen the "Portrait of his Mother" in the Luxembourg; another had seen the portrait of Carlyle at Glasgow; two or three had been at the Paris Exhibition of 1900, and had seen the two or three life-size portraits that were exhibited there,—in the American section, by the way; others had seen and had hoped to study the paintings which were loaned to the Society of American Artists two years ago, and which were withdrawn immediately because of objections to the way in

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

which they had been hung. In short, there was no one who had seen enough of the painting to warrant him in grappling with the problem of expressing in a few words his general opinion of Whistler's art; and yet Whistler and his works—what with their real artistic interest, and what with the extraordinary reputation which that erratic genius had gained by other than artistic efforts—had not failed to attract the attention of every one.

There was indeed an exhibition held in Boston at that very time. One or two of the zealous students were able to put other things aside and to stay a week in Boston for the immediate purpose we are considering. But you see at once the difference between that brief, and as it were, momentary, effort and the easy, the life-long, the unconscious training they had had in the work of the great masters of the past. And you will remember, too, that when George Inness died and when Homer Martin died,—to name only two men whose work may be thought as precious as that of Whis-

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

tlar—there was not the same widespread demand for a knowledge of their work nor the same possibility afforded for the study of it in a great and varied collection.

So it is generally. I am asked, let us say, to discuss some pieces of recent American architecture; but the conditions of American architecture will not become familiar to me or to any one of my generation until it has ceased to be recent. It is not—observe this—a matter of quickness of intellectual appreciation. Given a building complete and facing the sunshine, and a man who has seen a great deal of architecture in Europe and in America, and a ready appreciation of that building may be asked for; but this will not be a relative appreciation. It will not be a comparative opinion that this student forms, because he has not seen other buildings to which this one may properly be compared. He will not have seen the buildings of the same class in this land of magnificent distances,—not many of them; and he will not have seen the buildings of a correlative class in Europe.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

And observe that all art judgment must be comparative. There is absolutely no value in your opinion of a building or of a painting,—no use to yourself and none to your neighbor,—until you have seen and studied a great number of works of art of the same class, and have in this way discovered for yourself the possibilities and the proprieties of the situation. One has, let us say, travelled somewhat widely; and let us say also that only a few months have elapsed since his return from his voyages; but no sooner is he brought face to face in America with a mural painting, or an equestrian statue in a park, than he realizes with horror that the mural painting in the churches which he has seen in Europe is very different from this, the sculpture different in its aim; and also that he did not study it in just the right way. He will realize that he cannot say off-hand just how the new conditions differ from those of the older work. I will not imagine him as finding that he has forgotten much that he saw, and that he has mislaid



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

his notes, and that, in short, he is not as well prepared to judge the new painting as he might have supposed himself a moment before the church door opened and he entered the hall where it is to be seen. I will not assume that; and yet in the face of the new surroundings, the new handling, the new standard set up, our travelled and experienced scholar will come near to thinking sometimes that his study and thought have failed him, somehow. But, you will say, he has his experience of art in general. This critic of yours is assumed to have a wide knowledge of art! Yes; and therefore his opinion of a work of art of a settled kind, if one may say so, is easy to form. Let it be, if you please, a work by an American artist; let it be a painting by Washington Allston, or even a landscape by Homer Martin, than whom I cannot name a more honorable and honored painter. Of that picture our student of imaginative or of landscape painting will be quick to judge, and his judgment will be of value. And why of value? Because

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

the artistic form is accepted, the conventions are known; you involuntarily compare Martin's work with the great pictures of the noble past.

And so with architecture. It is fashionable nowadays for the architects to build with Neo-Roman colonnades, and to find their greatest delight in them; and assuredly these colonnades and the buildings of which they form the chief part, artistically speaking, are within the reach of the judgment of him who has travelled, collected photographs, and matured his opinions about the seventeenth-century Italian and the eighteenth-century French art. It will be seen, however, that these conditions do not hold when the recent work of American art is of a more strenuous character, is original to the extent of novelty. The moment that this most important departure is submitted to our critic, that moment—the moment when judgment is the most needed—he finds it unready. I shall show you by and by a photograph of a most interesting building by a townsman of yours, and I

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

shall confess that it is extremely difficult to pass judgment upon it. I think you will agree with me that in such a case the best judgment is that which is formed slowly. So with paintings, and so with sculpture, and so with the recent very novel attempts at decoration—few, but most interesting, most attractive. Who is to pass upon them? They will have become old things, accepted or rejected, admitted to the category of works of art or by common consent excluded from it, before our critic, no matter how great his gained knowledge, how great his quickness of mind, will be ready to pass upon them finally.

It is not asserted that the critic will wait for popular opinion; on the contrary, the critic with others, will *lead* popular opinion; and this popular opinion will be shaped out of the judgment of the special students of art; but this judgment will be formed slowly. If you go next month to a newly made collection and hear even the most intimate talk of artists about the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

tendencies to be seen in the works exhibited, you will find uncertainty as to significance, as to purpose; indecision as to what is portended or promised by the new departure; indecision as to how far it is a new departure; and you will conclude that it takes years of time to give to any work of art its proper place.

Therefore our experiments at doing this same thing, at placing modern works of art, must be conducted under the most favorable circumstances; and I propose to you that we should try to see what recent art looks like in the light cast by the older art. The older art is accepted, is ticketed, and indexed. You can, with a certain amount of reserve, discover what some excellent judges think of it; you can find out why one competent man prefers Velasquez and another Titian, and why most able critics, while admitting each for himself his own preferences, still hesitate to express them loudly, realizing that it is of little consequence whether you or I prefer Velasquez to Titian, or Rembrandt to

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

Raphael, or the other way. What is of moment, what is important, is that we see clearly and well why Rembrandt and Raphael are both supreme masters, each in his way, the two working on lines so different and yet so like; why Titian and Velasquez are both marvellous painters, executants of the first rank and colorists of unmatched excellence, although their notions of execution and their embodyings of the central idea of color are so unlike.

To judge new art by old, that is the problem; and the immediate aspect of it which we take up to-night is that which is primarily the representation of nature, including expression of all sorts. The subject, of course, would fill ten octavo volumes; which would even be easier to compose than a lecture, because then you would have merely to arrange—now you have to select with care. But still the selection is possible, and let us speak at once of the Grecian funereal monuments, the stelai of the fourth century B. C. There is one which I know by heart, because a well

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

made cast of it was built into the wall above my chimney-piece in that little Athens hotel where I spent five weeks; while the original itself was only a mile distant, at the spot where it had been found in the cemetery outside of the Dipylon, the western gate of old Athens. It is now in the Patissia Museum, the central museum of Athens, but I show you a photograph of it taken while it was still in the open daylight, as the sculptor meant it to be seen (Fig. 1). The interesting point about it can be stated in advance; it is a simple expression of gentle womanhood, and a photograph of it, or a drawing (especially if the two figures alone were shown), would not of necessity excite the emotions of regret, of that pathos which comes of the contemplation of brief human life, of loss and deprivation,—all of which the tomb relief assuredly held for those who saw it when it was first put in place. Therefore let us look at a photograph of Albert Dürer's print, the famous piece called "The Knight and Death" (Fig. 2), in which the mounted

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

man-at-arms rides quietly and with his eyes fixed on the space before him, although close by his side is the ghastly presence which he must know as Death, and behind him, with prodigious hooked spear, is as frightful a fiend as even German mediæval art has produced. The knight, Death, and the Devil: and observe that no one knows what Dürer had in mind, nor what thoughts he intended to convey. There is doubt even to this extent, that excellent judges are of absolutely opposite opinions with regard to it, the one class looking on the knight as the Christian in his pilgrimage, while another body of students thinks that the triumph is with Hell, and not with the Christian's hope in Death. Those of you who still read Ruskin are aware that he himself held both opinions at an interval of twenty years, assuming each in turn as certainly true. And we might give the same amount of attention to Dürer's "Melancholia" (Fig. 3), and explain to ourselves, if we can, why it is called "Melancholia," and indeed just what

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

Dürer meant by that word, whether written as he writes it or as the Latin dictionaries have it; and what the print is about, anyway, as the boys would say. An intelligent English critic says without hesitation that it is the Genius of Industrial Art; but if this is so, why is the word "Melencolia" set so plainly on a scroll in the sky? As for the Roman numeral or letter I, its presence there has defeated all conjecture.

What is it that I am trying to show? I am trying to show that in the important matter of human sentiment expressed in the art of design, the masterpieces of ancient art suffer from the same limitations from which suffers also our work of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. How was it about Hogarth? He was as bold a characterizer as Dürer himself, and in one way more unfettered, more bold and free, in this, namely that he was less restrained by what we now call good taste, and that he was more modern in his time, more immediately a portrayer of what he saw about him. He sets forth in many a pic-





PORTRAIT BUST BY BENEDETTO DA MAJANO (1444-1498)  
 National Museum, Florence

LECTURE I. FIGURE 5





HEAD AND TORSO OF STATUE OF BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI,  
AT VENICE, BY VERROCCHIO AND LEOPARDI

From a plaster cast of the original

LECTURE I. FIGURE 7



PORTRAIT BUST, IN BRONZE, OF ANTIQUE  
ROMAN TIME  
Naples Museum

LECTURE I. FIGURE 8



PORTRAIT BUST, IN BRONZE, OF ARCHAIC  
GREEK TIME  
Naples Museum

LECTURE I. FIGURE 9

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

ture the bad effects of early dissipation, and the horrors of disobedience, and the growth of cruelty, and the miseries of ill-assorted marriage. Nobody can tell an anecdote better in a painting or an engraving; and in that matter of anecdotal painting and of sculpture of incident there is much to be said and more to be thought; but the question is how far Hogarth was able to express more than the mere incident which he relates. Is there anything in the figures themselves, their pose or gesture, their action separately or together, the expression of the human countenance in each—anything to express goodness or evil, hope or despair, gentle affection or brutality? Mr. Hamerton has something to say about this in his shrewd English way, and he points out that if a certain acquaintance of his, who had unfortunately a very red nose, were immortalized by the pencil of another Hogarth, it would be undoubtedly as the dreadful example, as a hint of what would happen to you if you drank too much. “And yet,” says Mr. Hamerton, “my friend

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

is an absolute water drinker, and his red nose has had other causes." Is that a trivial instance? The difficulty is that more subtle instances are hard to express in words. Mark Twain describes the picture representing the first meeting of Blücher and Wellington on the field of Waterloo, and he suggests half a dozen other names for the picture, one of which would be "The Last Parting of Blücher and Wellington on the Field of Waterloo"; and as another, equally appropriate, the meeting, or the parting, of Blücher and Wellington on some other field. "For," says or implies Mr. Clemens, "nothing in the figures themselves, their attitudes, their faces, can express either parting or meeting, or sorrow or joy, or greeting or adieux, or, in short, anything else." Here are the portraits of the two rival commanders of the allied hosts, about whose relative merits as winners of the field there is dispute even to-day, and that is all there is in the way of historical record, except some partially accurate archæology in the uniforms and the horse-trappings.

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

It is, of course, natural, as it is common, that persons who are bid to study the art of the Greeks find it unattractive because of its lack of human expression. It is the reliefs with which we naturally deal, because the statues are separate, each "alone with his glory" in a literal sense of the word. The Hermes of Olympia, even if we had it intact and uninjured, the Apoxyomenos, which is intact, the Augustus of Prima Porta, an uninjured antique statue of the best Greco-Roman time, are all expressive enough in the way of pure art. But we are not at this moment discussing the question of pure art; we are considering the matter of the representation of nature, and especially in the way of bodily and facial expression. We find that the Augustus expresses nothing but a conventional thought of the Emperor's gesture; that the Hermes expresses nothing but the gentle, caressing glance of the kindly elder brother; that the "Scraper" is merely a thought of how a magnificent young athlete looks at himself

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

and caresses, as it were, his mighty right arm as he scrapes from it the oil and the dust and the sweat of the pankration. Now, we have no important painting of the Greek period or of the Greco-Roman period. In the way of graphic art we have only, to represent the spirit of classical antiquity, the work of somewhat mechanical copyists at Pompeii and on a wall or two in Rome.

But as to the figures which have much human expression, they are portraits generally. The seated draped female statue in the Naples Museum is called Agrippina because of its sadness of expression and because it represents a mature woman. This half-draped figure of Drusus, or Germanicus, or some other noble young Roman of the early Imperial time is also in Naples. (See Fig. 4.) The two busts which came from a Roman tomb in the Campagna and now are in the Vatican are the portraits of an unknown Roman and his wife; and this comes very near to giving us that pathos which we ask for in funereal monuments. And why does it so? Because the caress

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

of the clasped hands reminds the spectator first of the life that was, the sympathy and the mutual aid; and, in the second place, of the separation and the nothingness that is. There is no mistaking the individuality of the portrait busts of the Italian Renaissance,—of the portrait bust by Benedetto da Majano in the Bargello (Fig. 5), nor of the anonymous bust at Quarto, of the same epoch, nor of the portrait of Machiavelli by an unknown artist (Fig. 6), nor I suppose of the Colleoni equestrian statue in Venice, of which I show the head and body alone that it may compare the better with the busts we are considering (Fig. 7), nor of the bronze portrait bust of Henri IV. in the Louvre. They are expressive enough, but they are simply portraits. Each is a study of one individual head, and it has had no aim beyond fidelity. And so with this savagely energetic bronze head in the Naples Museum (Fig. 8), which is called by various fantastic names—Seneca (an absurd ascription), and Paulus Æmilius. That piece is also from the villa at Hercu-

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

laneum; and so are the one called, rather absurdly, Berenice and also Aulus Gabinius, and the vigorous head which is set up beside it. The first is alone among busts or statues of good Greek work in the addition to the bronze casting of spiral ringlets made of thin ribbons of the metal, each rivetted to the head, the point of junction covered by an added band around the forehead. Or, to take examples which are not necessarily portraits in a nominal sense, look at this head of a so-called Apollo with the corkscrew ringlets (Fig. 9), — the ringlet in this case not of a flat ribbon, but of a cord, a lock of hair round in its general section. This bust is cut from a bronze statue, as you see. In this way has been preserved for us also the exquisite bust called Plato because of its lofty and gentle expression of face. Comparetti, the historian of the Herculaneum villa, thinks it is a relic of the lost statue of Poseidon holding his son Taras, a piece famous in antiquity; it was set up in the city named from the son, Tarentum.



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

And now let us consider with each and all of these how far they are expressive in movement or in facial rendering. Is there any widely different character given to these works of plastic art found in the works of the masters of the Grecian time, of the Renaissance, of the moderns? I note the manipulation of the eyeball in the bronze bust from Herculaneum (Fig. 8), a non-sculpturesque motive found also in mediæval art and not of a nature that would commend itself, one would suppose, to a Greek. I note a similar treatment of the eyeball in the Verrocchio statue of the soldier of fortune (Fig. 7). In either case the sculptor has stepped out of his immediate sphere, his narrowest, his most limited field, to produce a natural effect by contradicting the facts of nature. We can hardly imagine a Greek of a great time doing that, and yet here it is seen, in a portrait, as we might find it in other heads, both bronze and marble; and from these we learn this lesson about the Greeks, that they were not always in the mind for lofty architec-

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

tonic composition in sculpture. And on the other hand, we find the expressive Machiavelli portrait, the highly individual Pietro Mellini, the busts from the Roman tomb with their life-like aspect and their memorial purpose, all perfected without that non-sculpturesque device.

Now it is a most difficult question to answer—the question whether the art of the nineteenth century shows any advance in this matter of facial or bodily expression. I wonder whether any person present remembers that picture by Arthur Hughes—“April Love,” as it was called, when exhibited in America. In that picture a lover, whose face is not shown, is bending over and caressing the hand of a girl whose face is in full light; and that face has been wrought into a unique design—it has been made the medium for the suggestion of hope and fear and that pathetic sympathy for the other person in the interview which our imagination can easily supply. In this instance there is really an attempt at facial expression carried to a high pitch.

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

It is possible that even if the head and torso of the figure were shown without the rest of the composition, the student of it would be able to say correctly what the sentiment of the face was meant to be. And, pray, observe that in saying this I put the highest possible estimate upon the success of the attempt, in this particular case. For indeed facial expression without the setting, without the descriptive parts of the design, would commonly be mistaken on every occasion and would be rightly qualified if we should say that it did not exist at all. One is reminded of the familiar experiment to try whether the expression of the eye really exists or not. You take the person with the supposedly expressive eye and have him look through a small aperture, allowing only the eye and the small muscles around it to be seen—and the result? The result is disappointment. For it is not inaptly said that the expression of the eye lies in the muscles at the corners of the mouth.

The peculiar sentiment of nineteenth-

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

century art will be found to be chiefly in that the nineteenth-century man had a story to tell, and that his effort to tell it included facial expression; although this last, if we look for it by itself, will not be found very strongly indicated. Here (Fig. 10) is a view of the Jeanne d'Arc of Paul Dubois, taken from the original shown in the Salon of 1880 or thereabout. Notice the violation of all true sculptural feeling involved in the use of metal sheathing which we designate plate armour. A Roman general could wear the bronze cuirass closely modelled to the muscular development of his body; a Roman legionary could wear the steel splints and spalls, movable and flexible adaptations to his leather coat; the Renaissance man, like Colleoni, could be seen in a cuirass and still be a fit subject for sculpture because the mind leaps over the distinctions there and sees the body beneath the rigid covering. But the complete panoply of hammered iron of the reign of Charles VII. of France has no such capacity. To put the body and limbs of a

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

young girl into such a jacket as that, and such cylinders of iron, is to deny the right of the genius of Sculpture to limit with any strictness the proceedings of her followers. And yet one who feels this is also aware that the lovers of narrative and suggestive quasi-historical art have a right to insist that once in a way the sculptor shall yield to the historian.

Vela's "Last Days of Napoleon," the massive seated statue with which many of us are familiar, was injured for us by the rather childlike device of the blanket covering his lower limbs, wrought over its whole surface by a tool "specially prepared for the purpose" as we were told. And yet in this statue how seriously is the problem faced, the problem of expressing in sculpture the feelings which we assume for the closing days of the greatest practical intelligence and the most prodigious egotism which the modern world has known! French's "Gallaudet," with direct reference to the teaching of deaf-mutes by the patient instructor who developed and

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

imparted the finger alphabet (Fig. 11), is as perfectly capable of exciting our sympathy as would be a poem on that subject. But how hard it would be to find in these works of art, any such facial expression as that of which we have been talking! You may as well go to the late Roman reliefs for pathos; indeed you will get it there in a form more naive and confessed than in our nineteenth-century work. In the great relief preserved on the Capitol Hill, Marcus Aurelius is entering a captured place. The delegates of the Carnutes kneel before him and pray that his mercy may be extended to their fellow citizens; a magnificent centurion accompanies the Emperor, a grave statesmanlike head is seen above his horse's neck, and beyond him again are the helmets of legionaries. And here all manner of non-sculpturesque devices are resorted to for the sake of the narrative. It is an important historical event related by its contemporaries, and therefore the horses must be reduced to the size of donkeys, and their character as war-horses disappears in



EQUESTRIAN STATUE, IDEAL PORTRAIT OF  
JEANNE D'ARC, BY PAUL DUBOIS  
Photographed from the original plaster

LECTURE I. FIGURE 10



GALLAUDET TEACHING A DEAF-MUTE  
BY DANIEL C. FRENCH  
LECTURE I. FIGURE 11



STUDY OF CLOUDS

Print from mezzotint on copper, by J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851)

LECTURE I. FIGURE 12



"OSTEND." PAINTING BY J. M. W. TURNER

Exhibited at the Royal Academy (London), 1844. Belonging to the estate of Cornelius Vanderbilt, late of New York

LECTURE I. FIGURE 13



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

an innocent look and bearing as of ponies in bakers' wagons. The trees are reduced to the character of coral branches, and their foliage to that of bouquets arranged by human hands. The dancing banners are allowed to flutter as they will, and no serious attempt is made to give them any charm as of floating squares of textile material. Nothing is treated with vigor and with insight except the Romans and the Barbarians, with their strongly contrasted costumes and their still more strongly marked differentiation of face. But there is no facial expression there beyond a suggestion of imploring eagerness in the faces of the kneeling suppliants.

We must admit, I think, that the sentiment which we find in a picture by Bouguereau, for instance, — an older sister carrying a smaller one across the shallow water; or in a Knaus, of the christening of a baby, and the interest therein shown by the members of the family, the clergyman, and the visitors; or in a Millais, such as the "Huguenot Lover," with its very prettily

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

posed pair of heads with their contrasting purposes to express, is always of a class which would not be thought to exist were not the story told partly by the figures and their costume and surroundings, partly by the description in the catalogues, and in the more permanent treatises. And this brings us directly to the question of expression by means of pose and attitude. Few men can draw the figure in such a way as to explain aright the fact of sudden, rapid, violent, or otherwise significant motion. That means, you will say, that few men draw altogether well. Granted; and yet there are different ways of drawing well. Try to get rid of your knowledge of what it is all about, and see how much the picture loses. I remember as a good one a picture by William H. Overend, of a boat with two oarsmen and an officer in the stern, while beyond, two hundred feet off and mounting on a wave, is a much larger boat approaching, in whose bow are soldiers standing, with muskets raised. The lieutenant seated in the stern of the smaller

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

boat is holding outboard what is evidently a weighted box of signals, orders, or other documents, which the enemy must not see. If he should be struck and lose his command of the situation, the box at least will be sunk and kept from the enemy's hand and eye. And the reason for this action is that the bullets from the larger boat are coming straight; that the forward man of the two rowers has just been shot and falls backward, the loom of his oar striking the stroke oarsman; that capture is imminent; and that, whether as prisoner or as corpse, the lieutenant will have carried out his determination to save his box from the enemy. As I said, that was a good picture as I remember it, good in this matter of convincingness of gesture and movement. It is not easy to draw a sailor at the oar or to give him exactly the right attitude. And on account of such merits as this the picture is, as I have said, convincing; but here we are dealing with the matter of choice, and with the obvious willingness of the artist to sacrifice something else in order to

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

get realism of pose, and thereby to express the fact of movement. Or, to take a larger field, remember the battle-pieces which came out of the war of 1870-71 in such abundance. They are pictures of incidents. They are not exactly anecdotes, because it is no particular incident which any one relates. One shows a group of mounted dragoons who have captured a smaller detachment of lancers, compelled them to dismount, and, while one of the mounted escort carries in a great sheaf the lances of the prisoners, their fluttering little pennons breaking the hard line of the shafts, the prisoners themselves walk stolidly on, smoking their pipes. In another a squadron of dragoons has attacked a retreating squadron,—a rear guard, as it seems, of cuirassiers. The forces in that skirmish are nearly equal, and the sword-play is going on vigorously, with really admirable drawing of thrust and parry; and to make the picture real,—to account for the retreating of the cuirassiers and a certain frightened, hurrying look which is given them,—a

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

great cloud of cavalry is seen in the near distance, a vast column of mounted men coming down with its own cloud of dust. There is a picture by Philippoteaux with a panoramic view of an eighteenth-century battle as it must have been fought really, and not as the pictures of the time represent it. It is of Fontenoy and of the familiar old incident, "Gentlemen of the Guard, will you please fire first." The long line on either side is seen stretching over hillock and into valley, as the eye crosses the field of the coming strife; and the sense of that line of battle—its significance—is perfectly established. There was such a picture at the time of the American Civil War, though here one line of battle only was seen, for the enemy had disappeared in the woods. Woods, you know, were an important part of campaigning in the Southern States from 1861 to 1865. I remember a comment by the London *Times* on some of Brady's photographs of the war: "Think of the difficulty of campaigning in such a country,"

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

says the London critic. But the interesting thing in this picture was the realism of the treatment. The line had just been formed; the company had just wheeled into place; the unmounted officers had just run to their posts behind the double rank of rifle-bearers, of whom here and there a man was wounded, and here and there a man in his curiosity and excitement was breaking the strict letter of the law by pointing away after the enemy, asking his neighbor's opinion as to what the next move would be.

You see that, without stating it very plainly, my argument leads to the conclusion that the art of old times did not relate things very often, nor describe things very exactly. In the nineteenth century the painter was more desirous to tell a story, to excite ready sympathy, to turn in search of the non-artistic interest,—the to art unimportant statement of fact.

Raffaelle's "Miraculous Draught of Fishes" is a familiar instance. The great composer asked only a theme for his composition. It was nothing to him if all

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

possibility was disregarded, and his three human figures with a great catch of fish are shown in a little boat with not flotation enough for the fish alone. He cared as little for that lack of realism as he did for the fishes themselves and their species, —the Mediterranean sea-fish of the always well-supplied Roman market shown as caught in the Sea of Galilee. Dutch pictures of the seventeenth century show, as a good critic has pointed out, a Hill with Wind-Mill—a Harbor with Fishing-Boats—an Interior with Sunlight—a Market-Place with Flowers,—never a bit of narrative, never an anecdotal relation, never a subject which you can put a name to. And if this is true of the Dutchmen, those sincere and most artistic realists, it is even more true of the great schools which did not pretend to realism. When did a Florentine of the fifteenth century, or a Venetian of the sixteenth century, or a Spaniard of the seventeenth century paint an incident? “The Surrender of Breda,” that grandiose landscape with figures, by Velasquez, occurs

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

to you at once as an exception, and rightly. An exception, I say. I take down De Beruete's quarto and the noble work by Stevenson, and Carl Justi's octavos; three most thorough treatises on the work of Velasquez, and I turn over the numerous photographs and cuts therein contained, with the conclusion that no other similar subject occurs in all the master's work. "Las Meninas," the little maids of honor, with the painter himself in the background, shows indeed an interior of a room in the royal palace, with elaborately dressed figures, but there is nothing going on more than that which goes on every day,—the chatting and posing and scuffling about of a number of people, while the painter stands and watches. And so there are portraits with what are undoubtedly faithful representations of the hound and the sporting gun of the period and of the principal subject himself. Counterfeit presentments enough, but no narration. And I think that the conclusion may be that art has gained nothing from the modern addition



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

of what is sometimes called "literary subject." Old art and new art alike recognize book-illustration; that indeed we know, and that may rightly have literary subject. The sixteenth-century picture put into a German translation of Livy's History of Rome, or the eighteenth-century print from a delicate line engraving bound in a volume of Voltaire's political stories, or La Fontaine's versified tales, may indeed repeat and extend, in a way, the statement made in the text: but this is an exceptional branch of art, *illustration*, with which our subject hardly has to do.

