

“The Decoration of Mouldings”

By Franklin L. Naylor

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(Note: The article entitled, “How to Beautify a City with Sculpture,” is also included at the end of the decoration of mouldings article.)

“The Decoration of Mouldings” article begins:

“Of all the architectural elements employed in our line of work none seem to hold a more important position for ornamentation than that of mouldings. The fact of this assertion can be readily felt by attempting to ornament one of the simplest of monuments, that of the plainest sarcophagus. All designs save those of a pyramid, obelisk and occasional rock-face work which are not architectural in a sense are subject to become freak designs or originalities in themselves without the aid of mouldings, no matter what name or style be given to them. Apart from the proper use and correct distribution of mouldings the ornamentation applied to them is a matter equally as important, that is to say, an ivy or floral design on a Greek Echinus or a Guilloche pattern on an Egyptian bead would be entirely inconsistent as to position, shape and style of architecture. Considering what may be seen in our cemeteries of errors similar to the one just instanced, a little reading or study from good architectural books would greatly benefit the designer.”

This two-part article, which begins on the next page,
is presented on the Stone Quarries and Beyond web site.

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The Decoration of Mouldings.

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The first and smallest of all mouldings is the Fillet and too small to decorate except when widened, which then becomes a Band and will be treated later.

The next larger moulding is a Bead which at the beginning was used very frequently by both the Greeks and Romans who in some instances enlarged it and then gave it the name of a Torus. Figures 1 and 2 show the Greek decoration of the Bead. Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 the Roman. Figures 7, 8, 9 and 10 the Renaissance and Figures 11, 12, 13 and 14 the Romanesque, Byzantine and Gothic.

The Torus in the classic orders appears mostly on columns and pilasters and instead of being decorated with pearls, discs and spindles this more important moulding is enriched with what seems to be a bundle of rods round which ribbons are twisted at suitable places, Figures 15 and 16; a decoration which is consistent with the theory of this moulding, that of denoting bond and strength. It is sometimes, too, surrounded with a plaited or net work, Figures 17 and 18. In the Renaissance, Mediaeval and Gothic styles the Torus is used mostly on doorway, windows and string-courses and is still richer in decoration by clothing them with various designs and systems shown in Figures 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23. Some examples are most exquisite and too numerous to illustrate, they being decorated with almost every conceivable design, water-leaves and artificial leaves with serrated margins. Laurel, oak, ivy, holly and acanthus all make good elements to use. As in the case of clustered fruit, ribbons are twined spirally at suitable places which appear to hold the elements together as in Figure 24, which is taken from the Louvre, in Paris.

