

# American Art in Bronze and Iron.

BY KATHLEEN GRAY NELSON.

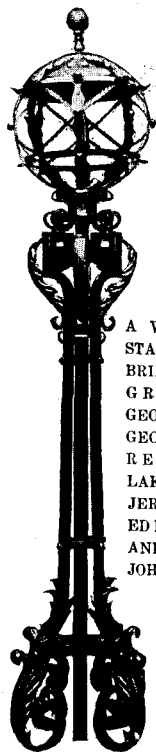
HOW METAL WORK OF ALL KINDS, FROM THE SMALLEST OBJECTS TO MASSIVE GATES AND DOORS, HAS COME TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE ARTISTIC DECORATION OF THE MODERN HOUSE OR PUBLIC BUILDING.

**I**N small articles, like hinges and locks, and in massive things, like gates and doors, iron and bronze work has added immensely to the beauty that man has wrought in the world. And although the art is as old as Tubal Cain, it has been only within the last half century that it has been generally appreciated in this country.

According to the book of Genesis, the son of Lamech and Zillah, who is credited with being the pioneer metal worker, was only seven generations removed from Adam, and it is not likely that art was highly developed in his time. But in these days, when even the most democratic Americans are taking so deep an interest in their ancestry, it is cheerful and comforting to trace anything back to within seven generations of the grand old gardener.

All down through the ages metal work has been honored and admired.

A WROUGHT IRON STANDARD FOR A BRIDGE IN THE GROUNDS OF GEORGIAN COURT, GEORGE GOULD'S RESIDENCE AT LAKEWOOD, NEW JERSEY—DESIGNED BY BRUCE PRICE, AND EXECUTED BY JOHN WILLIAMS.

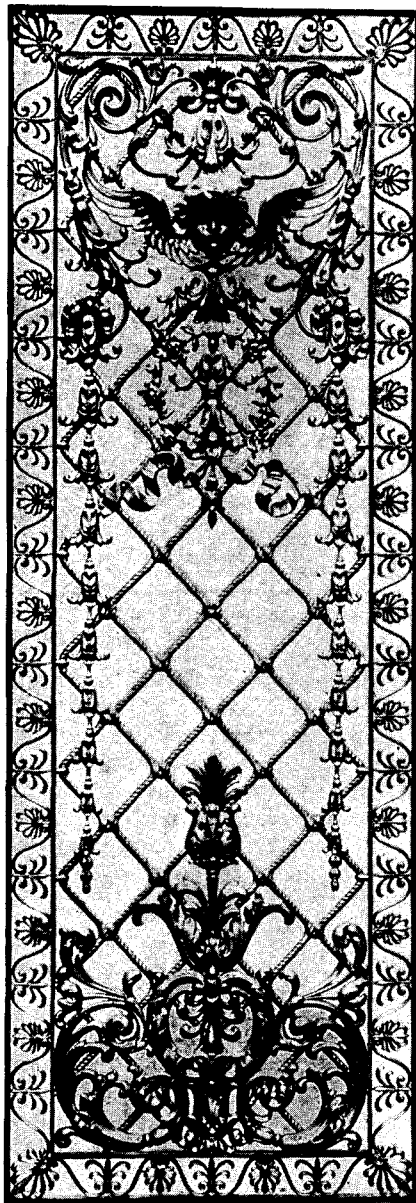


The British Museum has an iron joint taken from the Pyramid of Cheops, which is some sixty centuries old. Dr.

Schliemann found many specimens of wrought iron work at Mycenæ. And was not Vulcan, forger of thunderbolts for Jove and armor maker for Mars, a most important deity? It is plain enough, therefore, that ornamental ironwork has a pedigree of which any one might be proud.

