

When Leonetto Cappiello was made a Commander of the Legion of Honour after twenty years' work in Paris, the "Young Group" led by Jean Carlu, A. M. Cassandre and Paul Colin wrote the master an "open letter". This letter expresses the grate fulness of the younger artists to the pioneer of the "Art of the Street", without which the new French poster art would be unthinkable. But this congratulatory address, say Carlu, Cassandre and Colin, is not directed to the "old Master" but to the pioneer of poster art who to-day again belongs to the avant garde. Cappiello's posters of three decades bear witness to this, they lead from a painter's conception of the poster to a concise and impressive commercial art.

If we compare the first posters of this Italian artist with the work of the "Young Group" we are inevitably reminded of the relationship of Böcklin to the landscape painters who came after him. Just as Böcklin must set allegorical figures in his landscapes in order to make himself clear to the man of the late 19th century, so divorced from nature, so the young Cappiello confronted the citizen of the turn of the century, unaccustomed to an objective rendering, with an allegorically presented, picturesque concept of the wares he was introducing. Thus, for example, Cappiello personified the magic of a bottle of Asti.

In course of time the man in the street became accustomed to the advertising poster and Cappiello could lead him a step further. His work became more objective, concentrated itself more closely upon the advertising moment, his picturesque ideas enwrapped the goods ever more closely, but the idea, the personified abstraction, remained in the foreground.

Cappiello's posters are timeless and to-day one still sees much of his old work on the hoardings of Paris. The Bally shoe of 1930 is no longer up-to-date to-day but the hand that Cappiello drew displaying it will always command attention, always seem to present something special. Each of his designs contains so much wit, such wealth of colour, is so full of ideas—they are products of

*Cappiello* PARIS