We have still to consider, however, what the nineteenth century gives in the way of the representation of the forms and colors of external nature. There are certain reasons to think that the scope of painting was greatly enlarged by the landscape painters of this epoch. Nor does this enlargement of the scope of nature-study consist in color and the invention of new pigments only, nor yet in the added knowledge of light, and of the color of objects

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

under strong light. Of all that, we can hardly deal in these lectures, because the subject is too subtle to be followed in the spoken words, and because no photographic view can possibly illustrate one's meaning. But consider what the landscape painters of the years before 1850 did for the study of nature's aspects. This Turner "Study of Clouds" is taken direct from an exquisite mezzotint by him, entirely by his hand, the plate existing in his house at the time of his death,—a mezzotint work on the copper without any purpose except to express the full meaning of a sketch or of a memorandum of his own, taken from the clouds of heaven (Fig. 12). This Turner painting (Fig. 13) is that marvellous "Ostend" which belonged to Cornelius Vanderbilt at the time of his death, as it had belonged to him for ten years. Probably it still hangs in the house at 57th Street and Fifth Avenue in New York, for it is not one of those which were bequeathed to the museum. The photograph was taken from the canvas by some



Print from first state of mezzotint

LECTURE I. FIGURE 14



Print from second state of mezzotint

LECTURE I. FIGURE 15

# CALAIS PIER, FROM MEZZOTINT ON COPPER

By Francis Seymour Haden, about 1875, from painting by J. M. W. Turner



"BEN ARTHUR." PLATE NO. 69 OF LIBER STUDIORUM  
 Drawn and etched on the copper by J. M. W. Turner. Engraved in  
 mezzotint by T. Lupton, 1873

LECTURE I. FIGURE 16



"THE PINE-TREE"  
 Water-Color Drawing by Charles Herbert Moore

LECTURE I. FIGURE 17

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

interposition of a most influential man in such matters, the late Samuel Putnam Avery, and it is precious in proportion to the difficulty of procuring adequate photographs under such conditions.

When the real Turnerian begins to talk Turner, it is hard to stop him, and I must control my own utterances, because to one who has studied long and heartily enjoyed the Turner painting of mist and fog, cloud and storm, rain and snow, foam and spray, there is nothing quite so bewitching in the whole range of modern art. At least it is certain that no one of the ancients ever tried to do it. Titian was a great landscape-painter and loved the mountain country about Cadore, but what would he have said had you asked him to paint the mountain mists as his principal subject?

Turner's "Calais Pier," a picture which is in the National Gallery at London, has been engraved often enough, producing prints which have, one must confess, a somewhat commercial aspect. But here is the rendering of it by a very powerful

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

etcher of our own times, still living though an old man and no longer at work, Francis Seymour Haden, whom they have disguised by knighting him. This (Fig. 14) is the first state of the print, and I will show you the second state in a moment. The student of modern etchings will say to you that this is the best Haden there is, because in addition to its being very large and worked with prodigious force and energy, with deep bitings and most vigorous treatment, it is the only Haden in which he had a stronger man than himself to make his design. A student of nature, Haden is a gentle and loving one, with a great fondness for trees and for quiet English landscapes; but a great composer he is not. Turner was a great composer, if you like, and it was a wise thing in Haden to make his greatest effort depend in this way on Turner's design, while he invested it with his own unsurpassed mastery of technique. I said this was the first state. Notice the boiling mass of heavy clouds on the left. In the etching this is printed in dark

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

brown, in bistre, or the like; the effect is enhanced by the burr which at times almost conceals the lines. It is a most powerful composition in black and white, or brown and white, this state of the print; and yet when I instructed a London dealer who knew Haden well to get me a copy of the first state, this answer came back direct from the artist: "Tell Mr. Sturgis that if he has a good copy of the second state he should really be content. It was for the second state that I worked; that is the finer print of the two."

Here then (Fig. 15) is the second state, and you see how greatly the composition is changed by simply planing down the plate so as to produce a vast blank space of sky between the heavier clouds on the left and those on the right. There is no perceptible change in the lower part of the print except in a deliberate diminishing of the blackness everywhere. Haden guards his plates with religious care, sees every copy printed, and allows no one to be sold which is not faultless as an impression.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

Moreover, the proof from which this photograph was taken was completed as early as 1878.

A very different piece of modern work, though it is by the same great master, Joseph Mallord William Turner, is the drawing in the possession of the proprietor of Farnley Hall, the name of which is "A First-Rate Taking in Stores." It is a bit of that life-long study of the British navy of the post-Nelson day, the huge three-deckers, which it is hard for us to imagine as really impelled by sails and by wind power alone, and which had for Turner that charm which a Londoner, a street boy, a haunter of the wharves and docks, a student from childhood of rigging and sails and hulls, and a patriot as well would surely come to feel; and it is curious to see how this most non-realistic of painters, this most deliberate and convinced designer, the man more than any other Englishman to determine on a composition and make it without regard to the natural facts which suggested it to him—it is curious to see him studying so



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

minutely the ports, with the port-lids swung open at a regular angle, and, run out below them, the muzzles of the 42-pounders on the main deck and the 32-pounders above, the quarter-gallery in the distance and the rounding of the bow near at hand, the chains above where the shrouds are made fast, the anchor at its becket, and, opposite to that monstrous towering hull of the 80-gun ship, the two lighters, whose masts as well as their little flag-pole at the top reach only to the third tier of guns of the man-of-war. This is description of a kind which the Dutchmen would have loved. But now let us take a good and careful draughtsman who is very little of an artist but everything of a loving student of nature. Let us see what could be done in the nineteenth century between 1840 and 1860. There is a drawing by Ruskin, engraved for "Modern Painters," as plate 84 of the fifth volume, and in the first edition of this it appears as a noble print. The subject, Peace, is a minute study of the moat of a mediæval town. The bounding wall of

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

the fortification goes running away at the left, overgrown with vines and half hidden by trees; and some one has built a house against it on the inner side,— windows for which house are cut right through the massive ancient stonework. The towers mark the places where there are gateways; for this fortification is not that of a great post or of an important strategic point; it is merely the defence for a little mediæval town against roving bands or hastily gathered armies of the neighborhood. The wooden galleries at the top of these towers are simply the bretesches put in place to protect the defenders, who showered their missiles upon the enemy below. For, as you are aware, it was by missiles thrown vertically from above downward, and by arrows and bolts shot also from above, that the siege of a mediæval post was resisted. Now, compare with this modern work the older man's way of looking at a precisely similar case. Hollar's view of Lucerne is indeed intended to convey with topographical accuracy the notion of the

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

whole city and its immediate neighborhood; but in this fact itself there lies a notable difference between the modern and the ancient in their ways of talking about a town.

The modern study of nature and profound love of purely natural aspects is shown in the careful and almost scientific observation which landscape-painters have given to mountain forms. The best instance of this that one can think of is Turner's wonderful print, *Ben Arthur*, No. 69 of the *Liber Studiorum* (see Fig. 16). No one would assert that it is a faithful portrait, or even that it is intended to be a faithful portrait of the mountain-side and the stone-encumbered valley. There may be an immeasurable discrepancy in fact, the artist trying always to give a great effect, and caring little about the accuracy of his details. The great effect that he desired was of course the character of the mountain slopes, the markings of water-courses, the indication by light and shade of the folds of the stratified rock, and again by the growth of trees in the ravines and hollows. We may concern ourselves here

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

with the joy which the modern landscape-painter has taken in the complexity of the structural forms of mountains. You will find that there is nothing like this joy, this knowledge, this artistic insight, in any work of men previous to 1830.

But take another aspect of nature, a very different aspect, indeed. Look at this drawing by Charles Herbert Moore, "The Pine Tree" (Fig. 17). This is a drawing made in 1864, when that teacher of art was filled with his youthful enthusiasm, and was working hard for what he thought to be the only career for an artist who was also a man of conscience. The charm of the drawing is partly lost in the loss of the pale blue and white sky which the photograph will not render. Apart from that it is easy to see that the hilltop and its scarped and broken slope where the diggers have been at work are studied as carefully from nature as Ben Arthur, and that in like manner the setting down of the distant fields and low hillsides is religious in its minute accuracy. The same words are to be applied to the drawing

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

of the pine-tree and the two little juniper-trees. They are mapped upon the sky with precise and painstaking accuracy; and yet, to one who loves the trees themselves, and who cares for that manifestation of nature which the trees represent, it is a lovely drawing. Powerful it is not; rich in color it is not; it is not strong in synthesis, nor in that instinctive selection of the vital truths which makes Turner's landscape so great. But the subject is chosen to fit the artist's power and scope, and he has treated it in a faultless way.

The hastening, struggling modern world has so affected the mind of most of the art-workers, with all their willingness to keep out of it, that they also hasten, and believe time lost which is spent in elaborating minute details. This view of the painter's art, the notion that he will do more good for himself and for others by disregarding minute details and by seizing those general truths which a swift and dexterous synthesis will give him — this is a perfectly legitimate view: moreover it has been the victorious

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

principle, now for many years. The artist has a perfect right to say and to act as if it were hardly worth while to spend months in the elaboration of details, when hours given to the painting of effects will do more toward the completion of a picture, an impressive, a powerful work of art. In insisting on the merits of Moore's drawing I am talking exactly as if I were presenting the minute handling of the brothers Van Eyck or any one of the Florentines painting their delicate background in the first half of the fifteenth century. Moore is incomparably more truthful in his work, because he belongs to an epoch which recognizes the worth of precise accuracy of record. He cannot be a better artist, because his epoch is not nearly so close to art as was the fifteenth century. My purpose is merely to show you that the same love of nature which is characteristic of the modern is expressible and has been expressed with the minute touch of the painter of detail as well as in the headlong work of Turner's mighty composition. We do not

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

know whether a movement will be started to oppose impressionism in all its forms and set up once more the gospel of minute study of details.

There is still another side to the expressional art of modern times. It cannot be left without a word. It takes its shape usually in the way of illustration—illustrations to books, though by no means only to be found there. Cruikshank's etchings, made in his prime, though certainly too huddled and too slightly drawn, are yet great as record, as relation of incident; as in the imaginary scene of Jack Falstaff, as Justice Shallow describes him. He was "a boy and page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. I see him break Skogan's head at the court-gate when 'a was a crack not thus high." I wonder whether the most elaborate examination of seventeenth-century books would reveal to us such humorous treatment of semi-historical subjects as this. According to his lights George Cruikshank has been a careful recorder of details of architecture and costume.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

But passing over the purely humorous side of modern expressional art, consider also the strange, half-literary study of the past and the present in the way of exciting incidents recorded or imagined. Max Klinger's remarkable study of the Centaur shows how he, the Centaur, would escape from the prehistoric Greeks who were pursuing him, naked, mounted on barebacked horses. The Greeks wear what may be thought steel caps, and that is a bold assumption for men of the twelfth or twentieth century B. C., the time when Centaurs flourished in the mountains of Thessaly and often invaded the lowlands; but then the caps may be of bronze, and the chronological limits of the bronze age are not precisely fixed. The bow and arrow has always been the weapon of the Centaur ever since he was first devised, and in this case he has drawn his bow with effect; the foremost of the pursuing horses has a torturing wound in the neck and rears and seems to scream with pain, while his eager rider still hopes and strives to drag him forward in the pursuit.



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

Or, again, a very modern picture indeed is Klinger's print, "The Interview." Here a villa is shown by strong moonlight, and a couple who have met on the *perron*, their conversation interrupted by the bullet of the jealous overlooker at the window above. The stiff legs in trousers, the light stuff of which droops away from them, are all that we see, clearly, of the dead body; and much is made of the contrast between that detail and the gesture of the frightened and agonized woman.

It seems that a very lofty style of composition is incompatible with such narration as this. At least the artist who invariably resorts to the dignified study of form and color, such as was known to his predecessors, will never take up such a subject; he will, like the Dutchmen, like the Italians, like the Spaniards of old time, paint scenes of yesterday, to-day, and forever, not proposing narrative or exciting incident at all in any part of his theme.

## LECTURE II.

### MODERN JUDGED BY ANCIENT ART DECORATIVE EFFECTS<sup>1</sup>

In dealing with art that is not primarily representative of nature or descriptive of human sentiment, we are troubled by a curious defect in the English terminology—we have but one word for such art as that in all its differing manifestations. If we try to express in words the main difference between Italian painting of the sixteenth century and ours of to-day, it is found perhaps in the great and splendid character of the Italian designs. If we try to explain in words why we admire Dutch landscape-painting, it is found that what we admire is the simple dignity of the small, grave, subdued compositions. If we try to discover why we love Greek relief sculpture so supremely, it is found that what we love in it is the quiet charm of the thing. The

<sup>1</sup> Delivered April 14, 1904, at Fullerton Memorial Hall, The Art Institute of Chicago.



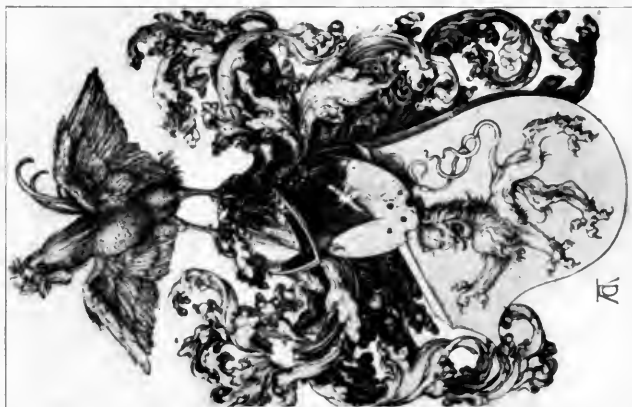
MARBLE FIGURE IN CATHEDRAL OF FLORENCE,  
BY LUCA DELLA ROBBIA

LECTURE II. FIGURE 1



TWO OF THE BRONZE FIGURES GROUPED ABOUT THE TOMB  
OF THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN I, AT INNSBRUCK

LECTURE II. FIGURE 2



"THE COAT OF ARMS WITH THE COCK"  
Print from engraving on copper by Albrecht Dürer

LECTURE II. FIGURE 3



IDEAL HEAD

Print from aquatint engraving on copper by Max Klinger

LECTURE II. FIGURE 4

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

question as to whether it represents accurately anything in nature is not a serious question. The artist only knows how in his loftiest flights of thought he had steadied himself by constant reference to nature; that is to say, to the great exemplar to which all our artistic ideas are referred, as they have been drawn thence. It is not for the student to ask whether there is anything of nature in the composition or not; what he finds is the lovely, the stately, the simple, and touching result. Now this side of art is the decorative side, and we have but the one noun substantive "decoration" and that one qualifying term "decorative" to apply alike to the Venus of Milo and to a small and simple painted vase. The artistic side of art is the decorative side, and we have no other phrase than that. Therefore, if our subject to-night is Decorative Art, we may include in it everything elaborate and simple—everything which has been the result of human thought and human toil applied artistically. The only distinction we can make is this: that the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

work of art which takes the least from nature in a direct way is the more purely decorative, and is more obviously our theme to-night. Thus the kneeling angel in the sacristy of the Cathedral of Florence and ascribed to Luca della Robbia (Fig. 1), is evidently intended for an ornament of the shrine more than for any other purpose. The angel is a candle-bearer; you see he carries a pricket candlestick, all, with himself, cut out of one block of marble, and the whole set upon a base inlaid with black marble in the spirit of the exterior decorations of the same mighty church. The six bronze statues in the National Museum at Naples, which represent young women in stately and graceful postures, and which we may consider to have represented ceremonial dancers, were found under the portico in the middle of one side of that famous villa at Herculaneum, from which so much that is precious and so much that is otherwise unknown in ancient art has been extracted. They stood there side by side, three and three, as they now stand in the

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

Hall of the Greater Bronzes in Naples City. One is adjusting her chiton at the right shoulder, for there the clasp or the pin had threatened to give way. One lady is handling her very ample folds preparatory, as it seems, to striking a more notable pose. The figure in the middle between these two is making one hardly knows what gesture toward her head, as if suggesting the placing there of a crown or a wreath. They are all engaged in that stately posturing which the Greeks called the dance. By the common consent of archæologists these figures are of pure, and even of early, Greek type. Another group of three stands opposite them now as it stood opposite them before the eruption of the year 79, only that it was in the colonnaded garden of the villa that they stood of old.

Well, that was a Greco-Roman idea of decorative art, that grandiose ordering of piece after piece of stately and costly character. The Parthenon had no carving, no architectural sculpture in the usual sense, but only sculpture of fully realized human

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

subject; and in like manner the way, as the Greeks thought, to make a truly decorative figure, is the one which, now in the twentieth century, we are reviving in a sense in the setting up of statues posed and draped in such a way as to fit the location.

Or, to leap over some centuries of time and a vast chasm of discord and separation in spiritual purpose, consider these portraits of two of the ladies who stand around the tomb of Maximilian I. in the church at Innsbruck. You will remember the King Arthur who is so admired as the most mighty of the warriors there, for all his graceful form and bearing: well, these (Fig. 2) are two of the women who go to make up the great array of his martial and princely supporters. They are bronze statues, some of which at least are recognized as the work of Peter Vischer, and are all thought to be by men of his time and mode of thought; that is to say, they are sixteenth-century South German compositions, precisely equivalent in their purpose to those dancing girls which we saw at Naples. It is curious to



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

see the queen and the grand duchess so be-dizened with ornaments piled onto the surface in embroidery and in jewelry work and wrought in the material by the skill of the weaver, while the dancer of twenty centuries earlier was so severely plain in her attire. But that is the change that had come over the world. Let us see a little more of the fantastic and yet graceful art of that period. Albert Dürer, that great engraver and passionate designer, whose *Melancholy* and *Knight and Death* we considered in the last lecture, has left us two famous armorial plates. They are like book-plates, *ex-libris*, but the prints are larger than are usually found in that connection, and they have never, so far as I know, been found pasted into a book. This one, the coat of arms with the cock (Fig. 3), is really heraldic. The rampant lion turned to the sinister side must be the bearing of some South German family, and the cock with spread wings, though not in its present form strictly a crest, must have been Dürer's rendering of the crest of that family. The

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

lambrequin, with its fluttering folds and elaborate serrations, is heraldic enough. The other famous one, however, the coat of arms with the skull, can hardly be accepted as altogether heraldic. It is rather the badge, the private *impresa* of some public man of his time. The skull on a shield, and what allusion to him and his is contained in the German lady into whose ear a satyr is whispering, have never been explained. The helmet, with its magnificent wings, is evidently such a reminiscence of the older Northern notion of the winged helm as Dürer could not carry out in its entirety in connection with the elaborate tilting helmet of his own time. Such an elaborate piece of smithwork as that would seem not to allow of the early notion of a pair of bronze or leather wings attached to its two sides, and so the wings have passed into the shape of a crest and are represented in that way. I venture to speak of this because it is so well known; and those who know it will feel how decorative the whole thing is, how much the artist has cared for



PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER RUBENS

Print from engraving on copper by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-1677)

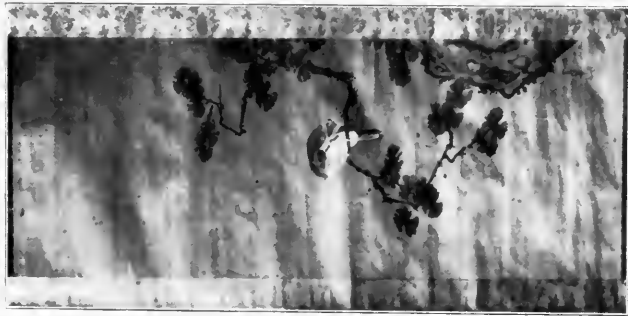
LECTURE II. FIGURE 5



PORTRAIT OF EDMOND DE GONCOURT

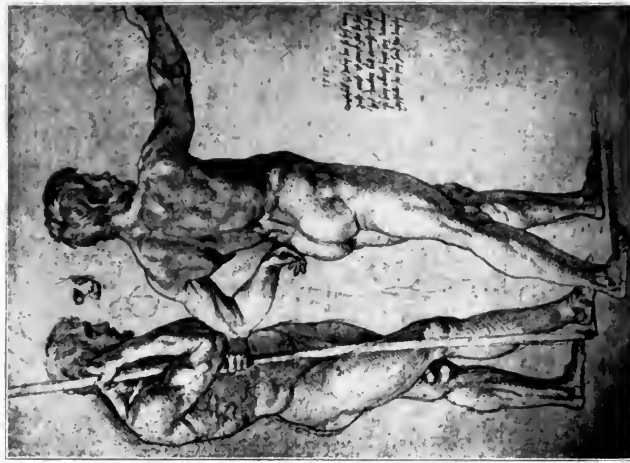
Print from etching on copper by Félix Bracquemond (1833-)

LECTURE II. FIGURE 6



JAPANESE PAINTING ON SILK, EIGHTEENTH  
CENTURY A. D.

LECTURE II. FIGURE 7



DRAWING IN THE ALBERTINA COLLECTION AT  
VIENNA, WITH INSCRIPTION RECORDING  
THE GIFT FROM RAFFAELE TO  
ALBRECHT DÜRER

LECTURE II. FIGURE 14

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

the composition of his details and of their grouping.

Now, what have we to show of modern art which is of this general character? Why, I think that this head by that same Max Klinger, with whom we had to do in our first lecture, may be thought to be born of the same impulse in the human mind (Fig 4). This is Mephistopheles, if you like; it is at all events a very skilful work, an aquatint in which the great ruff is used as it was used in the sixteenth century, to frame the head and to separate it in the most positive way from the body of the man—in this case, of the demon.

Or, we might seek for more classical feeling, and take a frank bit of reproduction or imitation of late Greek thought; we might take an etching called simply *The Idyl*, the work of that marvellous Mariano Fortuny, half Spaniard and half Frenchman, who is not always content with so peaceful a rendering of Sicilian motives. Or, to take portrait art. See this portrait of Rubens (Fig. 5) by Hollar, one of the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

greatest of engravers, at least in all that makes up the technical and the workman-like side of his art. How strongly marked is the decorative sense; how much the artist has cared for the effectiveness of his design! Now, in modern times, such decorative treatment of portraits is not unknown, and I select from among many that might be shown the Bracquemond portrait, Edmond de Goncourt, novelist and antiquarian (Fig. 6). The original is a nearly life-sized head and a brilliant piece of engraving, though hardly in the first rank. But what I note is the singularly successful treatment of the head and bust, the silk tie, the distant ornaments on the wall, and the portfolio near at hand, all to make up a decorative composition.

If we were comparing ancient art of pure decoration with recent art of the same kind, our self-complacency and our natural sympathy for the present epoch would be roughly used indeed. It is because of this—because of the weakness of the modern world in the decorative arts pure and simple—that it is on the whole more grateful to

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

consider how the arts of sentiment and expression may also be decorative. I am not showing you many Oriental things, because in so brief a space as this, one cannot present aright the essential differences between Asiatic and European art. But this kakemono we may look at (Fig. 7), in which the bird poised on the scraggy and twisted limb of a trained and dwarfed pine-tree is the single theme. It is the earmark of Japanese art—this contentment with one thought at a time, a single impression, a single suggestion, the most exquisite taste in the principal subject and surroundings, and the quiet relegation of all other accessories to another time and a different piece of paper or piece of silk. Or, if we consider Meryon's powerful print, *The Morgue*, showing that famous institution, the dead-house of Paris, as it was about 1850. There are more objects shown in this print than there are in the Japanese painting, but there is only one idea, or, if you please, the combination of two ideas into one, the staring white plastered houses on the Seine, far up the river at the Island

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

of St. Louis, and the bringing ashore of a drowned body. All the rest is mere accessory, ornamentation, like the needles of the pine in the Japanese drawing. The figures crowded about and looking down upon the scene, the woman who is weeping beside the body, the other one who is trying to reach the lower level by the staircase and is prevented and ordered back—the whole is intended to give, and does give, the one single thought of the distress, the hard lot, the cruel aspect, of life in the great city. At least it is in that way that the buyers of Meryon prints have taken it, and it is not because it is graceful or because it is a masterpiece of engraving that it commands the highest price of all the precious prints of Meryon. Or, take a subject which is near akin to Meryon's; let it be "Battersea Bridge," the etching by Whistler (Fig. 8). What a completely decorative composition is this, while yet it is to all appearance a frank setting down of the facts concerning the old rattle-trap of a wooden bridge across the upper Thames, the traffic which



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

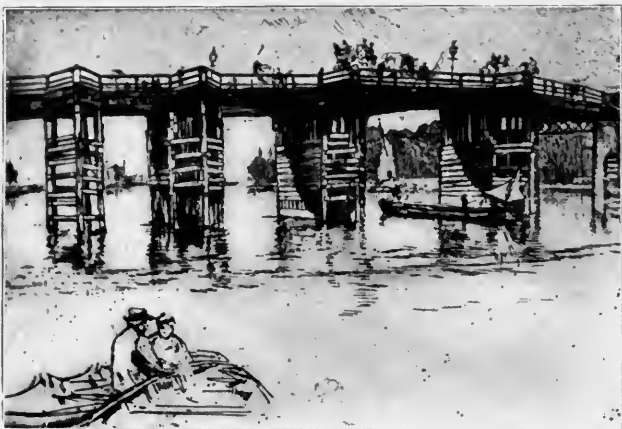
goes on above, passing over the bridge, and that which goes on below, drifting with the current between its piers. Whistler was wholly and entirely a decorative artist, aiming only at certain effects, as indeed the fantastical titles chosen for his works, both small and large, sufficiently attest. But it is with him as with the men of simpler aim and less conscious pose, and it is so with the great realist, the master of humble life, Jean François Millet. His etchings of "The Shepherdess Knitting," of "Going to Work" with the man and woman on their way to the field, of "The Gleaners" with the three bent forms in the foreground—these are as good examples as one finds of the decorative treatment of simple out-of-door subject.