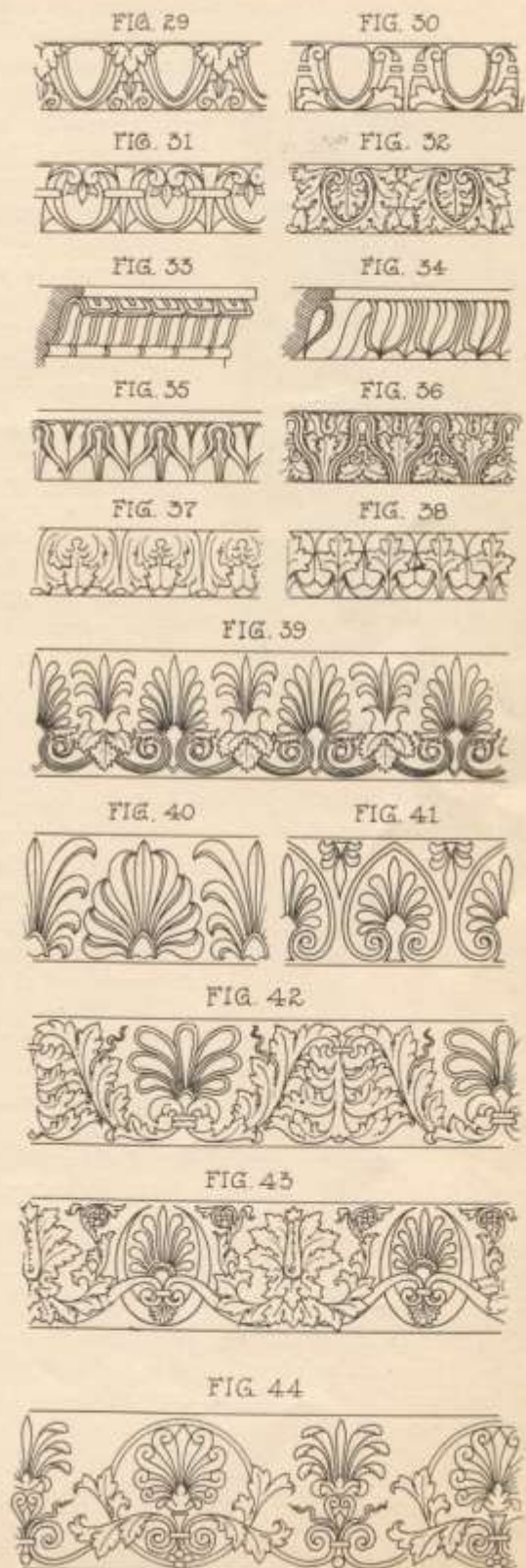
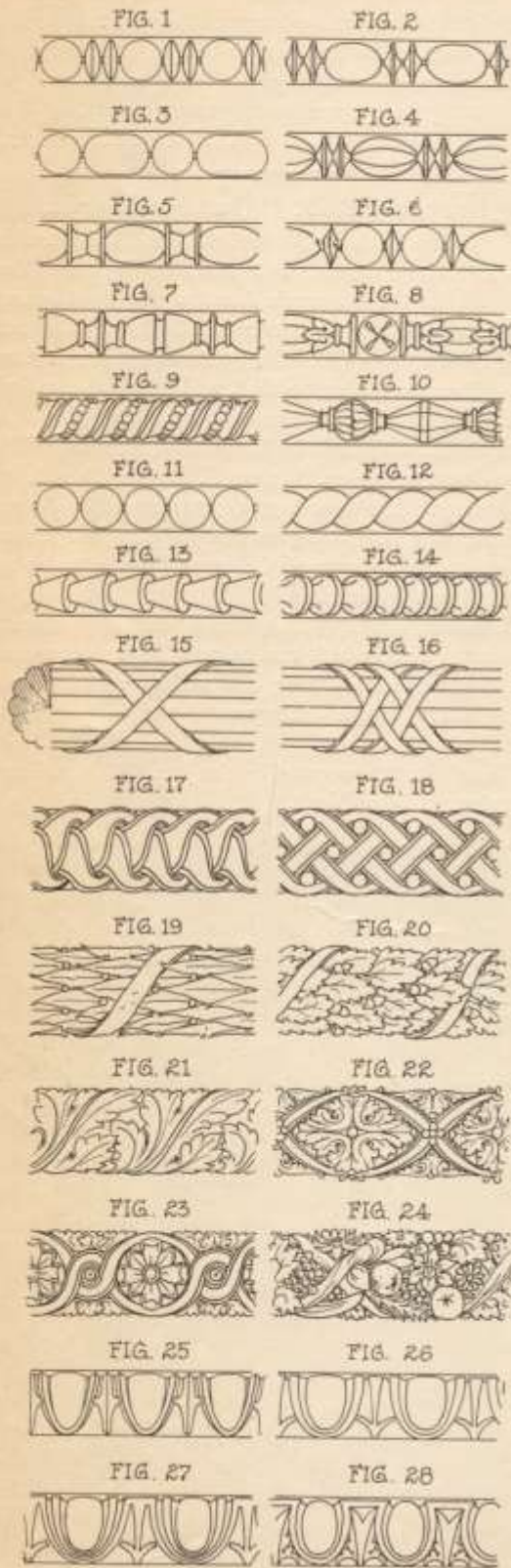
Figure 25 shows the first decoration of the Ovolo or quarter-round moulding. In Greek work of which

