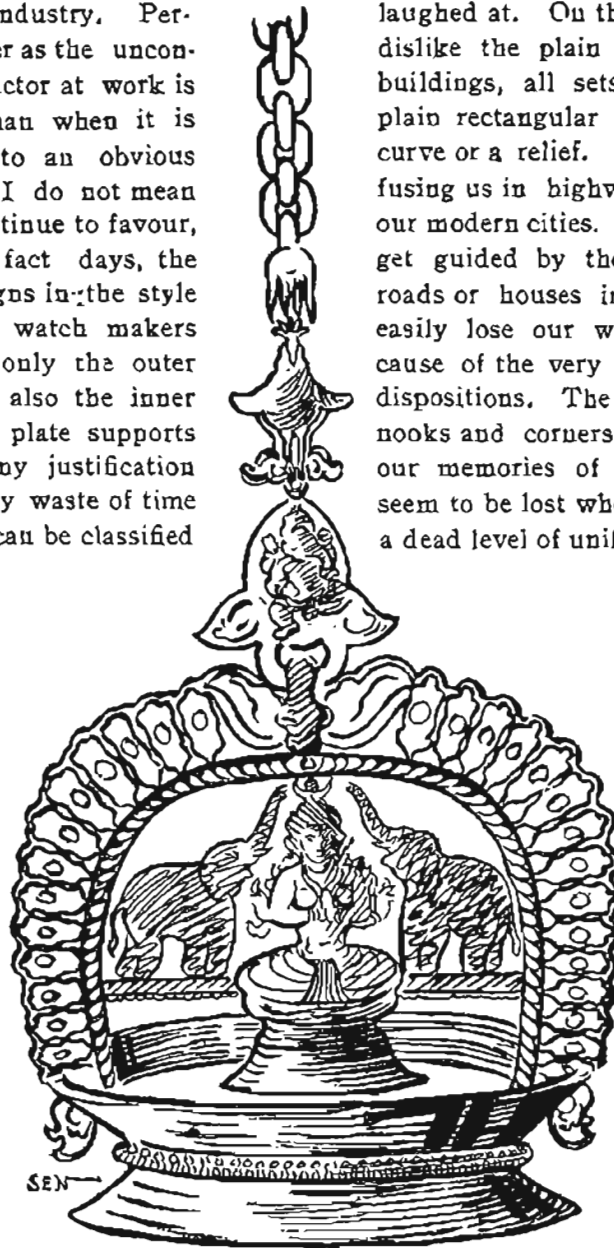


ART IN INDUSTRY

By H. PARAMESWARAN, M. A; Ph. D; D. Sc; F. Inst. P.
(Director of Industries)

IT is not often realised to the extent to which it ought to be how much of art actually enters into industry. Perhaps it is for the better as the unconscious presence of a factor at work is often more effective than when it is painfully present to an obvious extent. By all this I do not mean that we ought to continue to favour, in these matter of fact days, the elaborate ornate designs in the style in which the ancient watch makers used to engrave not only the outer casing of a watch but also the inner mechanisms and brass plate supports without there being any justification for such an unnecessary waste of time and labour. Even so can be classified the elaborate ornamental projections and images of eagles with outstretched wings or coiled serpents and mermaids on the cast iron columns of old printing presses. Time there was not very many years ago when people did think that to have things of utility in a plain matter of fact style was not exactly the correct thing to do. Even to-day in our great modernisation we see one extreme in over decorated heavily coloured