Mariano Fortuny, of whom we have spoken before, to-day, is great among modern composers, and his work is characterized by an almost unexampled decorative quality. He has left a number of soft-ground etchings of extraordinary beauty, of which I show you one, the Arab seated by his dead friend (Fig. 9). For "Arab" in such a

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

case read, rather, Moor; for what Fortuny had in mind was assuredly the habits and the surroundings of North Africa, and he did not trouble himself to inquire whether the dead man and the living one were really of Arabian stock. It is an abuse in the nomenclature of France that *Arabe* goes for so much more than the land and the pure race of Arabia. But it is hard to imagine a more effective composition in pure black and white; the original etching is nearly as sharp in contrast as the photograph alleges it to be. The passages of gradation, you see, are but small, the contrasts frequent and of extreme vigor. It is not, perhaps, the loftiest kind of chiaroscuro, but when it is combined with lines as effective as these, such sharp contrast of mass has its charm, just as sharp contrast of color has its charm, in spite of the superior loveliness of delicate gradation.

It seems interesting to consider the minor art, as we think it—the art now under a cloud, the art of wood-engraving. By turns during the last five centuries this art has



# BATTERSEA BRIDGE

Print from etching on copper by J. A. McN. Whistler (1834-1903)

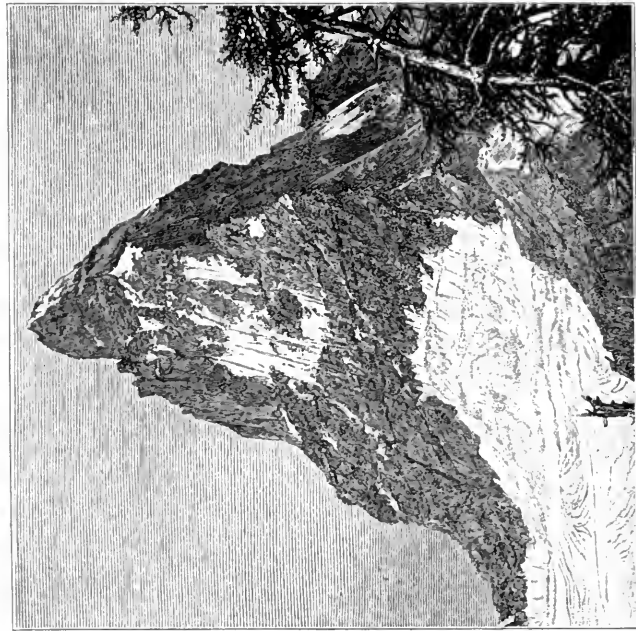
LECTURE II. FIGURE 8



# MOOR OF ALGIERS, MOURNING HIS DEAD FRIEND

Print from an etching on copper by Mariano Fortuny (1838-1874)

LECTURE II. FIGURE 9



From a woodcut by Edward Whymper, about 1865, reproduced in  
Whymper's "Ascent of the Matterhorn "

LECTURE II. FIGURE 10



From a photograph taken in 1881

LECTURE II. FIGURE 11

THE MATTERHORN, FROM THE RIFFELBERG

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

been of supreme importance to the community, and then again has been lost and forgotten. It is passing out of our knowledge now, because it is so largely replaced by photographic processes; but it will return. In the sixteenth century it was in a state of advanced development, for the Germans, Dürer and Lucas Cranach, and that school, had made much of it, had carried out splendid groups of composition by drawing on the plank, which drawings were afterwards cut for printing; and then, at a later time, the Italians took it up and used it for printing in two or three tints, producing what we call, rather foolishly, *chiaroscuro* prints, as if all prints of any consequence were not in light and shade, and therefore entitled to that Italian name. But such stately things as the Sibyl, after that Bartolommeo, who was called Coriolanus, were made then and printed in black and white and yellowish brown; and many a grandiose painting of the day, and of a day just past, was reproduced in this really suggestive if not quite adequate manner.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

The Saturn, by Andrea Andreani, is printed from four separate blocks, giving four shades of gray, evidently in fac-simile of a swift and dexterous drawing in monochrome. And we are to observe that neither of these is avowedly a reproduction of a painting of some celebrity. These very large and effective prints are wrought for the sake of the chiaroscuro composition alone. We must suppose that they were meant for the adornment of the walls of dwellings. The huge productions of later men, especially the Englishman Jackson, were rather intended for students of painting. They are among the most admirable records or suggestions of great paintings that we possess; but their individual interest may be less than that of such prints as the two of which there has been mention.

In modern times, wood-engraving has been turned, as other graphic processes have been turned, into other paths, especially into the depicting of natural effects, and used in book-illustration, though indeed this may be of decorative quality. Edward Whymper,

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

who is the author of two or three books on mountain-climbing, is primarily a wood-engraver of great excellence; and I show you his print of the Matterhorn set beside a photograph of the same place from nearly the same point of view (Figs. 10 and 11). You may assume that the artist was seeking a close copy of the scene before him. The camera for the photograph must have been placed beyond these trees, perhaps in the glacier hills and valleys below, or perhaps the storms of the last winter have swept some of the trees away. It is very curious to see how the physical process, the action of light upon the chemically prepared plate, gives what the artist ignores, while the artist gives so much that the camera fails to record. The composition in such a piece as this is hardly noticeable; it is so very important a theme that to take it as it stands is everything. But there is by this artist another view of the Matterhorn, that is to say, from the Théodule Pass; and it is noticeable that in such designs the choice of the point of view is everything. In the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

case of a mountain, more than in any other natural object, except perhaps in a human being, the point of view changes the aspect. The perspective alone will make a seeming peak out of a long ridge, as in the present instance. One does not hastily alter, as Turner and all the great landscapists loved to alter, the lines of the landscape, when it is of such prodigious dignity and force as are the great Alps of the centre. But there are landscape themes where one alters, and that without hesitation, composing indeed with such independence of feeling that it is open to doubt always whether the artist had any natural object in his mind or before his eye as he worked. Camille Corot has been described often enough for us to know how his canvas was set up, in the early morning, before the stumps of trees and the foregrounds of minor foliage with which he had fallen in love; and how he would paint, producing his composition as he went along, taking the piece of middle distance, the trees and bushes two hundred feet from him, and making of them



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

his picture in the half-light of the day. But when he produced these etchings (Figs. 12 and 13), it is uncertain, of course, whether he was so placed. He might easily have made these in the studio from the thoughts of the day, from the bits which he saw in passing and could not include in his large picture, or from the dreams of the previous night. The treatment of his paintings is decorative because, while he set up his canvas in the presence of the natural landscape, he did not follow what he saw, closely. He made a design; he composed a splendid surface of line and mass invested with cool, gray color, resembling in this the great Englishman, Turner, although the quality of the result was so different. It is so with the etchings which I show you; they are slight and light, but they are as strictly decorative compositions as the large and famous oil-paintings.

In figure-painting great composition is a characteristic of the older art. A picture by Filippo Lippi might show how the Florentines worked at a time when their

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

local school had culminated. Raffaello's Madonna, the one they call the Madonna del Gran Duca, now in the Pitti Palace in Florence, that or another would show how the school developed away from Florence. And it is interesting to see the way in which this grandiose style of Raffaello's grew up and took shape in his own practice. He did not draw realistically, and then afterwards compose by means of what he drew. The drawings, of which we have numbers ascribed to him with more or less certainty, are themselves as grandiose. Any hasty drawing in line is as characteristic as the more elaborate ones. The student will see in such a drawing how the strokes are all in one direction, arguing perfect facility of hand; he will see how Raffaello drew the outline with almost certain conviction, changing it only slightly now and again, and then putting in his suggestions of shade. In the more elaborate groups, the drawing, carried much farther and wrought into a quite complete system of light and shade, is precisely as stately in its construction as



"SOUVENIR D'ITALIE"

Print from etching on copper by J. B. Camille Corot (1796-1875)

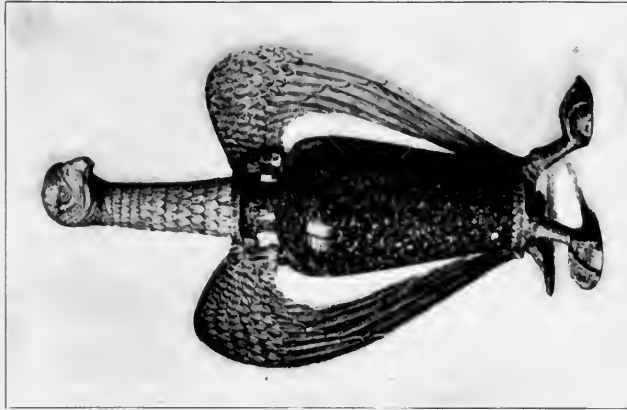
LECTURE II. FIGURE 12



"ENVIRONS DE ROMÉ"

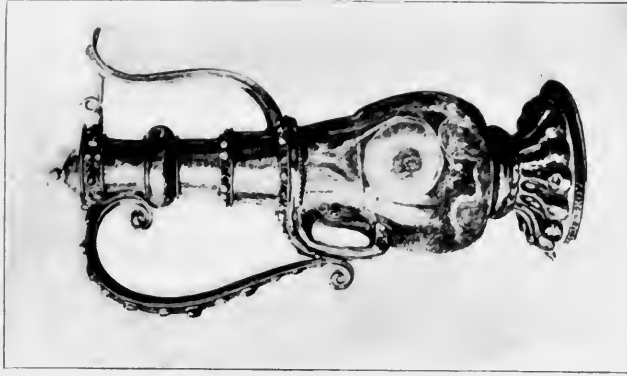
Print from etching on copper by J. B. Camille Corot (1796-1875)

LECTURE II. FIGURE 13



ANCIENT VASE, MOUNTED IN GOLDSMITH'S  
WORK IN EUROPE IN THE TWELFTH  
CENTURY

LECTURE II. FIGURE 15



AGATE VASE, PROBABLY OF ANCIENT RO-  
MAN MAKE, MOUNTED IN EUROPE  
IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

LECTURE II. FIGURE 16

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

any painting on the gallery walls. Yes, and even the red chalk drawing of two nude figures—the one which he sent to Albert Dürer of Nuremberg “to show his hand,” as you can read on the margin of the illustration I give (Fig. 14)—even that is a picture in every respect, except that apparently it is not completed.

A word only about figure sculpture of ornamental effect. If we take a Greek votive tablet, a small simple offering to Asklepios, the god of health, one of many similar sculptures which exist, we shall find a decorative treatment as pronounced and as intelligent as that of any of the paintings or prints which we have been discussing. Greek relief sculpture is indeed the most absolutely decorative thing which we have from antiquity. No doubt its purpose was different from what we now see; no doubt the sculptor meant something different from that which we mean when we say, A Greek bas-relief. We must not forget that the custom was to paint the bas-reliefs in vivid colors. What we have is a

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

monochrome in place of a splendid combination of form and color which the Greek artist created. And so for us it may be well to note the way in which the drapery is composed and arranged in such simple, cheap little pieces of the stone-cutter's art as the votive tablets found by hundreds in the ruins of great shrines.

And now as we take up the decorative treatment of a very different class of art, look at three or four of those wonderful pieces of costly splendor, jeweller work combined with triumphs of the lapidary's art, which are kept in the greatest collection of such things in Europe—that which fills the glass cases in the gallery of Apollo, in the Louvre. And these photographs that I shall show you are taken from the etchings of Jules Jacquemart, for I do not know that the originals have been photographed, except here one and there one for the reproduction in color as by lithography, and it is probable that the photograph from the original would often fail of its object. Jules Jacquemart, you know, is famous for

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

his singular gift, his quite unexampled power of reproducing exactly the amount of divergence in a line, of curvature in a surface; he is the man who, more than any other, can represent a piece of barbaric or archaic work with faultless accuracy, giving just so much departure from the standard of anatomical or other truth as the original contains, and no more. He can reproduce without exaggeration. This curious vase is, as far as the vase proper is concerned, a piece of Egyptian granite and of Egyptian workmanship which had found its way to Western Europe in the twelfth century and was there and then mounted with gilt and enamel, as you see (Fig. 15). It is about 18 inches high over all. This agate pitcher (Fig. 16) is known to have belonged to Eleanor of Aquitaine, and it has not been altered since her time. This cylindrical vase with dragon handles (Fig. 17) is of Oriental jasper and no one can say now where and by whom it was worked, except that the foot seems to be of the Renaissance and European in style, and

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

probably the whole piece was wrought into its present form when the mountings in gilt were carried out, as it is asserted, by Benvenuto Cellini. And finally, this piece (Fig. 18) this precious mirror preciousy framed, is Italian work of the seventeenth century. The mirror itself is of rock crystal and the setting is entirely in silver gilt with an immeasurable number of delicate cameos, antique and of the Renaissance, and with large pieces of richly veined agate; and, as you see, with two vases of precious material, and below two busts of jasper serving as pendants. There could not be, I think, a better opportunity than these pieces afford of dwelling on that side of the whole question of old time ornamentation, which question troubles us so much to-day. Our attempts at doing these things are feeble and therefore clumsy, and if no more important consideration interfered it would be well if the state and wealthy citizens would try to revive these lost arts of magnificence. But there is, of course, the other question,



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

that of the industrial value of such achievements as these, of their possible no-value, even of a possible injury which they do to the industrial community. It is one of the assumptions of the more thoughtful historians of our time that the decay and death of the great Imperial system of Rome was caused as much by the absence of an industrial system in the Empire as by any other influence. What was the actual wealth of the Mediterranean world of that time? As compared with our modern achievements in the way of gathering and storing up wealth it was not great; and so much was used in splendor, so many days' work was sunk in magnificent decoration and stately architecture that there was less for the world to live on. Are we prepared to listen attentively to that cry? It is a hard world we are building up, a world in which no one would wish to live if it were never to change—this world which consists entirely of strivers for more, lovers of acquisition, believers in the doctrine that to have is to

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

be, and that tangible possession is better than the riches of mind.

It would be a finer thing to put all art investment into beautiful art, and none of it into precious material: and yet, although that would be a finer thing no one would be content with the complete banishment from life of the arts of mere sumptuosity. There ought to be here and there a workman who can and will manipulate the most costly materials. The *rivière* of diamonds may be a poor, even an ugly thing, but a cup of lapis lazuli mounted in enamelled silver-gilt can hardly be poor or ugly, altogether, and even personal jewellery is splendid in the hands of those races who still understand decoration.

### *LECTURE III.*

#### THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS IN WHICH FORM PREDOMINATES.<sup>1</sup>

So far we have ranged over the field, touching on many points and comparing recent art with old art, trying to judge the new and unclassified by the old and well known. And we might recall again the proposition with which we started, that if there are many disagreements about each manifestation of old art, there are disagreements and nothing else about the manifestations of the art of to-day. No two men agree as to the character and the importance of anything artistic that is being done in the twentieth century: and no two agree as to the tendencies which have been at work, say in this country since 1865,—say in France or in England or in Germany since in each country the revival of thought began thirty or thirty-five years ago. Do any of us feel a doubt as to the truth of such sweeping statements as these? Is it supposed

<sup>1</sup> Delivered April 19, 1904, at Fullerton Memorial Hall, The Art Institute of Chicago.

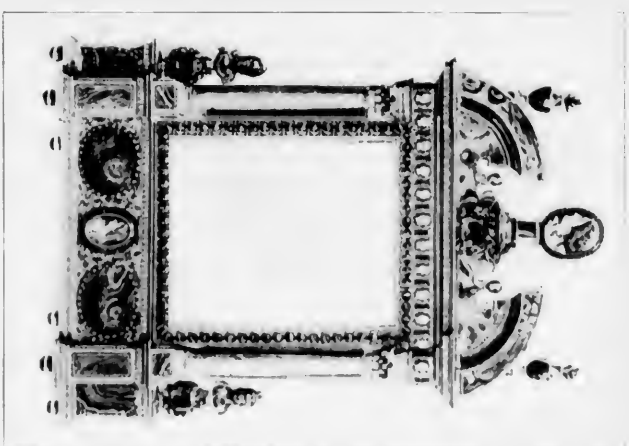
## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

that though there are disagreements there is also agreement? We are safe, I think, in accepting an appearance of agreement as an appearance only—in holding that when there is apparent agreement it comes of fellowship in action, as when the men of a certain school or society or alliance of any kind agree heartily for awhile, because they are working to a common end. But this is fellowship and mutual help in action; it is not, I think, a critical agreement in any case. Three or four of us have been taught in one school, and when we were pupils there the growth of thought was in a certain direction and we went with it; and we retain the set, the bias, given us then. This is not critical opinion in any sense of the word. Do not let us despise such unanimity of thought. It has a singular value in helping men to do their work. We shall never find that the tendency of a number of artists to work together and in unquestioned harmony is a bad tendency. It is not. It is a condition of progress. No great advance in art has been achieved without it. But



JASPER VASE, ANCIENT ORIENTAL MAKE,  
MOUNTED IN EUROPE IN THE  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

LECTURE II. FIGURE 17



MIRROR OF ROCK CRYSTAL, RICHLY MOUNTED,  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

LECTURE II. FIGURE 18



CARVED CABINET, ABOUT SIX FEET HIGH

French, Sixteenth Century

LECTURE III. FIGURE 1



CLAY MODELS, PREPARED FOR ELABORATE PIECES OF FURNITURE

LECTURE III. FIGURE 2

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

the opinions held by these active artists are not, on that account, to be considered gravely as binding upon their contemporaries; they are the opinions of men who are well satisfied with their own efforts and who look no farther than that, as indeed they have no reason to look farther. All of which is indeed another way of saying that the production of works of art and the criticism of art are very different things, often opposed to one another.

It is not as practising artists, full of our own plans, that we must judge tendencies. The student of art must, above all students, be careful about his prejudices. He must approach the question as to recent fine art without even a prejudice in favor of Greek perfection or of Roman grandeur or of Gothic energy and logic or of Renaissance grace. The student may admit the abstract truth of each proposition as to the existence of these excellences, but he must avoid too enthusiastic a care for any one of them; that he may not be swayed by his enthusiasm and so ignore or underrate the value of the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

other, the opposite view, the contrary gift, the grace, the charm which is incompatible with that which he admires. Every style, every great conception, every embodied thought in art has its defects along with its qualities; and you cannot have Roman grandeur while you are pursuing Gothic realism and intelligence; they do not exist together. In our own time there is a curious tendency in decorative building, a very strong set toward that form of Greco-Roman architecture which has to do chiefly with the colonnade. It has been noticed often enough that this has always been the tendency in Greco-Roman art in its original field, and in its revival in what we call neo-classic architecture. The builders of the second and third centuries A. D. were much swayed by it, and the great cities of the Mediterranean empire—the cities from Palmyra on the edge of the Eastern desert, to Lutetia built on and around that island in the Seine where now stands the Cathedral of Our Lady—were all adorned with such a display of columnar architecture as we of the



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

modern era can never thoroughly understand or grasp; but we know also from a slight instance *here* or an irresistible inference *there* that the Roman builders had a style for their domesticity and their times of economical building; a style as important to us, if we could only grasp it, as has been the grandiose style of the imperial Fora and the colonnaded streets of Antioch and Gerasa. Unfortunately that slight and light architecture has vanished, and while a diligent archæologist can partly restore it from the crumbling peristyles of Herculaneum and Pompeii and the stone-built villas of Syria, it is not such perfect presentment that the modern world of artists can take thought and time to understand it. So it is that we build even our inexpensive and our highly practical and money-making buildings of to-day as nearly as we dare in a style which was used by its inventors for grandiose public monuments in which time and money were never spared.

This is so important a consideration that we shall be returning to it; but let us also

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

approach it from below, from within, so to speak; let us also think of smaller and humbler things that are designed and have been designed and may be designed: let us take up furniture before we approach the temple and the building of ceremonial and state. I will not ask you to go back with me into the Middle Ages; but there was a certain dash and verve left by the Middle Ages and impressing itself very strongly on the earliest neo-classic art,—that of the fifteenth century in Italy, that of the sixteenth century in the North,—which we cannot ignore altogether. Thus in furniture the daring sculpture of the latest Gothic had its influence on the design of the sixteenth century in France, and such oak chests as exist by scores, although worked by men who were trying to be as Italianate as possible (to use the good old English phrase) still smacks of the late Gothic school of carving in its panels; and even in the wrought iron locks and hinges there are numerous purely mediæval devices. Now see what the next step was, and how

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

the men of the days of Henry IV and Louis XIII, the carvers who were working when Dumas's famous Musketeers strode across the stage, what they thought of and wrought out. This cabinet (Fig. 1) is a rather famous one in France; it belongs to a wealthy gentleman of a southeastern department, to whom the wrought and adorned furniture of his native land has been a special delight, and the thing to observe is, I think, the complete subordination of the extremely elaborate sculpture to the general design. I do not one moment defend the too architectural character of that design; to my mind a simpler chest is a better thing. I cannot accept this sinking of all the constructional element; in church-building or in furniture-composition alike I ask for the evidence of the Make of the Thing, not because of any consideration of morals, not because it is wrong to conceal or deny or ignore the construction, but because by such concealment or denial there is thrown away a noble chance of suggested design.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

See how the workmen of this later school did their work. Here (Fig. 2) are two models in *terre glaise*, that is to say, in modelling clay. The one, you see, is a study for a cabinet not very unlike the one we looked at a moment since, but smaller and with perhaps a more vigorous, a more strenuous design. You see, the artist is comparatively indifferent to questions of a larger or a smaller receptacle above, and as to the opening of the front of that receptacle by its doors. It is all one to him whether each half swings open completely, one of the panelled doors carrying the central upright with it, as was often done; or whether that central upright stays in place to stiffen the whole and to make it a reasonable thing, a rational, intelligent thing, with its heavy entablature receiving adequate support. In like manner he has not cared whether there is to be a drawer in either side in the frieze of his entablature, or whether there are to be two drawers or one in the surbase here above the little arches of the substructure. So in the

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

Prie-Dieu, the praying chair with its tabernacle above, the artist admits what he must admit—the sloping desk at such a height above the cushioned kneeling place below that a person of ordinary stature will find her Book of Hours conveniently under and near her eyes—but more than that he has not cared about. Do not suppose that I deprecate the use of such a method as this to bring a costly piece of furniture into shape. Why, there is one of our architects in New York who affects the use of modelling clay for putting into shape every country house he plans, every city façade even, that he lays out. With regard to this I say only that the excellent method brings with it its temptations, its almost inevitably injurious effects. It tends to make the artist careless of his constructional purpose, of his structure, of the way in which his pieces are put together; it makes him think of his framed composition of wood-work as if it were a monolithic structure to be sculptured out of the solid mass, and as if the question of pleasing propor-

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

tions were the only question given him to answer.

Better must we like, I think, the side-board that I show you now (Fig. 3). It is a late piece, probably of the reign of Louis XIV, dating from 1680 or even 1700, but as it is of the far South it retains some of that freedom of design which had then been abandoned in favor of a more purely classical method of design by the workmen of the great centres, Paris and Rouen and Lyons. We may suspect, also, an Oriental influence in those panels carved with anthe-mions of semi-Persian look. But what I am interested in now is the obviousness of the structure. You can see how the pieces are put together, and the heads of the trenails which hold them: you can see how the doors are put on with those admirable hinges with outside knuckles, the like of which we have never been able to introduce in our nineteenth century design but which prevailed in France through all the later pre-revolutionary epoch; and we can see how the drawer fronts lap over the



WALNUT SIDEBOARD, SOUTH OF FRANCE, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. JUG OF STONEWARE, CALLED BELLARMINE

LECTURE III. FIGURE 3



PIECES OF STONEWARE (COLOGNE-WARE)

LECTURE III. FIGURE 4



KNEADING-TROUGH, BREAD-CAGE, AND OTHER PIECES  
South of France, Eighteenth Century

LECTURE III. FIGURE 5



OAK SIDEBOARD, FROM THE ORIGINAL DESIGN BY  
ALEXANDRE SANDIER

LECTURE III. FIGURE 6



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

frame of the piece, even as do the doors of the main part. You see, it is a perfectly understood motive—that of giving to the drawer fronts and the doors the leading part in the composition. The frame exists for that only, and to my mind that is a better design even than the stately cabinet just shown. “Matter of opinion.” Our architectural school of to-day thinks nothing a design which is not based upon proportion. To me there is nothing so important in design as realism of thought tending toward originality; proportion is the easiest thing in the world to those who have the gift, and is out of reach of the other three quarters of the artistic world, and I am interested in securing that impulse in our designs which is more tangible and more within the reach of all thinking men.

