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THEOPHILE STEINLEN: A STUDY OF HIS GRAPHIC ART, 1881-1900

*City University of New York*

PH.D. 1982

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THÉOPHILE STEINLEN: A STUDY OF HIS GRAPHIC ART, 1881-1900

by

SUSAN GILL

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate  
Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1982

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## CHAPTER I

## THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF STEINLEN'S WORK

Introduction: The Realist Tradition

My initial interest in Théophile Steinlen was sparked by an exhibition of fin de siècle prints held at The New York Public Library in 1977.<sup>1</sup> The exhibition consisted of prints produced in France for three major publications: L'Estampe Originale, L'Estampe Moderne, and L'Album des Peintres-graveurs. These three enterprises, which published fine prints for the collector, grew out of the revival in lithography that occurred in France in the 1880s and 1890s. The style of the prints was very much in keeping with the major modes of representation of the period. The show was dominated by Symbolist and decorative works, ranging from the highly religious and spiritual art of Maurice Denis and Carlos Schwabe to the purely formal prints of Henri Rivière and George Auriol. Among these works, there were a few prints that appeared to spring from a different source. One of these was the

image of a café by Steinlen, Bal de Barrière, which was based on a scene in the Goncourt's Germinie Lacerteux. The stark realism of this work contrasted dramatically with the styles of most of the other prints in the exhibition.

Research into Steinlen's art revealed that in the midst of an artistic milieu in which Symbolism was dominant, Steinlen had created an art that was steeped in the realist tradition of his great predecessors Courbet, Millet, and Daumier. In a straightforward style he created images of laundresses and errand girls, construction workers and miners, prostitutes and pimps. Steinlen limited his work primarily to the illustrated journal, the print, and the poster. However, the artist also did paintings that reveal his unswerving commitment to these themes of social concern. During the '80s and '90s Steinlen's name became synonymous with the struggle for social justice. Later on, during World War I, his overpowering concern for human suffering led him to create a compelling body of work that dealt with the problems of war.

While a great deal has been written about Symbolism,<sup>2</sup> the advanced art style of the latter two decades of the nineteenth century, the prevalence of realism in this period has been almost completely ignored,<sup>3</sup> as have those

illustrated periodicals in which a form of this art appeared. Although realism was clearly no longer in the forefront of art, its manifestation in paintings, posters, prints, and magazine illustrations shows that this movement, which, in many regards, epitomized the major historical and social impulses of its time, was still alive.

Steinlen's art is linked both to the Realist movement that developed in France in the mid-nineteenth century as well as to a tradition of realism in printmaking that goes back to the 1830s. Both the art of Courbet and that of Daumier and his colleagues--illustrators of the 1830s--was strongly effected by the politics of their times. Like them, Steinlen was influenced by the politics of his day, and by the literature that grew out of the leftist political movement of the 1880s and 1890s.

The term realism is a complex one, with a long history. While certain concepts of realism have existed since ancient times, it was in the mid-nineteenth century that the term gained currency as the name of a specific artistic movement.<sup>4</sup> An outgrowth of philosophic positivism and a new and pervasive belief in science, realism in art was marked by a concern for perceived reality. Since, according to Auguste Comte's positivism, the only way one could ever really know anything was through empirical observation, it was the artist's job to record

contemporary events and customs, rather than to depict the imaginary circumstances of bygone eras.<sup>5</sup>

"Il faut être de son temps" was the battle cry of the realists, whose leader was Gustave Courbet; his large-scale paintings of peasants and workers had shocked the art establishment and the public when his work was exhibited in the Salon of 1851. Courbet's desire to paint only what was visible to him was but one reason for such paintings as The Stone Breakers and The Burial at Ornans; it was also up to the realist to record all facets of life, however "ugly" or debased they might be, if he was to be a truthful chronicler of his age. This latter concept was at the heart of Steinlen's depiction of pimps, prostitutes, and miners.

During the Second Empire, in the work of the Impressionists, realism was not closely linked to politics. However, it has been shown that the political and social ideas surrounding the Revolution of 1848 played an essential role in shaping Courbet's realist style and in the reaction that his paintings received.<sup>6</sup> The February Revolution was essentially a "people's" Revolution, through which the great majority of the French people hoped to gain greater equality and power than they had been accorded during the first half of the nineteenth century. Prior to the Revolution, such pamphlets and books as Jules

Michelet's Le Peuple showed the growing concern, about 1848, for the plight of the working class. This interest in the common man found a voice in the worker-poet movement, in the poetry of Max Buchon and in the songs of Pierre Dupont.<sup>7</sup> These writers created rustic poetry and songs commemorating, in simple and direct language, the life of the peasant. Ideas such as these influenced Courbet and helped to reinforce in the artist his "own sense of himself as a man of the people,"<sup>8</sup> contributing to the realist paintings he exhibited in 1851--all of which were based on personal experiences in his native Franche-Comté. That Courbet chose to immortalize the peasant rather than the urban worker is hardly surprising, not only because of his background as the son of a country landowner who had risen above his peasant origins, but also because at mid-century most working-class people were rural workers.

Another artist whose images of the rural proletariat were influenced by the Revolution of 1848, although in a less direct way than Courbet, was François Millet. During the June Days, Millet left Paris for Barbizon, where he portrayed a segment of the population whose lives had been shattered by the political developments that followed the Revolution. While some of his peasant images are romanticized, many of Millet's paintings show the harsh realities of a culture fighting for its very existence. Part of the

population around Barbizon based its precarious existence on faggot-gathering, gleaning, and grazing their pigs on the land near the edge of the great forest of Fontainebleau.<sup>9</sup> After the Revolution, both faggot-gathering and the grazing of animals were prohibited; thus the already meager existence of the people of the forest was made even more difficult. Out of their dilemma Millet was able to produce some of the most compelling images of peasants in the history of art.

While Courbet's and Millet's paintings were of the countryside, Daumier concentrated on depicting the life of the city dweller. Beginning as an illustrator for Philippon's journals La Caricature and Le Charivari in the 1830s, Daumier created biting satires of the July Monarchy and caricatures of its leader Louis Philippe.<sup>10</sup> He applied his wit to pictures of everyday life, concentrating on the new bourgeoisie that evolved from the waves of peasants that flooded Paris in the first half of the nineteenth century. With the coming of the Second Republic, Daumier began to paint in earnest. Many of his works of this period and the 1860s have become classics of realism. Among these paintings are his washerwomen, his saltimbanques, and his many versions of The Third-Class Carriage.

The working-class spirit underlying realism changed with the art of Manet and the Impressionists, although

Manet's early work--especially his depiction of the Parisian lower classes--openly reveals his debt to Courbet. The Impressionists challenged the academic establishment by painting scenes of everyday life, often with free brushstrokes, which gave their canvases the look of unfinished "sketches," in the eyes of the academicians. Their plein-air paintings were dominated by images of the bourgeoisie rather than of the lower classes. Despite this, and regardless of the lack of political motivation we find in their art, the desire for contemporaneity led the Impressionists--especially Degas, whose laundresses are closely linked to the work of Daumier--to paint memorable images of workers. Perhaps the final great flowering of French realism appeared in the art of Toulouse-Latrec, whose café performers and prostitutes, while painted in a heightened or exaggerated manner, still owe a great deal to the initial goals of realism.

Realism, then, was a major artistic movement in France, advanced by artists who had a decisive influence on the history of art. The term has been used to designate the work of those painters who, throughout much of the nineteenth century, depicted contemporary scenes in varied artistic styles.<sup>11</sup> In addition to realism in painting, realist themes were prevalent in the developing tradition of the popular arts as well.<sup>12</sup> Foremost among

them was printmaking, which was promoted by the discovery of lithography in 1797 and by the subsequent espousal of the technique in France during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Lithography offered artists a way of making drawings that could be reproduced in great numbers. It was the first printing process that allowed for direct reproduction of an artist's work, without the intervention of an engraver.

By the 1830s, lithographs appeared in illustrated periodicals, among the most popular of which were La Caricature and Le Charivari (previously mentioned in reference to Daumier). These journals were vehicles for the republican and left-wing sentiment stirred up by the Revolution of 1830 and were highly critical of the government of Louis Philippe, which had promised social reforms it did not deliver. Under the repressive journalism laws of the mid-1830s, many of the artists who had caricatured the government and its leaders began to draw scenes of everyday life. The republican impulse led to what had been called a "naturalist school"<sup>13</sup>: Gavarni made many drawings of laundresses; Henri Monnier created an album of images of the grisette; Traviès represented the ragpicker-philosopher, a type that would figure in Manet's early realist painting. Many of these artists also produced

images of the petty bourgeoisie like their colleague Daumier.

During the Second Empire, popular images focused less on the ordinary man and more on the grand courtesan and the life of the aristocracy. The goal of the journal La Vie Parisienne was to capture the gay and carefree aspects of the Empire, particularly the "cocodettes du grand monde."<sup>14</sup> However, after the War of 1870-71, the aristocratic cocotte disappeared and the carefree lorette became the female symbol of the people. The shifting of interest from the haut monde to the lower classes in the eighties and nineties reflected the contemporary image of France as a Republic. As we shall see, the young trottin, a major theme in Steinlen's art and in that of his contemporaries, came to represent the hopes and aspirations of the Republic.

In most cases, the trottin, or errand girl, had come to Paris from the provinces with the hope of improving her social situation. She was initially apprenticed to a modiste with the hope of opening up her own shop someday, or she might become a salesgirl in a department store. Both professions were well-paid and carried a modicum of social status. The possibility of social mobility represented by the trottin, was, of course, an important element of the democratic spirit embodied in the idea of

the Republic. Paralleling the symbolism of the trottin, were the scores of images of the Republic as the allegorical Marianne, or Liberty.<sup>15</sup>

Several factors were responsible for the adoption of realist themes during the Third Republic. With the triumph of the Republic, it became natural for illustrators to turn to images of the lower classes--a subject traditionally linked to republicanism. Equally important politically in the closing decades of the nineteenth century was the emergence of Marxist socialism and anarchism. Steinlen and many of his peers--Adolphe Willette, Henri-Gabriel Ibels, Hermann-Paul, and Oswald Heidbrinck, to name just a few--were committed to leftist movements, and contributed to socialist and anarchist periodicals. Socialism and anarchism developed at a time when illustrations in periodicals increased, as a result of the lifting of censorship laws in 1881 and the mechanical innovations that suddenly reduced production costs. All of these changes contributed to what Carlton J. Hayes has called the "emergence of the masses."<sup>16</sup> This phenomenon of the last two decades of the nineteenth century is reflected in Steinlen's art, the sources of which included the political climate in France, as elucidated in the following brief description.

### Political Background

Although Steinlen never joined a political party, much of his art including his contributions to socialist and anarchist periodicals--as mentioned above--is closely linked to the leftist movement in France that emerged as a political force in the 1880s just as Steinlen was getting started as an illustrator. Steinlen became the key contributor to the Marxist periodical Le Chambard Socialiste, and to the anarchist paper, La Feuille.

During the first years of the Third Republic, repressive laws, in reaction to the Paris Commune, virtually destroyed the French working-class movement. However, in 1878, socialist leaders organized an International Labor Congress in Paris. The meeting was disbanded by the police and its leaders thrown in jail. Jules Guesde, one of the leaders, issued a manifesto from prison calling for a revival of socialism--the first decisive effort since the Commune to politically reorganize the workers.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, inroads were being made in government to lift some of these repressive laws and, in 1879, amnesty was granted to those who had been active in the Commune and socialists began to return to France. In the same year, Guesde established the Fédération des Ouvriers Socialistes de France at the Marseilles Labor Congress, which was to be a worker's party. With Paul Lafargue,

Guesde drafted a constitution and a statement of objectives that were approved by a Labor Congress in Paris in June 1880. Influenced by Marx, whom Guesde had met in London, the program called for a united centralized party completely independent of all bourgeois parties. Thus, it was opposed to working through parliament for reforms, and therefore was unpopular among the more moderate socialists. In 1882, a schism within the party developed.<sup>18</sup> Out of this division a new party was formed under the leadership of Paul Brousse that was to have a less authoritarian leadership than Guesde's, giving greater power and freedom to local units. Moreover, Brousse and his followers rejected the idea of revolution as a means of achieving a socialist state, a basic tenet of Guesde's Marxist program. The Broussists, dubbed possibilistes by the Guesdists, believed that economic factors would naturally lead to the transition of private corporations into public ones, and eventually to a collectively owned state. Many of the Marxist principles that characterized these groups were represented in Le Chambard.

The Guesdists and the possibilistes were the two principal socialist parties, but a third political force developed as a powerful rival to the socialists: anarchism. It was in Lyon, which had a tradition of militancy,

that the first important signs of anarchism appeared.<sup>17</sup>

In 1881, the newspaper Le Droit Social, which became "the principal organ of French Anarchism," was founded in that city."<sup>18</sup> In 1882, numerous acts of violence were committed during a strike at Montceau-les-Mines. In response, the government arrested journalists and propagandists, which led to a further violent reaction by the anarchists and to more arrests. The prisoners were released by President Grévy in 1886. In the mid-1890s anarchism would again be active, and the ensuing violence culminated in the shooting of Sadi Carnot, the President of the French Republic.

