

Monumental Drawing and Lettering

By Dan. B. Haslam

THE LILY IN APPLIED ORNAMENT

In presenting the Easter Lily as a decorative motive in memorial design, we are impressed with the fact that it would be impossible to illustrate a more beautiful, more popular, or more representative flower for this series.

The loveliest flower of the lily family is probably best understood when referred to as Easter Lily, because of its great popularity at this particular season of the year.

This name is more commercial than real however, for its true title is the Madonna Lily, because it was dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Admitting that the lily is significant of everything pertaining to Easter, there are no particular reasons why we should not refer to it as Easter or Ascension Lily if we choose.

In all probability we would be considered very ignorant if we dared refer to the plant by any other name than Easter Lily, and we do not wish to convey such impressions to the minds of our readers even though they may be justifiable.

We prefer to call it Easter Lily anyway, which again shows an utter lack of everything a real author should possess.

We neglected to mention the "Lady Lily" another name by which this plant is recognized.

Just why this beautiful plant should be known by so many names is not hard to understand if we consider its richness in religious

symbolism. And is it surprising why the Easter Lily should be so popular with memorial designers even though we forget for the moment its beauty and the fact that every part of the plant can be nicely arranged in many splendid design schemes.

Symbolic of Purity, Regal Beauty, the Ascension, Easter, the Virgin Mary, what more could we ask for as a decorative motive in expressive memorial design?

The only justifiable criticism in the lily as a memorial decoration is this; the flower is so expressive in religious thought that few of us can ever hope to receive such a tribute from those who know us best. So that none of our readers will be offended at this statement, it may be best to suggest that the author of this series has himself only in mind when this insinuation is made. He feels that the only lily he will receive as a memorial tribute will be in the form of a pick and shovel, symbolic of his destination rather than of his work.

Naturalistic floral decoration is not acceptable in correct design for memorials, and while the modern memorial designer will do his utmost to abide by these fixed rules and laws, still at times he is greatly tempted to lower the bars of restraint, especially when seeking inspiration from the lily.

That these rules are not strictly adhered to is a proven fact. We have in mind several beautiful

FIG. 1. EASTER LILY.

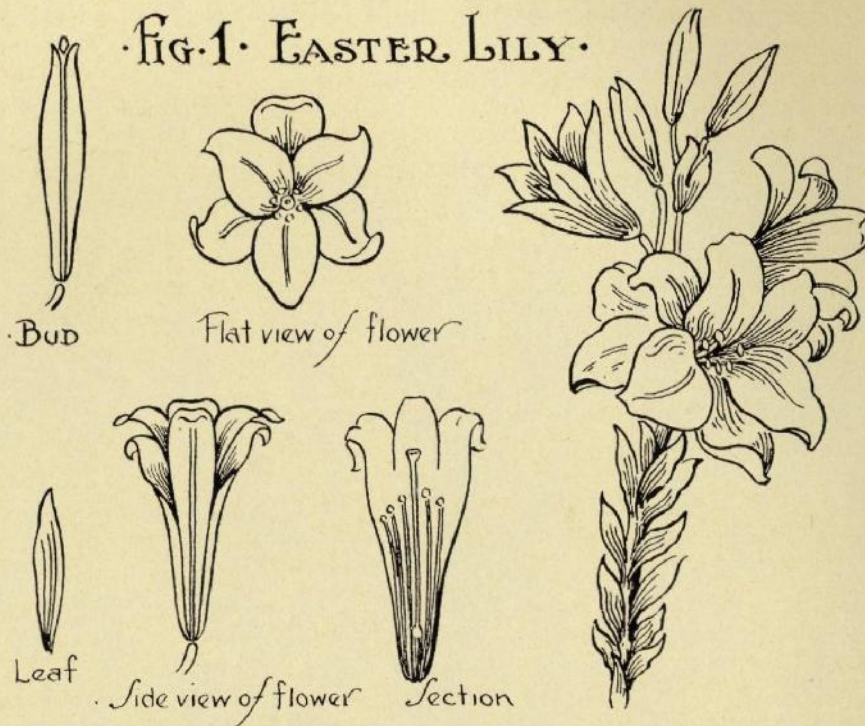
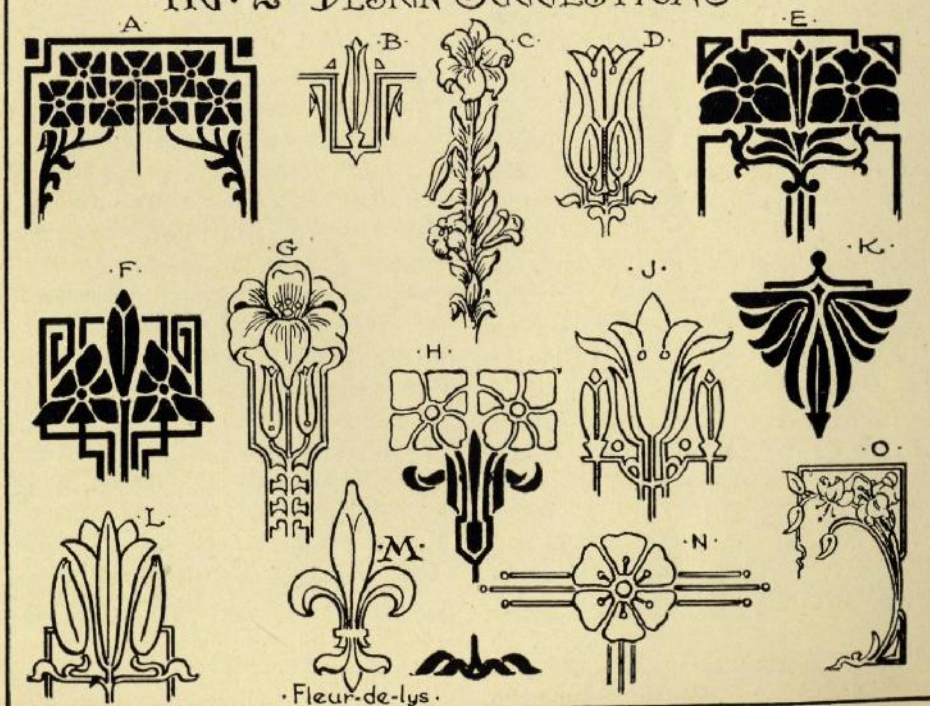