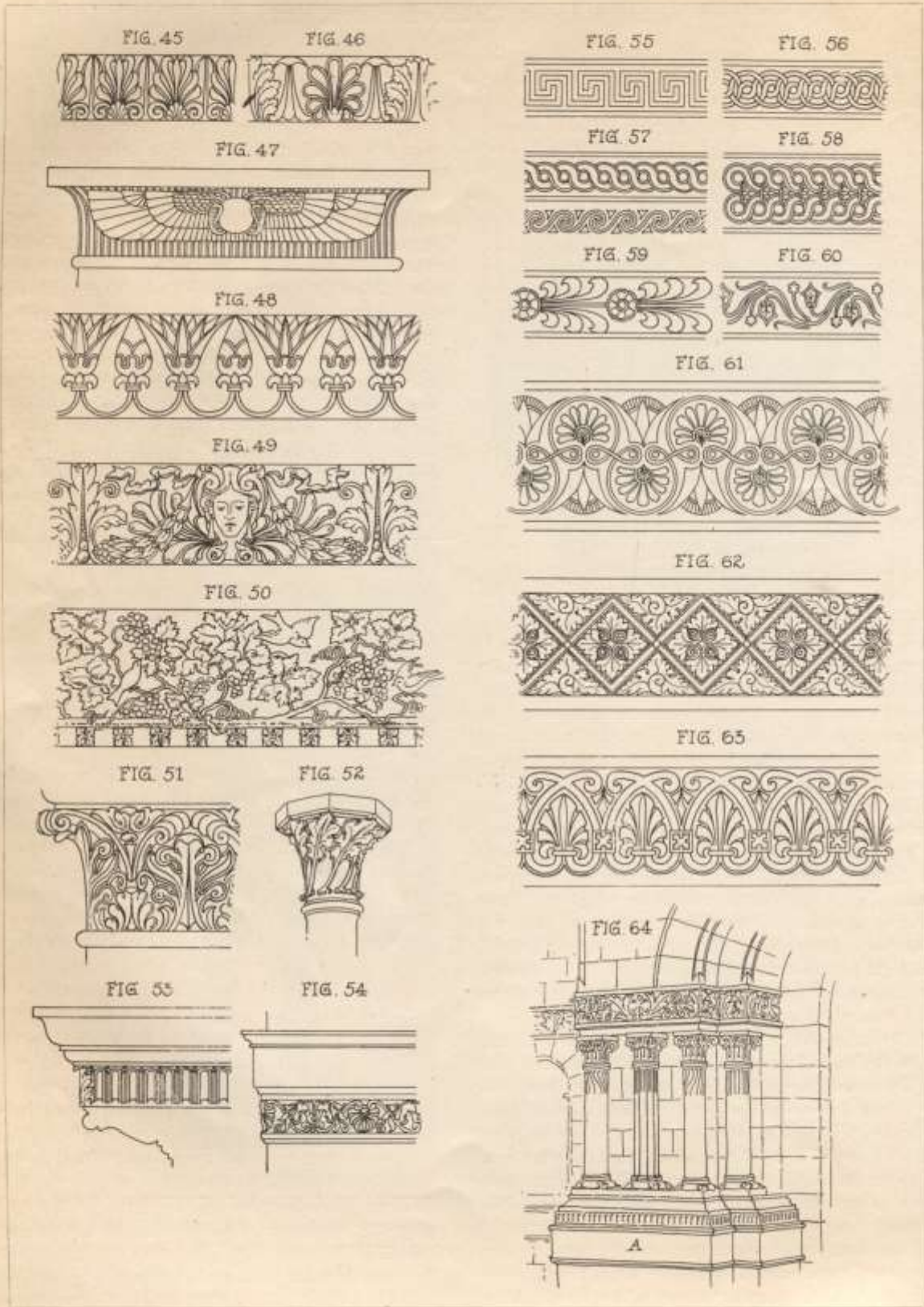
the figure is an example the moulding is known as the Echinus and the ornament is the well-known egg and dart pattern, from which all the more or less misunderstood varieties have, in course of time, been derived. To contrast this with the following varieties one may observe the Greek love for simplicity and refinement and can hardly say it is improved upon. Figures 26 and 27 are Roman examples showing slight variations. The egg and dart ornament harmonizes well with the support and weight the moulding possesses and is nicely adapted to its position. It also has a very decorative feature as a bordering member on panels. Figures 28, 29, 30 and 31 are developments which can be used in almost any other style than the Classic. In figure 32 can be seen how the egg or curved surfaces of the leaves have been covered with independent ornamentation, defying their origin.

The origin of the Cyma-reversa received its form from the manner in which it was decorated. Its prototype is the bird's-beak moulding which is so frequently employed on all Grecian Doric structures; a row of leaves, growing upwards, supports the weight above it and is bent outwards by its pressure, Figure 33, which only occurs partially. To still bend the leaves outward and down towards their lower ends we thus obtain the moulding having its double curvature, Figure 34. A false conception, which regarded the leaf-shape merely as a geometrical element, afterwards gave rise to the corrupt forms of the late Greek and Roman styles, in Figures 35 and 36. The size of this particular moulding does not afford the space for variations as most others and in some instances it is too small to decorate, which is then termed a Cymatium. For this reason the succeeding styles have invariably copied the original or Antique. In the Renaissance the simple water-leaf was replaced by more richly serrated ones like the artificial leaf, shown in Figures 37 and 38.

The Cyma-recta is the topmost and largest of mouldings so to speak; the theory of which is supposed to be to use it as a concluding member serving as a gutter. It is composed of two arcs curving inward and outward respectively. It is the only moulding on which to place the most beautiful of mould decorations. The double curve is a most fitting position to display either the natural lines in all foliage or artificial ones. The first decorations were those of the Grecian honey-suckle and palmette with leaves either connected or disconnected, Figures 39, 40 and 41, but mostly with lily cups between as shown in the first figure. The Romans employed mostly the acanthus leaf, Figure 42. Both Renaissance and Modern art follow the tradition of the Antique, but give the palmette a richer form, Figures 43 and 44.