The principles of anarchism, or anarchist-communism, were set forth by Pierre Kropotkin.<sup>19</sup> Kropotkin and his followers held that the most effective means of economic and social organization was based on a loose federation of local associations, or "communes," which would assure the health and well-being of their members. Like the socialists, the anarchists wanted to do away with all forms of private property. However, in contrast to the socialists, they opposed a collective state or centralized authority, preferring the free association of loosely bound "communes." The anarchists maintained that people were basically cooperative, not competitive, and that "mutual aid" would occur naturally in a free society

organized along these lines. They did not believe in any form of legislative reform but in the full destruction of the existing government. This would be accomplished in a variety of ways--through violent acts, agitation, and by educating the people politically. While "propaganda by deed" was condoned theoretically, most anarchist leaders did not support it as an effective means of creating change. La Feuille, the anarchist journal for which Steinlen was the key contributor, was aimed at startling its readers into a realization that there were social problems in France that were in need of change.

The rising social awareness that developed during roughly the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century sharply affected the artistic community. Many artists and writers became avowed anarchists or socialists, although how these political beliefs influenced their work is difficult to determine. The literature and art of the Symbolists and Postimpressionists, most of whom were leftists of one persuasion or another, were only minimally touched by social ideas, since there was a strong feeling that the purpose behind a work of art should not be moralistic preaching of any sort. This is a well-known fact, but what is perhaps less well known is that there were many realists and naturalists, particularly among writers, whose work was keenly affected by a concern for social egalitarianism.<sup>22</sup> In fact, on the level

of popular literature, there was a wave of songs, poems, stories, and novels in which social themes were dominant.

With the rise of cafés and café-concerts in the eighties and nineties there developed a large group of songwriters with radical political beliefs who sympathetically portrayed the lower classes while ridiculing the rich. Best known among these creators of the chanson réaliste was Artistide Bruant, who would be the first important inspiration for Steinlen.<sup>23</sup> Bruant, a radical, wrote about the underworld life of prostitutes and pimps. Aiming for an art form that was more realistic than any had been before,<sup>24</sup> Bruant called attention to the poverty and suffering of his characters by singing in the rough and brutal argot of the streets. A host of other songwriters, including Léon Xanrof and Albert Pajol wrote songs about Paris's working class, songs that would be immortalized by singers who attempted to personify the workers in their performances. Among these entertainers were Yvette Guilbert, Eugénie Buffet, and Mévisto. Moreover, social radicalism gave rise to songs that were openly propagandistic, such as Maurice Boukay's and Marcel Legay's Les Chansons rouges.

Paralleling the songwriters whose ballads were concerned with realist themes were the poets, whose radical and leftist ideas were also reflected in their work. Two outstanding representatives of this group were Jean Richepin and Jehan Rictus (Gabriel Randon), both of whose

works Steinlen illustrated. Neither writer preached politics, but their anarchism expressed itself through their portrayals of the bleak lives of vagabonds and beggars who seemed to exist in an alien and uncaring world. Richepin used a more traditional verse form than Rictus, whose argot closely imitated the actual street language of the people.<sup>22</sup>

In the area of the novel, Zola's Germinal of 1885 and Camille Lemmonier's Happe-Chair of 1886 were the first to explore the class struggle as a dominant theme.

Lemmonier's work was similar to Zola's, but its action revolved around a rolling mill, named Happe-Chair, and thus dealt with foundry workers rather than coal miners as in Germinal.<sup>23</sup> By the 1890s social themes were so numerous in novels and short stories that the writer Jean Ajalbert stated that "There are few books of note in our present literature which do not manifest, voluntarily or involuntarily, undeniable tendencies toward social justice."<sup>24</sup>

Gil Blas illustré, for which Steinlen was the key illustrator from 1891 through 1900, was a weekly literary supplement to the daily newspaper Gil Blas, dedicated to publishing the best popular literature. While the range of literary styles in the journal can only be described as eclectic, the themes of many of the stories, poems,

and songs that were included had to do with social concerns. The prostitute, the trottin, the vagabond, and the hobo repeatedly were treated with varying degrees of seriousness and social awareness. Lucien Descaves, Jean Lorraine, and Jean Reibrach dealt with the sociological reasons that led men to commit criminal acts such as mugging and stealing, and Paul Arène and Camille de Sainte-Croix, among others, examined prostitution from a similar standpoint; all were highly sympathetic to the groups they portrayed. Others, such as Aurélien Scholl, poked fun at the profligate and hypocritical ways of the bourgeoisie. The best of these stories accurately mirrored social phenomena and class distinctions; the worst were infused with a sentimentality that belittled their subjects so that the worker, particularly the female worker, became a mere object of amusement for the reader.

As an illustrator, Steinlen was charged with making visual images to accompany the songs, poems, and stories in two journals in particular: Bruant's Le Mirliton and Gil Blas illustré. In the latter, Steinlen's illustrations brought to life the social themes of the realist and naturalist literature in the journal, as well as to many other subjects. However, his most distinctive work--that which, historically, had been seen as the definitive embodiment of his style--are his images of the working

class and the poor. Having established himself as a defender of this group, Steinlen was called on more and more to create illustrations for books with social significance.

He was also asked to contribute to the socialist and anarchist press, which he did without remuneration. The images that he produced for journal illustrations also became part of his noncommercial work. Prostitutes, trottins, vagabonds, and laundresses were preferred themes in his paintings and prints. His art was linked historically both to the mainstream of realism and to the "popular art" of printmaking, which was characterized by political caricature and scène de mœurs. However, Steinlen's espousal of realism was influenced primarily by the political and social milieu of the day, which was, in turn, directly reflected in contemporary literary and political journals.

Because so much of Steinlen's art is illustration, we can study the literary and political texts that he illustrated in order to ascertain how his work evolved, thus gaining a greater understanding of his work as well as that of many of his contemporaries. In any case, the great majority of Steinlen's journal images stand on their own as accomplished prints.

### Illustrated Periodicals

The importance of the social and political climate in France in shaping Steinlen's art was matched by the role and nature of illustrated periodicals during the eighties and nineties. Popular journalism, like political institutions, had changed substantially at the end of the nineteenth century. During the 1860s and 1870s, newspapers were still expensive and were read by a small percent of the population. From 1866 to 1882, the number of newspapers in Europe was about 6,000. By 1900, there were nearly double that number--12,000.<sup>25</sup> Three factors were responsible for this growth. First, there was the wave of liberalism in Europe that led to greater freedom of the press. In 1881, censorship laws in France were lifted and newspapers of all sorts proliferated. Secondly, since the late sixties there had been a movement for mass education, facilitated by the dense population in urban areas. Between 1878 and 1881, France established a state system of primary and normal schools, and in 1882 attendance in school was made compulsory for French children. Between 1870 and 1900 the percentage of literacy among the entire adult population of France rose from 60 to 95 percent, creating a large audience for periodicals.<sup>26</sup>

Also crucial to the development of popular journalism were the mechanical advances that revolutionized magazine

publishing. Eighteen seventy-one saw the introduction of a series of inventions that would result in automatic typesetting machines in the 1880s. At the same time, cheaper papers were developed out of wood pulp.<sup>30</sup>

One of the most important advances in commercial printing came in the 1850s. Firmin Gillot perfected a means of transferring lithographic images to zinc plates that could be printed simultaneously with the type.<sup>31</sup> The process, which came to be known as gillotage, led to great increases in production. In the mid 1860s, Daumier's illustrations for Le Journal amusant, for example, were produced by Gillot, who had established a large printing enterprise in Paris. Eight thousand copies of each issue were made. Daumier's drawings in Le Charivari had been produced in the 1830s in much smaller quantity--about three thousand copies per issue.<sup>32</sup> Thus, gillotage more than doubled the number of prints obtainable at a low cost.

The next major steps in commercial reproduction came with the application of photography to lithographic printing. The earliest known examples of successful photomechanical printing were achieved by the father of

photography, Joseph Nicéphore Niepce. Niepce was experimenting with lithography when he discovered that instead of using lithographic chalk, he could obtain images with light.<sup>33</sup> His first reproductions made by the photomechanical process were images of line engravings. Niepce placed line drawings on tracing paper over a copperplate treated with bitumen of Judea, and exposed them to light.<sup>34</sup> After this exposure, those areas where the light did not penetrate, or where the lines of the engravings occurred, remained soluble, while areas exposed to light hardened. The plate was immersed in a bath of oil and lavender to wash away the soluble areas, while the insoluble bitumen acted as a "protective varnish" in all parts where the drawing did not appear; it was then treated with acid which caused the drawing to be bitten into the plate--and then inked and printed.

With the advent of photography new technological advances were possible. Drawing could be photographed on a woodblock and then engraved, obviating the middleman who had had to copy the drawing for the wood engraver. This procedure, however, still required the engraver, who transposed the original drawing onto the block. Even more important was the application of photography to black line drawing on zinc. In 1878, Charles Gillot, the son of Firmin, applied photography to his father's printing

process.<sup>35</sup> Basing his work on Niepce's achievement, Gillot films photographed line drawings and printed them directly on zinc plates that could then be printed on a typographic press. In this way, an original drawing could be directly reproduced photographically. With Gillot's invention, the 1880s became "the decade for the takeover of photomechanical processes for illustrating journals and books."<sup>36</sup>

Steinlen produced some of the finest magazine illustrations in the nineties with his work for Gil Blas illustré.<sup>37</sup> The quality of this work is partially the result of the artist's expert ability to create drawings that could be effectively reproduced on the photomechanical press. Whereas in the past illustrators were subjected to rigid restrictions in making drawings that could be reproduced in journals, during the eighties and nineties there was much greater flexibility as a result of the wide variety of papers and inks available to the artist.

The most basic drawing for reproduction was a simple pen drawing in black ink on white paper. Halftones were originally achieved through the artist's modeling but with phototechnology completely new procedures for obtaining halftones were developed. George Meisenbach, a Munich engraver, was the first to patent a halftone

screen, in 1882.<sup>38</sup> Meisenbach placed a grating in front of the sensitive plate of the camera; the plate was made by coating glass with an opaque film through which transparent lines were cut. This screen broke up the lines into light and dark tones. In 1886, the American Ives improved this single screen with the cross-line screen.<sup>39</sup> Halftones were also created with tinted screens containing dots or lines, which could be printed in sections or "vignetted" directly on the zinc plate, to create grays. In such cases, the artist might mark his drawing with a blue pencil to indicate where he wanted the grays since blue did not photograph.<sup>40</sup>

The vignetting of tinted screens was the most common method used in illustrated periodicals for obtaining grays. The majority of Forain's and Willette's contributions to the Courrier Français, a major artistic periodical, were black-ink drawings with vignetted dots attached to certain areas for the grays. Since these were applied by print technicians, often without the advice or knowledge of the illustrator, their placement frequently appears to be arbitrary and looks rather mechanical and uninspired.

In 1877, Charles Gillot produced embossed paper with inked lines separated in such a way that the paper appeared to be gray.<sup>41</sup> The artist would draw on the

paper in ink for the dark areas and scrape away the embossed inked lines for the light areas. Another of Gillot's papers was printed solid black and the same principle applied. The artist achieved grays and whites by scraping away the black in varying degrees, the highlights appearing where the entire surface was scratched away to reveal the white underneath. "Scrapper boards" were produced in England by Angerer and in Vienna by Göschl.<sup>42</sup> Drawings by Ferdinand Lunel and Louis Legrand, frequent contributors to the Courrier Français, were often created in this manner, as were Steinlen's efforts for Gil Blas illustré. The drawings made this way appeared rather dull, with an overall gray tone. In addition, the outlines of forms were extremely fuzzy and the general transition from tone to tone muddy and undramatic.

The most effective drawings produced for the illustrated press were those done with conté crayon or lithographic chalk on grainy paper.<sup>43</sup> Although this technique was available to artists during the eighties and early nineties, drawings done in these media rarely appeared in periodicals. However, in late 1893, Steinlen began to draw in this technique--and frequently employed it, through 1900.

Whereas the dotted screens so often used for

illustrations seemed mechanical, the textures obtained with greasy ink on grainy paper more closely approximated the look of an original lithograph. (This was so because, in lithography, greasy ink was often applied to a grainy stone similar to the grainy Allongé or Michalet paper available for drawing.) In this technique great tonal variation was easily achieved by applying the crayon with more or less pressure and density. Moreover, the artist had much greater control over his image than with dotted screens applied by technicians, or "scraper-boards," where scratching away took the place of drawing. Greasy ink and grainy paper were effective for yet another reason: they eliminated one of the biggest problems of photomechanical reproduction--muddy lines and images. In the etching process, this was caused by ink running down the sides of etched lines.<sup>44</sup> While this caused a fuzzy line, in outline drawings, with modeled images--such as those created out of lights and darks on a grainy surface--the runny ink blended into the rough surface of the paper to become virtually indistinguishable from the form.

