

The Eloquence of Simplicity in Design



SOMEWHERE in fiction or history a wise, if ironical, sage observed: "Oh, the eloquence of silence!" But a very little reflection will develop the searching truthfulness of this remarkable paradox. In the arts of design we might with no less forcefulness exclaim, "Oh, the eloquence of simplicity!" Two square rosettes, the name and inscriptions—these and a field of unembellished granite are the sole details of the Sharlow memorial. To be sure, we must remember the profile, the grace and interest of outline—and here we have the key which so many lose. It is not the enrichment, the elaboration which alone gives design or studied beauty to a work of art. Form is the supreme avenue of expression in architecture and ornament is but a detail—a subordinate complement. The Sharlow memorial is a consummate example of achievement in studied simplicity. The recessed joint is a novel and not uninteresting feature. Mindful of the quantity of lettering to be inscribed, the artist has deliberately refined his letter to avoid a mass of shadows. Note the low-set base which is happily gaining in favor throughout the country.