A word about the pots which stand upon the sideboard (in Fig. 3). Ignore the bowl if you please—that is Persian, an enormous utilitarian every day piece with a beautiful painted design, but not to be judged by the photograph. The other pieces are all of

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

nearly the same epoch as the sideboard, or, as in the case of the great jug on the corner, of a time somewhat earlier. Three of the beer mugs are German, painted on the glaze of a delicate faience. The fourth one is of yellow ware with the ornamentation in relief, and that I suspect of a Provençal origin, perhaps from the old mountain town of Apt where they still make the covered pots for *paté-de-foie-gras*; but as to the jug on the corner, the Bellarmine, I am sorry that the outline is lost in the elaborate tracery in the background (a surface of Japanese wall-paper); but you know the kind of thing—it is of Cologne-ware, which gets its chief ornamental effect from coats-of-arms and the like, which are impressed upon the paste before it is fired. Here (Fig. 4) are richer specimens. These are also of that same stoneware and these are special museum pieces. You see how there has been care taken to put a scale into the picture, by means of which we may ascertain that the tallest flagon—that on the right—is four-tenths of a metre high,

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

or rather more, eighteen inches approximately.

But let us go back to our wooden furniture, for this does seem one of the most attractive studies which the decorative artist can turn to. The simple chests of drawers which are also of provincial make and not of central design are often full of interest. They are very simply wrought in walnut, with the corner-pieces carved without any special care for what was represented as long as the form seemed spirited and lively, with an extremely effective little border of sunken relief to frame each drawer front, and with all the metal work in hammered iron, the handles, the plates or rosettes of those handles, and the rosettes of the key-holes. Again, other pieces go farther in search of elaboration of design. They are perhaps of Louis XV, say of the years between 1720 and 1750, and the sculpture is strictly decorative without any attempt at representation. It is singular, by the way, that that much abused rococo style should have brought with it such a delicate feeling

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

for sculpture in solid wood. As for the metal *appliques*, except for their florid rococo design they would command the respect of every lover of refined metal-work. They are of gilt bronze most generally and are combined with the wooden frame in a way that shows the skill and great experience of the artists. But here (Fig. 5) is something still more interesting. Thirty years ago there was a movement in the far south of France in favor of bakers' bread, and the families who for two hundred years had kneaded their dough in just such a *pétrin* as I am showing you, began to go around the corner to buy their loaves. This was one more of those tendencies of modern life which work against all freshness and inevitableness in decorative art. We shall find abundant example of this in the course of our talks. As long as the families made their own bread, they required these four pieces of curious furniture: the kneading-trough itself, to which the hinged cover was fitted, and which, in some cases, had a drawer below — in this case concealed,

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

as it were, by the elaborate lambrequin between the table-legs; second, the flour-box, seen on the right, with its portcullis, its sliding cover; third, the salt and pepper boxes, seen on the left; and fourth, the cage for the baked loaves. For, as you see, the people of Provence and Languedoc have always preferred their bread to grow dry rather than musty. "Our bread must hang up in the open air"; and so they put it into the cage and shut the door upon it, turning the key if the housekeeper were of a careful or suspicious nature. I am sorry that there is a baluster missing from my bread-cage; but, after all, the important thing in this and in its fellow-pieces is the abundant decoration in carving of low relief, and in the solid mass of the walnut plank.

Now see how in modern times we struggle with these problems. Here (Fig. 6) is a sideboard made thirty years ago for a wealthy New Yorker, and made strictly according to the design copied in the photograph before you. It was entirely of oak, and very massive, parts of the frame being

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

cut out of three-inch scantling and sculptured in the mass. Thus the little colonnettes are in one piece each. The shaft was turned, and then the necking and the base mouldings, previously decided on, were turned also, and finally the capital was carved by hand. The sculpture of the two diagonally set panels in the two doors is of birds on their nests, also carved in a thick plank of oak. The only metal work which shows in the design is in the three drop-handles of the three drawers. You see that the attempt has been to make a working side-board with three drawers for table-linen, or for spoons and forks and the like, and a rather large cupboard for bottles,—a cupboard of which the master of the house might keep the keys. So far, as you see, the designer's way was plain. Any draughtsman who thinks for himself can make designs of that sort, more or less charming in their ultimate results, according as his feeling for form is more or less acute and just. But take the more difficult instance of a series of book-cases and the

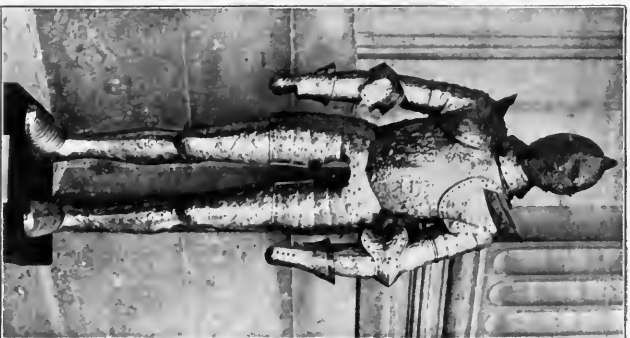
## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

general fittings of a library. One's hands are tied. Even in the country there is such a thing as dust; and the man who loves his books will ask that they be sheltered by close-fitting doors which, when open, will swing clear and leave the last book in the corner as accessible as the one in the middle of the row. He will ask, also, for cupboards below, in which unbound books and numbers of periodicals may be stored. He will ask for a case no higher than that he can reach the books on the top shelf without a ladder, but as high as that; that is to say, the top shelf may be at seven feet from the floor, bringing the top of the case at eight feet from the floor, unless one follows the example of his immediate ancestors and piles on a sham cornice with a hollow space behind it. But this he will not do. The assumption is that our designer is a man of ideas, who will not resort to such devices as that. Moreover, he wants his top shelf for the vases and statuettes which are to stand there, and this must not be too far from the eye; so that he is brought to some

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

severe outline and grave right-angled uniformity of design; and this is the worst of it, that the design will have a slender and liny character, with evident reference to the edges of planks and thin strips of wood. Except at great cost this cannot be avoided. Your book-cases are a row of boxes with glass doors or fronts. You cannot escape from that condition, and you will find that even if you use two-inch planks for your uprights or panel ends, you are still making a boardy, boxy, liny composition. We may remedy this partly by our treatment of the mantelpiece and whatever is combined with it in design with the book-case. The mistake in such a case will be to make the mantelpiece and mirror-frame of the same material and part of the same design. When it is feasible we will make that mantel very massive, of marble or fine-grained stone, and the mirror-frame a more slender composition of the same materials, exaggerating by their contrast the hollow, boxy look of the book-cases, no doubt, but improving the general effect of the room.

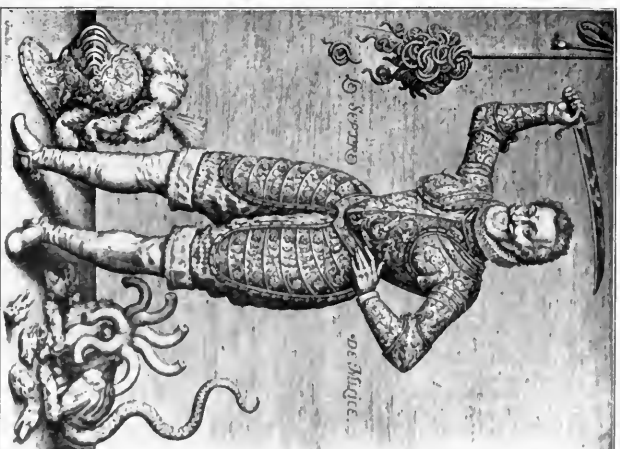




ARMOUR OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Louvre Museum

LECTURE III. FIGURE 7



ARMOUR OF THE EARLY YEARS OF THE  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

From Gauthier's portrait of Henry IV

LECTURE III. FIGURE 8



WROUGHT-IRON SHEARS, ON STAND

French work, Eighteenth Century

LECTURE III. FIGURE 9



COVERED GOBLET, OF SILVER

German, late Fifteenth Century

LECTURE III. FIGURE 10



COVERED GOBLET, OF SILVER

Probably French, about 1620

LECTURE III. FIGURE 11

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

But let us leave furniture for a while and consider metal work; and, first, that aspect of it in which the hammer has played the greatest part. And if you want to consider hammer-work, then the armour of the latest tilts and tourneys is the thing to study. The fact that it is wrought in steel makes it all the more interesting. Even to the veteran student and collector there is something peculiarly attractive in repoussé work in steel—in that obdurate, that rigid material. This suit of armour (Fig. 7) is in the Louvre and has been for many years in the Gallery of Apollo. It has always been called the armour of Henry II., that unlucky king who, being determined to show his courtiers that he was better at the lance than they, managed to get himself killed by a splinter from his antagonist's lance which flew through the sight-slits of his tilting helmet and pierced his brain. I am sorry that the exquisite Renaissance design of the relief cannot be seen very perfectly. But take this suit of his later successor—only thirty years later, by the way—which

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

is represented in Fig. 8 from the engraving by Léonard Gauthier, and see how intelligently every separate piece of steel has been wrought into relief by the hammer, while yet the general design is left complete and intelligible. You see that the time had come when men thought for themselves about the monstrous burden of the complete panoply of sixty or sixty-five pounds weight, even when the most extravagant, the most monstrous price was paid for the suit of steel; and that an active and hustling king like Henry of Navarre desired to leave twenty pounds of that steel behind him even at the expense of leaving some part of his bodily frame less perfectly protected from blows. Remember, too, that he is a horseman, and that when seated in the war saddle the thighs are largely protected by the high pommel and bow, while for the legs below the knees it was found that heavy jack-boots were almost as good a defence as the steel greaves bolted and locked behind, and the steel solleret with its laminations, as we saw them in the steel suit of the Louvre.

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

The armour of Henry of Navarre, then, reduces itself to a cuirass consisting of breastplate and back-piece, and complete articulated steel coverings for the arms, while below the waist there is no steel at all excepting the laminated tassets which cover the top of the thighs. We have only to suppose that in the case before us the great jack-boots of the field have not been assumed.

But here is iron work on a smaller scale and of simpler purpose. This (Fig. 9) is a pair of snuffers or scissors; though if any one has a positive name to give it I shall be glad to hear from him. But the thing is six inches high or so, and is made, as you can see, of a thin plate of hammered iron, supported on four rounded legs with knobs on the ends, all wrought on the anvil; and it has a handle cut out of some thicker plate of iron. Then the superstructure has an upright rod, which may perhaps have been cast, but is more likely to have been hammered and filed; and a rosette at the base, which is, of course, hammered and pounded into shape. Then for the shears

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

themselves; they have been made with singular care, and after a hundred and sixty years of preservation are still in good working order. Now, I call that intelligent designing, for the artist who made the thing was conscious that so small and so utilitarian a piece might be better left less stately in its ordonnance than a big cabinet or a monumental sideboard could be. He was working something in the spirit of the men who made such silverware as this (Fig. 10), although the silver hanap is an immeasurably more costly piece—a really royal piece of plate. But see how fearlessly the artist has used his hammer; how dashingly he has modelled up his glimmering bosses, and alternated them with applied leafage in silver as minute and fantastic as heart could wish. That was the fifteenth-century (late Gothic) spirit lingering on into the time of the Renaissance in Germany. Here (Fig. 11) is another hanap, in which the classical feeling has produced its effect and has given no undeserved check to the fantastic exuberance of the earlier work. The relief

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

sculpture in this piece is as delicate and refined as the other was bold and dashing, and the proportions of the latter piece are at least as good. But let us consider how a simpler thing is done. There are beakers and goblets, sometimes made of very poor, much alloyed silver, by workmen who had a dozen or more thalers of the different succeeding dukes of Brunswick and Luneburg, or of Hesse-Darmstadt, or of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The princes of Brunswick and Luneburg are those very dukes or grand dukes from whom the royal Hanoverian line of Great Britain has descended; and I had a goblet in which the medals of that princely house which form the principal motive of the design are placed judiciously, and so that the reverse shows inside the cup as the obverse is shown in the exterior. Apart from the medals, the design of such a cup may be of little worth; the artist may have been content with the slightest chasing of the surface in a design which had been used a dozen times before.

And now, before we leave metal work,

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

consider just one aspect of those old decorative arts of Europe which, as I have intimated, are out of our reach to-day. We imitate them when we have plenty of time and money; but we do not, except in the most desultory way, follow their lead. Here once, and there again, we do something like it, but without serious and consecutive thought. There is embossed work in high relief in those helmets exhibited at Naples; helmets of that curious pattern which was used in a certain gladiatorial combat. One such of them is reproduced in a copy in your museum. They are of bronze, and the hammering of the parts into high relief has given to the thin metal a singular rigidity. You will remember a similar treatment of the metal defensive armour in the corselet of that statue of Augustus which is in the new arm of the Vatican Museum. By mentally putting that marble statue together with this specimen of relief work in bronze, we can form an idea of how a Roman Emperor was armed, as to his body, when he addressed his legions.



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

Metal work of a more grandiose type is that which the Greeks of all epochs cast in bronze and then finished with minute care. Even where the pieces are small and used in connection with utilitarian objects they are splendid. Thus in a well-known piece, the handle of a mirror, this handle is made of a simple figure, treated like an architectural caryatid, and the handle is so arranged that the mirror may stand up on a definite pedestal, with four little feet to keep it steady; and yet it is easy in the hand. The best thing which the Germans have done in our own times, in the way of decorative art, is their bold treatment of the human figure in just this way. Draped and undraped figures, male and female, alone and in groups, are used for the handles of mirrors, the supports of lamps, and in a thousand such ways, that use of the human figure forming by much the most important part of the decorative treatment of these pieces. It is, of course, evident that such work of our time will rarely attain the grace of the finer pieces of

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

antiquity, but it is admirable, and gives great promise for the future.

And now see how the Renaissance men took their bronze seriously. You know how much there is in the way of portrait busts and statuettes, how much there is in the way of life-size bronzes of religious and profane subjects. War itself is treated in a wonderful composition in delicate relief, surrounding the tube of a bronze cannon, which lay for years on the floor of the basement hall in the Bargello in Florence, and is now set up in a more prominent fashion. I have never seen a gun as elaborately wrought as that. Even the knob or button of the culasse is a bearded head of great delicacy of modelling; and the delicate reliefs, which can hardly be distinguished without minute examination, are really valuable sculpture. But the bronze and brass guns of the wars waged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were only one degree less rich, and they are to be seen in a dozen great arsenals. The Spaniards, not generally of the highest rank among



GLASS VESSELS OF GRECO-ROMAN MAKE

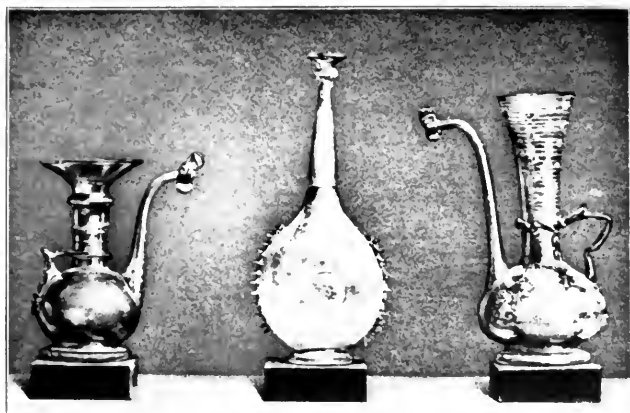
LECTURE III. FIGURE 12



GLASS VESSELS OF VENETIAN MAKE

Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Centuries

LECTURE III. FIGURE 13



GLASS VESSELS OF ORIENTAL MAKE

Probably Persian, of about 1700 A. D.

LECTURE III. FIGURE 14



REPOUSSÉ WORK IN LEAD

European, Nineteenth Century

LECTURE III. FIGURE 15



DECORATIVE SCULPTURE IN LEAD

French, Nineteenth Century

LECTURE III. FIGURE 16

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

decorative men, made splendid cannon of this sort. I have seen them in old Spanish colonies in America, in the old seaside forts of Venezuela, Trinidad, and Santa Lucia, and they all bear the famous motto which means, "The last argument of kings."

And the preparation for such a delicate piece of work may engage our best attention. There exists a drawing in which two of the greatest artists who have ever lived worked together, as the Latin inscription assures us. "Holbein had drawn it; W. Hollar made it, at Antwerp in 1645, and it is of the Arundel collection." So says the legend. Now, Hans Holbein, grave German as he was, and painter of religious pictures, had yet a pretty sense of the light and trifling branches of the designer's art, and his drawings for mountings of a sword and scabbard, for a buckler, or the like, are fantastical and varied enough. Some of these have been engraved by that man who was the equal of Holbein in technical power — Wenceslaus Hollar — and it would be a most interesting study to compare the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

original drawing, if it could be found in any case, and see how far the ingenious and most intelligent engraver followed closely on the design which he had undertaken to reproduce.

Now, it is my point, that such ornamentation in form, such scrolls and leafage as Holbein's, or as those of Henry's armour, such delicate tracery as that of the sixteenth-century hanap, and such bold embossing as that of the earlier piece which was shown in contrast with it, such carving in low relief as that of the French eighteenth-century furniture—all of it—is out of our reach. It is not because we cannot do *just that*, in any case. We ought not to be able to do *just that*; the time for those styles of design has passed, and we ought not even to dream of reviving a style that has once developed, culminated, decayed, and passed away. It is because we can do nothing of our own which shall be to us what the old art was to the old men.

Do you think that there are exceptions, that there are some decorators, even in

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

our time? Yes, there are exceptions; and, you see, the argument is that, as these *are exceptions* from a rule which applies to such a gigantic community as that of these states, or even as that of the more eastern part of them; a rule which applies with only a less general force to France, artistic France, where the carvers know every style and can reproduce it, but have no style which is not reproduced—so the condition remains a general one. The exceptional work of these exceptional men does not help very much: they are not working together; no general advance has followed it. In another field this is not so: we do not find it so in what there is to speak of in the next lecture; but for decoration in form we have to go to the highly taught, highly paid artist of the studio; we have to pay him his formidable price—and him, also, we have to choose from among many.

Now let us take another department or branch of decorative art. Here (Fig. 12) are seven glass phials and jugs, from graves chiefly, and always from the shores and

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

islands of the Mediterranean. The material is simply thin glass, blown into forms and moulded, with handles and lips cemented on by the voluntary action of the half-melted glass, with spirals and ribs wrought in the still hot and yielding and tenacious material; pieces having no ornament but in these easily applied threads and ribs, except as the little amphora on the left has designs of a slightly different character wrought upon its sides. There are much larger vessels with double handles—jugs—also of Greco-Roman origin. Some of them have been found in use as cinerary urns, holding the ashes of the dead. And if we turn now to what Europe was doing, as the nations grew more civilized in one sense than they had been, look at Fig. 13 and consider these Venice glasses of the sixteenth century, in which, as you see, there has been much more daring work done than that represented by the pieces of the Greco-Roman time. The bowls are cemented to the feet or pedestals, and the handles are expanded into volutes and spirals, even into



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

monsters of the deep and serpents of the rock; all wrought in plastic glass, at a temperature of four figures Fahrenheit, and hardening in the forms so given them. There is no doubt about the fact that all these pieces are open to the objection that they are not coherent in their make, nor very durable; even the simplest ones are too liable to split at the points where the foot and bowl are united. But this is not a serious objection, for no one would dream of utilizing such glass, except once in a while to drink a special health to a friend. So the Persian glass of the same epoch, which I show you now (Fig. 14), having some of its charm in a delicate blue color, very often shows how the artist in glass is led inevitably toward vagaries, toward fantastic combinations of form. He cannot escape it; the opportunity is not to be lost. Glass allows him and invites him to sport with it, and he would be either more or less than human as a designer if he could resist the temptation.

The work of the nineteenth-century

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

men cannot, indeed, compare with that of older times in purely artistic merit. The nineteenth century seemed to have a different mission in decoration. What was the lack of grace, what was the clumsy inefficiency of design which characterized its work? At first unintelligent, dull, without interest, it changed in the second half of the century, and grew to have significance, but significance of a different kind from that known to earlier ages. Its quality, as design, takes it out of our subject to-day, and it comes under the head of color-work altogether.

And, as I have not wished to prove or to elucidate my point by showing you ill-designed modern work, take two specimens, each illustrating a class of decoration which the nineteenth century did well. This group of poppies (Fig. 15) is all of hammered lead, and it was made in Rouen for the Paris exposition of 1878. You see, I think, in this piece, what the better thought of the nineteenth century was in search of. The power of natural, instinctive, easy design

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

had gone, but there was love of nature, and a keen eye for nature; and when such a French hammerman as this artist said to himself, "Now, let us take out of a great bunch of poppies all that is expressible in lead," he began as they begin who build up a great school of design.

Or, again, to show how the studio sculptor goes at his task of decoration, take Lanson's terminal statue, "*La Géographie*," shown in Fig. 16. You know what I mean by a studio sculptor: a man who has had all the chances, and who has learned to model the human figure with accuracy, and what we call anatomical truth. Such a workman desiring to produce a figure which shall be a stately ornament and nothing else, may well adopt the classical device of using what is called a terminal figure; and if he arranges a number of them to set off the grounds of a great university, he may well treat them with such attributes as he would give to fully realized statues: letting one stand for History, one for Geography, one for Philosophy, and the like.

## *LECTURE IV.*

### THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS IN WHICH COLOR PREDOMINATES.<sup>1</sup>

In the last lecture it was hinted that the nineteenth-century world (of which, as yet, the twentieth-century world is an extension) understood little of decorative art, except as a matter of delicate gradation, slight contrast of color, or of light and shade; and this without much connection with form. Let us consider the exact significance of this.

The typical adornment of the walls of a rich man's drawing-room, at least in the Eastern cities of the United States, and from 1880 to 1904, would be hangings of rough, ivory-white material, embroidered with crewels or raw silk, in buff or yellowish brown. This needlework would be carried out without floral form or leaf form, or the representation or suggestion of anything

<sup>1</sup> Delivered April 21, 1904, at Fullerton Memorial Hall, The Art Institute of Chicago.

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

in nature. Or else there would be a hanging of oriental silk; but even then, with all the magnificent world of pattern and scroll and floral ornamentation of China and Japan, India and Persia, to choose from, the piece chosen would be effective chiefly by its cloudy gradations of color—that would be the character of the stuff selected. Or else it would be, if expense were not disregarded so entirely, a hanging of bur-laps, to which a rough embroidery might be added; or else, if there were pictures to hang on the wall, the coarse texture which causes play of light, and the changing tint of the stuff, would suffice. Or else it would be tapestry; but, unless a chance had brought to the house-owner a good opportunity to purchase old work, an undoubted and important antique, the tapestry that he would use would be *verdures* nearly always; that is to say, those effects of greenery, of forest trees and undergrowth, which have but little significance, except as furnishing a greyish-green background to his furniture.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

And this mention of tapestry reminds me of the difficulty of explaining what the American would do, if he or his artists were left to do their own decorating from their own designs. That is what we have considered already, but that is just what does not happen when the man is rich enough to buy freely. Then he purchases, ready-made, the tapestries, or the rococo panel work, or the Louis Quinze carving, from an ancient house in Paris, or a country château, brings them across the water, and builds a room around them. Even if a certain room is left to be treated independently, and from designs made expressly for it, the chances are ten to one that it will be designed strictly in accordance with the accepted rules of the Louis XVI, or the Empire, or the rococo style; and this fact puts it outside of our consideration. The very last time that John La Farge told me of a decorative effect which he had to produce for a millionaire's Newport house, he cited with disgust what the owner had said to him: something to the effect that "the



GLAZED POTTERY VASES  
French, Nineteenth Century  
LECTURE IV. FIGURE 1



LACQUERED TRAY  
Japanese, about 1800 A. D.  
LECTURE IV. FIGURE 2



IMARI PORCELAIN

Japanese, Eighteenth Century, A. D.

LECTURE IV. FIGURE 3



INLAID BOX

Japanese, Nineteenth Century, A. D.

LECTURE IV. FIGURE 4



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

painting would be well set off, for all the woodwork of the room, dado and mantel and all, was genuine Louis Quatorze carved work from Château Un Tel." We are not now concerned with recalling the ways in which old designs are copied or adapted to modern use; and the cases in which strictly modern designs have been made for modern rooms have been relatively few. It is of those that we are talking—those few—and it is of them that we say that even when the American decorator is given full freedom he will refrain from committing himself, and will stay in the safer regions of soft gradations without pattern. Why, even the mosaic that we see so commonly in the flooring of the new business buildings and hotels, when it is not a frank copy of mediæval Italian work, is a surface of subdued white, checked and scored by the little lines between the tesserae, and with this for its only pattern, except a most simple fret or zigzag of dark grey at the edge. So with our pottery; and so with our boasted brilliant glass—the glass vessels,

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

I mean, which here in America, as in Austria, as in Bohemia, are produced in accordance with a sincere desire to be original and to be interesting. The old knack at graceful forms has gone, of course. The old power of embedding a beautiful pattern in the body of the colored glass can only be imitated at a distance; it has been revived, with a difference, and this revival may come to something, but is only the suggestion of an industry, as yet. The effects generally sought are iridescence, pearly or fiery or in suggestion of peacock feathers, or in suggestion, perhaps, of sunset skies; there are always cloudings and stainings, there are never patterns. Thus the work of that famous potter, Clément Massier, of the Golfe Jouan, consists very largely in splashings and tricklings of colored glaze, which may indeed be guided a little to express the idea of sunset or mountain chain or clumps of foliage, but which are often merely combinations of color without even a suggestion of a further significance. Larger pieces have the suggestion (but only the

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

suggestion) of great birds soaring or hovering on outspread wings, or of a whole sierra of sharp-pointed mountain tops, or of a fir-grown hillside. Those that are in this way suggestive of nature are the earlier pieces, such as we admired, and bought now and then, fifteen years ago; but here (Fig. 1) are some bottle-shaped vases by the same Massier, and you will see here very plainly how the conception takes form in the artist's mind. The left-hand piece is of a cold grey, whose iridescence, however, is golden, and the grey is modulated by a bluer and a greener cast. The pattern, as you see, is a mere splashing of unformed and poorly understood chevrons and ovals on a background made of irregular spots. The right-hand piece is in brownish yellow, again with a golden iridescence, and you see how completely devoid of significance is the pattern—if, indeed, it can be called a pattern. The middle piece is easily the best in effect; it is of a richer color than the others, and the effect of zigzag is produced by, not a continuous line, but by

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

separate chevrons, each like a pair of compasses almost, the points touching or nearly touching, and the rounded tops made darker by the meeting of the two sweeps of the brush lapping over one another where they meet. Do not suppose I am out of sympathy with these pieces; I admire them with all my heart. But we are defining and describing, are we not? and our description must certainly be to the effect that these pieces are all lustre and glaze and brilliancy, with but little care for the drawing of patterns or the consideration of what nature has to say in the way of lessons in form.