## EARLY DECORATIVE WORK IN METAL.

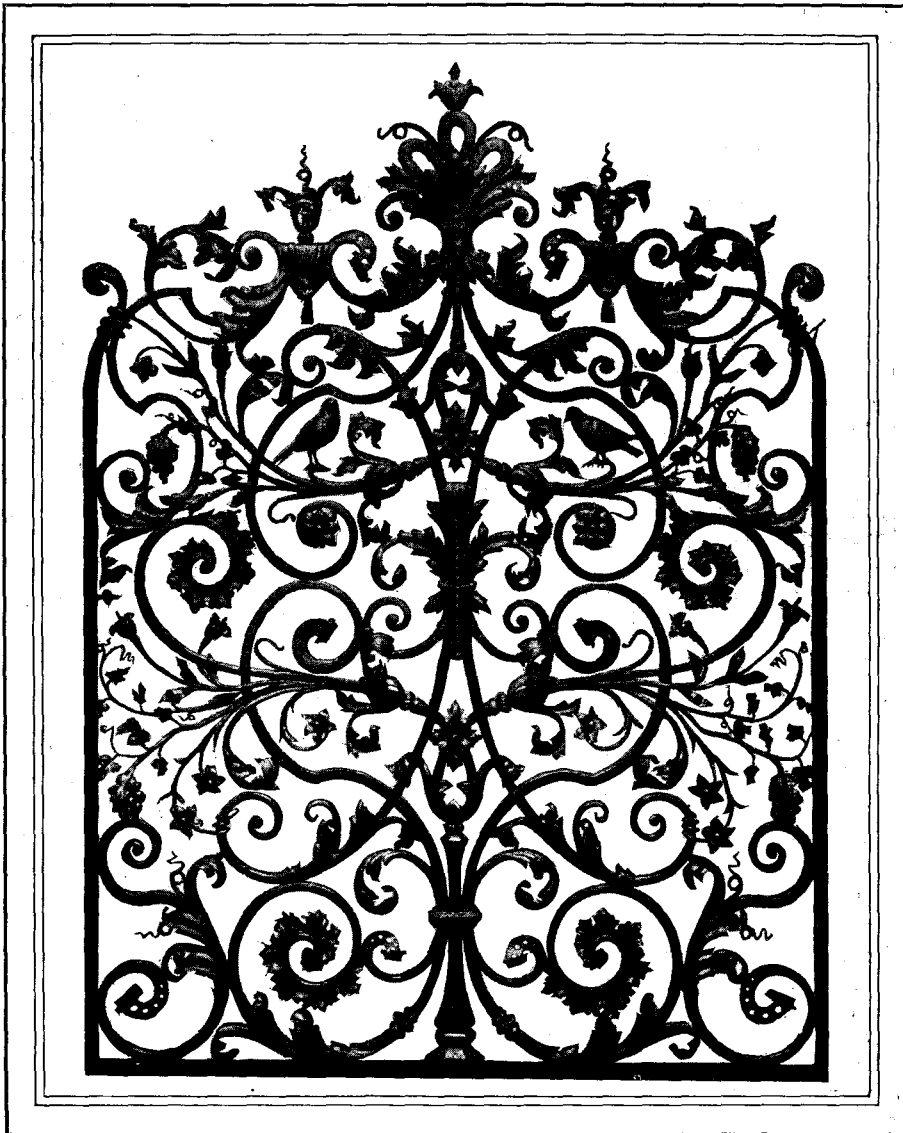
In the early days, metal, like pretty much everything else, was first considered for its use as a means of offense and defense; but



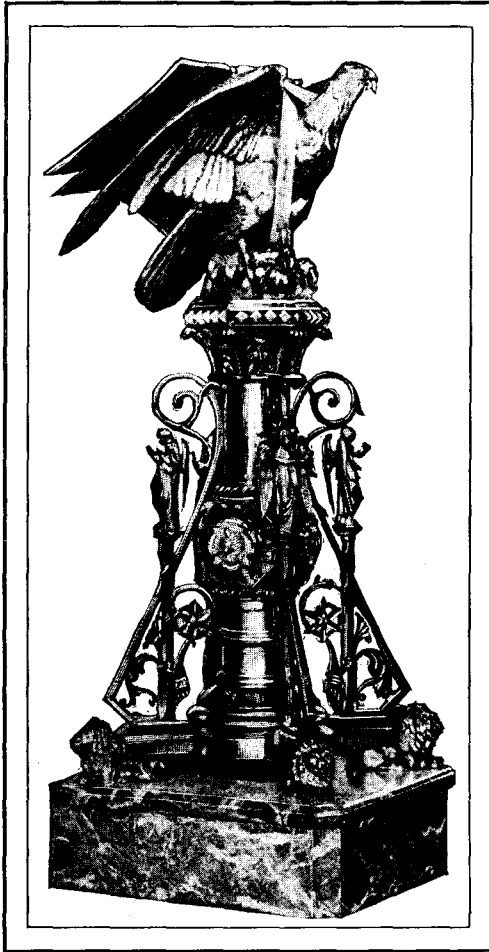
A CAST BRONZE GRILLE IN THE RESIDENCE OF WILLIAM G. IRWIN, SAN FRANCISCO—DESIGNED BY D. S. HESS, AND EXECUTED BY JOHN WILLIAMS.

the decorative sense grew rapidly as men's primal necessities were satisfied. The Greeks made their shields wonderfully beautiful. After safeguarding their lives, the next thought of those ancient people—and it is the same today, for that matter—was to protect their property; so they made strong boxes and bound them with metal, speedily working the bronze and iron into decorative designs. From the strong box, they turned to their homes,

and the same process was repeated again. Iron made the strongest locks and hinges, the stoutest gates and window bars. And that instinctive love for decoration which all human beings have in common, and which manifests itself in the savage and in the newest millionaire as soon as they feel that the immediate struggle for existence is past and the future reasonably clear, led the feudal barons to have their doors and gates and windows as handsome as possible.



