

# B E R N A R D

**F**RANCIS Bernard is a modern poster artist, that is to say he is not only artist but at the same time and above all, advertising expert.

It is often said that the choice of form is an indication of the artist's personality, and this is really true in his case. He was formerly a student of the "Ecole des Beaux Arts" in Marseilles, and also attended the commercial School in Marseilles. Here he made his first acquaintance with advertising and felt himself strongly attracted to it. His first attempts at commercial art were book illustrations and then came theater decorations. In 1925 he was in Paris and devoted himself exclusively to advertising. He worked alone, put in the right way by his friend Gus Bofa, a master of caricature, and determinedly followed in the tracks of the prominent French poster pioneers Loupot, Cassandre and Carlu.

It is no longer the most important point for the poster artist of to-day that he should merely give free rein to his imagination, neither does it suffice to run a fascinating "idea" to death or to illustrate a banal catch-word with a certain sense of humor. The poster artist's task has become simpler and at the same time more complicated. He must study his problem and reduce it to its fundamentals. The picture, raised, to a symbolic representation, must be built up upon this scheme but it must be clear, attractive and easily understood by the general public.

Bernard's poster "Gaz" is very characteristic of his method of work. Here it is not only a question of portraying gas. The gas-stove implies a parasitic idea, the meter reminds one of the monthly bills and is therefore unpleasant. On the contrary, the great majority of housewives know nothing of the gasometer. They only know the gas-pipe and the tap, which they turn on and off many times a day. Francis Bernard therefore designed a poster in which the attention is caught by the gas-pipe and the tap. The three letters of the word "Gaz", which appear to be written in dancing red and blue light, remind us of the familiar gas-flame and give the poster life and movement.

In the poster "Art Ménagers" the artist was confronted by a task for which it was much more difficult to find a good graphic solution. The prominent silhouettes of housewife, cog-wheel and broom symbolize the idea of "Modern Technics in the Service of the Housewife." This method of solving a many-sided problem is by no means new, but the film has made us acquainted with a new technique, that of super-imposing the figures, and Francis Bernard makes clever use of this novelty.

For the poster "Bal des petits lits blancs" he takes the newspaper "L'Intransigeant" (the originator of this charity fête), as background for a couple of modern dancers. The



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