Now see, on the other hand, how the Oriental attacks such a problem. Here (Fig. 2) is the simplest and cheapest way. This is a wooden tray, so slight and light in make that it cannot have cost a dollar in Japan; the rim, set at an angle of forty-five degrees with the flat bottom, is a separate strip of wood, lacquered in red. The flat bottom itself has the grain of the wood picked out, so as to show the fibre, by some process that we do not fully understand,

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

and is then painted in lacquer with a spray of peony blossoms, as you see—the colors being strong and clear, not vivid, as so often in European water-color, but grave and emphatic as decorations. Again, the two pieces shown in Fig. 3 are cheap enough, or were so when they were made for the Dutch at Deshima two hundred years ago. They are barbers' plates, you see, just such in form and purpose as the famous helmet of Mambrino, which, being of brass, served its knightly purpose better than these porcelain platters would have done. They are painted in the famous Imari or "Old Japan" taste, in dark blue under the glaze and crimson and gold, with dashes of green above the glaze; and of course the work is conventional, of course it is traditional, of course the flowers are drawn, not with the artist's eye on the blossoms themselves, but from his well-learned lesson of how a peony ought to be represented; but, nevertheless, here is real pattern-drawing, and it is needless to say—it is a truism—that the Oriental has the secret of such work as this. Or,

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

to consider something which is not done with the paint-brush,—to consider such inlay as we might produce if we cared to, because we have sculptors who could work it, and some painters who could design it,—let us take this cylindrical box, hollowed in a curious, dark-brown wood with an open grain, and then adorned with those three pieces of inlay, and no more, two bats in black horn, and a crescent moon in mother-of-pearl (Fig. 4). You see that the inlay is in slight relief; that this relief is a brilliant addition to the mere contrast of color with color. An inlay without relief is good, and is capable of much in the way of splendid adornment; but an inlay of which the surfaces can be sculptured, as seen here, is a triumphant thing, is a device which we never shall exhaust, if we were to work it, beginning to-day, throughout the twentieth century.

Of course, if we are considering inlay, we can go much farther afield; there is no end to the splendour of Oriental work in that direction. Enamelling is often a kind

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

of inlay. The Chinese use such an inlay, with patches of good size and much breadth of design, the patches of bright-colored enamel separated by gilded lines of a definite and appreciable width. The Japanese affect, as a general thing, a more minute style and graver colors, and the delicate little lines of gold appear and disappear in the play of light upon the surface. For all this, you understand, is what we call *cloisonné* enamel, the ornamentation which is prepared by building up a pattern with little strips of metal soldered upon the surface of brass, in most cases, but sometimes of porcelain. The enamel fills the little spaces left within the walls or partitions (*cloisons*), and the edge of each partition shows as the boundary of the patch of color. We of European stock cannot design those things, we can only copy them.

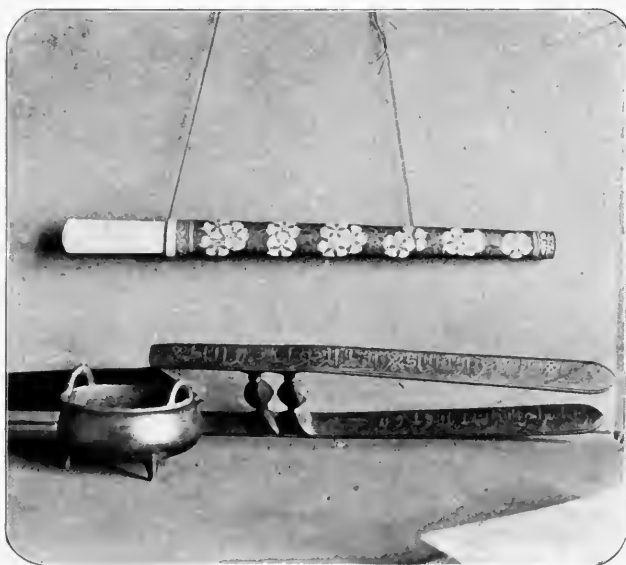
Here (Fig. 5) is a simple picture—a dagger-sheath—Chinese enamel of the seventeenth century of our era, the five-leaved flowers, white, on a nearly black background, with little scrolls made of the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

edges of the partition only; that is to say, in dull gold like the outlines of the white flowers. See how the artist has combined his blossoms to make them adapt themselves to the tapering form of the scabbard; a clump of three, then two set thwartwise, then another clump of three more, packed together so as to get into the narrowing space; then another pair set diagonally, in order that both flowers may be seen, and again, a pair set longwise of the sheath, and finally, one to fill up the point. That is the rough and commonplace Chinese way of doing it. And the people who were capable of that art, and are capable of it now for all we know, are the people that Europe is hustling into corners because they (the Chinese) have not perfected their military organization! The Chinaman hates and despises war.

But here is set up, in contrast to the Chinese dagger-sheath, a piece of work inspired by that tradition which is the most warlike of all traditions. This is Arab work, done by the Moslems in northern





CHINESE ENAMELLED SCABBARD; INDIAN STEEL WEAPON,  
DAMASCENED IN GOLD; SMALL JAPANESE BRONZE VASE

LECTURE IV. FIGURE 5



TOP OF BOX, INLAID LACQUER  
Japanese, about 1700 A. D.

LECTURE IV. FIGURE 6



ENAMELLED POTTERY  
French, Eighteenth Century  
LECTURE IV. FIGURE 7



LAVABO, SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE  
LECTURE IV. FIGURE 12

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

India, damascening in gold on black iron. In passing, we may allude to the fortunate possession by the Arabic-speaking people, as also by the Chinese and their fellows of the far Orient, of a system of written characters which are beautiful in themselves. It is easy to see that it is of immeasurable benefit to the decorative arts in Japan, in China, and in the Moslem East, that their written characters, which replace the letters of our alphabet, are capable of such exquisite treatment.

And yet, as you will hear on every side that the modern taste for the vapors and the clouds, for the gradations unlimited by outlines, and the combinations of color without shape, are largely inspired by Japanese example—and as that is true, not to be denied—let us consider the way in which the Japanese use that cloudy effect of theirs. Here (Fig. 6) is a top of a box, about fourteen inches long, a very precious piece of old lacquer. All of the five-lobed blossoms of that tree are in silver-foil, in the metal itself, cut out, and then inlaid in and

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

cemented down by the lacquer; and the moon also is a real silver crescent. All the branches and leaves are in painted lacquer, the sprinkle which fills up so much of the background is in gold, and, as you see, the whole effect is pale and in high light. Now, why are these clouds introduced? For you see they are clouds—the suggestion of the long bands of the vapor which fills the evening sky is unmistakable. Their intellectual purpose here is to suggest, I think, that the flowering tree is high on the mountain side. That intellectual suggestion is, however, of but little importance to the designer. He desired the bands of grey across the deep-black, star-strewn background, in order to give horizontality to his composition, and to remind you that this tree, the root of which is not visible, nor even the trunk, and which seems to float in the air, is really rooted in Mother Earth, and is a part of that low, level, long-drawn-out panorama which we will call external nature. The disposition to use soft gradations of color,

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

without determinate outline, is as true in Japanese lacquer workmen and silk manufacturers, water-color artists and metal workers, as in the paintings of the great Turner. It is plainly an important part of their artistic outfit, as is their strong inclination to use browns and greys and dulled gold where the Chinamen would prefer to use strong, pure blue and crimson, green and imperial yellow. We accept it to the full, only we are not to forget that the Japanese use that as part of a great decorative system—of which Europe can have but a faint idea—a living art, in which the outlined pattern, the firm and unmistakable diaper, the perfect distribution of spots, is an every-day matter, a thing in which they always succeed.

Now let us consider some cases in which the Europeans of better times than ours tried their hand at adornment in color. Glass vases of Venetian work in dark blue glass were sometimes adorned with the enamelled pattern in white and red, spotted, as it were, all over it. And let us remember that

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

this enamelling has not been done by the *cloisonné* process, with firmly set gilded partitions to hold it in place, but is applied like paint with a brush upon the already glassy surface, and then fired that it may be fixed forever in that place. In other words, this enamelling is akin to and exactly equivalent to the painting on the glaze of porcelain or fine earthenware. We cannot refuse to admit the presence of a strong Persian influence in this decoration; the coloration as well as the shape suggests that, and we are not likely to forget that the Venetians in the sixteenth century had close affiliations with the nearest East. So the French pottery of the sixteenth century (the great round platters) is entirely glazed with bluish white, and the pattern is painted in a darker and rather dull blue directly on the ground. Certainly the scrollwork is never equal in beauty to that which an Oriental would have done under the same conditions, but it is perfectly well applied to the dish, both to the raised rim or *marly* and to the bottom of the piece. Here (Fig. 7) is what the French were

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

doing in their exquisite faïence, at a still later time, a hundred years later indeed. The two pieces on the left are, as I think, of Moustiers ware; they were bought in Marseilles; and at that time, twenty years ago, pieces of southern manufacture could still be had cheap. They seem to have been made in that little town of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie or Moustiers-la-Reine, for it is known by both names. These on the right are, I suppose, of Nevers. They are altogether of the first half of the eighteenth century; the right-hand piece entirely in orange-brown, while the others, especially the one on the left, are much more elaborately adorned with a thin outline of that same orange color, and this filled in with red and blue, not very vivid, but intelligible and decided patches of uncompromising color. I have never seen inexpensive glazed pottery more beautiful in color effect than this.

Of course this inquiry might be carried on indefinitely. There is no limit, absolutely none, to the stock we might draw upon, the stock of beautiful decorations of the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

Renaissance and the Middle Ages in Europe, of the Moslem for eight centuries, and the farther East for twice as long a lapse of time. But we have to consider a more elaborate application of color design, and, first, some of that furniture which two or three modern Englishmen have painted, with their whole hearts in their work. The firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. was established in London about 1865, for the purpose of producing just such pieces as I wish to show you, as well as decorative stuffs and glass for church windows and the like; but it soon disappeared in the business of William Morris himself. That work by William Morris I will not ask you to admire. It is the result of immeasurable energy, industry, sympathy, and a noble ambition, but in the hands of a man who, I think, was not by nature a strong designer. But in the hands of a man who really could design, namely William Burges, the architect and collector, the style took shape; and there was made some English furniture which cannot have been surpassed, even when, under the Byzan-



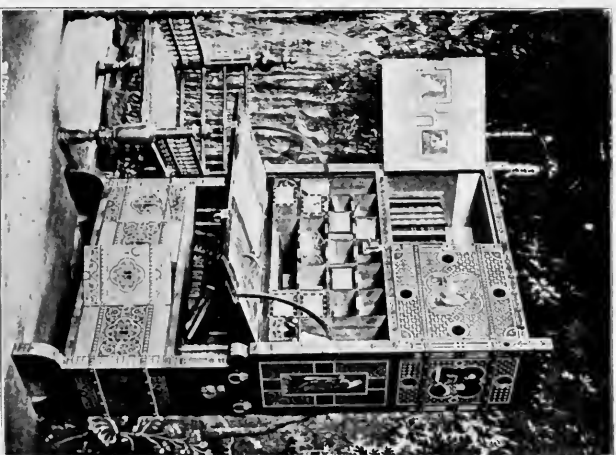
## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

tine emperors, color and color patterns were the chosen ornamentations for buildings and their contents alike, for dresses and armor, for everything to which man set his hand. Little is accessible to us of that ancient Byzantine magnificence, but by one or two workmen in the modern world some part of its spirit has been preserved and restored; and those cabinets in Burges's house are so exceptional and yet so exactly what we need to have a try at in order that something of our own may develop out of that style, that we must pause for a moment to look at one of them. This (Fig. 8) is a cabinet, serving as *escritoire*—open, with its books tumbled down and its papers showing as they are piled loosely into the pigeon-holes. There is a portrait of Chaucer in the quatre-foil at the top, and portraits of friends of the owner on the inside of the door which is swung open. And now I show you (Fig. 9) the same piece with the doors closed, and you see how on the outer or under side of the great door which makes the writing-desk when it is lowered, there is a stately

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

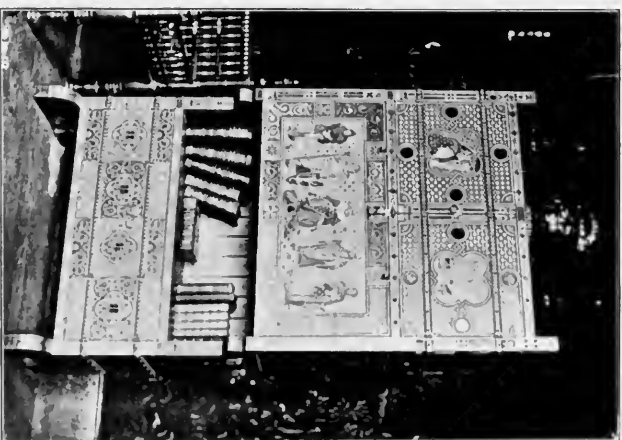
composition of human society—the king with the warrior on his right and the bishop on his left, the husbandman on the more distant right, the merchant on the farther left. I will not dwell upon the pattern, because it will take too long to explain the exact system of coloring adopted, and because it is obvious that it is not equal in charm to those that the Oriental knows how to produce. But the frank acceptance of the situation, that where there is color there need not be so much thought given to form, and that when color is rich and pure, even slight and unmeaning patterns suffice—that, I think, is important as showing us in the twentieth century how we could work more easily. I do not suppose that anything that could be done in the next fifty years would give us a system of real sculpture for the adornment of our architecture, or for our minor articles of utility; but it is practicable to do something in color.

I think we shall not fail to see plainly enough how much those designs made by the Englishmen of 1860 to 1870 under the



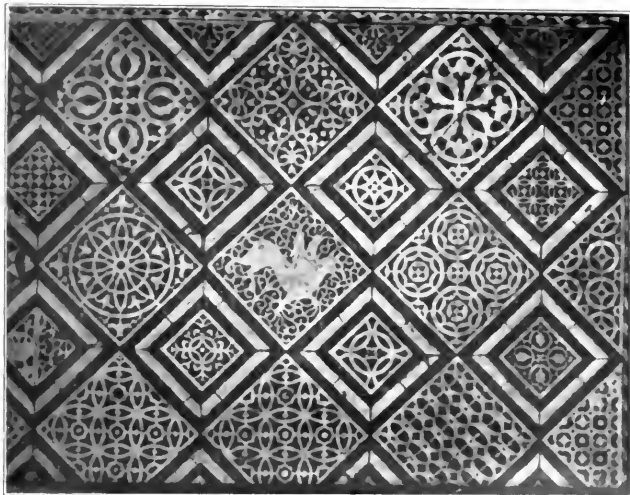
CABINET, ENGLISH WORK OF ABOUT 1870  
From "The House of William Burges, A. R. A."

LECTURE IV, FIGURE 8



CABINET, EXTERIOR (SAME AS FIG. 8)  
From "The House of William Burges, A. R. A."

LECTURE IV, FIGURE 9



INLAID PAVEMENT, BAPTISTERY OF FLORENCE CATHEDRAL

LECTURE IV. FIGURE 10



DETAIL OF VAULT OF SS. NAZARIO E CELSO, MAUSOLEUM  
OF GALLA PLACIDIA, RAVENNA

The Mosaics are probably of the Fifth Century

LECTURE IV. FIGURE 11

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

influence of the pre-Raphaelite movement and the study of mediæval art—how very much they confirm the opinion which has been suggested already in these lectures; I mean the opinion that the power of abstract design is lost to the modern world,—that we must paint pictures or carve expressional groups when we wish to adorn,—that there is no apparent means of restoring the decorative gift once held by European men, of reawakening it, of teaching it to our pupils or learning it for ourselves. It is necessary to linger for yet a few moments in the consideration of this unpleasant truth. The photograph (Fig. 10) shows a detail of the pavement of the Baptistery at Florence, that famous Church of St. John of which Dante speaks with so much affection; and that pavement must have been in Dante's time even as it is to-day. The guide-books say that the designs of that inlay, carried out and shown to Florence seven hundred years ago, were of infinite value to the silk-weavers of that early time. And we may as well accept that statement

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

as true or as true-seeming; that is to say, true in the historical sense, according to which the author of the statement does not guarantee absolute accuracy in details, but states, tacitly as it were, that this is the historical verity. It is so that we have agreed to declare it. And if you think of it for a moment, that will appear to be the only historical truth that there is. What is your authority for saying that a given statue was the work of Praxiteles or is a copy from a work of Praxiteles? What is your authority for the separate and individual existence of Praxiteles? All such statements are accepted by the modern student as true for the present—true until further advices. There is certainly every reason for a weaver, for a designer of a textile fabric, to study his diaper patterns in such a school as this, for, as you see, that pattern might be woven in a fine material without serious alteration. The signs of the zodiac and other natural or emblematic forms are just sufficiently suggested to give the piece a slightly extraneous merit, a merit apart from its

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

artistical character. I call that pattern a normal one, the sort of pattern which an inlay ought to affect; for I think that when the inlay or the imitation of the inlay by the paint-brush is sharp-cut, with clear outlines, and strong contrast of tint between background and pattern, it is a mistake to have a design of mere spots, a sowing, a *semé* as the heralds have it. But when the outline is not so sharp and the contrasts are not so strong, the sowing may be the best of patterns. See this figure of a mosaic (Fig. 11). Here the pattern of circles set at equal distances and alternating with eight-pointed star-flowers seems to me faultless for its place and purpose, because the circles are extremely inaccurate in their curvature; because they are not spaced with geometrical accuracy, because their pattern differs slightly, there being two separate designs, and each design being modified largely in the separate units; because, finally, the broken up irregular character of the surface produced by the juxtaposition of the tesserae would prevent the pattern from

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

being too formal, even had it been designed in the way of formality—a pattern that is visible and yet is not too insistent, a diaper which is not too exact, a sowing which is not too regular. And, in the pursuit of this mingling of exact meaning and less precise expression, let us consider the lovely eighteenth century marquetry. This work was applied to little ornamental writing-tables as well as to secretaires and still larger pieces, all of the eighteenth century. We will not discuss now the plaques, the large ones which are painted on a gold ground in the style we call *Vernis Martin*, and the small ones of Sèvres porcelain, which are very numerous. That is indifferent. The present question is about the inlay of veneers which covers the greater part of each one of these pieces—front, ends, back, and top of each upright escritoire. This inlay was made by taking for it little pieces of veneer, some of which were left in the natural color of the rare, imported, tropical wood, while others were of holly and maple and the like, dyed in strong colors. It is a



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

charming art when, for any reason, the greater decorative appliances of actual carving or painting or even inlay with hand-work are ruled out. But really, if one cares to consider how color can best be applied to the decorative arts, he must consider very seriously that combination of polychromy with form, which is as well seen as embodied in the work of Luca della Robbia and his nephews, as in any other work of which we have any knowledge. This (Fig. 12) is the lavabo or wash-hand fountain which stands in the sacristy of Santa Maria Novella. Everybody goes into that sacristy. You enter it through the heavy door-piece seen on the right, and the lavabo is at your elbow as you pass through the doorway. The guide-books say that this was the work of Giovanni della Robbia, and that it was erected in 1497. Such historical truths as these are of the more accurate sort, for the facts are recorded in conventual records; although those truths, again, have been transmitted from hand to hand, from pen to pen, through a term of

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

years, and the truths are no longer to be accepted absolutely, even as they are stated in the records. The agnostic spirit is the only one in which to approach these questions. One is free to speak of a date and an artist together, accepting it always, and counting on his hearer's knowledge of the fact that he accepts it all as approximate, and as a theory good enough to help in the investigation. The decorative sense manifested in all that Robbia work is a matter of universal consent; and if I insist upon it here, it is very largely because we have in this monument one of the very few instances of Robbia work in flat painting. The landscape in the lunette above the fountain, and the tiles with a formal pattern of circles below, are of the same epoch as the colored reliefs of the great archivolt and the still more prodigious swag held up by the Cupids. As in most of the earlier Robbia ware, the figures are in pure white enamel; and the background of the upper lunette is blue, while the fruit and leafage is all in naturalistic coloring, making the strongest

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

contrast with the gleaming white of the flesh and the draperies. The smaller festoons of the frieze and the details of the capitals form a middle term between the glazed white group of the upper lunette with its pendant angel-children and the strongly colored decorative relief; and on the other hand, the panels of the pedestals form a middle term between the flat painting and the relief; for in these the orange-tree is a flat painting—and yet seems to spring, as you see, from the vase moulded in relief below. This is deservedly classed as one of the great things of the Robbia school, and it is worth while to compare it with any of those great vases, those huge show-pieces from the national manufactory at Sèvres, which stand in a gallery of the Louvre. These are of the reign of Louis Philippe and of the Emperor Napoleon III. In these vases all the relief parts are richly gilded, and this gold-embossing contrasts with the realistic band of painted flowers and leafage in full color. The artists were not contemptible ones. The names of the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

men who have done the technical masterpieces of the Sèvres atelier are recorded in the roll of French masters of fine art; there can be no doubt that the painters of these vases had their own theories of what they were about and worked intelligently. They give no shadows to their design, which has no great diversity of planes, their clumps and bosquets are composed so as to be all close at hand, as if they were on one side of a plate-glass through which you might see them; and yet we can see very readily how different is the French treatment of such a realistic piece of drawing from that which a Japanese painter of correlative rank would have employed about a hundred years ago. The Satsuma vases, and those which are of the Kaga province, show an immeasurably greater knowledge of decorative conditions. Their clumps of flowers and foliage have relief and solidity without cast shadow, and are without excess of shade; but so do their birds—magnificent pheasants and dainty partridges, cocks and hens of splendid plumage, and the little songsters of the bough.

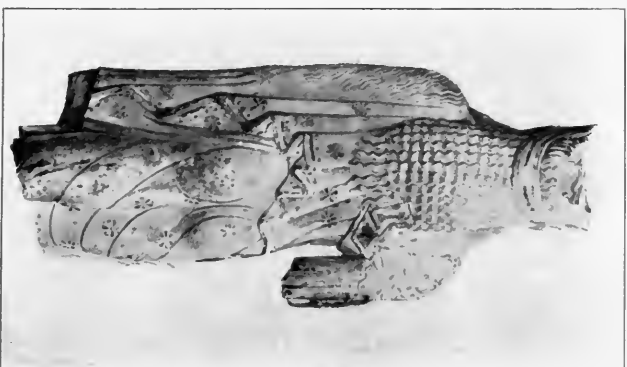
## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

It is a feat as rare and praiseworthy to put life into a perfectly flat painting, wrought only by pure color, as it is to master light and shade and cast shadow, together with color in our oil-paintings. Do not suppose that I am preaching the doctrine much too loudly announced fifty years ago and since that time—the doctrine that decoration must be flat. I do not understand that Michelangelo obeyed that doctrine or recognized it when he was painting the vaults of the Sistine. But there are degrees and limitations, and just as the cast shadow is eliminated from fine work in glass, from the windows of the great times of the past and from those of the nineteenth century, and as, again, there are no cast shadows in the illuminations of the mediæval manuscript, or even one of the Renaissance, so in these bands of decorative purpose, however naturalistic their drawing and however strong and vivid their color, there are no shadows and no perspective, no relief beyond that which design and color give to the mind already prepared to accept a magnificent

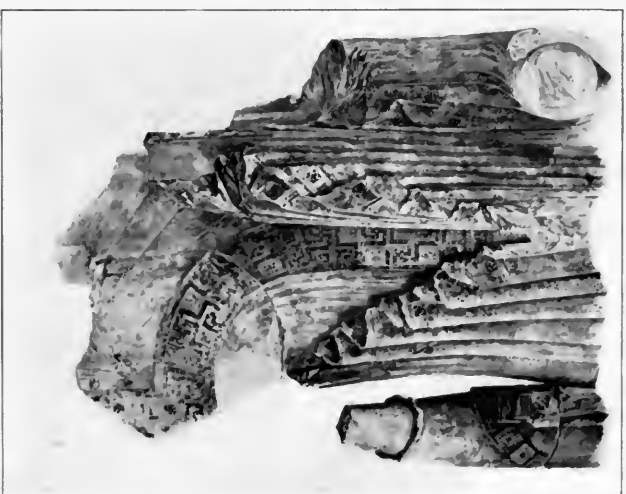
## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

fowl or a cluster of peonies as a solid object. The two bands of decoration—the French one and the Japanese one—are, as I say, alike as to this. And yet, how different is their aspect, how much more decidedly is the Oriental work truly decorative, a thing of the surface, taking nothing from the solidity of the piece! How much more like the facts of nature is the Frenchman's, and how little decorative effect he gains by this semblance of solidity, of air and space! If you were to see these two vases in your museum this afternoon, the immense Sèvres piece would produce a knock-down effect as of the wholly unexpected, of the striking, the startling, the impressive work of art; and yet the more you turned around it, and looked at it from different points of view, the less you would find your artistic soul content; while the Japanese piece would, I think, never tire any one.