(To be continued.) FRANKLIN L. NAYLOR.





The Decoration of Mouldings.

(Concluded.)

The Cavetto, like the Cyma-recta, also serves as a concluding member. Its section is concave and can be made either small or large. In the classic styles it is mostly found under a fillet, and therefore usually small. It is only ornamented when made large, but does not receive the same attention as the Cyma-recta, and in many instances, regardless of its size, it is still left plain. Figures 45 and 46 show the treatment of it in the Classic, which is nothing more than an infringement upon the decoration of the Cyma-recta. All other styles made extensive use of the Cavetto and found it a very important moulding in the way of decorating, and especially in the joining of two surfaces where the desire is to have them become tangential. Judging from the following illustrations one would think it was the most important. Take, for instance, the Egyptians. They found nothing that looked more suitable or that could be adapted to that particular place so as to give the walls of their structures the appearance of completeness; that of carrying and terminating the inclined line to a proper finish. In this moulding they put their most important ornament, that of the winged globe or sign of Horus, Figure 47. Figure 48 shows the treatment of the lotus plant in this moulding. In the Renaissance we find the Cavetto more elaborate (Figure 49), but in Gothic work may be seen its supreme position over other mouldings and the height of its embellishment (Figures 50 and 51), not only as a decorated moulding, but its line serves as a harmonious division between piers or clustered columns. The vary line on some of the Gothic capitals is nothing more than a decorated Cavetto (Figure 52). The plain moulding itself is frequently used to soften the union of a wall and stylobate; likewise with wall and cornice. In the former case, where it is used at the base of a building or monument, it is then termed a Scotia; simply the Cavetto inverted. Windows and doors cannot be of a true Gothic character without this line of the Cavetto. This completes the rudimentary decoration of mouldings with the exception of the Band, which was heretofore mentioned.

The Band can hardly be called a moulding, yet in many cases it is used to serve the same purpose and sometimes comes into direct union with other mouldings. It is of one flat surface or face, and can be projected or raised any distance from the body or ground upon which it is cut, according to what it is going to serve or the effect one wishes to obtain. In designing a monument or mausoleum or a plain sarcophagus where the different surfaces have to be divided and subdivided into panels or zones, the importance and value of the Band is at once realized and appreciated, and in many instances it can be employed where no

other moulding will answer. In the Classic orders the Corona is sometimes ornamented with a Band design (Figure 53), and in some rare instances a Band design can be seen on the architrave of buildings. Figure 54 is the design used on the architrave of the Temple of Jupiter Stator at Rome. Most commonly in the Antique we find the Band used more for interior decoration on walls and in mosaic floors. Figures 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60 and 61 show the designs mostly adapted for the Classic treatment of Bands. With the exception of the fret and simple scroll, the arrangement of the elements are known as Link-borders, so termed because the transversely-growing foliage or design is connected together by scrolls, loops and hooks, which serve the purpose like the links in a chain. All Band designs should possess this one strong feature. Rather different is the Band decoration in this particular respect from the Cyma-recta, where each element may be detached or separated one from another. Like the Cavetto, the Band in all the subsequent styles of architecture became prominent, especially in Romanesque and Late Gothic, where it developed to a great size and was elaborately decorated (Figures 62 and 63). Sometimes the large ones were left plain, but only when used on the lower part of the building, and came under the term of belting, as shown at "A" in Figure 64.

The Link border is generally composed of identical details symmetrically repeated, and its forerunner is seen in the connected lily and pomegranate of the Assyrian style. Unsymmetrical and naturalistic forms should be avoided. A good decorated Band in some instances will serve better and improve the appearance of an object more than any combination of mouldings. Again, the proper decoration of mouldings in a certain combination or order is of vital importance regarding the size and weight of each member and the proportion of the object on which they rest, and sometimes, too, a beautiful profile is entirely ruined by some incompetent designer by causing a big bunch of ugly leaves to be carved on the corner of a monument, an instance which is so commonly met with in our line of work.

FRANKLIN L. NAYLOR.

How to Beautify a City with Sculpture.

How to make the best uses of the recent Ferguson bequest of \$1,000,000 for public sculpture in Chicago forms the subject of an interesting article by Mr. Lorado Taft in a recent issue of *The World To-Day*. Some of Mr. Taft's suggestions, which follow, may well be heeded by other cities that are making plans for municipal beauty.