A WROUGHT IRON GRILLE IN THE DOOR OF THE CHILDREN'S ROOM OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION IN WASHINGTON—DESIGNED BY HORNBLOWER & MARSHALL, AND EXECUTED BY JOHN WILLIAMS.



THE EAGLE LECTERN IN OLD TRINITY CHURCH, NEW YORK, A MEMORIAL TO DR. OGILBIE, A FORMER RECTOR—DESIGNED BY CHARLES R. LAMB, AND EXECUTED BY J. & R. LAMB.

There have always been, in every walk of life, men who care more for beauty than for wealth and power, and whose mission it is to foster the germs of estheticism in those who can make money to pay for beautiful things. It is in this way that art in general, and what is commonly called metal art work in particular, have been developed.

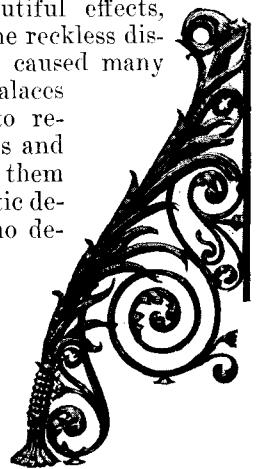
Some of the old metal workers were true artists. At first blush, the term may not seem appropriate to a man who works at a forge, although it is really no more remarkable that an artist should fashion his design in hot iron than that he should chop it out in marble, as Michelangelo did. All over Europe one may see the work of these

smiths. There are no hinges in the world more decorative than those on which swing the great doors of Nôtre Dame, in Paris. One of the finest ornamental gates in England, that of Eaton Hall, is the work of a village smith.

We have in America many fine examples of high art in metal work, but they were planned by artists, rather than by artisans. Architects have recognized the value of wrought iron, and have devoted much attention to working out designs; and in the smaller articles, like locks, hinges, gas fixtures, and railings, there is almost a craze for artistic metal effects. Nor are we lacking in the more serious efforts. For instance, the hinges on the doors of Trinity Church, Boston, and Sever Hall, Cambridge, designed by the late H. H. Richardson, are worth going far to see. As for fences and gates, there are few finer than those of the Havemeyer residence, on Madison Avenue, New York; Cornelius Vanderbilt's houses in New York and Newport, designed by the late R. M. Hunt; and those of the Goelet house, Ochre Court, at Newport.

Some of the finest exterior iron work in this country is to be seen at that most fashionable of all resorts, where the rivalry for elaborate and beautiful effects, coupled with the reckless disregard of cost, caused many owners of the palaces called cottages to remove the old gates and fences and replace them with modern artistic designs. There is no denying that the old time gates made in this country of cast iron were more pretentious than beautiful.

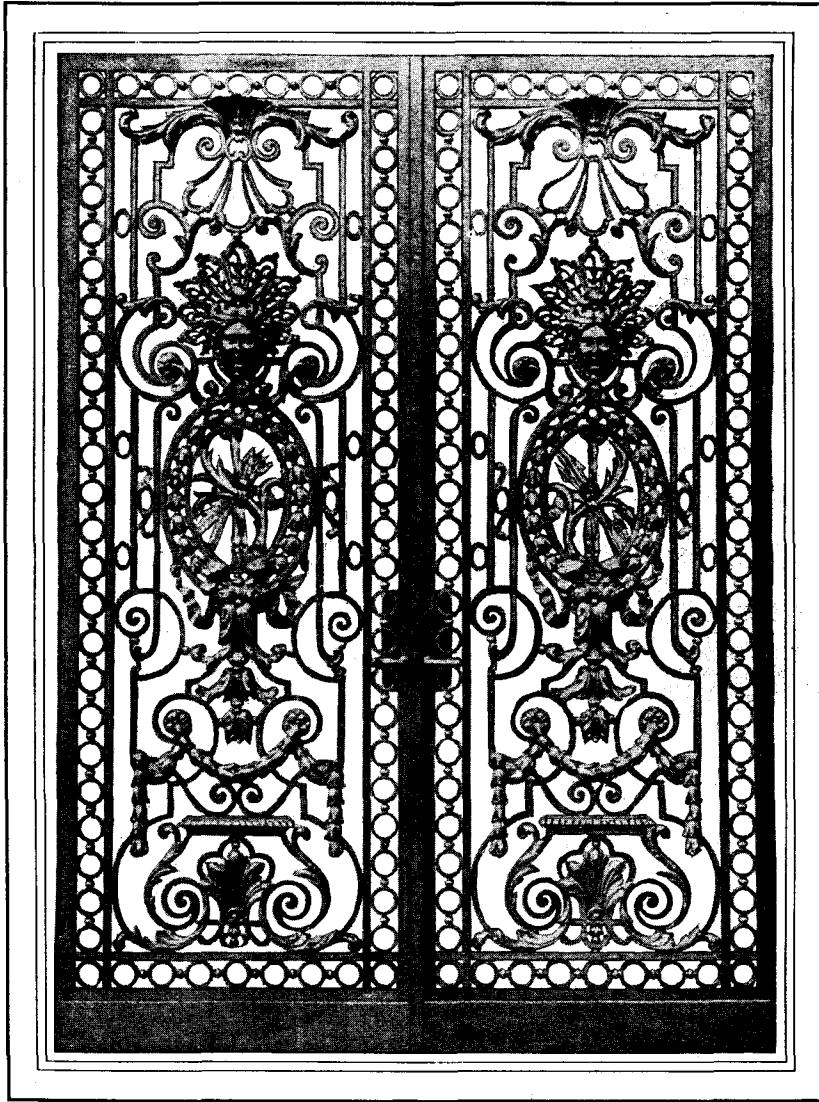
The admirable tendency of millionaires to have their real homes in the country, instead of in the