Steinlen used this method to great advantage. The images that he produced on grainy paper are much more coherent as full-scale compositions than most of the line drawings by his contemporaries that appeared in the

illustrated press, and they are also superior to many of his own illustrations that were not made in this manner. This is particularly true of a number of his covers for Gil Blas illustré dating from late 1893 to 1900, as well as those done for La Feuille, from 1897 to 1899. The dramatic light-and-dark effects made possible with this technique were used for different expressive purposes in each journal. In Gil Blas illustré, Steinlen created moving atmospheric effects that evoked the sad lives of the people whom he portrayed. In La Feuille, the intensity of his images matched the violent emotions that the images were meant to symbolize.

In addition to the high quality of the Steinlen drawings, Gil Blas illustré was also distinguished by the fact that, from 1895, color was used in nearly all illustrations. This was not the case at either Le Chat Noir or the Courrier Français, which also had accomplished illustrators in their ranks. Whereas black-and-white illustrations were now rather easily reproduced, color reproduction was still complicated and tedious, as it involved separate plates to print each color.<sup>45</sup> Although many journals used only the three primary colors--red, yellow, and blue--others employed as many as seven colors for the required effects.<sup>46</sup> First the drawing was photographed on a zinc plate, as was done for black-and-white

illustrations. A "key" print was pulled from the zinc and this was transferred to as many additional zinc plates as there were colors to be printed. Each plate had to be stopped out in areas where the color was not wanted. The plates were then etched and inked appropriately.<sup>47</sup> The stopping-out of the plates and the final correct alignment of all the plates on the finished print required the skill of a trained technician.

The leading firm in the field of color printing in the 1880s and 1890s was Boussod, Valadon & Cie., who achieved delicate and complex colors by an etching process in which prints were produced through a special adaptation of Woodbury relief.<sup>48</sup> Much hand-finishing helped to achieve the polished effect. The primary outlet for this company was Le Figaro illustré, which was published from 1883 to 1911. A forerunner of today's slick magazines, this journal, which was made up of articles, short stories, reviews, and occasional musical scores, was produced on fairly smooth paper of a much higher quality than many other journals, including the majority of those for which Steinlen worked. Filled with black-and-white and color illustrations, the journal featured three facsimiles of paintings, one of which appeared as the cover of the issue. The aim of this journal was clearly to reproduce with as much fidelity as possible the colors of the

canvases depicted. Unfortunately, the paintings chosen for reproduction, many of them commissioned for the journal, were insipid images of pretty young girls who seemed to step out of the rococo age.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the plates were of a superior technical quality but with little artistic merit.

Compared to Le Figaro illustré, the color work in Gil Blas illustré was crude, indeed: the reproductions were on thin, inexpensive paper in three basic colors--pink, yellow, and blue--which were sometimes superimposed to obtain secondary colors such as orange, brown, and green. The colors were applied in a rather impressionistic way. For example, a touch of pink on a woman's cheek or a patch of yellow in the sky were used to indicate the overall color of an area. Whereas in Le Figaro illustré, there was an attempt to create photographically correct forms that appeared three-dimensional, the editors of Gil Blas illustré had no such ambitions. Flat, abstract colors enlivened the images and added to the graphic, handmade quality of the prints in Gil Blas illustré. It remains a masterwork of creative magazine illustration, and today many of its covers are regarded as exemplary images of the art of printmaking in the 1890s.

### The Print Revival

The color photomechanical processes sensitized the public to color prints and helped contribute to the revival of lithography that began in the 1880s and flowered in the 1890s.<sup>50</sup> As noted above, lithography enjoyed considerable prestige from the time of its introduction in France in the early 1800s until about 1850, when interest in the medium diminished considerably.<sup>51</sup> A movement to revive the medium began in the 1880s. In 1884, Paul Marou and several other lithographers founded the Société des Artistes lithographes français, with the goal of defending its members in annual exhibitions.<sup>52</sup> It was presided over by Alfred Lemer cier until 1891, when Henri Hamel, director of La Revue des Beaux-Arts--a journal that had been fighting for the renaissance of lithography since 1880--took over.

In 1895, the Exposition internationale du Centenaire de la lithographie was held. It represented "the final efforts to systematically renew the prestige of lithography...which had been going on for about twelve years."<sup>53</sup> Installed in the Galerie Rapp of the Palais de l'Exposition Universelle, the exhibition recognized both the commercial and artistic aspects of lithography, and was a historic event in terms of its comprehensive examination of the medium. The show was divided into six

sections, and displayed printmaking processes as well as the prints themselves. The six sections were 1) Histoire de la lithographie, 2) Lithographie artistique, 3) Lithographie scientifique, 4) Lithographie industrielle (including photolithographie and phototypie), 5) Matériel lithographique, 6) Industries se rattachant à la lithographie (including photographe Journaux).<sup>54</sup>

At the time of this exhibition a schism developed within the Société des Artistes lithographes français between the lithographers making original prints and those making lithographs for reproduction.<sup>55</sup> Hamel resigned as president and with the original printmakers, he established a new organization, the Société des Peintres-lithographes. Fantin-Latour and Henri-Patrice Dillon were elected vice-presidents. An ancillary committee was made up of Puvis de Chavannes, Gérôme, Bouguereau, and Jean Alboize, coeditor with Dillon of l'Album des Peintres-lithographes. The Society exhibited every other year, from 1897 to 1903.

Meanwhile, another organization of printmakers was formed that included lithographers, although not exclusively. This was the Société des Peintres-graveurs headed by Félix Braquemond and Henri-Charles Guérard.<sup>56</sup> The group held five exhibitions between 1889 and 1897. Activity ceased after 1897, but the group was reorganized

in 1905 and held its seventh exhibition in the Grand Palais, next to the Peintres-lithographes, under the title Salon de l'Estampe originale.

In addition to the role played by illustrated periodicals and print organizations in the print revival of the 1890s, there were other contributory factors. The dissemination in the West of Japanese prints in the 1880s, and the prestige that they enjoyed, as well as the appreciation of Impressionism, with its colorful bravura brushwork, helped to heighten contemporary awareness of color, widening the audience for the print.<sup>57</sup> By the 1890s the print revival was in full swing, with numerous printers, dealers, and publications concerned with prints.

Poster art also figured in the print revival. The Freedom of the Press law of 1881, which dramatically affected journals, also liberated posters from previous restrictions, and the streets of Paris were suddenly ablaze with colors. With his innovative mechanical processes and dynamic designs, Jules Chéret paved the way for large-scale posters, and in the 1880s articles, books, and exhibitions related to the poster began to appear.

Because Steinlen produced lithographs in virtually every contemporary genre, his work is a particularly good guide to the developments in lithography. In addition to magazine illustrations, he created individual prints,

sheet-music covers, book illustrations, menus, and theater programs. Moreover, Steinlen was acknowledged as a master of poster art, along with Lautrec, Mucha, and Grasset. When the democratic philosophy behind the art of the poster--which was seen by some as a "social art,"<sup>58</sup> par excellence--and the relationship of the poster to the renewed interest in arts and crafts are considered along with the social impulse that governed Steinlen's imagery, one sees the connection between the artist's magazine illustrations and his seemingly less political posters.

This examination of Steinlen's magazine illustrations will be followed by a discussion of his posters and the social background underlying the decorative arts--another aspect of the concern with the masses that characterized the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

Notes

1. Fin de siècle Prints, The New York Public Library, April 26-November 15, 1977.
2. See Robert Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism in France: Joséphin Péladan and the Salons de la Rose-Croix, New York, 1976; H. R. Rockmaaker, Gauguin and 19th Century Art Theory, Amsterdam, 1972; Phillip Jullian, Dreamers of Decadence, London, 1971.
3. A recent exception is the exhaustive catalogue by Gabriel Weisberg, The Realist Tradition: French Painting and Drawing, 1830-1900, Cleveland, 1980.
4. Linda Nochlin's Realism, Baltimore, 1971, is the definitive work on this subject.
5. George Boas, "Il faut être de son temps," Journal of Aesthetics, vol. 1, 1941, pp. 53-54.
6. See Linda Nochlin, Gustave Courbet: A Study of Style and Society, New York, 1976, and T. J. Clark, Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the Second French Republic 1848-1851, New York, 1973.
7. Nochlin, Gustave Courbet, pp. 73-74, 95-107.
8. Nochlin, Gustave Courbet, p. 73.
9. T. J. Clark, The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France 1848-1851, London, 1973, pp. 76-80.
10. On Daumier, see Oliver W. Larkin, Daumier: Man of His Time, Boston, 1966, and T. J. Clark, The Absolute Bourgeois, pp. 99-123.
11. See Weisberg, pp. 1-20.
12. See Beatrice Farwell, The Cult of Images: Baudelaire and the 19th-Century Media Explosion, Santa Barbara, California, 1977, and Raoul Deberdt, La Caricature et l'Humour au XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle, Paris, 1898.
13. Deberdt, p. 183.

14. Deberdt, p. 183.
15. See the images by Willette in Deberdt, pp. 223-26.  
See also the periodical Le Père Peinard.
16. Carlton J. Hayes, A Generation of Materialism 1871-1900, New York, 1941, pp. 165-95.
17. G. D. H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought, vol. III, part I: The Second International 1889-1914, London, 1963, pp. 323-25.
18. Theodore Zeldin, France 1849-1945, vol. I: Ambition, Love and Politics, London, 1973, pp. 752-54.
19. G. D. H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought, vol. II: Marxism and Anarchism 1850-1890, London, 1964, pp. 327-39.
20. Cole, II, p. 327.
21. See Cole, II, pp. 348-54, and Eugenia Herbert, The Artist and Social Reform: France and Belgium, 1885-1898, New York, 1961, pp. 5-7.
22. See Herbert, pp. 144ff.
23. On Bruant, see Bettina Knapp, Le Mirliton: A Novel Based on the Life of Aristide Bruant, Paris, 1969, and Oscar Méténier, Aristide Bruant, Paris, 1893.
24. This was how critic Arthus Symons described Bruant's style in Parisian Nights: A Book of Essays, Westminster, England, 1926, p. 13.
25. Herbert, pp. 177-79.
26. Herbert, pp. 162-69.
27. Gil Blas, June 6, 1893, as quoted in Herbert, p. 147.
28. Hayes, p. 176.
29. Hayes, pp. 171-74.
30. Hayes, pp. 176-77.

31. E. Courmont, La Photogravure, histoire et technique, Paris, 1947, p. 65.
32. Honoré Daumier 1808-1879, Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1979, pp. 18, 26 note 14.
33. Alfred de Lostalot, Les Procédés de la Gravure, Paris, 1882, p. 181.
34. In 1826, these experiments led Niepce to produce the first photograph taken from nature: he exposed glass plates, treated with bitumen and placed in a camera obscura, to the light that was reflected from objects. See Estelle Jussim, Visual Communication and the Graphic Arts: Photographic Technologies in the Nineteenth Century, New York, 1974, p. 47. Niepce's photographs of line drawings were the first images to be produced photomechanically. See Jussim, p. 119.
35. Courmont, p. 67.
36. Phillip Dennis Cate and Sinclair Hamilton Hitchings, The Color Revolution: Color Lithography in France 1890-1900, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1978, p. 4.
37. Of those who appreciated the high quality of Steinlen's illustrations, Joseph Pennell wrote in 1895, "It is especially in 'Gil Blas' that the best French work is now to be found, usually printed in colour." See Pennell, Modern Illustration, London, 1895, p. 54.
38. Jussim, p. 68.
39. Jussim, p. 68.
40. See Charles G. Harper, A Practical Handbook of Drawing for Modern Methods of Reproduction, London, 1894, p. 73.
41. Courmont, pp. 67, 92.
42. Harper, p. 82.
43. Harper, pp. 30-32, strongly recommends this technique. Gustave von Groschwitz discusses the importance of texture in lithography in "The Significance of XIX Century Color Lithography," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, November 1954, p. 245.

