

Advertising In The American Life

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Advertising is only a form of propaganda. In many instances it has accomplished ends that are for the good of the people. Examples of advertising for the good of the masses can be seen in the publicity that the new medical discoveries are given. You would not say that knowledge and awareness of penicillin are harmful to people who are not doctors of medicine. You will not let yourself think that posters asking for contributions to The National Foundation for Prevention of Infantile Paralysis should be burned for "selling themselves" to the American public. Nor will you think that newsreels showing the heroic work of the Red Cross are a lot of "high pressure salesmanship." You would not want the church page, giving exact location, time and subject of Sunday's services, cut from your paper because it "plays up" a coming event.

We could do with less "high pressure" tactics from many fields. Certainly nothing is more wrath-provoking than a "honey voiced" announcer explaining the minute details of how, along with your right arm and the top of your automobile, you can

have a sparkling new potato peeler as a generous reward for finishing "I use Cancellation Pullman Tickets because," in fifty additional words or less. There must be an easier way for my little brother to get "El Tarnisho" rings, that will fit any size finger, than for me incessantly to gulp one box of shredded wood fiber a week, after the box-top has been mailed back to the manufacturer. Why should thousands of people bite their nails, from one Saturday evening to the next, wondering who Duz's Walking Man happens to be?

What this country needs is not a "good five-cent cigar." The public needs a good sense of proportions. The individual goods consumer needs a stiff course in sales resistance. Mr. and Mrs. Householder should study the bachelor's bulwark, "Walden," from cover to cover. Perhaps with a little effort the American people can learn to see value and not a full-color, half page advertisement. But until we learn what is necessary for our health and comfort, we will have to contend with foolish buying, by foolish people, of "nationally advertised" foolishness.