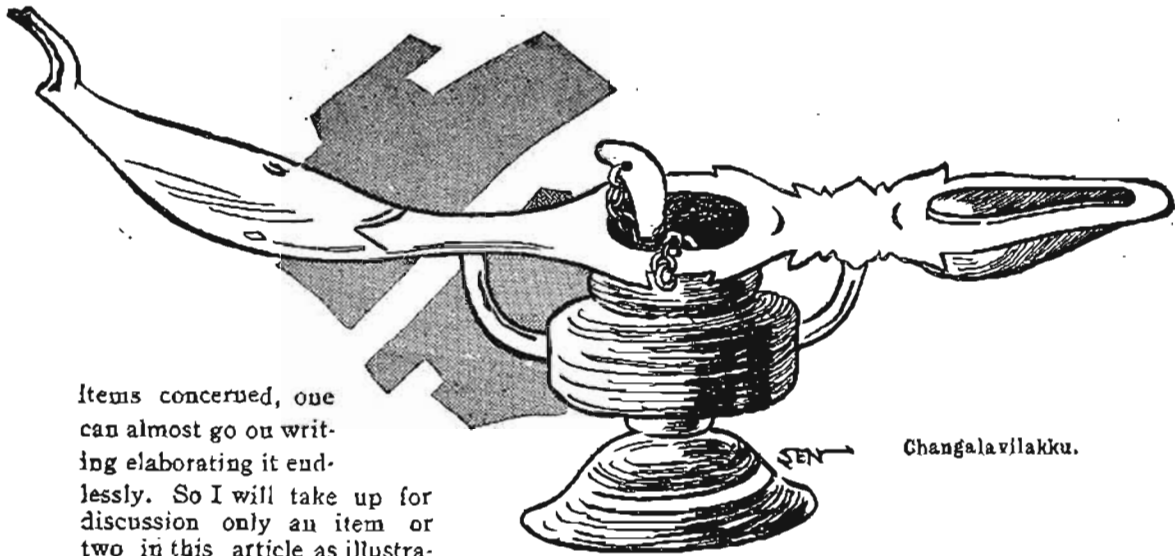
designs of houses on the public highway which attract attention only to be laughed at. On the other extreme we dislike the plain cubical blocks of buildings, all sets of houses in such plain rectangular patterns without a curve or a relief. We see them confusing us in highways and roads of our modern cities. Except when we get guided by the name plates of roads or houses in these places, we easily lose our way amidst them because of the very symmetry of their dispositions. The individualities of nooks and corners by which we fix our memories of places and things seem to be lost when we attempt such a dead level of uniformity in anything.



A Hanging Lamp.

Art applied to Industry

Thus art can certainly be applied to matters industrial in a spirit of compromise without going to such extremes and such an effort cannot but result in articles of utility being graceful and pleasing at the same time. Were one to develop this aspect by discussing the many, many



Changalavilakku.

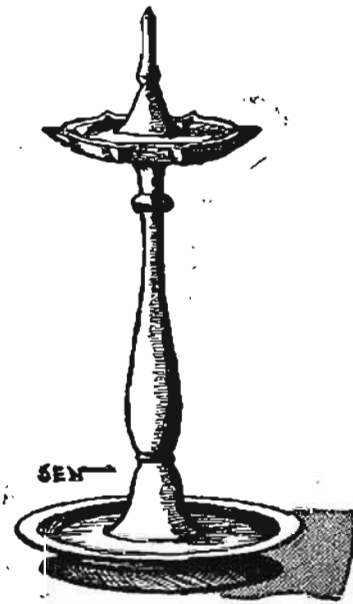
Items concerned, one can almost go on writing elaborating it endlessly. So I will take up for discussion only an item or two in this article as illustrative examples.

Art appears to have been ever present in the efforts of man to illuminate. It is curious that man has never been satisfied with the mere illumination of the scene he desired. He seems to have wanted the old oil lamp that shed the light to be so artistically designed that it added beauty to the scene illuminated.

Exquisite Brass Lamps

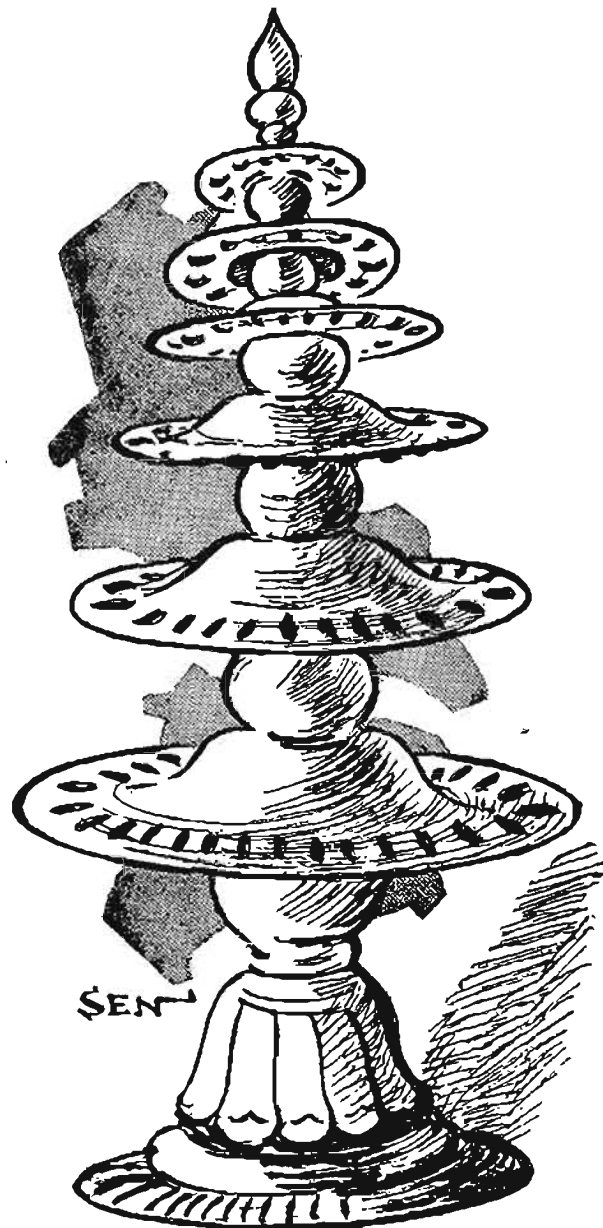
Thus Travancore famous for its hundreds of varieties of old brass lamps can provide many an excellent example in support. Some of these are temple structures going to a height of 30 feet weighing several tons while others are elegant little designs of a portable type to light the path of one closely following it. No ceremony and no processional dignity is ever complete without such a display of lights from sources so elegant and graceful. To any thinking person the flickering oil lamp of old is not merely a lamp. Because of the play of shadows, by the most unexpected and frequent changes in appearance it causes even on the cold dead faces of the effigies that hold the light to us, such