This matter of what is decorative is, you know, of a most baffling nature. You say that a Greek vase is the most intelligent, and on the whole the most admirable, decoration



STATUE, SMALLER THAN LIFE  
Acropolis Museum, Athens  
LECTURE IV, FIGURE 13



PART OF STATUE, LIFE SIZE  
Acropolis Museum, Athens  
LECTURE IV, FIGURE 14



BUSTS, CALLED SEVERUS AND CARACOLLA  
Roman of Third Century A. D. Heads of white marble, drapery of  
veined marble

LECTURE IV FIGURE 15



POLYCHROMATIC BUST, BY CORDIER

LECTURE IV. FIGURE 16



POLYCHROMATIC STATUE  
(LAMP-STAND), BY  
CORDIER

LECTURE IV. FIGURE 17



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

in the world, and yet it does not decorate a room, nor even a mantelpiece or even the top of a book-case. Its subtile form cannot be appreciated till you have it in your hand. Its ornamentation does not *carry*. From ten feet away, even its color, its grave reddish brown and black, passes into a not very striking blot on the background; while an Oriental piece, or a piece of majolica of one-tenth the intellectual force of the Greek vase, affects the whole room in which it stands, and has to be reckoned with in any system of decoration which you may think of carrying out. In its figure-painting in flat silhouette, the Greek vase is of immense intellectual importance, and of greater importance to us moderns, because through it we receive a far-away notion of what Greek wall-painting of the time may have been. But at no time does the painting of the earlier or of the later amphoræ and phials reach the condition of a continuous solid decoration of the whole piece. It seems never to have occurred to a Greek painter of pots that he could carry a continuous frieze around the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

whole body of his vase. His procession of isolated figures, his Hercules bringing the Erymanthian boar to the unhappy King Eurystheus hiding in a great earthenware pot, or his Peleus carrying off Thetis while her sister nymphs seem rather to applaud than to resist the ravisher, may indeed surround a vessel without handles except at the top, or may be broken only by the handles if they are at the sides. But they are not continuous and wrought into one composition; whereas, since the time of the discovery that a band making the circle of a vase may be considered as a flat frieze of indefinite length, the treatment of that as such a frieze is a commonplace of the designer. One of the best pieces that I have seen of American pottery is a Volkmar vase, in which a landscape study of trees and undergrowth passes entirely around the body of the vase, returning into itself, a landscape without beginning or end, suggesting in a curious way, in its convex roundness, the concave roundness of the great natural world without. It is a pity that the work turned

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

out by that pottery should be so seldom treated with polychromy or other significant painting. It is mainly the interesting in form and the attractive in tone which makes interesting pieces of the Volkmar works. Decorative pieces are so very unusual in the United States and in modern European lands, anywhere, that it is to be regretted that this remarkable product should be so seldom used for the finest pottery decoration.

I must remind you again of the profound conviction which the ancient men held, and the Eastern men of to-day hold, the conviction that sculpture was as nothing until it had been completed by polychromatic treatment. The Athenians of the great time—the time of Phidias and of Praxiteles—used polychromy as freely as their early ancestors, but it has so happened that the greatest number of examples of such color adornment of sculpture have come to us from a somewhat earlier time. The wonderful find of painted statues on the Acropolis in 1886, preceded by the discovery of six or seven most interesting pieces in 1883, has

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

given to the Acropolis Museum a collection of Greek sculpture of a time just previous to the great culmination of art about the middle of the fifth century B. C. Those statues and reliefs in a few cases preserve the marks of a still earlier archaism, but the greater part have all the characteristics of the years 500 and thereafter, that is to say, of the time just before the Persian invasion of continental Greece. I show you (Fig. 13) one of which I have thought the back more interesting than the front. Note the rippled hair lying down the back and at one time gilded. Note the crinkled stuff of the garment which covers the left shoulder, and again the crinkled stuff of another texture which forms a part of the outer or upper garment and covers the right shoulder. You see the study made by the sculptor of the very material, the crepe-like woolen gauze which the Greeks used continually, and which their successors to-day have begun to make once more. The band around the head, and the outer garment, are painted with patterns, that of the cloak itself—the himation—being made

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

up of detached round figures arranged like a star, and of two patterns; and a border composed of a series of parallel lines emphasized by a row of dots on the upper or inner side. The smoother parts of the garment above—the chiton or tunic or shirt, which shows on the left shoulder—was, when found, of a positive green. The picture which I show you now (Fig. 14) is of a larger statue, one of life-size, and in order that you may see the colored pattern more accurately, I give you only a fragment of it. You have the body below the elbows with what remains of the two arms, but you see nothing except the painted drapery; and here again the chiton beneath is painted with detached spots, while the himation has a very complex and richly colored border made up of a succession of frets, or, as we call them sometimes, key patterns.

Now, the disposition to paint statues in this frank and outspoken way gradually diminished with the growth of a self-conscious civilization. In a way which is very hard to follow and to explain, the change

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

in social organization from the simpler to the more complex, and of social feeling from the conscious and natural to the more carefully organized, is often accompanied by a reluctance to use brilliant colors. Explain that who may—no adequate description of it has come in my way. But the love of color remains and is modified in a curious fashion by the constantly growing love of the costly and precious in the way of material. And thus, to leap over some centuries of time, the photograph which I show you now (Fig. 15) gives us two of those imperial busts with which the hauntings of the museums in Rome are so familiar. There are scores of them, and one does not always accept the ascriptions—the imagined names of the originals—which, as you know, are inferred from the resemblance of the heads to coins whose inscriptions make the profiles upon them authentic. The bust on the left is lettered Severo, which is intended to stand for Alexander Severus, emperor from 222 to 235 A. D.; while the other has been variously named. In each of these pieces the head

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

and neck are of white marble, and the whole mass of carved stone which stands for the draped shoulders and bust is of a very precious, beautifully veined marble from the Pyrenees or from Numidia, marble of some variety so rich and precious that it may be considered as a jewel—a precious stone whose units are somewhat larger than those of the turquoise or the topaz, but not less desirable or less lovely. The work of Europe and the East in the *pietra-dura*, the hard stone, that is, the crystal and agate and jasper, is not more beautiful or more worthy of an artist's attention than that in the softer stones and the metals, the marbles and alabasters which serve for statuary and also for the shafts of columns in high-wrought decorative architecture.

Now in modern times, with our comparative inability to spend money freely on magnificence, the longing of the artist for brilliant and delicate color is to be gratified, if at all, by other appliances than these. A certain French sculptor, named Charles Henri Cordier, has made himself a name for

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

polychromatic sculpture of much less beauty than that of the workmen of old times, but of even superior significance. He has gone far toward realism in his desire to express the facts about the clothing and the personality of races of men more picturesque than his fellow Europeans. The inhabitants of North Africa, Moors and Berbers, the people of mixed blood whom the French call too often by the not wholly appropriate name of *Arabe*, have always excited interest in the minds of the artists of Europe; and the people of France have a political interest in them which comes of their control over so vast a territory in Algeria and Tunisia, a tract of country at least as great as France herself. Among the statues by Cordier there is one which I can only describe to you, an ancient Egyptian playing upon the harp, in which life-size composition the opportunity offered by the costume and by the form of the harp itself has been used to the full, and a system of brilliant color is added in what seems to be enamelling of a certain rough and expeditious sort.



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

The pieces which I can show you (Figs. 16 and 17) are more simple, and the colors used are merely those of dark bronze gilded, or copper-colored bronze, white marble, and the like. And this bust is called simply "*Un Kabyle*," that is, an individual of the tribe which gave to the French invaders the most serious and constant military problem to solve. The colors here are all metallic, and the system is merely that of contrasting the lighter and the darker tones of bronze. But in the other, the decorative lamp-stand, the very effective pose of the woman carrying a jar upon her head, by the contrast between the marble and dark bronze, with the lustre and appearance of gold in smaller parts completing what is really a very effective composition of soft and suggestive color, we are, as I think, at the beginning of an epoch of polychromatic sculpture. The works of our countryman, Herbert Adams, are known to many of you; and while Mr. Adams has limited his efforts to the more gentle and cooler colors which are those most readily accepted by

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

the modern world, he is eager, as I know, to try polychromy in a more strenuous way. Portrait busts of his have been exhibited, in which colors were used with extraordinary effect, and that these have been accepted in portraiture is assuredly a good sign. We cannot afford to leave unnoticed and unimproved so splendid a field as that afforded us by the application of polychromy to disciplined and marshalled form.

The subject of polychromy in architecture is so immediately connected with the sixth lecture of this course as announced, that we will leave it unIntroduced to-day.

## LECTURE V.

### SCULPTURE AS USED IN ARCHITECTURE.<sup>1</sup>

There is no reason for the constant application of sculpture to buildings except this, that the building affords a solid and generally a noteworthy mass of hard material, parts of which may be carved with advantage. You will observe that one main reason for the special glory of architecture is that it allows of such carving; shows it well; associates many pieces of carving into a whole. The poles which support the front of a New Zealand chief's wooden house are liable to be cut into ornamental shapes; and it does not take much thought on the part of the half-savage builder to inspire him with the strong desire to turn that cutting and carving into the forms of such expression as comes natural to him. If he wishes to produce an effect of terror on the supposed

<sup>1</sup> Delivered April 26, 1904, at Fullerton Memorial Hall, The Art Institute of Chicago.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

enemy who may come in sight of the chief's dwelling, or merely to announce the formidable character of the chief or of the tribe, he will give to those sculptures the effect of grinning and ferocious heads, embodying in them, not so much his ideas of what would be beautiful decorations for the purpose, as his overmastering thought of terror-striking ferocity. The Assyrian builder, preparing to line the walls of the larger halls and corridors of his master's palace on the Tigris, will resort to representations of his master or his master's father or predecessor hunting—and generally hunting some ferocious and formidable beast—or heading his troops in battle; or adoring the divinities of his race or his family. It has not often been objected to by the prince, or by his followers and admirers, that his own achievements should be recorded in his own palace. That saying of the English ambassador, when at Versailles they showed him the historical paintings of the palace of Louis XIV, and asked him whether such decorations were to be seen in England,



**TOMB-SLAB OF DENETRIA AND PAMPHILE**  
 Found outside the Dipylon Gate, Athens; work  
 of close of Fourth Century B. C.

LECTURE V. FIGURE 1



**TOMB-SLAB OF DENKLEOS**  
 Found near tomb-slab shown in Figure 1, and the largest there;  
 6 feet 8 inches wide; work of 395 B. C.

LECTURE V. FIGURE 2



SLAB, TOP OF A STELE RECORDING A TREATY  
Three feet long. Now in Acropolis Museum, Athens

LECTURE V. FIGURE 3



CHARTRES CATHEDRAL, FROM THE WEST  
Only the southernmost of the three doorways is visible

LECTURE V. FIGURE 4

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

“My master’s achievements are to be found recorded anywhere except in his own palace,” may have been caused by the fact that there was no other answer to make. It was not good taste, nor in all probability was it any form of reluctance on the part of William III of England, or on the part of his admirers, that kept Windsor Castle or St. James’s Palace from such adornments. The subject uppermost in the artist’s mind is that which he will utilize in painting on ceilings or on the lunettes of vaulted rooms, just as the sculptor is thinking of that which he will show in the carved decoration of his rising wall or newly completed porch; and, in the reign of Louis XIV, the assumption that the glory of France was all embodied in the worship of the monarch was the controlling thought.

Sculpture is added to Egyptian palaces and temples in two notable ways. There is first the carving in relief of some kind upon the walls, vertical or sloping, and the rounded surface of the great columns; these reliefs being painted in brilliant colors, as was all

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

sculpture of antiquity. Second, there were the statues, which were still in a sense reliefs, because they were almost always backed up by the walls of a natural cliff. These statues were often of colossal dimensions.

Sculpture existed in other forms and in great abundance, and also from the earliest times there are wooden statues, and statues of the hardest materials, basalt and diorite, dating from a time long antecedent to any dates which generally have been assumed as the earliest of human civilization. But at the same time that sculpture was carried on independently and for the sake of the beautiful works of art resulting from the unfettered play of the human mind and hand, there were produced works of sculpture which are closely attached to and form a notable part of the buildings themselves. Then, when the work of Greece began to rise out of the semi-Asiatic Mycenæan period, sculpture of human subject replaced very rapidly, for the exterior decoration of the temple, the glass mosaic, the metal capitals, and the like, by which the early monuments were made



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

splendid if not always beautiful to behold. The temple walls themselves in the time of perfected Greek art did not receive sculpture in any case; but this is chiefly because the buildings which have come down to us as being the most important monuments of Greek art have but little exterior walling, which is not masked by colonnades throwing deep shadows and preventing a full view of the smoother wall behind. The one experiment made in the Parthenon seems not to have been repeated. There is no other frieze set on the back wall of the colonnade. There are elsewhere continuous friezes or figures in low relief, such as the one which follows the exterior of the wall of the sacred enclosure at Gjolbaschi; but this is really a bounding wall, and no part of a building in the usual sense; it is the enclosure of a temenos, or sacred place. There is the frieze of the temple at Bassæ, but that also is free from the interference of columns. There is the monument of Lysikrates, and again the main frieze in the Erechtheion; but indeed, if we had more

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

completed and not ruined buildings of Ionic style to refer to, we should have more of these; but those friezes of the entablature are necessarily small and low, the figures themselves of almost minute proportions. There is the parapet which surrounds the temple of Athena Nike; and in this, almost for the first time since the Parthenon, we find figures in relief of important scale and free and vigorous treatment. There is the mausoleum at Halicarnassos; and at Pergamon there is the smaller frieze above, and the huge and abnormally great and vigorous frieze of the Battle of the Gods and Giants; but it is curious that among all these examples almost none of them play an important part in the adornment of the building. The maxim stated in the first sentence of this lecture has been verified in almost every one of these examples. The ornamenting has been done because here was a large and prominent piece of smooth stone work which formed so tempting—so obvious and natural—so easily a medium for the display of the sculptor's art. Reliefs

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

are also used in those square panels which are left between the triglyphs of the Doric entablature. Not all these metopes are carved; some are painted, some are plain and bare, and have always been so, as we think; but where these are carved they are apt to be in high relief. In the Parthenon these alto-reliefs have parts wholly detached from the background; they are half-way between bas-relief and the free figure sculpture mentioned below.

Sculpture in the form of free statuary occurs, in connection with buildings, mainly in the form of groups which fill the triangular panel at either end of the roof of the temple. This triangular panel, which with the moulded projecting plates below and above forms what we call the pediment, was again simply the most obvious and natural place to set up statues. It was at a rather too great height above the ground outside, but this was made up for by the vivid and strenuous painting in clear and bright colors of the statuary and the background which set it off. It is curious to

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

note how, in that mental reconstruction which we are compelled to make of each important temple, the sculpture in this form of statuary in the round assumes the shape of an accessory which might perfectly well be omitted, and which could be replaced by painting the triangular panel, or by filling it with mosaic or inlay, — which, in short, formed no obvious and natural part of the temple structure.

We have really only a single monument of pure Greek style in which the sculpture is an absolutely essential part. Others existed; we know that they existed in Delos, in Epidauros. We have no record of what they were, and their names are merely a part of that record of irreparable loss to which we soon grow accustomed. After having passed in review the splendid history of Greek civilization, the one monument of associated and truly architectural sculpture which remains for us is the Portico of the Maidens, that is to say, of the draped statues carrying on their heads the entablature which once supported the roof at the

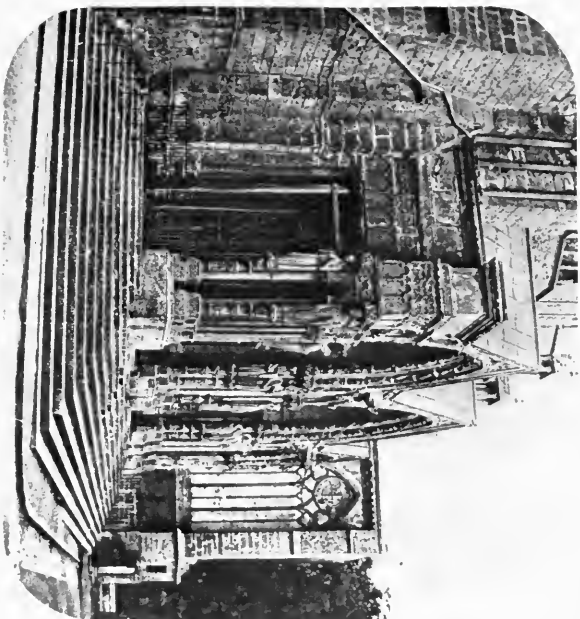
## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

south side of the Erechtheion. Now, as regards this building, one has to give its image in photography, or give a description of it, or both; for it stands alone as a specimen of a class which has disappeared, and this is the peculiarity of the situation, that there is a general unwillingness to admit that this could have been a normal and natural piece of Greek decorative work. We are so accustomed to think of Greek buildings as devoid of decorative treatment other than by use of delicate mouldings, and to think of Greek sculpture in any other way than as reliefs or as free statues, that it seems foreign to our notions of propriety that the people of Hellas should have allowed themselves architectural sculpture in its true form; that is to say, as constituting an important part of the design of the structure. We know the Doric temples as buildings without architectural sculpture; the Ionic temples are all ruined and destroyed except the Erechtheion; we are only half prepared to believe that which may still be accepted as truth, that those Ionic

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

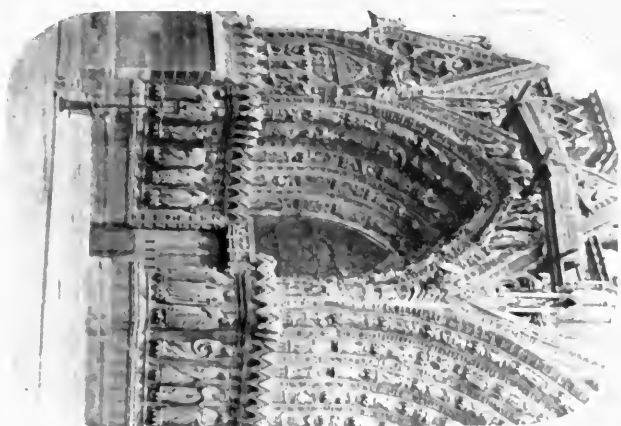
buildings were treated much as the Cathedrals of mediæval France were treated—with sculpture forming an inseparable part of their design.

Now, as these great buildings and parts of buildings are all ruined, it is well to correct our observation of such mangled and disfigured works of art by those works of the great period of Greek art which we have almost wholly intact; viz., the memorial stelai which were set up beside graves in the churchyards near city walls. The very first picture which we studied at the commencement of this course of lectures was one of those tomb sculptures; and I show you now (Fig. 1) a stele of two ladies, sisters perhaps, whose names are carved upon the narrow epistyle above. In a small way the conditions of architectural treatment are seen in these upright slabs. The high relief is sheltered in a way by a projecting roof, which is carried by just such antæ as are used at a temple porch, only smaller; and the feeling of the Greek for the surrounding by architectural forms of his more elaborate, more



CHARTRES CATHEDRAL, SOUTH PORCH, FROM THE  
SOUTHWEST  
Second half of Thirteenth Century

LECTURE V. FIGURE 5



REIMS CATHEDRAL, WEST FRONT, NORTH-  
ERN DOORWAY AND PART OF  
MIDDLE DOORWAY

LECTURE V. FIGURE 6



REIMS CATHEDRAL, MIDDLE PORCH  
TWO STATUES OF SOUTH JAMB

LECTURE V. FIGURE 7



MARBLE RELIEF AND SHIELDS OF ARMS

Formerly built into wall of house at Ponte dei Dai, Venice. Removed  
about 1883

LECTURE V. FIGURE 8



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

refined and complete sculpture is seen even in this minor example. It is just in that way that the statues of the pediment were set up, standing in the place made by the geison or shelf made by the top of the horizontal cornice, and sheltered in part by the overhanging of the cornice at the edge of the roof it is on. In this example (Fig. 2) the slab of Dexileos, where the idea remains of the projecting shelter, it is different, as the pediment has never had support in the way of pillars of any sort. However it may have been surrounded by other parts of a greater structure, the overhanging piece itself has had no support. The artist has cut away the whole of the surface of his slab from side to side, sinking the background many inches back from the highest point of the relief, and leaving the vigorous action as if in the case of an equestrian statue. Much smaller and less grandiose sculptures are found in abundance in Athens, and in such other cities of Greece as have been rather thoroughly searched with the use of spade and pickaxe. The museum of the Acropolis alone contains scores of

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

votive and memorial tablets. There is one in which is recorded the greeting of the Goddess Athena, the protectress of the city named from her, and the people of that city embodied in the draped figure which we call Demos. Demos, here, is an elderly male figure.

The composition (Fig. 3) heads the record given below of an important event in the city of Athens, an event which happened in 398 B. C. In this relief of three figures, the subject of the legend is a treaty made between Athens and the State of Korkyra, or Corcyra, in 375 B. C.; and here the Goddess Athena standing for Athens, and a female figure meant to personify the state of Corcyra, appear before a seated male figure, who embodies in himself one of those great international tribunals which the pan-Hellenic spirit created to preserve peace and a certain amount of common feeling among the states of the too scattered, too often quarrelling peoples of Greece.

In a former lecture we looked at one of those great slabs from the destroyed arch of Marcus Aurelius. The one which we

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

then chose represents the entry into a conquered town on the borders of southern Germany, of the philosophical emperor with his soldiers and his advisers of state. In another of the same group we see Marcus Aurelius preparing to offer a solemn sacrifice; and the architectural background of this one seems to fix the place as the Roman Forum itself. The victim, the sacrificing priest with axe in hand, the acolytes beyond, who bring water or wine or other things needed for the ceremony, the flamen with his curious official cap seen just beyond the emperor, and the singular grouping of the whole assembly, bring the student into that pleasant, inquiring mood which is so often our state of mind in the presence of the important works of antiquity. To lead ourselves into their habit of mind; to know what those men were thinking of, not so much the emperor (for it is hard indeed for us to see how a philosophical man upon whom was forced the almost unlimited sovereignty of the Mediterranean world would have looked at his own fate and at

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

life), not so much the Emperor himself, but to see things as any one of his attending ministers would have looked at them—is, indeed, a definite object of study.

Now, let us consider another Roman work—the great Mausoleum of Hadrian, on the Tiber, the same building which is now called the Castello Sant' Angelo. Conjectural restorations are not, of course, absolute; nobody would pin his faith to them without reserve; but it is evident enough that the general scheme of the building was as it is generally represented. The great circular drum is surrounded by columns, and a small round peristyle is at a higher level. The independent position of the statuary is even more absolutely asserted here than in the case of the Greek building we have named. The statues are set up between the columns of each order, and also on a sort of cornice above, although one may dispute altogether this third row of statues, if he pleases. A similar arrangement existed unquestionably in the famous tomb at Halicarnassos, which gives us the term

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

mausoleum. There were friezes in relief on the walls of that great tomb, but the statuary stood free between the shafts of the columns. Or take the arch of Titus at Rome. Here is the Roman system of combining sculpture closely with the architectural ordonnance, and therewith the Roman custom of bringing statues against the sky. The bronze figures set upon the top of the structure, that quadriga with its triumphing imperator which must have been there, and the grooms leading the horses, and perhaps two Victories, one on either side, all these have disappeared, and their character and places can only be conjectured; but otherwise the sculpture of the building is recognizable. The sacrificial procession in the frieze; the admirable figure carved upon the front of the keystone and giving an almost Gothic freedom to the combination of sculpture with architectural forms; the famous high-reliefs under the arch, one on either side, and representing, as you know, the triumphal procession bearing along the trophies of the siege of Jerusalem — these

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

reliefs are just above your head as you pass through the arch on horseback or in a chariot. It is, of course, not known to us how busy a way was that one. If the hustling crowd of the Imperial City streamed through there on that road, we should challenge the fitness of the location for so important a triumphal sculpture; but this is the only questioning criticism that we make, for, indeed, this arch is one of the best in its scheme and plan of any that has come down to us. And let it be said, it was really a "triumphal" arch; for of the four or five hundred Roman arches which are known to have existed, the majority were not triumphal; that is to say, they had nothing to do with a triumph. They were memorials, which were often erected after the death of the great citizen in whose honor they were put up, or by vote of the Senate, or by the authority of some provincial governor.

You will not need to be reminded of the larger and more splendid arch of which you have the beautiful photograph hanging in

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

the Sculpture Gallery alongside of the unusual and really splendid casts of sculptures from its face. That arch of Trajan at Benevento is the best preserved of all the great arches, and it is of quite inestimable value and importance to us because it is so noble an example of Roman Imperial art at its culminating period.

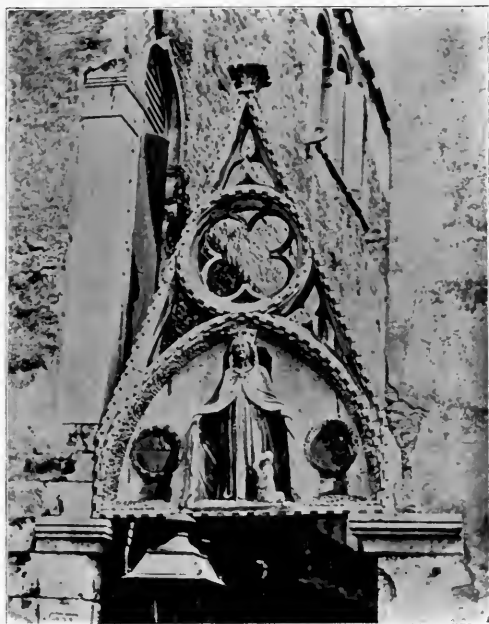
Now, to skip eight centuries and to take the Romanesque art of middle France also at its culminating period, let us consider the front of Angoulême Cathedral. It is a noble church, and its sculpture is among the most beautiful of the time; but I think that we must discriminate, and not claim for its ordonnance a wholly faultless layout, so far as the sculpture is concerned. It seems to be huddled into place, it does not seem to have grown naturally out of the architecture. But if we look at a single detail of it, we shall see how perfect is the application of the sculpture in each given member of the front. We shall find in the work of the great Gothic period an immeasurably more noble sculpture, and a

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

vastly more perfect alliance of the sculpture with the building, but we shall hardly find there or elsewhere in the history of art a more admirable piece of sculptured ornamentation.