44. Harper, p. 34.
45. During the first decade of the twentieth century, three-color photographic separation completely altered this situation. For a good description of this process, see M. P. Verneuil, "La Procédé de Gravure en trois Couleurs," Art et Décoration, t. XXIII, January 1908, pp. 1-16. On the older process, see Robert M. Burch, Colour Printing and Colour Printers, London, 1910, p. 263.
46. A.-L. Monet, Procédés de reproductions graphiques appliquées à l'imprimerie, Paris, 1888, pp. 243-55.
47. There were variations on this technique. For example, a halftone negative could be used in order to obtain the image on each plate, which did away with the initial transfer of the "key" print. See Burch, p. 264.
48. Reproductive Arts from the XV century to the Present time, with Special Reference to the Photo Mechanical Processes, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1892, p. 77.
49. Occasionally a work such as Monet's Les Glaçons appeared (in March 1895), which, today, gives us a good idea of the quality of the color reproductions in the journal. The reproductive aims of Le Figaro illustré were, of course, those that made chromolithography so antithetical to artistic tastes in the nineteenth century and against which the makers of original color lithographs had to struggle in order to gain acceptance of color lithography in the 1890s. See Cate and Hitchings, pp. 1-3.
50. Cate and Hitchings, p. 8.
51. See Robert Goldwater, "'L'Affiche Moderne': A Revival of Poster Art After 1880," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, December 1942, p. 174, and Henri Bouchot, La Lithographie, Paris, 1895, p. 182.
52. Léonce Bénédite, "Peintres-Graveurs et Peintres-Lithographes," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, December 1909, t. 2, pp. 484-85.
53. Bénédite, p. 483.

54. Exposition Internationale du Centenaire de la Lithographie, Paris, 1895.
55. Bénédite, p. 486.
56. Léonce Bénédite, "Peintres-Graveurs et Peintres-Lithographes," Gazette des Beaux-Arts," March 1909, p. 241.
57. See Goldwater, and Cate and Hitchings, for a full discussion of the print revival and its sources.
58. This was the term used by the influential critic Roger Marx. See Roger Marx, l'Art Social, Paris, 1913, and Chapter VI of this thesis.

## CHAPTER II

LE CHAT NOIR AND LE MIRLITON:  
STEINLEN'S EARLY CAREER AS AN ILLUSTRATOR

Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen began his career as a magazine illustrator, contributing to Le Chat Noir and Le Mirliton, two Montmartre journals launched in the 1880s. Steinlen was born in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1859.<sup>1</sup> Although his father was a petty bourgeois, Steinlen nevertheless was familiar with art, within the family milieu. His paternal grandfather, Théophile-Christian-Gottlieb Steinlen, had made his living as a landscape painter in Vevey and, in 1833, he had designed the costumes and decorations for that town's famous wine festival. Steinlen's uncle Marcel was an accomplished porcelain painter who had studied with Charles Gleyre in Paris.

As a youth, Steinlen had a penchant for adventure and "played hooky" from school in order to take long walks in the countryside. It was during these exploratory walks that he did his first drawings. However, at

school he was drawn more to the natural sciences (probably because of an influential teacher) than to drawing. In 1876, Steinlen entered the Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Lausanne, but did not apply himself to his studies. After two years, his father packed him off to Mulhouse, in Alsace--then part of Germany--where the textile industry was thriving. Another uncle, a successful industrialist, secured Steinlen a position with a textile company for which Steinlen designed fabric patterns. It was in Mulhouse that he decided to pursue a career as an artist.

Disdainful of the bourgeois home of his wealthy uncle in Mulhouse,<sup>2</sup> and anxious to further his artistic experience, in 1881, Steinlen left for Paris, where he made his home until his death in 1923. He was accompanied by Emilie Mey, an Alsatian woman whom he had been courting in Mulhouse. She was to be his companion, and then his wife, until her death in 1910.

Steinlen found an apartment in Montmartre and a job with a textile manufacturer. Before long, however, he obtained employment as a painter and illustrator. His most important commissions came from the entrepreneur Rodolphe Salis, who ran Paris's most celebrated cabaret, Le Chat Noir. Steinlen originally had been introduced into Salis's circle by the artist Adolphe Willette, whom

he had met fortuitously. At the cabaret, he met other artists, including Toulouse-Lautrec, Jean Louis Forain, Caran d'Ache, and Henri Pille, as well as writers and musicians. He created a pastel to hang in the cafe and was soon working regularly as the key illustrator for Salis's journal, Le Chat Noir.

Salis was the director of Le Chat Noir from its inception in 1882 until 1895, when it was taken over by Emile Boucher. A four-page weekly selling for fifteen centimes, Le Chat Noir contained humorous poems, stories, and news about Montmartre.<sup>3</sup> Steinlen's first magazine illustration, done for Le Chat Noir, appeared on September 1, 1883. It represents an apotheosis of summer in the form of a cloud-borne young woman surrounded by angels and dancing children. At this time, Steinlen was influenced by Willette's rather baroque style. In his second contribution to the journal, done six months later, Steinlen established his own idiom. A good example is Le Chat et la Grenouille, of September 20, 1884 (Fig. 1).

The comic-strip format employed in this illustration had already been used by Willette in images of his famed Pierrot, but Steinlen, with his incisive fables, soon outstripped Willette. Simple, direct, and easily read at a glance, Steinlen conveyed a sense of vulnerability in his depictions of animals and children. He often used a

black cat, which stood out boldly on the white page. This was, of course, the symbol of the magazine and cats were a favorite subject of the artist. Between 1883 and 1895, Steinlen contributed close to one hundred illustrations to Le Chat Noir, and their comic-strip style, which he used so effectively, was adopted by many other contributors to the journal--Fau, Döes, Gérin, Roedel, and Henricus, to name just a few. Such early images as Le Chat et la Grenouille show Steinlen's ability as an illustrator, but they are a long way from the politically charged works of future years.

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In 1884, Steinlen met Aristide Bruant at Le Chat Noir, where the singer was performing his own songs about Parisian low-life. Steinlen and Bruant became friends, often taking trips to the outskirts of Paris, inhabited by the poor, where Bruant found inspiration for his songs and Steinlen for his sketches.<sup>4</sup>

In the spring of 1885, Bruant, having gained great popularity at Le Chat Noir, decided to establish his own café. When Salis announced he would be moving to larger headquarters some blocks away, Bruant took the opportunity to install himself in Salis's old space. He named his café Le Mirliton (The Reedpipe), launched his own journal

of that name in October, and appointed Steinlen as its chief illustrator. Through 1896 Steinlen contributed approximately one hundred and fifty covers to the magazine. While still producing comic-strip-type illustrations of animals and children for Le Chat Noir, Steinlen created for Le Mirliton a series of genre images which were the visual counterparts to Bruant's songs. Under the influence of this dynamic singer Steinlen first discovered his affinity for the poor, the downtrodden, and the working class.

In order to understand Steinlen's imagery for Le Mirliton, one must be aware of the nature of Bruant's songs and their impact. Bruant was immersed in the life of the social pariahs, among whom he had spent a good part of his youth.<sup>5</sup> Unlike François Villon, with whom he is often compared, Bruant believed that vice and criminality were, to a large extent, the result of social conditions; the poverty-stricken upbringings of his characters were an important element in his songs. An ardent leftist, Bruant hoped to call attention to these tragic figures. Toward this end, he wrote songs and monologues exclusively in the rough and brutal language of the street. One of the best descriptions of Bruant's style was written by a British critic, after a visit to Le Mirliton:

With his hands in his coat pockets he saunters to and fro, chanting rather than singing, in a loud, monotonous voice to the accompaniment of a piano.... The monotony is a calculated monotony; it is Bruant's "note," a part of his brutality, his unemotional way of taking things....The singing, like the songs, is grim, macabre, with a certain bare, unaffected simplicity, matching well enough the sordidly tragic simplicity of the words. And the lines, limited to a few notes, almost in recitative, have the same quality, the same effect. The whole matter is an attempt to do something more realistic than has ever been done before....<sup>6</sup>

The bourgeoisie flocked to Le Mirliton to hear Bruant's plaintive songs and to be insulted in the argot that Bruant adopted in his café. By the mid-1890s, Bruant enjoyed a national reputation; he has since become a national legend.

Le Mirliton, which sold for ten centimes, was relatively small in format. Whereas Le Chat Noir measured approximately eighteen by twelve inches, Le Mirliton was about eleven by seven inches, with the exception of a brief period, from March 15, 1893, through October 1, 1894, when it was issued in a larger format, approximately fourteen by ten and a half inches. However, from the very start, Le Mirliton was produced with full-page cover illustrations of two or more colors in addition to black, while Le Chat Noir, along with other Montmartre journals, was printed entirely in black and white. In addition to the stencil-colored covers,<sup>7</sup> the magazine comprised three or more pages of text, containing

a work by Bruant as well as humorous stories and poems by other authors, who often used la langue verte popularized by the singer. While Steinlen created the great majority of covers, other contributors included Toulouse-Lautrec, Ibels, Uzès, Pille, Heidbrinck, and Ber.

Steinlen's work for Le Mirliton reflects some of the social conditions that prevailed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. There was a substantial bourgeoisie with money to spend in the cafés and music halls of Montmartre,<sup>8</sup> while in one-third of the houses in Paris people lived in squalor, with inadequate space and poisonous air. Working conditions were as unpleasant, with ten- and eleven-hour workdays and few holidays.<sup>9</sup> Dissatisfaction among workers not only led to mass actions and organized strikes, but, especially under the impact of anarchist ideas, to acts of individual lawlessness culminating--between 1892 and 1894--in anarchist bombings and assassination. It is against this social background that Steinlen's art must be considered.

During the eleven years that Steinlen worked for Le Mirliton, he produced images of workers, wanderers, rag-pickers, soldiers, the bourgeoisie, and entertainers such as Bruant and Yvette Guilbert. However, most frequently he depicted the pitiable world of prostitution that

dominated Bruant's verse. While there are many images of prostitutes in Le Mirliton, as numerous and perhaps more interesting are Steinlen's procurers, characters that rarely appear in the visual arts but are common in Bruant's writing.

Some of Steinlen's prints for Le Mirliton, during its first year of publication, were specific illustrations of Bruant's songs, but a great many of Steinlen's drawings were done more independently, intended as generalized representations of Bruant's anti-heroes. Les Dos (slang for pimps) was such a series. A cover, of February 1, 1886 (Fig. 2), for the ninth issue of the magazine, is typical of these illustrations. It is signed Jean Caillou, Steinlen's pseudonym; he loosely translated his German name, meaning small stone, into the French caillou. The illustration shows a man dressed in a blue work-jacket with flaired pants and a very tall hat, a common costume for pimps in the 1880s.<sup>10</sup> On other occasions, the pimp appears with a more closely fitting cap and a large smock. The pimp in Fig. 2 sits idly at a café, drinking, smoking, and reading the newspaper. The caption reads, "Guerre aux bonneteurs!...suppression de la prostitution!!...ben quoi?... alors ils veulent qu'on les saigne!" The general reference here may be to the laws passed in the 1880s that placed severe

restrictions on prostitutes and pimps. For example, in May 1885 a law calling for the punishment of procurers-- of "ceux qui, de manière quelconque, aident, assistent, ou protègent sciemment le racolage public en vue de la prostitution d'autrui"--was put into effect.<sup>11</sup> The enforcement of such laws was left to the controversial Police des Moeurs, a branch of the local police force.

Steinlen provided a rather sympathetic portrayal of the pimp compared to Uzès, who showed three brutal pimps lying in wait, ready to pounce on an unsuspecting victim (Fig. 3). In Le Mirliton, Steinlen presented the pimp in a humorous light, as relatively harmless. In an earlier Steinlen illustration, a pimp dressed in a smock and a cap, standing in the street in front of a public urinal, says baldly, "Plus de marmite! Plus d'bouillon!" ("No more whores! No more soup!"), a rather witty pun on the word marmite, which means, literally, cooking pot, as well as prostitute in slang. While Steinlen had created humorous images for Le Chat Noir without the use of words, for Le Mirliton captions played an integral part in the design, and Steinlen excelled at writing them.

A group of images with a consistent theme grew out of the series called Les Dos. It represented pimps, either alone or with their women, lying near the fortress walls that surrounded Paris, enjoying an outing in the

country-like fields that skirted the city. In the first of these illustrations, of September 1886, a pimp seated on the grass near his mistress exclaims, "Si on pourrait vivre toute sa vie comme ça, on penserait jamais à faire des sales coups." The background is extremely sketchy--just fields and an indication of the fortress wall. The next image with this theme, of June 1887, shows two pimps and a woman in the same languid poses. However, this time one sees a factory in the distant background, emitting heavy streams of smoke. A lame man walks along the horizon with a cane, supported by a friend, possibly a grim reminder of an industrial accident. The illustration is entitled Idylle, an ironic note to a scene that is already incongruous.

In April 1888, Steinlen created another cover with the same theme (Fig. 4). As before, a pimp forgets his cares while relaxing in a meadow; however, behind him is an extensive industrial landscape, which contrasts dramatically with the green field dotted with flowers in the foreground. The caption reads, "V'là l'beau temps, pourvu qu' ça dure!..." This man is supposedly enjoying the countryside, but there is a feeling that the land, like the good weather, will soon be destroyed by encroaching industrialization. In fact, the pimp himself is a product of the urban environment that

industrialization fosters.<sup>12</sup>

Steinlen's sympathetic depiction of pimps--usually considered among the most odious of city dwellers--and his portrayal of them as victims of urban blight are manifestations of his political attitude. By the early 1890s Steinlen, like Bruant, was a confirmed leftist. His subsequent work, whether for political journals or in other media, demonstrates this fact. In the transition from his serial images of animals for Le Chat Noir to his work for Le Mirliton, Steinlen developed his political sensibility as well as his art.