A WROUGHT IRON BRACKET FOR A RAILING IN A BUILDING IN BUFFALO—DESIGNED BY GEORGE J. METZGER, AND EXECUTED BY JOHN WILLIAMS.

city, has caused an increased demand for monumental iron work, and some of the gates of the country places in New Jersey, Long Island, and at Lenox are as fine as those at Newport. W. K. Vanderbilt's Idle Hour, near Islip, H. McK. Twom-

in this country are the great cast bronze doors, "Tradition" and "Writing," at the main entrance of the Congressional Library in Washington. The commission for the two doors was awarded to Olin L. Warner, but after completing



THE BRONZE ENTRANCE DOORS OF THE RESIDENCE OF PETER A. B. WIDENER, NEAR OGONTZ, PENNSYLVANIA—DESIGNED BY ALLARD & SONS, AND EXECUTED BY JOHN WILLIAMS.

bly's place at Madison, New Jersey, and George J. Gould's at Lakewood, have splendid entrance gates.

#### IN CHURCHES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

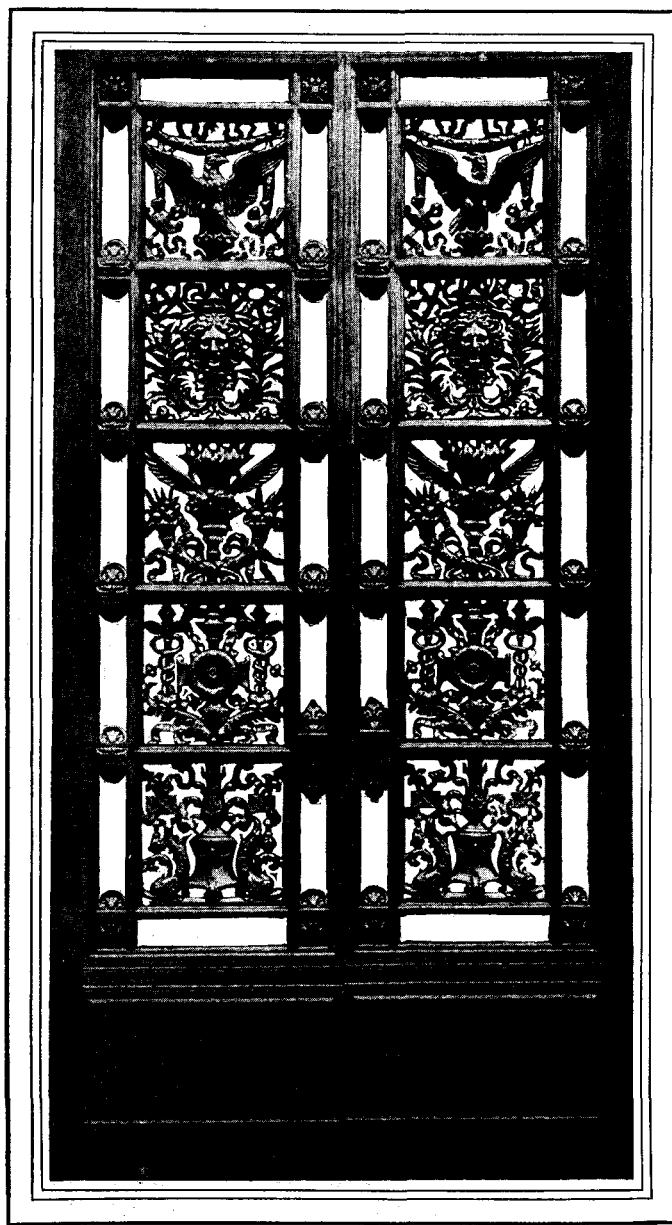
Probably the finest pieces of sculpture and artisanship ever produced in metal