"Mr. Ferguson's directions are explicit and yet

capable of liberal interpretation. His money is left to erect and maintain 'statuary and monuments commemorating worthy men and women of America or important events of American history.' It is fortunate indeed that the far-sighted donor did not say 'representing' instead of 'commemorating.' A man may be fitly and beautifully commemorated by means of an ideal group or a fountain, an object of beauty in itself. It must be conceded, however, that the modern costume for men is not an object of beauty, particularly in bronze and marble. Imagine our Lake Front Park invaded by an army of portrait statues; what a depressing display we could easily make there, with rows of gentlemen in 'Prince Alberts,' like clothing dummies! Some of us could get along nicely with never an addition to the city's exhibit of full-length figures of men of our time. Saint Gaudens has given us in his Lincoln perhaps the finest portrait statue in all America, but it takes a Saint Gaudens to handle such a subject. As a rule one pair of bronze trousers is not very much more interesting than another pair. In too many cases the encouragement of sculpture means nothing but an indefinite multiplication of these examples of modern tailoring, planted at regular intervals in public places before unwilling eyes. Is it any wonder that most people think that they do not care for statuary?

"Daniel French, the eminent sculptor, has not only protested, but has shown us a way out of the difficulty. In 'The Angel of Death and the Young Sculptor' he has given us a magnificent memorial to Martin Millmore without attempt at portraiture. But portraiture has its interest, and in two of his best works, the John Boyle O'Reilly memorial and the monument to Richard M. Hunt, the architect, he has used large busts, with subordinate allegorical figures.

"Now and then, however, a portrait statue will be demanded, and in such cases the placing of the monument is quite as important as its workmanship. There is probably no danger that realistic portraits will ever again be perched on high columns. The Douglasses and Clays of a past generation are safe from intrusion on their high-level pedestals, as secluded and as absurd as was St. Simon Stylites of old. Scarcely less futile than this elevation of a figure far out of sight is the placing of statuary in the midst of crowded streets, where there is no peace, nor even safety in viewing it.

"One great advantage of the portrait bust is that it requires little space. It can be 'bracketed' and may therefore be used on the very spot associated with the service of the man represented.

"Busts on simple pedestals, or carved on the lines of the ancient termini, are very decorative in formal gardens. In a public park of Padua one finds a circle of marble heads of native dignitaries, poets and artists surrounding a large pool of water. They form the

logical center of interest of the little garden. A unique feature, likewise, of the famous drive on the Pincian Hill in Rome, is its endless array of busts of famous Italians. We should find no lack of material for the nucleus of a similar gathering. A cloister or 'peristyle,' used as a setting for the effigies of our pioneers, our inventors, our statesmen and others who have deserved well of us, might be made very artistic and impressive, as it certainly would become in time one of the most interesting places in our city.

"Some day we dust-coated and dust-choked toilers may learn, as have the Parisians and the Romans, the artistic uses of water in streets and squares. They have to bring it from mountain springs many miles away; we have a supply practically as boundless as the ocean right at our doors. To be sure we have to pump it, but why should not some of this vast supply serve us en passant for the refreshing of our eyes and the beautifying of our public places?

"Equestrian statues are expensive luxuries. They are conspicuous objects, and seldom worthy of the attention which they claim. Our national capital has a small regiment of them, but is not especially beautified by their presence. All but two or three could be well spared. Chicago now possesses several equestrian statues ranging from excellent to mediocre and needs no more excepting the very best.

"Memorial arches of good design are very impressive. They have been associated in the past with great victories, and therefore such a project as the 'Dewey Arch' was strictly appropriate. To build a big arch merely for the sake of having an arch, or in order to expend the money, would be a little incongruous. It must have a significance proportionate to its magnitude. A military memorial could hardly take better form, provided the sculptures are adequate. At the entrances of our parks may well be great gateways or piers decorated with historic or allegoric subjects, and likewise, as has been admirably suggested, the larger gateway of the city, the mouth of the river, might be marked by stately pylons crowned by quadrigas or other symbolic sculptures of noble design. Our bridges in particular cry for adornment. Though they are necessarily light and movable, there is no reason why their ends should not be made attractive by means of monumental piers of good design and fitting sculptures. Our river has made progress in decency; some day it may even aspire to charm.

"Whatever we do, let us endeavor to combine beauty with significance, remembering that the important thing is the development of a virile art of our own. The true artist no longer puts himself deliberately out of touch with his time, but endeavors to be a part of the life about him. He realizes that in order to exert an influence his art must speak no alien tongue, but must follow the vernacular of his day and race.