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Hand in hand with his sympathy for the lower classes was Steinlen's antipathy for the upper classes. For Steinlen as for Bruant, "Les Vrais Dos" were the frivolous members of the bourgeoisie who went slumming in Montmartre.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the 1890s the bourgeoisie frequented the cafés and music halls of Montmartre, becoming as much a part of Steinlen's environment as the pimps, streetwalkers and beggars. Steinlen's political awareness is reflected in his images of this social group, as represented in Le Mirliton. Steinlen personified this bourgeois type with his image of Maurice Barrès, whose reactionary theories were, no doubt, abhorrent to

the artist (Fig. 5).

Barrès had entered the Chamber of Deputies in 1889 as a revisionist-socialist from Nancy, but by 1892 he was a conservative-nationalist who became one of the leaders of the nationalist movement in France. Although, during the Boulanger crisis of the late 1880s, some leftists flirted with nationalist ideas, in the 1890s nationalism was directed against socialism: the French regarded such Germanic ideas as divisive. Nationalist groups opposed progressive measures within the Chamber, continually expressing their anti-republican sentiments.<sup>14</sup>

Politically, Steinlen must have seen Barrès as an enemy, for by the early 1890s the artist sympathized with the left. (In 1893, Steinlen became a contributor to Le Chambard Socialiste.) A cartoon for Le Chat Noir, of March 8, 1890, illustrates his allegiance to this group: in comic-strip style Steinlen shows a political figure being knocked to the ground by a worker carrying a large plank. As he unwittingly knocks down the politician with the plank, the worker gives him directions: "Vous suivrez toujours tout droit," a pun on the word droit, which means right as well as straight.

Barrès's politics were, however, only one reason for Steinlen's portrayal of him in Le Mirliton. In addition to being a politician, Barrès was an influential writer,

and in his literary work he assumed a decidedly nationalist stance. In a series of novels, influenced by Baudelaire, Barrès wrote about the importance of the individual and the cultivation of personal feelings. The characters in his works were totally self-absorbed, very much in the manner of Huysmans's prototypical decadent, *Des Esseintes*, in *A Rebours*.<sup>15</sup>

Barrès himself was arrogant, aloof, and condescending. In the Chamber it was common for the deputies to tutoyer each other, but Barrès was always "Monsieur Barrès."<sup>16</sup> It was undoubtedly Barrès's hauteur and his self-imposed reputation as an "aristo" that elicited the contempt of both Steinlen and Bruant. This contempt is most clearly manifested in a drawing by Steinlen, now in the Louvre (RF 32788) (Fig. 6), in which Barrès is represented as a repugnant figure with a large head and a grotesquely beaklike nose. Steinlen was both repelled and fascinated by Barrès, who was the subject of a number of Steinlen's drawings. For example, on the cover of the June 1893 *Le Mirliton*, the elegantly dressed Monsieur Barrès stares at a newly issued poster of Bruant, by Toulouse-Lautrec.

Steinlen invented this image for Bruant's monologue "Les Quat' Pattes," which is entirely about the stray dogs of Paris, a metaphor for the unfortunate people of

Bruant's verse. In a monologue of nine verses Barrès is merely mentioned in passing. Early in the monologue, Bruant speaks of the dogs, who are not the dogs of proprietors, "C'est mem' pas des chiens d'locataires; I'sont lib's comm' Mossieu Barrès." Bruant is obviously referring here to one of Barrès's novels, Un homme libre, published in 1889.

Yet, on the whole, Barrès is of little significance in Bruant's monologue. Why then did Steinlen choose to represent him so prominently in his illustration for Le Mirliton? He did so because he saw Barrès as the very essence of the fin de siècle bourgeois whose presence in Montmartre--though necessary to the existence of Le Mirliton and therefore to his own and Bruant's livelihood--he found anathema. It was a decadent taste for the macabre, as well as the desire for entertainment, that led many members of the middle and upper classes to such Montmartre cafés as Le Chat Noir and Le Mirliton, where they would hear of the lower classes and rub shoulders with them--a safe and superficial involvement.<sup>17</sup> By including Barrès, Steinlen combined three important contemporary figures in one image--the other two were Bruant and Toulouse-Lautrec--so that his cover for Le Mirliton is an inimitable document of Paris in the 1890s.

Bruant's attitude toward the bourgeoisie is summed up in his monologue "Fins de Siècle," a term he used to describe the pleasure-seeking rich. The term fin de siècle became popular during the 1890s. It was used to characterize the decadent aspects of art, culture, and social behavior, which, it was believed, pervaded French and English society.<sup>18</sup> Bruant saw its representatives as useless, deformed, skinny, weak, and feeble.

Steinlen illustrated "Fins de Siècle" for the July 14, 1893, cover of Le Mirliton (Fig. 7).<sup>19</sup> He depicted the bourgeois men as Bruant described them, adding a certain femininity that was associated with decadence in the 1890s.<sup>20</sup> These characterizations are emphasized by placing the figures in direct contrast with a pair of robust workers, who are entirely an invention of Steinlen's, as there is no mention of anyone but the "idle rich" in Bruant's monologue. The juxtaposition of one class against another is a device that Steinlen used in subsequent illustrations, particularly those done in 1894 for Le Chambard Socialiste.

In Le Mirliton, Steinlen vividly recreated distinctive aspects of contemporary life. In encouraging him to depict such themes, Bruant and Le Mirliton played an important role in shaping Steinlen's art.

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It is interesting to note the developments in Steinlen's style in his illustrations for Le Mirliton. That style was adopted subsequently for most of the artist's work, especially for the illustrations that appeared in periodicals in the 1890s. It was particularly true of those published in the journal Gil Blas illustré, for which Steinlen created more images than for any other periodical. Steinlen's style underwent a very distinct evolution during the period from 1885 through 1891, which can be seen in the pages of Le Mirliton although in the mid- to late 1890s only slight stylistic variations are apparent in his work.

For most of his drawings in the journal, which were reproduced photomechanically, Steinlen worked in pen, instead of in brush or crayon. The use of pen and ink to create intricate crosshatch patterns, in order to define form, to indicate light and shadow, and to enliven an image, was common in French periodicals of the 1880s and in prints of the previous centuries. Artists who worked for the Montmartrois journals Courrier Français and Le Chat Noir employed this technique, among them Henri Pille, Albert Lunel, Tiret-Boguet, Uzès, and Willette, with all of whom Steinlen was familiar. While most of Steinlen's

fables for Le Chat Noir were drawn with an economy of line (see Fig. 1), when he began to draw the human figure in a spatial context, in the manner of his contemporaries, he, too, began to use cross-hatching. (Good examples of this are the November 1885 and January 1886 covers of Le Mirliton (Figs. 8, 9).) In addition to relying on these French contemporaries as a source for his illustrations, Steinlen was also influenced by the German periodical Die Fliegende Blätter, which, along with the British journal Punch, he was said to have admired.<sup>21</sup> His style at this time is similar to that of Max Flashar, Hermann Schlittgen, and Carl Zopf, three contributors to the German journal.<sup>22</sup>

The figures in these early works by Steinlen are stiff and almost puppet-like, and the world that they inhabit is equally unrealistic. However, by late 1888, Steinlen was using the pen more effectively, and with greater originality. This can be seen in a Le Mirliton cover of November 1888, Soulauds (Fig. 10), one image in a series of illustrations of drunks that he created for the journal. In this portrayal of a drunkard on a lonely Parisian street, reaching out into the distance toward a full moon, Steinlen broke away from the traditional cross-hatch patterns of earlier illustrations. Rather, the artist used a variety of lines in a highly expressive

way. For example, circular lines surround the moon, emphasizing its shape and magnetism; swirling lines are used to define the drunk and his shadow--highly appropriate to his unsteadiness; and an interesting sense of space is created by the diminishing horizontal pattern of the cobblestones in the street. The nervous, energetic line that delineates the figure shows the influence of Daumier, as we saw in an earlier Steinlen magazine cover (Fig. 4). However, Daumier's impact on Steinlen is more pronounced in Steinlen's original prints, in which the laundresses and the people riding in carriages are akin to Daumier's famous paintings and lithographs of those subjects.

Although in Soulauds Steinlen used the pen to great effect, he soon began to experiment with the greasy crayon. His work of 1890, in which this change of medium first occurred, is very different from that of previous years.<sup>23</sup> These works, however, do not exhibit any clear style, are derivative of Forain, and represent only a transitional phase in Steinlen's work.

By the latter part of 1890, a new style began to emerge, the first indication of which was a Le Mirliton cover of October-November 1890, Dans la Rue (Fig. 11). Here, the figure is more realistic than those of the 1880s, and the entire composition has a looser, more

fluid appearance than that of earlier works. This fluidity is the result of several factors. First of all, Steinlen eliminated the frame, or boxlike format of previous illustrations, thus using the page more freely. He also employed color in a new way: rather than applying color locally--that is, within the defined borders of a given form--Steinlen applied patches of pink and blue to the foreground and a blue wash behind the branches of the trees in the background, all in a most abstract way.

Dans la Rue shows the influence of two of Steinlen's colleagues. One was Oswald Heidbrinck, a principal artist on the Courrier Français and an occasional contributor to Le Mirliton. Heidbrinck employed color more freely than most other illustrators; he did not confine his images within a pictorial box. In Le Marché Saint-Pierre, à Montmartre, published in December 1887, he applied a bright tone to the background, a device that Steinlen might have learned from him (Fig. 12). Steinlen's other influence, one that continued throughout his career, was Toulouse-Lautrec.

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The art of Toulouse-Lautrec, and the sudden widespread interest in Japanese prints themselves, influenced Steinlen profoundly during the first half of the 1890s.<sup>24</sup>

These two phenomena are intimately connected, since Lautrec himself was influenced by Japanese art. In 1887, Lautrec had contributed three illustrations to Le Mirliton. One of these, Saint-Lazare (Fig. 13), was incorporated into Steinlen's own illustration for the same song, which appeared in the first volume of Bruant's book Dans la Rue, in 1888 (Fig. 14). This points to the deep admiration that Steinlen must have felt for Lautrec. Another cover by Lautrec, Le dernier salut (Fig. 15), of March 1887, probably influenced Steinlen's portrayal of the vagrant in Dans la Rue (Fig. 11), which is composed in much the same way. In Lautrec's work, the figure is placed prominently in the foreground, at an angle and to the side; it is seen against a vignette in the distance, a device borrowed from Japanese prints. Steinlen imitated this composition. However, in Dans la Rue the figure is smaller in relation to the background and is drawn in such a way as to appear highly corporeal, which is not the case in Lautrec's illustration. The three-dimensionality of Steinlen's figure offsets the abstract effect of the flat patches of color, so that the work does not possess the totally flat, decorative quality characteristic of the most avant-garde prints of the period. On the other hand, both the realism of the figure--as compared to earlier, more stylized figures by Steinlen--and the new

use of color and space show that the artist is moving towards a more contemporary idiom in his illustration. (Compare Fig. 11 with Figs. 8 and 9.)

Shortly after his drawing of the vagrant appeared on the cover entitled Dans la Rue, Steinlen completed another illustration in his series of the same name. This is the first of several portraits of Aristide Bruant that the artists created for Le Mirliton (Fig. 16); it appeared in the January-February issue of the journal. In this illustration, Bruant is seen standing against a backdrop of posters relating to him. Most prominent is one that advertises the upcoming performance of his monologue "Aux Arts Libéraux" at the Eldorado. For the first time, Steinlen created a figure that forcefully dominated the page and a composition much more forthright than anything he had produced before. Seen against the compressed space of the billboards, Bruant forms a bold silhouette in his characteristic black costume, which Steinlen has effectively drawn in crayon.<sup>25</sup> The emphasis on the frontal plane is a technique common to the Japanese woodcut.

In the next issue of Le Mirliton--that of March 1891--Steinlen published an illustration of another singer, Yvette Guilbert (Fig. 17). He showed Guilbert outside of the Théâtre d'Application,<sup>26</sup> which is seen in the background, placing her squarely in the foreground,

flush with the picture plane, again recalling Japanese woodcuts. As for his portrayal of the chanteuse Steinlen cleverly drew Guilbert in profile, emphasizing her long gloves, long neck, and long nose, the same elements that Lautrec would later immortalize.<sup>27</sup>

In Au Bois de Boulogne, of July 1891 (Fig. 18)--the third illustration that appeared that year--Steinlen again used several of the devices employed in Japanese prints. He showed a man in a carriage on his way to the famed woods in search of a prostitute. The motif of the bourgeois in the carriage, composed of flat planes, dominates the foreground. This contrasts dramatically with the background, in which an atmospheric effect has been created through the use of elongated black brushstrokes, an indication of the multitudinous world of Parisian pleasure-seekers. In this illustration Steinlen has effectively combined the free use of brush and ink in the background with the bold, flat planes of the forms in the foreground, creating an interesting yet ambiguous sense of space. The flatness of the frontal plane, the deep one-point perspective, and the atmospheric quality are all effects common to Japanese prints. This is apparent if one compares Steinlen's illustration with--for example--two prints by Hiroshige, from his series "One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo" (Figs. 19,

20).