the model for "Tradition," he met with the accident which caused his death, and the second door was designed by Herbert Adams. Both are very successful compositions, artistic and appropriate in every way. To show the care and skill with which they were finished, one



rather peculiar detail of the work may be mentioned. As continual contact produces beautiful color effects on bronze

Next in importance to the Congressional Library doors are the beautiful bronze doors of Trinity Church, New



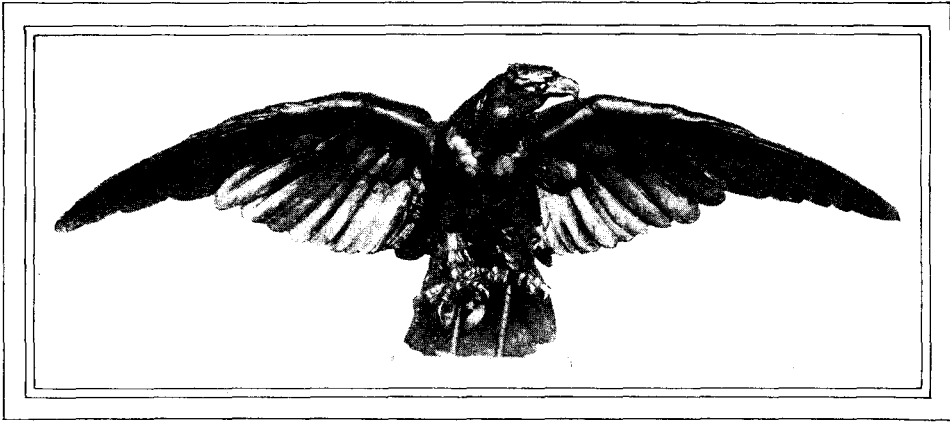
THE BRONZE DOORS OF A NEW YORK RESIDENCE DESIGNED BY THE LATE RICHARD M. HUNT—THESE WERE CAST IN A SINGLE PIECE.

casts, the doors were treated with chemicals until the color which appeared on certain parts of the work, on account of the handling of the artisans in the process of chasing, was reproduced on the whole surface.

South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, has been called the finest piece of ecclesiastical art in the United States.

Equally admirable along the same line is the angel lectern in Zion and St. Timothy Church, New York, composed of

York, showing scriptural scenes flanked by figures of the apostles, saints, and patriarchs of old. In the chancel at Trinity are the Astor memorial lights, made entirely of antique metal. Bronze and iron have of late years entered very largely into ecclesiastical art, and in many American churches may be found examples that are worthy of the setting of the famous cathedrals of Europe. In St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in Brooklyn is the Fransioli memorial pulpit, a combination of *blanc veine* marble and bronze, with gold inserts in the shafts. Here the treatment of the marble is particularly effective, the metal work being open as a screen, and the stone inserted from behind, giving a combination of marble and metal as a background to each figure, including the figure of the Lord in the center and the four Evangelists. It was designed by Charles R. Lamb, whose Lindermann memorial rood screen, a combination of wrought iron and brass, in the Church of the Nativity at