lamps seem to give an additional liveliness to the scene illuminated. Compared to this the still electric light that shines without a flicker, without changing a shadow appears so dull and dead in its effects. It gives even beautiful sceneries a cold deadliness. Even so all animate nature appear quite



A Nilavilakku

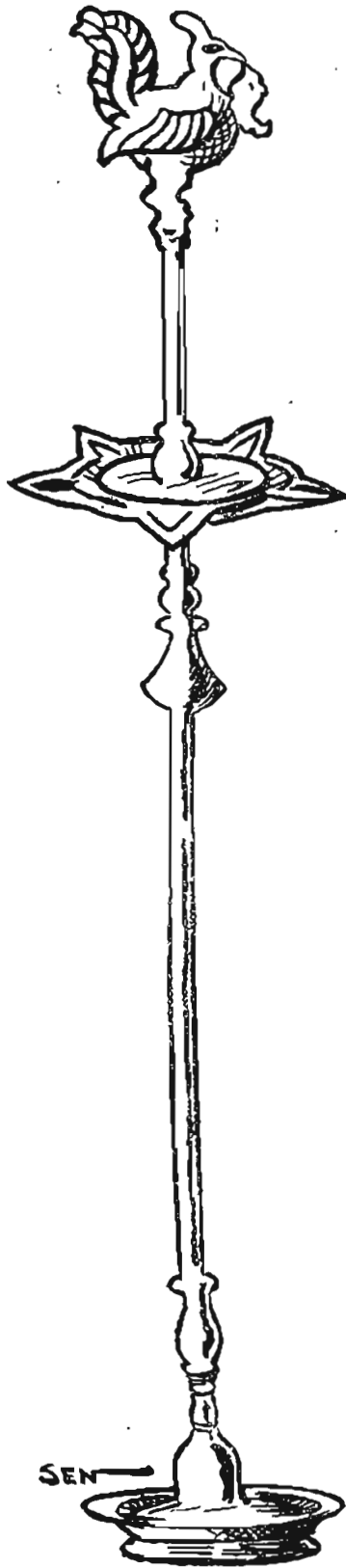
objectionable from any artistic point of view. This may suit matter of fact factories or shipyards or lonely long stretches hundred and one variety of design and decoration by which to make things artistic and graceful in actual service. Even in



Deepastambha or Pillar of Lights usually erected in temples.

of verandas to be illuminated by the plainest of bulbs and shades. But when it comes to interior lighting and living rooms one becomes aware of the necessity for a

the old ornate glass bead chandliers the flickering candle flame is replaced by a long white bulb that looks like a candle burning. But alas, where is the incessant flicker of



the flame that adds so much to the beauty of the scene illuminated by the ever changing reflections and refraction in the glass. It is lost by the modern electrification.

Artistic Lamp Shades

The plain ground glass is perhaps ideal to diffuse the light of a concentrated source of powerful illumination which an electric light bulb can be made to be. But this again is harsh unless such glass is painted over in shades or designs artistic, so that, one does not get a blank wall of harsh illumination, but something soft and agreeable.

Hence it has become customary to engrave or relieve by spray painting various patterns including some in colours on such diffusing shades. Typical specimens employing the famous shank design of Travancore are used in novel types of lamp shades now being made in Trivandrum. This is of special interest in as much as such lamp shades can be made so easily in large numbers and in a variety of patterns without the use of any extensive machinery or high skill beyond an artistic temperament and an inventive ingenuity to develop varying designs from time to time.

Another specimen of Nilavilakku.