Thus, Steinlen's new style, which began to emerge in his Le Mirliton illustrations of 1891, is based in part on the influence on Japanese prints, which the artist had first become aware of as early as 1884. In that year, he created an illustration for Le Chat Noir (Fig. 21) that clearly echoes a page of drawings from Hiroshige's Ukiyo Ryusai Gwafu (Fig. 22). In 1888 and 1889, Steinlen turned out a series of sheet-music covers for the journal La Semaine artistique et musicale, many of which borrow Japanese motifs, such as Solidarité (Fig. 23). Then, in 1891--the year of the change in his style--Steinlen made a large-scale poster called Le Rêve, advertising a ballet for the National Academy of Music (Fig. 24). This poster is replete with japonaiserie. Among the Oriental motifs is an immense fan, which serves as a backdrop for the dancers. On the fan are Japanese actors or musicians, who could have been drawn only by an artist with a close knowledge of Japanese prints. While Le Rêve incorporates Japanese objects into a basically Western composition, Steinlen borrowed actual stylistic elements from Japanese prints for his illustrations for Le Mirliton, and for much of his later work: he even created his own Oriental monogram.<sup>28</sup>

Steinlen's work in Le Mirliton, continued to develop,

under the influence of Japanese prints and of Lautrec. Many illustrations show his debt to that great French artist, particularly a cover of January 20, 1893, La Vigne au Vin (Fig. 25), which is very similar to Lautrec's Ambassadeurs, Aristide Bruant et son cabaret, of 1892 (Fig. 26), a preparatory study for a poster that was never executed. Lautrec shows Bruant standing on a table, as he did so often in his café, with Jane Avril seated in the foreground. Discernible amid the crowd is the distinctive profile of a man with glasses, said to be Sarrazin, the proprietor of the cabaret Le Divan Japonais.<sup>29</sup> The similarities between Lautrec's and Steinlen's work are obvious. The fact that Steinlen depicted Sarrazin entering the café, just as Lautrec had done, indicates Steinlen's conscious use of Lautrec's work as a model for his own.

While creating images of performers for Le Mirliton, Steinlen continued to produce many illustrations of prostitutes and pimps, now in a style quite different from that of the mid-1880s. In addition to their inclusion in this journal, such figures also appeared in the pages of Gil Blas illustré, to which Steinlen became a contributor in 1891. These works vary in the degree of compositional freshness they exhibit. Typical of the work for both journals is the cover A la Glacière, of February 3, 1893

(Fig. 27). Steinlen's composition is based on the balance between the domineering pimp on the left--the subject of the song--and the group at the right. Space is suggested by the receding curve of the sidewalk, with the lights and trees placed on one side and the houses on the other. While there is much greater freedom here than in his earliest works for Le Mirliton, Steinlen attempted to create a three-dimensional space through the device of the receding street and the plastic quality of the figures, which are in conflict with the more abstract pictorial aspects of the image.

Much more powerful than this work is one from the following year, La Veuve d'Arsène, published on January 12, 1892 (Fig. 28). With a minimum of detail, Steinlen captured the harsh expressions and candid gestures of the street. The economy of line and the spareness of the composition, combined with the use of crachis,<sup>30</sup> signal a new dimension in Steinlen's art. Although he continued to produce images in the style typified by A la Glacière, by 1894 Steinlen was also creating works like La Veuve d'Arsène, which shows a more sophisticated handling of the lithographic medium. This new approach is evident not only in Mirliton, but also in his illustrations for Gil Blas illustré, his sheet-music covers, and his posters (to be discussed below). However, it

should be remembered that the roots of Steinlen's mature style, like his interest in scène de mœurs, are to be found primarily in his work for Le Mirliton.

Notes

1. Since much has already been written about Steinlen's life, a brief outline of the artist's background will suffice. The most reliable sources on Steinlen's life are Georges Auriol, Steinlen et la Rue, Paris, 1930; Marguerite Steinlen, "Steinlen," Du, May 1953; and Maurice Pianzola, Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, Zurich, 1871. My account is drawn from these sources.
2. This was related to me by Marguerite Steinlen (see note 1), the artist's niece, in an interview on July 6, 1978, in Paris. Mme. Steinlen, who lived with the artist before his death in 1923, believes that Steinlen's pursuit of a "bohemian" life was at first largely a result of his disillusionment with his nouveau riche uncle in Mulhouse.
3. For more on Le Chat Noir see Mariel Frèrebeau, "'What is Montmartre? Nothing! What should it be? Everything!'" Art News, vol. 76, March 1977, pp. 60-62.
4. Auriol, p. 13ff.
5. See Bettina Knapp, Le Mirliton: A Novel Based on the Life of Aristide Bruant, Paris, 1968, pp. 25-41, which contains an accurate account of the singer's life; and Oscar Méténier, Aristide Bruant, Paris, 1893, p. 11.
6. Arthur Symons, Parisian Nights: A Book of Essays, Westminster, England, 1926, pp. 12-13. Bruant compiled a dictionary of slang, L'Argot au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris, 1901.
7. See Phillip Dennis Cate, "Empathy with the Humanity of the Streets," Art News, vol. 76, no. 3, March 1977, pp. 56-59; Phillip Dennis Cate and Sinclair Hamilton Hitchings, The Color Revolution: Color Lithography in France, 1890-1900, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1978.

8. The term bourgeois is problematical; it cannot be precisely defined. As analyzed in Theodore Zeldin, France, 1848-1945, Paris, 1973, vol. I, pp. 11-22, there was a good deal of social mobility among the different social classes in France during the nineteenth century. The term bourgeois might have been applied to anyone, from a shopkeeper to a noble. One way of telling if a person was a bourgeois had to do with his manner of dress. A bourgeois worked in a frock coat and never in the overalls, blouse, or blue work clothes worn by the manual laborer. I will use the term bourgeoisie to refer to the middle and upper classes, who are always dressed in more formal clothing than that worn by the working classes and the poor.
9. Michael Curtis, Three Against The Third Republic: Sorel, Barrès, and Maurras, Princeton, New Jersey, 1959, pp. 17-18. Zola's L'Assommoir, originally published in 1876, and said to have influenced Steinlen, provides a brilliant description of Paris's poor.
10. Pimps in this costume appear occasionally in Le Chat Noir. See the issues of April 15 and June 10, 1882. The tall hats disappear in the 1890s.
11. Thomas E. James, Prostitution and The Law, London, 1951, p. 74.
12. An undated Steinlen drawing in the Louvre (RF 34064) shows the devastating effects of industrialism. One sees a large mass of factories spewing out smoke on the right, and on the left an immense pyramid of skulls. Above this heap a young couple stand, on a patch of earth, and romantically embrace, apparently unaware of the decaying civilization below. Steinlen has written on the bottom of the drawing, "Attention aux industries."
13. Bruant first published his monologue "Les Vrais Dos" in Le Mirliton in October 1885. It was republished in his collection of songs and monologues, Dans la Rue, Paris, 1888, a book illustrated by Steinlen.
14. Curtis, pp. 58, 253.
15. On Huysmans's A Rebours and its impact on contemporary writers and artists see John Rewald, Post-Impressionism from Van Gogh to Gauguin, 2d. ed., New York, 1962, p. 149ff.

16. Curtis, p. 56.
17. A scene depicting a bourgeois outing like this is included in Jacques Becker's film Casque d'Or, of 1952, which is about French lowlifes in the 1890s.
18. See Raymond Rudorff, The Belle Epoque, New York, 1972, p. 206ff.
19. After its publication in Le Mirliton, of July 14, 1893, Bruant's "Fins de Siècle" was published in volume two of Dans la Rue.
20. Rudorff, pp. 225-28.
21. Auriol, p. 9ff.
22. See Die Fliegende Blätter, in particular no. 2072, April 12, 1885; no. 2073, April 19, 1885; and no. 2083, June 28, 1885.
23. See, for example, Le Mirliton of March-April 1890 and August-September 1890. That year, Steinlen began to sign his Le Mirliton covers consistently with his real name, rather than with his pseudonym, Jean Caillou. This may be attributed, in part, to the great acceptance and popularity of Bruant's book Dans la Rue, whose illustrations by Steinlen were highly publicized.
24. A great deal has been written about the influence of Japanese prints on French art. Among the most recent and most exhaustive studies is Japonisme: Japanese Influence on French Art 1854-1910, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975.
25. Since one cannot help but compare this work to the unrivaled posters of Bruant by Lautrec, it should be noted that Steinlen's illustration predates by a year Lautrec's first poster of the singer, Ambassadeurs: Aristide Bruant. See Loys Delteil, Le peintre-graveur illustré, Paris, 1920, vol. XI, H. de Toulouse-Lautrec, 343.

26. Guilbert appeared at the Théâtre d'Application to demonstrate her singing style, which was being discussed in a series of lectures on the popular song. These lectures were organized by Charles Bodinier, who had transformed an old space used exclusively for exhibiting pictures into an experimental theater. The front part of the hall was still reserved for exhibitions and Steinlen had his first show there in 1894. On the Théâtre d'Application, see Knapp, pp. 84-85.
27. Lautrec's first images of Guilbert appeared in 1892. See Douglas Cooper, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, New York, 1966, p. 114; and Claude Roger-Marx, Yvette Guilbert vue par Toulouse-Lautrec, Paris, 1950.
28. I am drawing a distinction between japonaiserie and japonisme, which are discussed in Mark Roskill, Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Impressionist Circle, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1970, p. 57.
29. Sarrazin is identified in M. G. Dortu, Toulouse-Lautrec et son oeuvre, New York, 1971, vol. II, p. 240, p. 413. See also Henri Perruchot, Toulouse-Lautrec, New York, 1966, p. 173.
30. Crachis is defined as "a splatter process of inking in lithographic printing, so as to give a speckled effect; lit., a spray of spittle; a drizzle," according to Herman J. Wechsler, who prepared vol. XXXII, Appendix and Glossary, of Loys Delteil, Le peintre-graveur illustrée, New York, 1970, p. 119.

## CHAPTER III

GIL BLAS ILLUSTRÉ:  
IMAGERY FOR POPULAR LITERATURE  
OF THE 1890S

Gil Blas ilustré spanned nearly the entire decade of the 1890s. Introduced on July 28, 1891, it persisted through August 21, 1903.<sup>1</sup> The journal was a weekly literary supplement of the daily Gil Blas; it measured approximately sixteen by eleven inches, thus allowing for the inclusion of substantial sized drawings that were reproduced photomechanically.<sup>2</sup> As its key illustrator, Steinlen produced hundreds of images for the journal, from 1891 through 1900, after which he ceased to be a contributor. He created full-page covers, as well as illustrations for the center and back pages, to accompany the stories, poems, and songs that were featured in the journal. As Steinlen's imprint clearly dominated the journal it was largely through the widespread circulation of this weekly that the artist became well known internationally. In Spain, his work was studied by the

artistic community of Els Quatre Gats, including the young Picasso. In the United States, John Sloan attempted to imitate the journal with his own, short-lived Gil Blas, and in Germany, Simplicissimus was established as a counterpart to the popular French periodical.<sup>3</sup>

While Steinlen was the principal illustrator for Gil Blas,<sup>4</sup> many others contributed to the journal. Like Steinlen, Paul Ballauriau also published covers, as well as last-page and center-page drawings. Ballauriau's work, however, became more and more derivative of Steinlen's--which clearly dominated the magazine. From 1891 through 1893, Albert Guillaume created many cartoons in a very different style, and there were scattered images by Jacques Villon, Henri Dumont, Lourdy, Belon, Job, Max, Guydo, and Gamber, among others.

Steinlen's relationship with the editors of Gil Blas was not always amicable. He had been under contract in the early nineties to produce ten drawings a month for the journal.<sup>5</sup> This meant that he was responsible for over two drawings a week, and, with the many other commissions that he was receiving by the mid-nineties, it became more and more difficult for him to turn out the requisite amount of work. The artist attempted to break his contract with the journal in 1895. In May, Eugène Navarre, an administrator at the journal, replied to his

request:

D'après les renseignements, dan [sic] je me suis entouré, votre talent est trop apprécié à Gil Blas et par ses lecteurs pour que l'on commence à rompre les accords existants entre vous et le Gil Blas.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, Steinlen was continually under the pressure of a deadline, but not always promptly paid. In a letter to his wife, written on a Sunday in 1896, he complained bitterly:

le Gil Blas m'a fait traîner jusqu'à hier soir pour finir par me dire qu'il n'avait pas d'argent--oppositions--procès--des tas d'histoires--tout ce que ces Messieurs m'ont pu donner c'est la promesse ferme de me payer deux cent francs mercredi (la reste peu après) ces deux cent francs t'arriveraient donc Jeudi. [sic]<sup>7</sup>

The sheer quantity of images with which Steinlen was charged, over a ten-year period, accounts to a large degree for the uneven quality of his work for the journal. Some of his drawings rank with the most original and expressive of the nineties, while others are inferior in spirit and design.