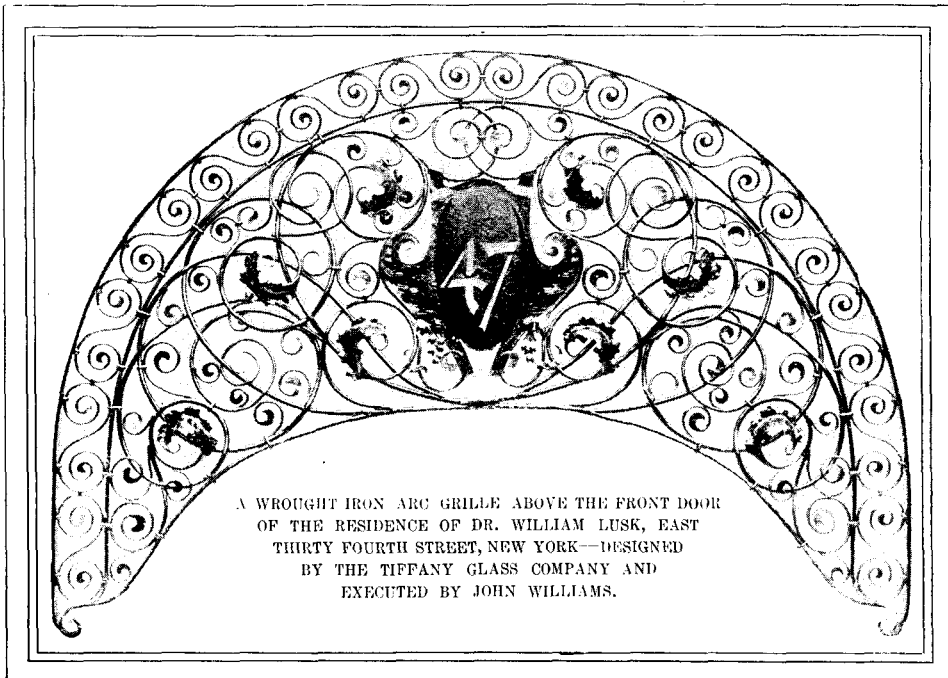
A CAST BRONZE EAGLE WHICH FORMS PART OF THE SOLDIERS' MONUMENT AT PORT CHESTER, NEW YORK—DESIGNED BY J. MASSEY RHIND AND EXECUTED BY JOHN WILLIAMS. THE EAGLE MEASURES FIVE FEET FOUR INCHES ACROSS THE WINGS.

antique metal and mosaic. The angel figure, of which J. Massey Rhind was the sculptor, is a splendid piece of bronze against a background of mosaic in rich color and Venetian gold. Into the exquisite figure of the angel Mr. Rhind has thrown the same spirit and grace and truth that won such praise for his eagle on the Soldiers' Monument at Port Chester, New York, shown in the engraving on this page. Another New York church that has a lectern worthy of

note for its appropriate design and fine workmanship is old Trinity, whose bronze doors have already been mentioned. The lectern, which appears on page 518, and which is a memorial to a former rector of the church, was designed by Charles R. Lamb.

#### METAL WORK IN AMERICAN HOUSES.

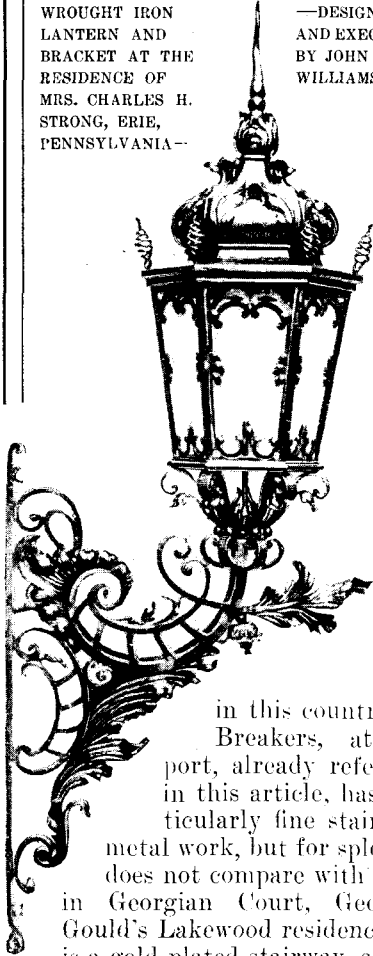
The ornamental stairway has followed the decorative railing in popular favor, and there are many gorgeous specimens



A WROUGHT IRON ARC GRILLE ABOVE THE FRONT DOOR OF THE RESIDENCE OF DR. WILLIAM LUSK, EAST THIRTY FOURTH STREET, NEW YORK—DESIGNED BY THE TIFFANY GLASS COMPANY AND EXECUTED BY JOHN WILLIAMS.

WROUGHT IRON  
LANTERN AND  
BRACKET AT THE  
RESIDENCE OF  
MRS. CHARLES H.  
STRONG, ERIE,  
PENNSYLVANIA--

—DESIGNED  
AND EXECUTED  
BY JOHN  
WILLIAMS.



