

DR. AGHA

AND THE NEW FRENCH ADVERTISEMENT

MICHAEL SPONDÉ

EVERYONE who of late has set up theories about graphic commercial work has come to the conclusion that here too, as in all artistic creation, the national element is the predominant factor. How easy it is to contradict such a theory! The new sensational French posters were created by the artist Cassandre, and the new French advertisement, which has developed in recent years, especially in the large fashion papers, has been most strongly influenced and inspired by Agha, a Russian born in 1896 in Nicolajeff. He is the leading spirit of the Dorland Studio, where he reformed the advertisement section of the French fashion-paper "Vogue", in common with his friend Real, the artistic director of the studio. His work to-day cannot even be said to have been influenced by the course of his development, for he studied in St. Petersburg at the State Science and National Economic faculties of the Polytechnic High School, and then, in Paris made a study of modern oriental languages. His artistic training ran parallel with these scientific studies. It began under the famous Russian graphic artist Professor Narbut at the Academy of Arts in Kieff, and young Agha was doing practical art work at the age of seventeen: he drew an illustrated alphabet for a Russian publisher. Paris led him into the sphere of elegant advertisement. The magazine "Vogue" offered a particularly brilliant opportunity of distinguishing himself experimentally in this field, and thereby achieving results which served to determine the character of the present-day advertisements in "Vogue". At the moment Agha is engaged in superintending the German edition of the magazine "Vogue" in Berlin, and he hopes to achieve a still closer typographic unity between the editorial and the advertising sections than was possible in Paris, thus fulfilling an old aspiration. He devotes especial attention to the full-page advertisement, building it up as a strongly decorative composition, and endeavouring to approximate its delicacy of form and design to the refined countenance of the editorial section of the magazine, as it is known and recognized the whole world over.

Translated by E. T. Scheffauer