Most of the artist's contributions to Gil Blas depict anecdotes specific to a given story. However, Steinlen also created illustrations for Gil Blas that mirror the wider social concerns of his age, thus establishing his reputation as a social critic. This body of work consists of popular Parisian types, such as the trottin, or midinette, vagabonds; and homeless children. While many of his portraits of the young Parisian working woman

have an erotic appeal, the artist actually viewed these women as both heroines and victims of their time. Their erotic appeal lies in the fact that Steinlen, as well as the literary contributors to Gil Blas, idealized them and portrayed them as sexually available.

Steinlen's socially oriented images grew out of one segment of the literature in Gil Blas. The literary content of the journal represented authors with diverse styles and interests. Among these contributors, there was a group whose primary concern was the depiction of the lower classes, an extension of the naturalism characterized by the Goncourts and by Zola.<sup>8</sup> Novels, stories, poems, and songs by writers that included--in addition to Zola himself--Bruant, Guy de Maupassant, Jean Richepin, Jehan Rictus, and Camille de Saint-Croix, all contributed to the popularity of this genre.

During the 1890s and just after 1900, there was a great deal of sociological material published in which the living conditions of the working class and the poor were also described. Based on "field work," these studies were aimed at awakening the public conscience to the plight of these people and, ultimately, at new legislation that would benefit them. The social conditions described in these books and pamphlets parallel those depicted in many of the stories in Gil Blas. Both the

sociological and the literary trends grew out of Comtian positivism and were linked to the political climate of the 1890s, when there was much leftist agitation.

Steinlen's work for Gil Blas illustrated literature dealing with the lower-class milieu most typically embodied by the working woman--from the jovial trottin to the pathetic streetwalker--although there were also numerous drawings of vagabonds by him in the journal. Thus, the popular literature of the 1890s and the social conditions of the lower classes were the two main sources of Steinlen's imagery in this period.

\* \* \*

Perhaps the most dominant theme in Gil Blas was that of the urban working woman, long associated with Paris.<sup>9</sup> However, the subject was envisioned in a variety of ways. For some writers, the female worker was seen as the embodiment of the vitality of the city; she represented innocence, honesty, and pure joyfulness. Other writers dealt with the economic instability experienced by many women in Paris, which led to transient liaisons, often with members of the bourgeoisie who could help them financially. In these stories the young workers are sometimes characterized as morally loose and constantly on the make, although in many other stories sympathy for

these unfortunate women was the dominant theme. Still a third image of urban womanhood represented in the journal was the streetwalker, the lowest level on the social ladder.

While there is a great deal of idealization and sentimentality in many descriptions of the female worker, there is also a good deal of literature that is faithful to the social and economic circumstances of these young women. In fact, some modern sociologists consult stories of the 1890s as a means of understanding the quality of life of the period.<sup>10</sup> The problems of the female worker were a result of the urbanization brought about by the industrial revolution. As is commonly known, during the first part of the nineteenth century there was a migration from the countryside into the city.<sup>11</sup> As the cities--with their commercial enterprises and factories--prospered, the population gravitated towards them. Agricultural problems throughout the country also contributed to this migration. In the past, young women had generally worked on their parents' land, in family-owned shops, or in neighboring villages.<sup>12</sup> These women were closely linked to their families, which formed the basic social and economic unit; if they worked for someone else, they were expected to contribute their salaries to the family. In this context, many social controls were

exercised to maintain the stability of the family unit.

With the need for workers brought about by the industrial revolution, and the concomitant economic problems in the countryside, unmarried girls were often forced to travel to distant cities to find work to supplement their families' incomes. Gradually, ties with their families were broken; they stopped sending money home, and no longer thought in terms of the "family" but, rather, in terms of "self." With the dissolution of the family unit, there came a breakdown in the social controls enforced by parents. In the villages, it was not uncommon for young girls to engage in premarital sex with their fiancés; this usually ended in marriage. In the city, however, young girls who conducted themselves in a similar way usually found themselves abandoned by their lovers; the social pressure exercised in the villages was lacking. Accordingly, in Paris during the 1890s, the illegitimacy rate soared.<sup>13</sup>

While the city held the promise of social mobility for enterprising young women, who might become salespersons in large department stores or open their own clothing shops, most workers subsisted on meager salaries, barely enough to cover their yearly expenses.<sup>14</sup> The majority of women in the city worked in the clothing and textile industries, where there was a rigid hierarchy of

jobs and salaries. At the top of the ladder were the couturieres and modistes, who made more than enough to live comfortably. Below them were the women who worked as seamstresses in their shops. Some of these women earned decent salaries, but many barely eked out enough for food, shelter, and clothing. The same was true for the hardworking laundresses and bread-carriers. Among the remaining workers were the errand girls, or trottins, usually apprentices in the clothing shops, who earned still less than the shopworkers. Women who worked in factories earned even less, on the average, than the trottins, and they had little hope of improving their lot. In this difficult situation, many young women entered into illicit affairs out of want, and the most impoverished turned to streetwalking as a way of supporting themselves.

\* \* \*

The youthfulness of the urban woman and her sexual availability provided many authors with material for sentimental and erotic literature, which appealed to contemporary tastes. The midinette or trottin<sup>15</sup> of Paris stimulated many songs and stories, some of which were published in Gil Blas. Much of Steinlen's work thus reflects the stereotypical characteristics of the

midinette, which were depicted in this popular literature. Among her other attributes, the midinette is physically attractive, even in the early morning when she first makes her appearance in the street. She is also well dressed:

Ça vous a des frisettes sur le front que l'on dirait de la mousse de nuage, ça vous a des yeux bouffis et rougis par le sommeil qu'elles viennent de quitter et qui semblent encore pleins de rêves roses, les joues le sont aussi, roses, roses comme des fesses d'anges; et la petite gorge qui palpite et qui s'agite sous des sensations encore à peine débrouillées, et les franfreluches, les rubans, les plumes, les chiffons qui ont sur elles des manières de vêtements de fées!<sup>16</sup>

Not as "fairy-like," but highly picturesque, is another description:

Huit heures. Elles trottent; elles descendent de Montmartre, de Belleville, de partout. Elles ont des yeux d'un brillant vague de personnes mal éveillées, des joues frottées très vite d'une serviette rude, des dents claires qui grignotent quelque chose. Sur les cheveux soignés, des paillassons fleuries dont les bords trop larges, battent dans le vent comme des ailes; des tailles serrées; des mantelets courts; des bottines étroites; çà et là un bijou grêle, quelque bague, une parure d'oreille, un bracelet qui glisse jusqu'au gant.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to her physical attractiveness, the midinette is viewed as a lover of nature and sometimes of animals. Frequently, she is described on an outing in the countryside,<sup>18</sup> joyfully picking flowers:

Il faut piquer dans le gazon transi les violettes une par une. Puis, une par une elle les cueillit pour en faire un bouquet, ses genoux dans la mousse humide, heureuse néanmoins d'avoir ainsi réalisé un idéal de

printemps et de campagne, et s'écriant parfois, prise d'enthousiasme:

--Mais regardez ces quatre-là, regardez-les donc! si elles ne tremblent pas au vent comme des personnes naturelles!<sup>19</sup>

Besides the qualities of beauty and love of nature attributed to the midinette, one of her endearing characteristics is her joie de vivre. She is carefree, full of laughter, playful, and even prankish. The first quote describes her in the morning, on the way to work. The second, during her lunch break:

Il avait neigé; et, sur le trottoir du boulevard Haussmann,...trois fillettes, presque des gamines, avec des rires et des cris, s'amusaient à faire 'grogner la neige.'<sup>20</sup>

Avec des rires de pensionnaires qui seraient en récréation, les midinettes ont envahi le trottoir, s'attardent curieuses et moqueuses aux devantures des magasins, se donnent le bras, se poussent du coude, animent, fleurissent la rue comme d'une jonchée de jeunesse, marchent sans but, du soleil dans les cheveux, des bouts de fil dans les jupes, retournent la tête narguent d'un regard effronté quelque suiveur qui les talonne et les obsède.<sup>21</sup>

As suggested above, there is a close camaraderie among these workers. Here is a description of the midinette after she has had her lunch:

Puis tout de suite la promenade, deux par deux, trois par trois, bras dessus, bras dessous, et barrant la rue.<sup>22</sup>

It is clear from these quotes that the youth, freshness, and charm of the Parisian midinette were seized upon and romanticized by the authors of the day,

who viewed her as a popular heroine. The difficult circumstances in which she often lived were obscured by this mythology. Steinlen's representations of the midinette conform to this popular image. Four illustrations by the artist depict the qualities described in the quotes; three illustrate stories from which the quotes have been taken. In Une Bonne Fille (Fig. 29) and Les Trottings (Fig. 30), the young women are pretty and particularly well dressed. In La Bagnole aux Cerises (Fig. 31) their comradeship and vivacity are emphasized. In the fourth illustration, Innocence (Fig. 32), the midinette's love of animals is manifest.

The midinette became one of Steinlen's favorite subjects. Through his illustrations for Gil Blas, he discovered a theme that he would repeat innumerable times, in individual prints and drawings, until the last years of his life. In 1898 and in 1899, when asked to contribute original designs as special numbers for Roger Marx's series "Les Maîtres de l'Affiche," Steinlen submitted drawings of the midinette. One of these shows two young women at night, looking wistfully at a brightly lit display window; the other shows three women in beautifully tailored dresses and aprons walking arm in arm in the streets of Paris (Fig. 33).

In 1902, Steinlen was asked, for the second time, to

submit designs for a series of postcards, a new area of interest for print enthusiasts that was initiated in the mid-90s by the Chaix publishing house.<sup>23</sup> The previous year he had submitted various images culled from Le Mirliton and Dans la Rue to Greninigaire's "The Collection of One Hundred." For the second series of postcards, which he entitled "Petites Ouvrières," Steinlen chose images of young working women that had appeared in Gil Blas. His name became identified with this theme, as well as with Bruant's pimps and prostitutes.

While throughout the 1890s, Steinlen preferred to show the midinette in groups of three, as seen in Fig. 33, after 1900 he created poetic charcoal drawings of larger groups of young girls (Fig. 34). These are soft images, with fuzzy outlines, akin to the sfumato-like works of Eugène Carrière and Henri Le Sidaner. These two Symbolists aimed at evoking a spiritual state of mind. Earlier, in 1897, Steinlen had produced a somewhat similar effect with his lithographs for Paul Delmet's Les Chansons des Femmes (Fig. 35), showing that he, too, responded to some aspects of Symbolism.

A look at illustrations of the midinette by other artists shows that Steinlen was a true champion of the positive--albeit romanticized--aspects of these women. While he always stressed the close friendships that these

women appeared to share, in 1894, another artist, Richard Ranft (also Swiss-born), focused on the petty rivalries among these workers (Fig. 36). Many artists seized on the flirtatiousness of the midinette, another trait often attributed to her by contemporary writers. With a flick of her wrist, the midinette would raise her skirt, thus baring her ankle, to attract an unsuspecting passerby. Thus, Edgar Chahine showed the midinette as a beguiling femme fatale (Fig. 37).<sup>24</sup> Although, in an illustration for the bawdy song "Parisiennne," in an issue of Gil Blas of 1895, Steinlen, too, showed midinettes raising their skirts, and emphasized their swaying hips as viewed from behind (Fig. 38); the young women appear to be more innocently engaged in conversation and less interested in attracting pursuers.

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In addition to depicting the midinette as joyous and carefree, Steinlen showed the more somber aspects of her life. Occasionally, he simply portrayed the young working woman as a victim of reduced means, as in La Poupée, where two ill-clad young women huddle together as they walk along the street on a snowy day (Fig. 39). More commonly, however, the economic instability of the young working woman was symbolized in images in which she was

seen in relation to a bourgeois gentleman in a top hat. The situation of a young city woman who becomes the mistress of a well-to-do man was by no means a new theme in literature or art. However, during the 1890s there were a plethora of illustrations created around this theme--a continual source of amusement. Nearly every illustrator produced at least one image of the relationship between the female worker and the middle-class man. In some illustrations, satire is focused on the old man who pounds the street in search of a young trottin. Lautrec's illustration for Le Mirliton, of February 1887, documents this. In Sur le Pavé (Fig. 40) an old man asks a young worker, "Quel âge as-tu, petite?" She replies, "Quinze ans, M'sieu..." The man's response is, "Hum!... déjà un peu vieillotte." In other illustrations the midinette is placed under satiric scrutiny, as in Hermann-Paul's caricature for Le Rire, of April 1897 (Fig. 41). In this illustration of Le Trottin, which was part of a series the artist called Parisiennes du Matin, a young female worker spots a well-dressed man across the street, walking in the opposite direction, and laments, "C'est toujours la même chose... Chaque fois qu'il prend un fiacre, je suis en retard."