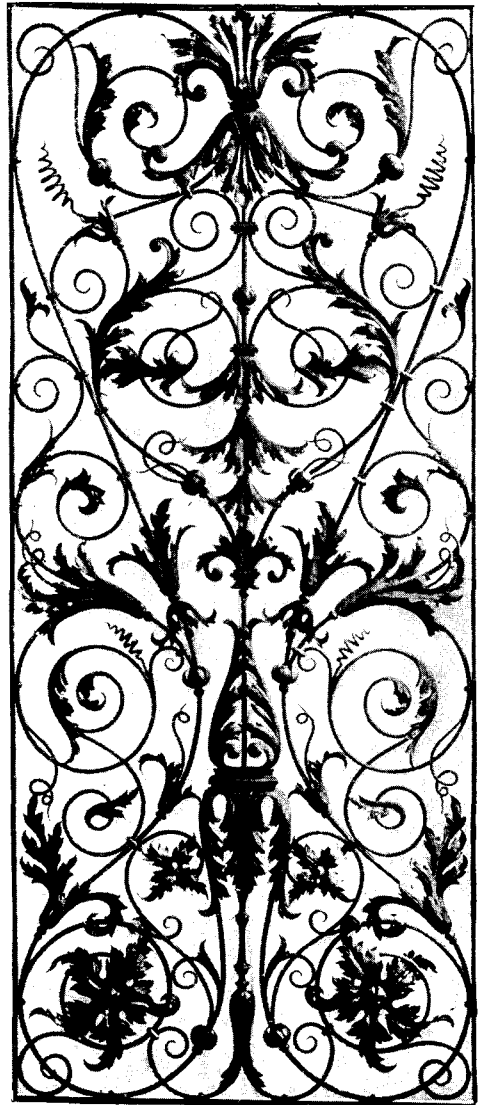
in this country. The Breakers, at Newport, already referred to in this article, has a particularly fine stairway of metal work, but for splendor it does not compare with the one in Georgian Court, George J. Gould's Lakewood residence. This is a gold plated stairway, and very heavily plated, too, probably the first of its kind in existence. It is much more beautiful than it sounds—as an English writer, much given to epigram, said of Wagnerian music. Mr. Gould's gold stairway is very simple in design, depending for its effect upon the finish and color, brought out harmoniously by the rich hall hangings and rugs.

But Georgian Court has not the only gold plated stairway in America; there are at least two, and possibly half a dozen, others. Louis Stern's New York house has a stairway of statuary bronze, with the lighter parts and scrollwork in gold. P. A. B. Widener has a fine house near Ogontz, a suburb of Philadelphia, with a stairway of cast brass finished in steel color, with gold plating to relieve it.

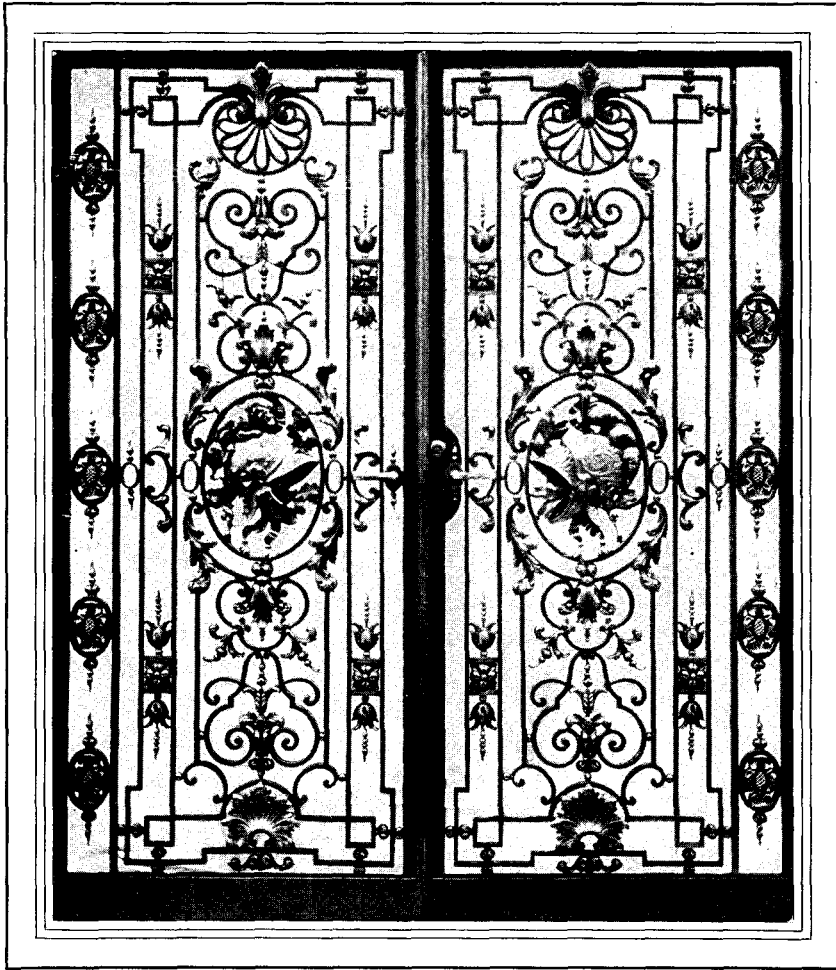
But while wonderfully fine effects can be gained with gold, there are not many who will employ it. And really, the commonplace person of average poverty cannot help feeling that it must be an enormous responsibility to own a gold plated stairway.