Or if we take the Church of Notre Dame la Grande at Poitiers, here is certainly a more perfect distribution of the sculpture. In that case it was proposed to carve every part of the front, at least all the flat part of the front, and to repeat that elaborate embossing of the whole surface by the admirable disposition of the imbrications which cover the little cones at the head of the flanking towers. Imagine yourself called upon to emboss such a front, using fourteen statues or groups in as many niches, a descriptive bas-relief covering every part of the flat wall above the arches of the lowest story, and a covering pattern of great richness investing all the faces of all the arches—say the archivolts and soffits of not less than twenty-two arches of actual construction. It would be no shame to any modern designer to confess that that effort





PONTE DI PARADISO, AT VENICE

LECTURE V. FIGURE 9



LUNETTE, FLORENCE, BY LUCA DELLA ROBBI  
Formerly in a house-wall, now in National Museum

LECTURE V. FIGURE 10



LOGGIA DI SAN PAOLO, FLORENCE. THE MEETING OF  
SAINTS DOMINIC AND FRANCIS, BY LUCA  
DELLA ROBBIA

LECTURE V. FIGURE 11



FRONT OF THE OPERA HOUSE, PARIS  
Finished, 1875; the design of Charles Garnier, died, 1898

LECTURE V. FIGURE 12

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

was beyond his strength, at least beyond his training.

The sculpture of the far south of France is claimed by the French authorities themselves to be more soft and, in a way, classical—far less notably invested with the savage energy of the northern style out of which the Gothic architecture was to spring; and I think the result of considerable familiarity with the sculpture of both the north and the south will tend to give to us a greater care for the former,—will tend to convince the student that the glory of Romanesque art is to be found north of the mountain chain of the Cévennes and between them and the Province of Flanders. Indeed, a still narrower field might be marked out, but we will not be too precise when there is no opportunity to explain the reasons for our precision.

Meantime, consider the most famous and most valuable specimens of that southern sculpture. The great portal of the church of Saint Gilles has been rather closely followed in its disposition by the architects of

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

the Church of Saint Bartholomew in New York. This church of Saint Gilles was never completed; and indeed, this magnificent frontispiece and a single half-completed spiral staircase on the flank of the choir is all that we expect to see. There is an eleventh-century dwelling-house across the street from the flank of the church, but it has been restored out of recognition and its value greatly impaired.

A better known front is that of Saint Trophime at Arles, a church now used as the cathedral of the town, but originally a monastic church with a singularly rich cloister. The cloister has a very famous system of colonnettes arranged in pairs, two in the thickness of the wall; these alternate with large square piers which divide the arcade at each fourth interval, and the piers themselves are flanked by statuary of great relative importance. One agrees with the Frenchmen who have ruled that there is too much of a Sicilian softness about this work, and that the admixture of barbaric energy with Roman tradition is more

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

perfectly established in the north than here; but how dignified and full of opportunity is this sculptured cloister, how successful as a piece of decorative art are its long-drawn walks!

Now, when we touch upon the Gothic system, it is quite necessary to deal with the whole building—so close is the alliance, in this style, between sculpture and architecture. This is the west front of the Cathedral at Chartres (Fig. 4), and the three doorways, of which you see one only, are of Romanesque type, or, if you please, of the Transition, and the story about those doorways is pretty nearly this: That originally the nave was shorter by two bays, and that that great south tower, the most famous steeple in France or in Europe, was built, and with it the lower part of the north tower, at the close of the twelfth century. Thus the church, or at least the nave itself, was lengthened by rebuilding its front in the place where you see it now. It must be that the three doorways were those of the older and Romanesque cathedral, but

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

these remarks are not offered by way of apology. Nowhere in the world has statuary been made so architectural in effect. If you will ask, as students do ask from time to time, why the proportions of the human form are abandoned altogether in this design, and no attempt made to preserve even the relation of the head to the body, or of the width and thickness of the draped person to total vertical height, the answer is that these statues are serving almost absolutely as caryatides; for though their heads do not support the cushion or basket upon which the superstructure is rested, they themselves (the figures) are carved upon the very stone of which the column is made up. It is a new order of columnar architecture—an order in which the shaft was to be completed by this sculptured human form upon its outer face. The sculpture of the tympanums and the lintels below them is still wholly Romanesque in distribution, but on the arches which rise above those flat roofs, the Gothic system of little niches with a statue in each

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

is already well established. The south porch of the same church which I show you now (Fig. 5) is the porch leading to the south transept and which was just visible in the picture of the west front. It is entirely Gothic. That is, it belongs to the period of complete ribbed vaulting and of the developed Gothic sculpture, and it is interesting to see here also how the statues are inherent parts of the vertical structure, of the great pier which served at once as impost and as buttress for the arches of the porch.

Now, one word about the Cathedral of Reims, for it is in this west portal (Fig. 6) that the Gothic statuary reached its highest level. Here we see the statues on one flank of the central doorway and of a side doorway, and here are two statues by themselves. The two statues put together, as seen in Fig. 7, form the exquisite group which we know as the Visitation; that is, the meeting of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Elizabeth, the mother of John. The photograph of the general view in this case is vague and not as distinct as we need it for the study of details;

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

but the general charm of the porches may be more intelligibly seen through this hazy medium than if every detail were sharply noted. You will notice two tendencies here which indeed seem to be inevitable in sculpture. As the artist grows more competent to deal with the human figure, both nude and draped—as he learns the secrets of anatomy, observes the action and pose of the body, and notes more and more closely what is beautiful in the casting of the loose garment about the form—he grows less interested in architectural sculpture of the older and simpler sort. So in this noble porch there is shown, below the feet of the great statues, nothing but a really feeble and inadequate motive—a poor little affectation of a curtain or loose hanging gathered in festoons, in the very spot, mind you, where the Cathedral of Amiens has that magnificent series of bas-reliefs in which Ruskin thought he found the whole Bible history portrayed. In like manner you will look in vain among these statues and the statues in the arch above for leaf or flower sculpture as effective as that in earlier and less



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

splendid churches. The knowledge of nature is there, as you will see in the capitals above the heads of Mary and Elizabeth, but the care for it, the profound love and sympathy for it, is diminished. It was so with the Greeks—apparently it will always be so. Success in figure work has always tended to make the artist careless of the detail of lesser aspects of nature. The great Venetian painter, Paul Veronese, and his fellows, are almost the only artists of the highest rank who have retained their love of detail.

Now see fourteenth-century work—decoration of garden gates and simple house-walls in Venice. See in Fig. 8 how the mediæval love of sculpture has led to a more advanced art, at once narrative and artistically perfect. This bas-relief, with its accompanying shields of arms, was, until recently, built into a house-wall at the entrance to the Merceria, just north of the great square of St. Mark at Venice. This was fifteenth-century work: but that of an earlier time has constant interest for the student. Do not forget that the fourteenth century

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

in Italy is a much more advanced epoch, a more modern epoch, than the same years in the north; the spirit of the Renaissance was already starting in Italy, and so we find two Renaissance interpretations of the Story of Saint Martin and the Beggar, and in each in a subordinate place is seen the arms of the family which held the property, the house and garden beyond the gate. Passing to a more elaborate and very well-known instance, look at this tablet which is set up upon two imposts across a narrow *calle*, which is reached by going over the little Bridge of Paradise, so called (Fig. 9). The traditional account of this feature, not known in other cities, is that the two mansions which flank the little *calle* were held by the same family. The subject, however, is purely religious. The Madonna, with wide-spread mantle, is covering her worshipper, a person who may be assumed to be the donor of the piece.

All this smacks of the revival of classical art. It is not Roman art, but it comes of the study of Roman antiquity. Three-quarters

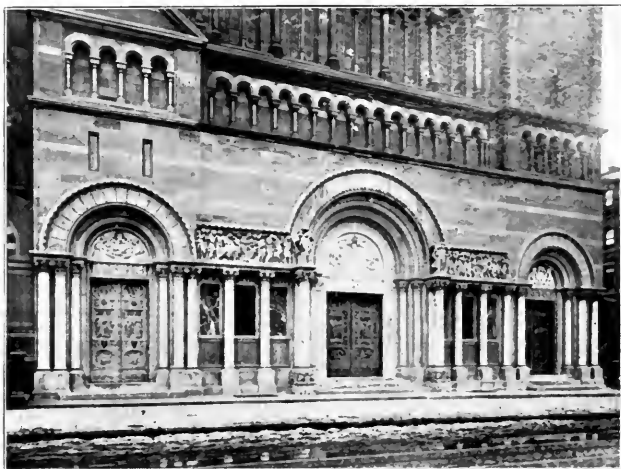
## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

of a century elapses and then we find the completed and developed Renaissance in the work of one of its greatest and most lovable men, Luca della Robbia. This lunette (Fig. 10) is one of the many detached reliefs of Robbia work which we find set up along the streets of Florence, often in places where their presence is not easy to explain. This one, for instance, is built into a wall in the Via dell' Agnolo; but that means, of course, that there had been a church or the entrance to a convent thereabout, which buildings have been removed, while the sculpture was preserved. As usual in such reliefs, the figures themselves are white on a ground of blue, the whole being covered as you know with a delicate glaze, which receives strong color in the most perfect way. The flower decoration in the archivolt is, on the other hand, in strong colors, as was that fountain in the sacristy which I showed you a week ago. But now we will consider the greatest existing work of the family della Robbia, in the little town of Pistoja, a few miles

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

north of Florence, on the road to Modena. It contains a little hospital, a building of two stories above an open arcade, and a broad frieze runs along the front and returns along both ends of the small building. There are seven divisions in this frieze. One subject fills each of the end walls, and five go to make up the longer central piece, that of the main façade. They are all devoted to the *works of mercy*—the seven virtuous acts; and the first shows "*Feeding the Hungry.*" All of these figures are in enamelled terracotta, as are the other works which we call Robbia work, and these colors are used freely; and as you see, great vivacity, intensity of expression, strength, and realism of all kinds have been employed in it.

In one of the pictures is shown "*Clothing the Naked,*" and we have the wretched beggars to whom garments are being doled out and children brought by women, who ask for them a share in the charitable dole. Again, we have the *Giving of Aid to Travellers*, and in this composition the artist has flown a little higher and has associated his design with



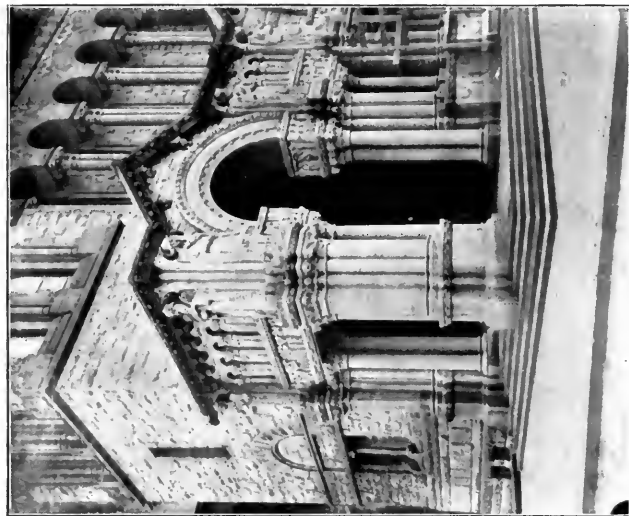
FRONTISPIECE ADDED IN 1903 TO CHURCH OF ST.  
BARTHOLOMEW, NEW YORK

LECTURE V. FIGURE 13



DETAIL OF THE FRONT, FIGURE 13

LECTURE V. FIGURE 14



TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, DETAIL OF THE  
GREAT PORCH

Built about 1895

LECTURE V, FIGURE 15



THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON  
FOOT OF GREAT STAIR

LECTURE V, FIGURE 16

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

religion in this way: First, he has pilgrims as his travellers. They all appear as newly come from the Holy Land, with scrip and staff and cockle-shell; and again, in one of these pilgrims is to be recognized the Saviour of the world. It does not appear that they recognize the Divine Being, but the artist means that the spectator shall recognize him. There is nowhere a more perfect instance or a more perfect combination in one design, of a noble decorative effect with a realistic simplicity and a moral significance.

I show you another piece (Fig. 11), the one which of all the numerous works of the family seems to be the noblest, the lunette which opens upon the gallery or arcade of St. Paul in the square opposite the church of St. Maria Novella. The subject is the meeting and greeting of the two great founders of religious monastic bodies—St. Dominic, in his white robe, and St. Francis, in his brown or cinder-colored gown—meeting, we may suppose, in Heaven; the leader of the great order of poverty, the friars properly so-called, and the leader of the preaching

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

monks, the man who tried to complete St. Francis's work by insisting upon dogma.

When St. Paul's Cathedral was built in London, between 1675 and 1700, architectural sculpture, or sculpture of the old sort used architecturally, had almost ceased to exist. The perfunctory acanthus leaves of the capitals, and a few descriptive reliefs in the pediment, which do not fill the pediment,—which form really an ornamental adjunct hanging in the middle of it,—these and the very few statues showing against the sky are all the great cathedral offers. There is, indeed, admirable wood-carving within, and if it were a history of ornamental sculpture we were writing, it would have to be considered carefully. I want to make it clear that there was that lapse of time from the middle of the seventeenth century on to the French Revolution when sculpture, applied to a building as part of its system of design, had been almost forgotten; and I wish to insist upon this, because it makes more interesting the return to the display of fine sculpture in much more



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

recent monuments. After the French Revolution people tried to study real antiquities; they tried to go back of the Renaissance and of the classic learning and decoration and to draw from Roman art direct. So it was that they studied the great memorial arches of Imperial Rome, and so it was that, when Napoleon undertook the construction of a vast monument to record the glories of his campaigns and to do honor to his fellow-soldiers, his advisers naturally chose the form of a Roman arch, which, however, they increased in scale until they made it larger than the largest building of the kind which had existed previously. On the side toward Paris are two great groups of sculpture; that to the south is that high relief showing "The Departure for the War," the most renowned work of the sculptor François Rude. The other piece, that to the north, is "The Deification of Napoleon." On the side toward Neuilly, the two corresponding groups by Antoine Étex represent the one on the north, resistance of the French to the invading armies of 1814; that on the south the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

blessings of peace. That arch was finished by the successors of the great emperor; it was not wholly abandoned even by his enemies of the Restoration, and it was finished under Louis Philippe about 1845. It seems odd to us now that only fifteen years were to elapse before the building was begun of the great Opera House at Paris. This (Fig. 12) was intended to express the glory and the civic splendor of the second empire, which indeed did so much to make Paris the admirable city we know. Our purpose is mainly with the sculpture, and you will note that here there have been consulted other influences, other arguments, other rules of procedure; for it had been made clear to sculptors that they must insist on putting their great works nearer to the eye. Therefore, while certain pieces are set high on the roofs with the sky for their background, they being in this way sacrificed, for nothing shows aright with the brilliant sky (even though on a cloudy day) eating away its outline, yet the important pieces are on pedestals hardly higher than the heads of the passers-by. One of these

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

two groups on the right is that composition by Carpeaux, "The Dance," which caused so much of an excitement and something like a scandal soon after its erection.

And now that we come to our own time, I must show you first the front of that Church of St. Bartholomew in New York, to which there has been allusion already. (See Fig. 13.) In its disposition it is very like to the front of St. Gilles, except that it is made flatter and thinner as of necessity. It is the same composition as the porch of the older church, and even the statues are intended to be put in, although the work has been delayed in that respect. I show you this as a piece of the best possible copied or derived work in modern reproduced art. We do not often succeed so well. The reproduction that I speak of is mainly in the architecture, but in the sculpture, too, there are instances of similarity worthy of the best attention. The lunette on the left by Herbert Adams is assuredly based upon the art of Luca della Robbia. The bronze doors are among the finest that exist,

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

generally admirable in design and splendid pieces of foundry work, the sculpture and mouldings cast together with no planting on. Here is that southern door with Mr. Adams' lunette (Fig. 14), and the whole of the work is by him. In this picture also is seen on a larger scale one end of the greater frieze, the work of Mr. Daniel C. French, aided by Andrew O'Connor, Jr., who indeed appears to be responsible for the actual work of the greater part of Mr. French's sculpture on this front. The north doorway, of which I have no separate picture, is the work of Mr. Martini, and now I wish to show you another composition, also suggested by that church at St. Gilles. Here, however, (Fig. 15) you will notice that there were opportunities for doing things on a great scale. This porch is immeasurably more massive than the neighboring parts of the original church. It projects boldly from the front of the church, and it is solidly built, and casts deep and sombre shadows. The design is in harmony with these features. Nothing certainly was ever

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

better done than that treatment of each separate pier as made up of a crowd of columns with here and there a massive fluted pilaster, copied, as it were, from that splendid cloister of Arles, of which we have spoken to-day. Architecturally this achievement is far beyond the previous example in dignity and splendor; and as for the sculpture, we have side by side these two very curious results—that one porch has come of the employment of very highly praised and renowned sculptors, men of the class which we rank as among the most renowned of artists, while the other is the work of a man who professes himself rather an architectural decorator and carver, and whose work has been the placing of sculpture in relation to the building in the spirit of the work done in mediæval times. It is the strangest thing to see how nearly sculpture, which pretends only to be decorative, approaches in individual merit the work of the renowned sculptors named. The consideration, however, of the problem is out of our reach at present, and I only wish to call your attention to the

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

fact that, when you undertake sculpture combined with architecture, it is the last named art which must talk first and which must impress itself upon the sculptor.

The recently completed Appellate Court House in New York City has two great statues on pedestals at the steps of entrance. Other statues are seen against the sky. Again, semi-recumbent figures adorn the pediments of the great windows, and a great group adorns the southern front. In this way, you see, almost every application of free statuary to a building has been utilized. The sculpture has not a fair chance, because the building has been of really unusual ill success. More than once I have taken some architect, one of the school to which this design belongs, to this corner, or to walk past the long front, and have put to him innocently the question why the sculpture fails so utterly to give its true effect, and the answer has always been the same; the poor composition of the building destroys the best worth of the figure-work.

The Washington Congressional Library,

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

however, gives a partial relief to those who are longing for sculpture in modern buildings. This (Fig. 16) is the foot of the great stairway on one side; and here the sculpture is by that same Philip Martini, whose work we could not examine closely in the north door of the New York church. The light-bearing statues are in bronze, and all the rest of the work, including the little genii, is of marble. Of marble, too, is the great cylindrical newel-post, and so is the hand-rail that sweeps around it and finishes by disappearing in its mass. And we accept this building as the most important thing yet done in America in the way of decorative treatment of an interior, for the mosaics and the paintings which we must study in the next lecture are supported and helped by the marble and bronze to which the sculptor has given life.

## LECTURE VI.

### PAINTING AS USED IN ARCHITECTURE.<sup>1</sup>

The relations of color-decoration to architecture are difficult to put clearly before one's own vision because of the extremely uneven character of European art in that respect. Nowhere will you find a building with color decoration applied as generally and with as much desire for a complete composition in color, as to equal at all the similar combinations in sculpture, of which we have many.

The first building that I shall show you contains in its interior a splendid scheme of color; and I might with equal propriety give you the interior of a still larger and more brilliantly decorated building, St. Mark's in Venice, or the Cathedral of Monreale in Sicily; and still, with the possible exception of St. Mark's, we should find no building which is adorned without and within by a

<sup>1</sup> Delivered, April 28, 1904, at Fullerton Memorial Hall, The Art Institute of Chicago.



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

consistent scheme of chromatic decoration. We know that a Doric temple in Athens or in Sicily was painted all over, as one may say, outside. The sculpture, both in relief and in the round, received the richest painting, but all parts of the building were treated with a consistent scheme of decoration applied with the brush. We do not know of what nature this color-harmony must have been. We can only guess at it; and as to the interior, simply we know nothing about it at all. We do not even know whether daylight was admitted to that interior otherwise than as it shone through the great west door, and so was reflected from the pavement and the walls upon the statue of the goddess. That statue of the goddess itself, of ivory and gold—of what nature was its color scheme?—shall we agree with those enthusiasts who are sure that the Greeks understood and practised the art of enamelling on metal, and that the “gold” was not merely the gleaming and generally yellow substance which we know by that name, but was made into a rich color

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

combination by the different alloys used in casting the metal and by the application of colored enamels?

The best thing for us in this too brief inquiry, is to abandon the insolvable problem set for us by the remains of Greek temples, and to take up those mediæval buildings—those very early Christian shrines—which are richly adorned in color. And first the church at Ravenna, which is called by the name of its patron saint, and to distinguish it from another of the same dedication, is called the New—Sant' Apollinare Nuovo. In Fig. 1 we are standing in the north aisle and looking eastward, and all along the south wall, above the arches of the nave arcade, is a long row—a procession as it may be called—of Christian martyrs; men draped in priestly garments and marching eastward toward the throne where Christ sits, near to the chancel or the sacred centre of the church. If we should look at the north wall we should see a corresponding row of virgin martyrs, twenty-two female figures, also moving eastward. These walls above



CHURCH OF S. APOLLINARE NUOVO, RAVENNA  
Completed in the Sixth Century A. D.

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 1



CHURCH OF S. VITALE, RAVENNA  
Mosaic of about 500 A. D.

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 2



MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA, RAVENNA  
Mosaic in lunette beneath vaulted roof

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 3



MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA, RAVENNA  
Interior

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 4

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

the nave arcade including the spandrels, as they are called, that is, the triangular spaces above the arches, are covered with mosaic of glass tesserae; and not only is the procession of saints or of worshippers wrought in that material, but also the figures of Fathers of the Church and the ornamental patterns above.

At the eastern end of the corresponding church of Sant' Apollinare in Classe, outside the walls of Ravenna, the semi-dome of the apse, which is covered with mosaic, is filled with the subject of the benediction given to the sheep of Christ, which in this case is pronounced by the saint to whom the church is dedicated, a splendid decorative cross in a circle above the figure is accompanied by angels and attended by other sheep; and this is assumed to stand for the Transfiguration of Christ. Again, in the wall above and on either side of the arch the same subject recurs, the faithful symbolized by figures of sheep; and everywhere there is a free use of conventional patterns of color to serve as frames and settings for the whole.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

The most famous of the wonderful old churches of Ravenna is San Vitale, but unfortunately that interior has been so spoiled by repainting in the eighteenth century that no knowledge whatever is now obtainable of its chromatic effect within. We have in its original condition only the chancel, a short, square member with the apse beyond, forming a space about twice as long or deep as it is wide. The walls and roof are indeed covered with the original early mosaics, and in Fig. 2 is shown a detail of this—three small arches carried on columns and built in beneath a huge discharging arch. Please note the relation which it bears to the other surfaces around. The pictorial composition in the great tympanum itself, as you see, has to do with the Christian sacrifice, and it is personified here by those Old Testament characters, which were taken by the early church to stand as the precursors of the High Priest, Christ. Abel on the left, Melchizedek on the right, are offering each his sacrifice; for Abel, you will remember, was he who sacrificed the living creatures of his

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

flock, while Cain offered the fruits of the earth only, and Melchizedek is especially named as being the "Priest of the Most High God." That mosaic-covered tympanum is on the north wall of the chancel, directly opposite the high altar. A little farther east, on the wall where the rounding of the apse begins, is a scene of mingled imperial and religious state and splendor. The Emperor with four of his great ministers occupies the centre of that composition. On his left (or the right of the spectator) are servants of the church, and on his right are the warriors who, it is assumed, are to fight for Christianity against the pagan and against the heretic. And we have to note in this pictorial composition the continuance of that spirit which we noted in the statues of the west front of Chartres. There is the same readiness to sacrifice everything to the dignity of the composition. The lines must be severe, formal, nearly vertical; the surfaces must be treated with grave and severe coloring; and the use of flat patterns of peculiarly ornamental character replaces all landscape

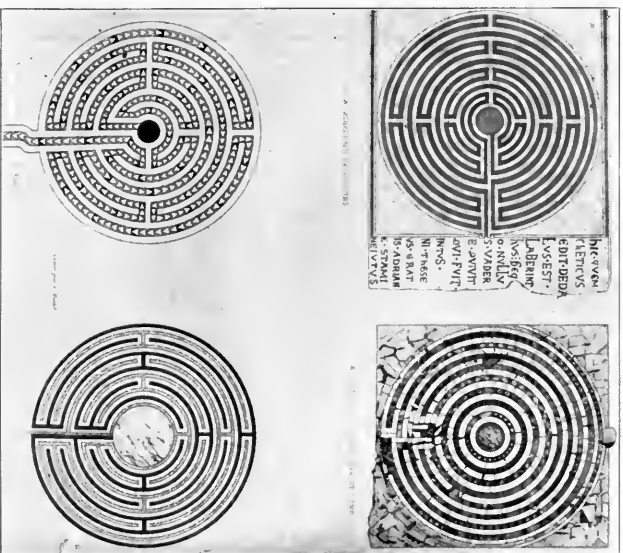
## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

background or similar completion of the design. You will understand that this is not mentioned here as the final or as the only possible treatment, for I can show you compositions in which the mosaic designs are treated more freely. Still, it is on this general principle that mosaic has always been treated when good taste was the rule and when its peculiarities as a medium were kept clearly in mind. That was poor mosaic which was made in the eighteenth century in close imitation of paintings of the great masters of a preceding epoch.

