

to the public about goods for sale or about anything else, you must say it crudely and even rudely, and however much thought is expended on the erection of a building, not one iota of thought is expended in making it phonetic, that is, making it convey to the mind of the beholder the reason and purpose of its erection. The exceptions, unfortunately, are few, but examples can be found showing that large buildings can be covered from top to bottom with announcements of the purpose of their erection without one disfiguring note. In these, all the writing is kept within the architectural lines of the building, and adds to, rather than destroys,

No words in polite language can adequately express the righteous indignation which every lover of Nature must feel on seeing such wanton desecration, yet while England, France, Germany, and America, are passing laws and striving to kill the monster of disfigurement which is ruining their cities, so apathetic are the Italians, so little do they value their glorious inheritance, that as yet no steps have been taken to prevent the disfigurement of their beautiful and romantic land.

The Work of American Societies.

It is pleasing to find that America, with which we are unfortunately often compelled to associate all that is worst in modern commercialism, has among its citizens an ardent band of workers striving to prevent the further disfigurement of their towns and rural scenery. There the task is extremely difficult, as the Bill Board interest is so strong, and makes ample use of its funds to procure the defeat of every restraint.

The results of the efforts of an American society taken from illustrations in one of their journals are most satisfactory. A beautiful view of the capitol of Nebraska was shut out by a 12ft. high bill board which has now been removed.

A fine view was opened up on the railway by the removal of high bill boards which had previously hidden it.

A simple covered bridge standing in beautiful scenery was disfigured by signs nailed to its entrance. They were removed, and the perfectly satisfactory effect of the simple, unadorned bridge without

river is that from Worcester street bridge, to by the erection of a fine pile of buildings for the Y.M.C.A., for which the pleasing effect of which has been added architects deserve full credit. From this point of view nothing can be desired. On the other side, because a blank wall on their older adjacent building exists, the Association have, in accordance with the usual practice, painted a huge sign with letters 10ft. high, and in glaring colours, which quite destroys the pleasing effects of one of the prettiest spots on the river, a spot which both our Association and the City Council have spent money and thought in beautifying.



OLD LUDGATE HILL.

Fifteenth century, showing the homes of the Merchant-princes and their artistic signs.

the decorative effect of the whole. It is astounding to think that when it is so easy to do right, the great majority of citizens all the world over should do wrong: so wrong indeed that in every part of the world now you will find that Beautifying Associations, under various names, are striving to bring their fellows back to a right way of thinking and acting. The strangest part of all is that many of those who are most guilty of disfiguring the towns and countrysides with irritating signs, are men of taste, who provide for themselves homes of beauty.

A striking example of the way in which the world is being disfigured is to be found



MILL STREET, WARWICK.

Showing the picturesqueness of 15th century Village architecture.

the advertisement was immediately apparent.

All these disfigurements were removed as the result of earnest endeavours on the part of individual members of the Association, showing that improvement in our surroundings is within the power of everyone to effect. Great efforts are made to remove advertisements from the plain walls of buildings, for a plain brick or stone wall in itself is perfectly neutral; it is only when placarded with signs that it becomes a dominant discordant note in the landscape. An illustration is given of a wayside cottage and boathouse, which was a perfect eyesore when covered with advertisements, but became at once a simple, pleasing feature when they were removed.

The question of the neutral effect of a blank wall is an extremely important one, for we find in every town a blank wall at the side of a building when covered with huge signs wholly destroying the effect which might be produced by the architectural features with which its front has been adorned. You get striking instances of this form of disfigurement down every one of our streets: several flagrant examples are to be seen of extremely well-designed blocks of offices and shops ruined by this treatment of its end wall. One of the prettiest views on our Christchurch



ANN HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE, Stratford on Avon. Showing the simple beauty of English domestic work.

An object lesson is afforded by an exceedingly plain structure, which is the home of the Young Men's Christian Association in Illinois, which had before their occupation been decorated with posters. These they promptly removed, and the building became at once perfectly neutral and wholly inoffensive. But we had till lately a similar example; for close to our Cathedral, and quite destructive of the effect it might produce from the east, was a building which would otherwise have been wholly inoffensive made dominantly assertive by the unwholesome accumulation of ancient, and the irregular display of newly-posted bills. Most certainly our principal approach to the city from the east should not have been allowed to be thus disfigured.



ROADSIDE BOATHOUSE.

Showing the pleasurable effect to be derived from a plain, simple building, and the irritating effect of placarding it with advertisements.

Bill-posting may be Decorative.

If bills are to be posted they can be placed in a decorative way by maintaining the lines of the heads and sills, of the windows and forming equal-sized panels of bills between them with a plain simple border. With harmonious colouring and judicious placing, a decorative effect could always be produced. But in order to effect any such change, the bill-posters themselves would have to be instructed in



THE CLIMAX.

Showing what we shall arrive at unless the placarding mania is checked.

at Venice. If there was one view which could be said to be more entrancing than another, it must have been the perfectly unique approach to Venice as seen by Turner and Ruskin in the early forties. From the published engravings you know it to have been beautiful in the extreme. When I visited it I found that just where we expected to get our first glimpse of the poetic city, we had nothing but huge signs on both sides of the railway line, completely shutting out the glorious view.