#### THE DECORATION OF BUSINESS BUILDINGS.

The big modern business buildings contain many examples, both within and without, of artistic work in bronze and iron. Signs, standards, grilles, elevator



A WROUGHT IRON GRILLE FOR A BUILDING IN LOUISVILLE—DESIGNED BY SNEAD & COMPANY AND EXECUTED BY JOHN WILLIAMS.



THE BRONZE ENTRANCE DOORS OF THE RESIDENCE OF W. L. ELKINS, AT ELKINS, PENNSYLVANIA—  
DESIGNED BY ALLARD & SONS AND EXECUTED BY JOHN WILLIAMS.

inclosures, railings, counter screens, electric light fixtures, often most artistic in design, go towards beautifying the offices of the toilers in the cities. In freedom from undue ornamentation and pleasing arrangement there is no better example of art in commercial life than the bronze elevator inclosures and grilles on the second floor of the Bank of Commerce, in New York. For exterior work, the entrance to the Western National Bank of the same city, with its graceful capitals surmounted by bronze lions and surrounded by lanterns of Venetian pattern, stands first in beauty.

Little is now being ordered from abroad in the way of bronze statuary—a fact that speaks well for what is being done at home. Both sculptors and

foundries have had to combat a certain prejudice against the home made article, and to prove the error of the idea that a piece of work, to be good, must come from one of the art centers of Europe. Then, too, the owners of foundries have had much to learn; but at last American industry, boldness, and originality have conquered.

It is true that the workmen are almost all foreigners, usually French or German, and that in the lesser things, such as small ornaments, statuettes, and pretty trifles, we still depend upon foreign lands, since labor is cheaper there and sculptors more abundant; but our business buildings, parks, churches, and homes are being decorated with admirable examples of native art.



# MODERN STAGE EFFECTS.

BY EDITH DAVIDS.

THE EXACTING WORK OF THE SCENE PAINTER, WHO BRINGS A SMATTERING OF MANY ARTS AND SCIENCES, AS WELL AS THE GREATEST MECHANICAL INGENUITY, TO AID HIM IN PRODUCING THE ILLUSIONS OF THE MODERN THEATER.

"We must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall."

"You never can bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?"

"Some man or other must present Wall; and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some roughcast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper."

SO the Frohmans of former times worked up their scenic effects. The modern stage has traveled as far from the Arcadian naïveté of its early methods as the modern child from the corn cob dolly. We have passed from faith to works in the theater, as well as in other things; wall and moon and palace are no longer trusted to the imagination of the audience. And out of the new and complicated demand has come a product whose value is just beginning to be recognized by the laity—the scene painter.

He is a strange conglomerate; something of an architect, for his houses must be plausible, and his bridges able to bear weight; something of a botanist, that his vegetation may not give the lie to the locality; a student of history, so that a demand for any period will not disconcert him; and, above all, an artist, with an inborn sense of color, an inspired instinct for effects. He is not a simple artisan, carrying out orders, but an active collaborator with author and actor.

The accepted play is put into his hands, and he reads it through very carefully, to get well into its spirit and feel its requirements. Then he turns to the brief paragraphs wherein the author has laid down the essentials of his scenes. He finds, perhaps, that the garden requires a hedge at the back and a sun-

dial L. C., or that the drawingroom must have two doors and a practicable window. So long as he introduces these elements, he is free to build up as effective a room or garden as the congruities allow.

## HOW SCENERY IS MADE.

He sketches his idea, then carries it out to minute perfection in a model, a fascinating toy stage of pasteboard, presenting down to the smallest ornament the scene that is to be, and with the full complement of lights. If a dining table occupies the center of the stage, it is equipped with pretty paper ladies, in frocks whose colors harmonize with the surroundings, and a paper gentleman is entering through the practicable door from the balcony. The fireplace has glowing flames of red isinglass, and a vista of hills and sky may be seen through the window.

When the scheme is complete, and has been approved by the powers, different parts of it are given over to skilled workmen. The back cloth, which may be billed as a terrace of brilliant flowers against a pale and luminous sky, is splotted with such coarse and bloated vegetation as never grew on land or sea, with the sure knowledge that from the house it will appear a mass of frail and delicate bloom. The soggy blue stretch above needs only distance and a light behind to become a vaulted heaven, for it is painted in aniline dyes, and has a delicate transparency not possible with paint.

Seen close at hand, the result is a monstrosity; and that is the most baffling part of the art—the artist must paint with his mind's eye some seventy five feet away. He must color with a