The Church of SS. Nazario and Celso is the name given by the later clerical authorities to the old mausoleum of the Empress Galla Placidia; and that little building remains, with its three great sarcophagi standing in the three arms of the cross.

This picture that I show you (Fig. 3) is the lunette at the end of one of those arms with the same familiar subject of the Shepherd and the Sheep. You will note that the roof or vault in this picture is that which I showed you for the sake of its pattern in

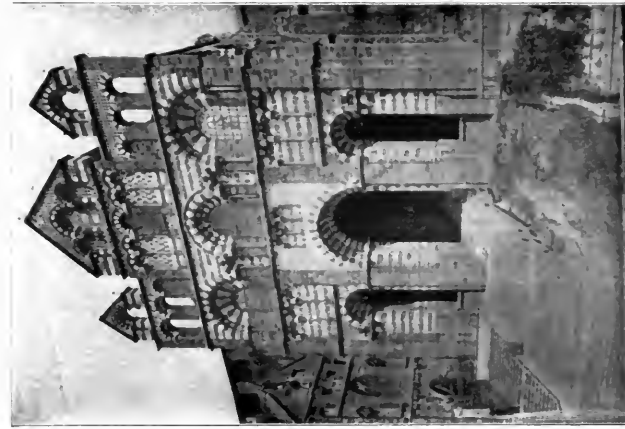




LABYRINTHS IN MOSAIC AND INLAY  
From early churches  
LECTURE VI. FIGURE 5



DETAIL OF PAINTED CEILING OF CATHEDRAL,  
MESSINA, SICILY  
LECTURE VI. FIGURE 6



WEST FRONT OF CATHEDRAL, LE PUY  
(HAUTE LOIRE), FRANCE

LECTURE VI, FIGURE 7



TOWER OF CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME DU PORT,  
CLERMONT-FERRAND (PUY DE DOMIE),  
FRANCE

LECTURE VI, FIGURE 8

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

the fourth of these lectures; but it is very true that one of the difficulties in discussing the nature of art which depends chiefly upon color, is found in this very opacity of our glass pictures. The light of the lantern cannot be forced through the dark surfaces.

This picture (Fig. 4) shows a general view of the interior of that little church, for it is really very small. The width of the nave and the transept cannot exceed twenty feet, if it equals that. Two hundred persons, all standing, would crowd the little church in a disagreeable way.

The square domes at the crossing of galleries in the Archbishop's palace at Ravenna have, on the vault, interesting angelic figures with upraised hands, and wrought, of course, upon a domical or rounded surface—part of the inside of a sphere. Therefore, the figures are not to be taken as if they were really flat. They are designed with singular skill and propriety for the generally hollow concave surfaces.

And now a brief allusion to two rather

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

curious forms of color decoration in use at different times during the Middle Ages. They are all Italian, because in Italy there has been less destruction of the monuments of a period which afterwards passed for barbaric and tasteless. The contemptuous judgment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was not allowed to prevail in the churches there so far as to destroy the remains of earlier art.

These curious labyrinths, shown in Fig. 5, are not indeed unknown in the pavements of French churches; but those of Italy are equally attractive and elaborate and have preserved their original aspect, whereas the French ones have been restored and relaid and generally freshened up. That comes, you see, of there being too much prosperity in France—too much money to spend. The impoverished Italy of the seventeenth and eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries could not undertake such costly repairs. One of these labyrinths is in that same church of San Vitale of which we have heard so much already. Another is

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

in the Cathedral of Lucca; and it is to this that belongs the Latin inscription according to which it appears that the word "labyrinth" is to be taken as the feminine article "la" and the long word beginning with "B." The thirteenth-century artist really thought that "la Berinthus" was the proper and satisfactory way of writing the Latinized Greek term, and he followed it with a pretty little reference to the father of labyrinth, the Greek Dædalus. You understand, of course, that the significance of the labyrinth is that it exemplifies the difficulty which the Christian finds in reaching the goal of his hopes. The path which he is to follow is sometimes marked by a band of triangles all pointing one way, as in the example taken from San Vitale, but more often it is a mere black band.

The other single example which I have to show you is the painted roof of the Cathedral at Messina in Sicily. (Fig. 6.) The surface across the top of the picture is the underside of that lowered part of the ceiling, which is boxed down to cover the starting

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

of the roof timbers from the wall. You will see projecting from this, the under side of one of the great tie-beams of the wooden roof, and the space on either side of that tie-beam is the ceiling in boards above and beyond. You will see how every part is covered with the most elaborate painted patterns. You will easily understand how impossible it is to draw up a scheme for the classification of these different forms of chromatic decoration. It would take a volume to express that thought; and I am compelled to go on to the mediæval adornment of interior walls.

This picture (Fig. 7) is the west front of the famous cathedral at Le Puy in central France. According to a system much more common in Italy than in the north, the front is designed in an abstract way; nor is the designer ashamed of the fact that his flanking gables do not correspond with the aisles or flanking parts of the interior. He has taken from the plan of the church with its broader and higher nave and its too subordinate aisles only the central idea—the triple

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

division; and it has not worried him that his aisle-roofs did not come as high as he desired to put his side gables. He has let the sky show through the openings of these without the slightest disguise. The very beautiful composition in stone of three colors, growing more and more elaborate as the front climbs against the sky, replaces, as you see, all treatment by means of sculpture, near as this front is, geographically, to the magnificent sculpture of the Romanesque churches farther north. It has taken nothing from them and is content with its effect of color.

So in the famous and really lovely church of Notre-Dame-du-Port at Clermont-Ferrand, the inlay is used with more reserve and with excellent taste. The octagonal tower shows only the tympanums of the arches treated with color, but in the little square tower which I show you (Fig. 8) the decoration is carried further. In the chancel and transept of that admirable church, you may see the true origin of much of the interesting American work to which

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

we give the name of Richardson without asking too closely whether he was really the designer of all of it. However, as a matter of comparison with the French originals, here is Richardson's own church in Boston (Fig. 9), the one which made his celebrity. And you will see how closely the French feeling of the twelfth century was reproduced, or, if you wish, to use a less complimentary phrase, was copied, at the close of the nineteenth century. The square blunt tower to the left has gone. It has been replaced by the completion of that west end, carried out at the time when the great porch was built — that porch of which we spoke in the last lecture.

In the fourteenth century the Florentines, who had been as reluctant two hundred years before as any of the Italians to accept the Gothic style as the northern builders created it, had adopted this curious compromise. They built in what was the old Gothic system, and they carried it out in the pointed arches for the windows and doors, but in every other way they kept and





TRINITY CHURCH, FROM THE SOUTHEAST,  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 9



DETAIL OF NORTH FLANK OF CATHEDRAL,  
FLORENCE, ITALY

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 10



CLOISTER OF SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 11



DETAIL OF PAINTING SHOWN IN FIGURE 11

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 12

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

even carried further, the southern notion of smooth wall surfaces treated in color, as opposed to the northern idea of a building without flat walls, but made up of slender supports—the space between them filled by colored glass.

This time I show you (Fig. 10) a part of the northern flank of the Cathedral of Florence, and, included in it, the westernmost of the three doorways which lead into the church. Here the brick walls are sheathed with thin plates of marble; and around the windows and the doorways the decoration is required to be the richest and the most concentrated. This sheathing culminates in the jambs and in the archivolt of the doorway and windows, and in the gables above them, in beautiful mosaic of small pieces of marble. This decoration is much too minute to be seen in the photograph. In the beautiful bell-tower the decoration is carried still further, because the inlay in color pattern is eked out, strengthened as it were, by carving in low relief. Like that Japanese box which

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

I showed you a week ago with its little bats in black horn, each bat wrought in relief in the most delicate fashion, so here in the bell-tower the effect of a color pattern is enhanced by raising a part of the design in carved relief. The feeling for such decorative inlay continued into the time of the Renaissance, although it disappeared sooner in Florence, lingering much longer and produced more effectively in Venice and in the cities under Venetian control. The Renaissance church of S. Maria Novella is the latest in date of all the pieces of such work that we have in Tuscany; and in the front of that church the whole scheme of the exterior is based upon the decorative pattern in color. The marbles of different shades are used here just as they were in the Cathedral of Florence, but with the semi-classical spirit visible in the patterns, whereas those of the Cathedral retained their full mediæval character.

Still the most important part of architectural work in color is, for us, that which is done by painting on walls and ceilings,

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

and, as we have had occasion to learn before, that painting which is done with the deliberate purpose of narrating or describing—that which we call commonly “painting” without qualification, or the painting of pictures. Here in the cloister of that same Church of Santa Maria Novella (Fig. 11) is a combination of painting in mere flat pattern and the painting of pictures of historic or religious significance, which marks that period when pure adornment had reached its culminating point in Europe, while at the same time the painting of expression and representation was approaching its perfect splendor.

The picture on the left is ascribed to Giotto, but I think not with sufficient authority. It seems to be the work of one of his followers; that is, of a man of greater acquired knowledge and of less vigorous purpose. We shall see that picture in a moment, but look first at the general effect proposed by the designer. You will certainly understand that these patterns, which I have praised by implication, are not

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

in reality as sharp in contrast of color as the black and white makes them. They do not injure the picture by contrast. Before we leave this view let me remind you that the famous Spanish Chapel, of which we must speak in a moment, opens out of this cloister. The door to it is behind us as we stand here looking up one arm of the cloister, and on our right is the open arch which leads to the green space within.

In this picture (Fig. 12), the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, you will note the type of composition, the distribution of the parts, the way of telling the story, which remained the accepted one for two centuries at least. You will find it in Titian's magnificent picture in the Academy of Venice; you will find it in Tintoretto's no less magnificent picture in the Church of Santa Maria del Orto.

As to the Spanish Chapel, it is one of the most interesting rooms, artistically, even in Italy, for it is a beautiful specimen of Italian Gothic vaulting, a square room of sufficient size to enable one to see the



FRESCO IN THE SPANISH CHAPEL, CLOISTER OF SANTA  
MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 13



THE SUPPER IN THE HOUSE OF LEVI: CENTRAL GROUP  
Paul Veronese (1528-1588)

LECTURE VI FIGURE 14

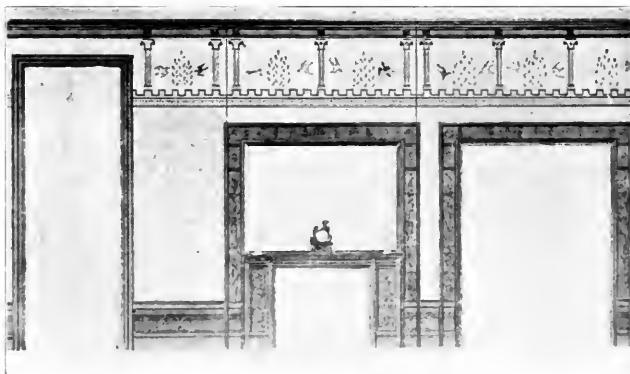


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# CONCORD BRIDGE

In Memorial Hall of State House, Boston, Mass. Edward Simmons (b. 1852)

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 15



WALL OF A DRAWING-ROOM, NEW YORK CITY

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 16



## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

paintings perfectly, and so adorned with those paintings that vault and walls work together in perfect harmony. There is nowhere a more faultless example of how an interior may be made glorious by painting, and its true artistic character shown for the first time, as it were, by such painting, while the painting itself is satisfactorily lighted. The wall above the altar, the north wall, opposite the doorway which enters it from the cloister, is adorned with the great picture of the Crucifixion. On the west wall is the still more important picture which I show you now. (Fig. 13.) This is a symbolic design, expressing, in a way too recondite to be followed here, the relations of society and life, intelligence and morals, to the world of religion. It is commonly called the Triumph of Saint Thomas Aquinas. But, of course, while such work as this is of faultless effect as mural decoration, and has quite immeasurable interest for us as expressing the religious and philosophical thoughts of the age,—an age peculiarly susceptible and refined in its tone of thought,

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

—it is still not as vigorous painting as that which was to follow. That is always a very difficult proposition to make clear to the mind, to one's own intelligence, and even more difficult to express in words—the strength, the value, the profound interest of the early work which is not as yet based upon perfect artistic knowledge. Thus to many a student of painting and of architecture, that picture which we are now leaving behind us is a more precious monument than the superb work known to all of us as the fresco by Raphael in the Vatican, *The Burning of the Suburb* (*Incendio del Borgo*). In that picture everything that art can do for beauty in the way of admirable composition is done. Composition in line, composition in mass, are produced with faultless accuracy; moreover, a notable tradition of the church is preserved, and again the natural desire of every great draughtsman to represent the nude figure in vigorous action is made possible—even necessary in appearance—by the subject, the sudden outburst of fire, the sudden alarm, the beseeching

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

multitude who address the Pope, all work toward the result which Raphael had most in mind. It was quite indifferent to him that the picture is conceived in an impossible way, the flames flickering where there is nothing to burn, the people collecting water in Greek vases of beautiful type, but in a most ineffective and impossible way, the whole conception non-realistic. A complete contrast is seen in one of those tremendous Venetian conceptions, the famous Crucifixion of Tintoretto's which is placed in one of the smaller rooms of the Scuola di San Rocco in Venice. Now, it is a truism, an accepted dictum, that the oil-paintings of the Venetians were not as effective mural decoration as the frescos of the Florentines; and if we understand exactly what is meant by the true worth of painting, that dictum is to be accepted to the full. One would rather adorn a stately hall with such paintings as those of the Florentine Chapel than with even the more tranquil paintings of the Venetians—certainly rather than with the tumultuous and

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

realistic composition we are considering—a picture in which for the first time in Christian art one meets with a studied rendering of the Crucifixion as it might have taken place. On the other hand the picture of which this group (Fig. 14) is the central feature, the magnificent Paul Veronese in the Academy of Venice, called the Supper at the House of Levi, and more generally called “The Green Man,” from the splendid figure which does not appear in this group before you; this group, I say, shows what the Venetian was when he was painting with almost a simple decorative purpose. There are those of us who think that Paul Veronese was the greatest painter that Europe has ever seen, and this because of the unfailing serenity with which those superb compositions, perfect in line and in mass, perfect also in color, succeed one another as we follow his tranquil and hard-working life. It is hard to say that any mural painting can be better than this—and yet here again there is room to ask that the hall to be adorned shall at all events be

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

planned with reference to the unmatched stateliness of the decorations which are to be given to it. There are few rooms which such painting would not dwarf.

Now, in our modern art, there is one man who, more than any other painter, has preserved the tranquil perfection which marked the greatness of the Italian sixteenth century. Pierre Puvis de Chavannes is represented in America by one very noble composition, the Muses rising to greet the Aspiring Soul, or a subject of that character, a painting which covers the wall at the head of the great stairway in the Boston public library. (Frontispiece.) And this picture shown after a Paul Veronese, is to us as if we returned to the earlier epoch of the Spanish Chapel—so grave, so simple in its composition, so subdued in its coloring is the modern's work. But as a piece of mural decoration there is this to be said and insisted on, that the very dark background with the diaphanous figures floating in the air and relieved against the darkness is notably a finer thing than the white, or nearly white, background

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

with figures relieved upon it in strong light and shade. The solid parapet in front of you conceals nothing of importance in the painting, but it does conceal the lowest edge of it, and the space between that marble wall and the painted surface beyond may be twenty feet; so that the columns that you see, relieved against the darker background made by the picture and the vault which they carry, mark the width of the passageway between. The smaller panels are symbolical, one of pastoral poetry, the next one of epic poetry, and they occupy the side walls of the same square hall in which the stair goes up. It is curious to see the determination of the artist to relieve his figures in a generally pale chord of color against a somewhat darker background. They have, however, no very close relation to the form of the hall. Except in the case of the great painting of the Muses, these pictures might be in any large and stately room, and in fact would be better were they not quite so far above the eye. It is but seldom that a room fits its painted decorations, and seldom

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

that the paintings fill the room as perfectly as in the case of the vaulted hall at Florence.

And now take another instance of the tendency to paint historical and narrative pictures on walls without considering too closely their strictly mural nature. This (Fig. 15) is the very splendid painting by Edward Simmons, in the State House in Boston, one of four pictures which by express order were painted to deal with scenes in the patriotic history of Massachusetts. The artist has himself explained his strong feeling for the situation as it really was. It was an early spring that year, so that even when the fight at Concord Bridge occurred, the whole country was bright with the tender green of the coming vegetation. The topography is understood to be accurate. Now, there are many ways of representing a battle, and an interesting screed might be delivered on the comparative fitness of these different ways of telling the story; but in this one there seems to be peculiar fitness in leaving to imagination the almost unpaintable struggle itself, to leave that wrapped in

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

white smoke through which flashes the blaze of infantry musket and farmer's rifle, and to concentrate the attention of the observer on the rallying crowd of villagers who hurry down the road to the scene of the conflict. If it is not a perfectly understood mural decoration, this is because it is so thoroughly realized as a historical picture. The depth, the perspective, the range of country from the distant hill to the near foreground—all this on the one hand; and the vigor of movement, even the violence of action, on the part of the nearer figures, all tend to remove it somewhat out of the sphere of mural painting into that of the historical gallery. But this, you will understand, is said by way of hypercriticism—there is no reason why one should not enjoy the painting as heartily on the wall of the circular hall in which it is found as if it hung in a gallery, while again, the hall is the richer for the possession of such a work of art.

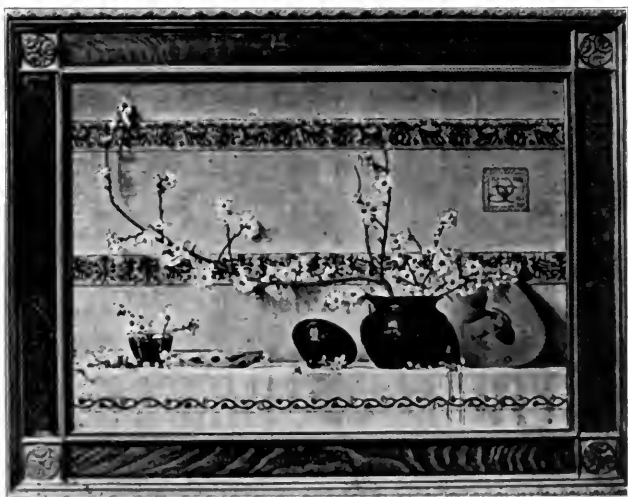
I have now to ask you to consider how we decorate rooms when such splendid appliances are not allowed us; and first consider





WALL OF SITTING-ROOM, NEW YORK CITY

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 17



PANEL FOR MURAL DECORATION  
C. C. Coleman

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 18



HALL IN LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, D. C.

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 20



CORRIDOR IN LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, D. C.

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 21

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

the necessity of sticking to the general lay-out of the room as our main theme. Here, for instance (Fig. 16), is the design for a drawing-room in New York, which design, indeed, was carried out. The wood-work—consisting of door-trim and window-trim, and of the mirror frame, so arranged as to correspond with the doorway and also with the mantelpiece, which is inclosed in the mirror frame, as you see—is all framed of white holly with the panels of doorway and mirror in mahogany, very delicately carved in low relief. The carving takes the form of a continuous little vine climbing each vertical member. But in the window-trim no such broad panelled frame is used, only a narrow group of mouldings of the white wood with a slight narrow band of mahogany to serve as “echo,” and to bind the room together in design. Now, to carry out the wall decoration, the whole surface is divided up into squares, each one filled with a delicately suggested pattern only slightly relieved in color from the background, and above this is a frieze of much stronger coloring,

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

repeating in paler tints the creamy white and dull red of the woodwork. The little suggestions of leafage and tree-form with birds shown in the panels of this frieze are in the working scheme wrought into almost realistic effects of treetops, and of birds that, indeed, seem solid enough. In this case there is no attempt, as you see, to provide for the hanging of pictures. This drawing-room was intended to be complete in itself; but take this other case (Fig. 17), the case of a large living-room in which it was intended to house a great many works of art hung on the walls,—water-colors, and now and then a smaller painting, and perhaps a number of etchings. You see there is a simple dado of dark wood; and above that the surface of flock paper, or velvet paper as it is called nowadays, affords a faultless background for the drawings to be hung upon it. They might be crowded much closer than they are shown here. The band of background finishes at the top with a row of those Japanese colored woodcuts, which were cheap enough at the time when this design

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

was made, and which can still be bought at reasonable prices if one is fortunate; and above this again a very rich flowered French paper was used. In practice this scheme was modified; it was thought necessary to increase the width of the background for pictures, and accordingly the Japanese frieze disappeared, the band of velvet paper was made higher, and a group of wooden mouldings alone separated it from the very rich and beautifully composed flowered surface above, of which the suggested figure in the photograph gives no idea at all. The complete success of the room was partly dependent upon that wall-paper, which was, indeed, a remarkable piece of modern designing—its discovery at the right time a real stroke of good fortune. It would have been feasible to have had such a paper made to order; but the cost of it in America with nine blocks to have cut and used in printing would have been prohibitory. This would be the way to proceed if you clearly understood that your purpose was to show to the best advantage your valuable prints and drawings;

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

but now look at Fig. 18, to see Charles Coleman's notion of how to make the elaborate color compositions themselves, the representative paintings themselves, a part of the wall. These that I have to show you are some of his compositions painted lately in oil and intended for mural work. The frames, indeed, are not what he would choose—he desires to see the pictures framed into the panelling. In the first one, as you see, he has represented a small oleander tree growing in a very beautiful bronze pot, and beside it some branches of another flowering plant in a Chinese vase. In the oblong picture (Fig. 19), the same bronze pot does duty, used this time as the receptacle for water and branches of a flowering tree; while its very beautiful cover lies beside it, and a saucer and an ornamental glass carry other blossoms of the same tree. The decorative sense, you see, is very strong, and in each case the artist has used his cipher in a fashion to truly aid the decorative effect, which in the case of the oblong picture is enhanced by the very splendid eastern stuff

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

which forms the background. That cipher, you will perceive, is merely the three initial letters of his name turned into crescents and interlaced; all with a kind of reminiscence of Diane de Poitiers. And now see in Fig. 20 how, in very recent times, these decorative appliances, which we have dealt with, work out when used together. This is in the Library of Congress in Washington, the northernmost corridor on the ground floor, the great stair being behind us and on our right. The lower wall and the floor are not now engaging our attention; they are of simple veined marble and of simple mosaic. But the vault is covered with mosaic in a very rich and fairly successful decorative pattern, and the lunettes are filled by the paintings of Charles Sprague Pearce. The large picture opposite us is called *The Family*; the lunettes on the left are filled with the several subjects—Religion first on the left, Labor, Study, and Recreation. The first of the series, Religion, is not visible in the picture we are just leaving; it is a beautiful composition and a beautiful thought.

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

Here again (Fig. 21) is one of the long corridors in that richly adorned building, and the lunettes here, which are faintly seen on the left, are all filled by the paintings of Walter McEwen. You get from this picture a fairly good idea of how such highly adorned passages tell in effect when they are carried out with complete control of material; with this exception, that the photograph betrays us a little and makes the blacks and the whites too sharp in contrast and too aggressive.

To close my lecture, and with it this course, we will speak of the latest of those mural paintings by Sargent which have been put up at different times in the Boston Public Library. This picture, reproduced in Fig. 22, was in place in October, 1903, when I saw it with absolute astonishment and with a feeling that at last the country had been so favored as to possess a really superb piece of mural decoration. In that way it is one of the finest things of modern times, able to hold its own against any composition of the nineteenth or twentieth





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# MURAL PAINTING IN PUBLIC LIBRARY, BOSTON, MASS

John Singer Sargent. (b. 1856)

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 22



PANEL FOR MURAL DECORATION  
C. C. Coleman

LECTURE VI. FIGURE 19

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

century. The picture fills the end of a gallery of great length, but only twenty-six feet wide and thirty-two feet high; and of this thirty-two feet, thirteen feet is the height of the semi-circular lunette, where the wall is bounded by the barrel-vault above. That lunette then, the semi-circle and a little more, is filled with a great composition of religious significance, and below it is a broad band forming a frieze of painted figures. These two painted surfaces occupy all of the wall except a plain gray marble dado. Right in the middle of the color composition is a strange oblong panel filled and more than filled by a secondary panel in the form of a broad cross. This cross-shaped panel is filled by a Crucifixion; the crucified Saviour and the cross that bears him modelled in high relief; and the groups of mouldings which inclose the panels also in relief and gilded with burnished gold. At the sides of the crucified figure are Adam and Eve crouching; held to the cross by the blood-colored band of drapery which has its own obvious significance; and,

## THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF

by a very unusual reading of the symbol, it is Adam and Eve themselves who catch in goblets the blood that drips from the wounds made in the hands of Christ. The feet of Christ press upon the coiled and folded serpent, whose coils however hold fast the feet of Adam. All this, you understand, is in relief, and also in full color with much use of gold, and this forms the centre of the great composition.

Now, the lunette above and around the uppermost member of the cross presents a great group of the three persons of the Trinity draped with a single vast robe, upon the border of which is wrought the often repeated word, *Sanctus, sanctus*. The three faces are in relief; and as you are told, and as appears true, they are cast in the same mould, their crowns only differing as differ, in European political history, the crowns of the pope, of the emperor, and of the king. The figures are relieved upon a splendid background of sombre blue, like that of the midnight sky. The frieze below is occupied by the angels of the Passion, and it is a mag-

## THE ARTS OF DESIGN

nificent band of grandly harmonized color. The whole effect gives to the lover of mural decoration but little to desire; and yet we know that the effect will be modified when the rest of the hall is painted. It is to be hoped that the artist himself will be there to save the picture from possible injury by its new surroundings, and indeed to give it that slightly modified tone which the new conditions may require.





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