FIG. 2. DESIGN SUGGESTIONS.



memorials in some of our finest cemeteries, in which the naturalistic lily was used with pronounced effect, raised in bold relief and carved by skilled artists. "Terrible design", the critic will say, but to those who do not understand, the memorial is and always will be considered a masterpiece.

Our purpose in writing these articles is to convey to the student what knowledge we possess of good practice in design. We do not propose to act as dictators or critics in any sense of the word. If you desire a naturalistic carved lily on your family memorial, none shall harm you if your wishes are carried out in the matter. Your tastes may be criticized by certain self-appointed authorities, but you will exist as before. Personally we would rather have a naturalistic artistically carved lily on our memorial than a crudely outlined group of nude women, referring of course to a certain French example of Mortuary Art which some critics are eulogizing.

All this illustrates that we do not always "practice what we preach", and we will now await the abuse from the high and mighty for our departure and utter lack of respect for certain accepted principles in good design.

We believe the accompanying Plate to be the most interesting of any shown in the series. The Plant and its parts are clearly illustrated in Fig. 1, while fourteen design suggestions based on the lily are offered in Fig. 2.

Sketches A, B, E, F, H, J, K and N will serve as central motives in design, while C, D, G, L and O are arranged for corner decorative schemes. Sketch C is the only naturalistic design shown. Note the

smallness of the leaves as compared to the flowers and buds in this example and in the illustrations in Fig. 1.

Sketch M illustrates the Fleur-de-lys—the lily of France which appears on the French arms and flag, and is the emblem of Florence and of French Kings.

It is frequently used as an emblem of the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary, and is symbolic of Christ the Light of the World.

The Fleur-de-lys as an ornament is very well known, but its origin is not generally understood. The upper part of the design resembles a lily bud and two leaves, and for this reason and on account of its symbolic representation of the Virgin Mary, some authorities claim it originated from the lily. The best authorities however, agree that the pale, purple Florentine Iris is the original of the Fleur-de-lys.

The ornament is beautiful, symbolic, and adaptable to pleasing arrangement in memorial design.

The three petals of the Fleur-de-lys in the arms of France denote Piety, Justice and Charity.

We have had more real pleasure in writing this article than any we have treated previously. We no doubt will be criticised for some of the statements made, but we trust our readers will be as charitable as possible in their criticisms.

In passing from the sublime to the ridiculous we had no other motive in mind than an occasional desire to forget the serious aspects of our work.

Do Not Forget:—All Photos for the Dealer's Private Memorial Contest must be in our office on or before November 15th, 1926. Please Hurry.