For Gil Blas, Steinlen created a more sober, straightforward version of this theme.<sup>25</sup> Although the

stories about the young women and their suitors differed, Steinlen usually depicted them similarly. He concentrated on two or three figures, seen at night, among flickering lights and deep shadows. These illustrations show the young women as sad and alienated creatures, their faces sometimes pale or ghost-like (Fig. 42).

The stories that the images illustrate frequently describe the plight of the working woman sympathetically, showing the severe circumstances that forced her into the illicit liaison pictured in the illustration. "Hirondelle de Nuit," by Théo-Critt, is a classic story of the "down-fall" of a young Parisian woman (Fig. 43). In the story, Zizi, formerly Jenny, is comfortably ensconced in the hôtel of her lover, where, in a flashback, she recounts what led to her transformation. Her mother had died and she was left without enough money to pay the rent, so she found herself on the street. There she met a count and his young nephew (the scene that Steinler illustrated). The elderly count set her up as his mistress. Later, she met another man to whom she is now attached.

Another story, "L'Enfant," (Fig. 44), is about a young woman who can only earn three francs every five days or so, a meager sum. She came to Paris from Poitiers with her fiancé, in order to earn enough money to get married. However, he died, and she is now penniless,

having paid the doctor bills during his long illness. The man in the illustration buys the young woman some dinner and offers to try to help her find work. She brings out the poet in him:

Ils sortent de la brasserie et montent dans un fiacre. Le Clubman n'a plus sa blague et son scepticisme de boulevardier. Tant de détresse, tant de misère l'ont l'ému. Oh! Paris, mangeur d'hommes, dévorateur de femmes! Il embrasse, d'un baiser paternel, d'un baiser consolateur, cette Enfant si doucement triste, si résignée....<sup>26</sup>

The majority of these stories are maudlin and melodramatic and it is not surprising that Steinlen found a formula for dealing with them. While there is a certain detachment in the artist's point of view, it is clear that these illustrations, like the midinettes discussed earlier, appealed to the fantasies of the male readership of Gil Blas. To an 1890s viewer, these images immediately conjured up the economic instability, and the consequent availability, of the female worker; they stimulated fantasies in the minds of the male readers of coming to her rescue. Thus, the class consciousness of the period is reflected in these images, as it had been in Steinlen's illustrations for Le Mirliton.

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The dividing line between the impoverished midinette, who might turn to a man for aid, and the professional

streetwalker was not a rigid one. However, there was a difference between the two types, and it is seen in the stories and poems in Gil Blas. Steinlen was able to convey the distinction. For example, as we have seen in his illustrations of the young working woman, she is usually shown being pursued or accosted by a man (See Figs. 43,44). By contrast, depictions of prostitutes emphasized two things: the woman's aggressive pursuit of the man and the ambulatory nature of her work. Steinlen thus created his own visual devices--such as altering the roles of pursuer and pursued--in order to identify modes of behavior and social distinctions that were familiar to his contemporaries. One might say that the artist created his own visual language for dealing with the many forms of street life that so intrigued him.

Les Marcheuses, an illustration for the song by Bruant that was published on December 24, 1893, illustrates both the aggressiveness of the prostitute and her ambulatory existence (Fig. 45). In the foreground, a woman grabs the coat of a man who has turned away from her. We can see the fold in the man's coat as it is pulled or pinched by this woman, whose coarse face and desperate movement signify the harshness of her existence. In the background, figures make their way through the darkness in a dream-like world, shivering in the glare of

electric lights amid the bare trees of winter.

In this illustration, Steinlen deals with the individual woman in a prosaic, and thus highly realistic way. The figures in the background, however, are conceived rather abstractly; they were derived from an illustration of the same song published a month earlier in Le Mirliton, on November 24, 1893 (Fig. 46), in which five figures dressed in dark coats appear to glide through the night. Steinlen created a rhythmic pattern with their dark silhouettes, so that the image is akin to Symbolist works of the period and in tune with Bruant's verse. "Les Marcheuses" consists of twelve stanzas, marked by the repetition of a singular refrain, which conveys a sense of rhythm and movement unusual for Bruant. Steinlen must have been reacting to this when he drew Les Marcheuses for Le Mirliton. One verse and the refrain follow--yet the reader must be reminded that the refrain is repeated five more times in the song:

A'vont comme ça  
Par-ci, par-là  
En app'lant l'a-  
-mour qui s'en va

Pierreuses, Trotteuses,  
A's marchent l'soir  
Quand il fait noir,  
Sur le trottoir.

Three years later, Steinlen recreated the feeling of Les Marcheuses in another striking illustration of

prostitutes, the highly expressive Ballade d'Hiver. This accompanied a short piece by Gustave Coquiot, published in Gil Blas on March 15, 1896 (Fig. 47). Unlike the stories about fallen midinettes, Coquiot's three paragraphs are more like poetry than prose. The poetic rhythms in Coquiot's verse are similar in spirit to Bruant's "Les Marcheuses," and Steinlen's illustration for "Ballade d'Hiver" is related to his illustrations of "Les Marcheuses" for Le Mirliton and Gil Blas.

In these images, it appears that Steinlen was influenced by Symbolist notions of "correspondences," which affected some artists of the 1890s. Baudelaire had "considered the theory of 'correspondences' to be the foundation of the artistic possibility of suggesting one thing by means of another, a sound by a colour, a colour by a melody, etc., or, also, an idea by one of the means just mentioned."<sup>27</sup> These ideas were further expounded upon by writers and artists associated with Gauguin, such as Albert Aurier and Paul Sérusier.<sup>28</sup> Later, Seurat invoked sensation through the specific use of color and line.<sup>29</sup>

Steinlen's illustrations of 1897 and 1900 (Figs. 34, 35), which show the influence of Symbolist ideas, have been cited previously. In such works as Les Marcheuses and Ballade d'Hiver, Steinlen used line to suggest the

rhythms of poetry and music, and he relied upon the pictorial structure of his illustrations to create a mood--a sense of alienation and melancholy. Edvard Munch also used pictorial equivalents to represent states of mind in his painting of city life--such as The Cry of 1893 and Anxiety of 1894, in which the rapidly receding perspectives and the brilliantly colored wavy lines evoke the spiritual unrest of modern man.

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Steinlen also created for Gil Blas several heroic images of women--in addition to the portrayals of women already discussed--that should not be overlooked. One of these was an illustration for a politically oriented song, "La Mine," with words by T eramond and music by F. Jacotot. The song tells of the harsh working conditions of the miners, their attempts to strike, and of how the army subdued them. The bitterness implicit in this song is reflected in Steinlen's illustration: coal miners face soldiers, who are lined up in the manner of a firing squad (Fig. 48). In front of the coal miners is a grief-stricken woman, who, in an act of defiance, holds aloft a tiny child before the armed guards, an image that probably derives from Jacques-Louis David's Rape of the Sabine Women. Her young daughter clings to her and tries

to push her back in line. Several of Steinlen's later images drew closely up on La Mine, one of them a drawing for the lithograph La famine en Russie, of 1922 (Fig. 49).<sup>30</sup>

Another heroic portrayal of womanhood is the illustration for the story "Gaieté parisienne" by Camille de Saint-Croix, published in Gil Blas on June 16, 1899. Steinlen focused on two laundresses with heavy bundles who stop along the boulevard to watch pallbearers carrying a child's coffin (Fig. 50). The story makes no reference to these laundresses, but is about Plantureau--seen tipping his hat in the background--a roving playboy who appears in several of de Saint-Croix's stories. This character engages in conversation with the pallbearers and discovers that he may be the father of the dead infant, who was carried away from its sick mother in a poor section of the city. The last line of the story reads: "Est-ce qu'on sait, à Paris!" referring to the temporary liaisons of modern Paris.

Steinlen gave substance to a trivial story. His washerwomen are strong and well drawn, the roundness of their forms enhanced by the oval bundles of clothing that they carry. These figures are part of the tradition of laundresses in art with which Daumier and Degas first made us familiar.<sup>31</sup> Steinlen, too, would produce similar

images of laundresses in his original prints and paintings.

\* \* \*

Besides depicting working women, Steinlen made a series based on the vagabond for Gil Blas. While drawings on this theme are less numerous than those sexually charged renditions of women, they should be regarded as an essential part of Steinlen's socially oriented art. Although inspired by the literature that appeared in Gil Blas, this subject, like the midinette, was one that Steinlen turned to in his more personal drawings and prints.

Unlike the midinette, who was a relatively recent social type, born in the nineteenth century, the vagabond had a long and complex heritage. The wanderer of fin de siècle France is a descendant of the Wandering Jew, a figure dating back to the New Testament and the Apocryphal texts.<sup>32</sup> Originally, the Jew was condemned to eternal wandering and suffering for having mistreated Christ on his journey to Calvary. From medieval times onward, the legend of the Wandering Jew was recreated in numerous forms in Western art and literature. The figure became a philosopher, a historian, and a prophet, as well as a social rebel.

In the popular literature in Gil Blas, the vagabonds are secular versions of the Wandering Jew, symbolizing the suffering of humanity. They are displaced workers who wander about looking for employment, or individuals who have given up hope and have become criminals. Many vagabonds, or vagrants, were sinister figures who inspired terror, and the experiences of some late nineteenth-century vagrants were akin to the horrific tales of the Wandering Jew that prevailed in literature of the High Romantic period about 1800.

The sinister quality that characterized vagabonds and vagrants in the 1890s was offset by a more positive view of vagabondage. To some, particularly artists and writers, the wanderer came to symbolize freedom from bourgeois conventions and concerns. The vagabond, who had no earthly ties or attachments, was felt to be more in touch with nature and it was believed that he led a more spiritual life than did his contemporaries.<sup>33</sup> While Bruant sometimes created vagrants of a more sinister type, in his verse, he also expressed the latter vision of the wanderer. One of his songs, "Alléluia du Cheminot," was among the most positive and joyful expressions of vagabondage to appear in Gil Blas. Published in the journal on April 8, 1894, this song is a celebration of nature and of the open road:

Tout ce qu'on bout et tout ce que l'on mange,  
 Et la récolte et la bonne vendange,  
 Pour qui donc pousse tout cela?

Pour le cheminot qui passe par là  
 Dixit Dominus au premier cheminot:  
 Allez, mangez,  
 Prenez, buvez,  
 Dixit Dominus Domino meo.

In a radio broadcast produced after Steinlen's death, based on interviews with him in the last years of his life, the artist recalls this song, and speaks of his reveries about the lives of the vagabonds, who lived "sans attaches, totalement libres, maîtres de l'espace...et qui ne possédaient rien."<sup>34</sup> In his illustration for this song, Steinlen drew himself as the vagabond in Bruant's verse. He is seen against an idyllic landscape in which there are rolling hills, a small town, and peasants working in the fields (Fig. 51).<sup>35</sup> An earlier representation of a vagabond, probably from about mid-century, shows a vagabond dressed in a similar way, with a soft hat, knapsack, and large walking stick. In the background is his wife with two children, one in her arms and one at her side, very much as in Steinlen's illustration (Fig. 52).

A few months earlier, Steinlen had created a vagabond, in exactly the same dress, for an image that appeared in Gil Blas on January 28, 1894;<sup>36</sup> it was also an illustration for a verse by Bruant, "Marchand

d'Crayon." This poem, unlike "Alléluia du Cheminot," is angry in tone, more in keeping with most of Bruant's work. The malicious and cajoling voice of this vagrant is the first hint of that violence that came to characterize the homeless man in many later stories and illustrations.

Written in slang, the poem is a plea by a vagabond who is about to be taken into custody by a policeman.<sup>37</sup> He tells the policeman that he is not without work, because he sells pencils, but explains, however, that he really doesn't earn anything from this so-called employment because competition in the city has ruined him. Moreover, in describing the shopkeepers in the city, a sense of his dissatisfaction and unhappiness emerges, because the hobo must live alone, without the comforts of family life. This longing for the bourgeois ideal of the family is completely opposed to the notion of freedom from responsibilities that is the theme of "Alléluia du Cheminot." In Steinlen's illustration for "Marchand d'Crayon," a good deal less saccharine than Alléluia du Cheminot, the arrogance of the hobo, who defies the law with his tiny pencil, is effectively captured (Fig. 53).

In several poems and songs of the mid-1890s, the vagabond emerges as a victim both of natural elements and of society--in keeping with the tradition of hardships

experienced by the legendary Wandering Jew. For example, in Jean Richepin's "Marche de Pluie," the vagabond laments:

Après la pluie  
Viendra le vent.  
En arrivant  
Il vous essuie. 38

In Camille de Saint-Croix's song "Le Vagabond," a man complains, "Le froid me mord; la faim me poignarde...." In this work, the vagabond becomes an ominous creature of the night:

Les yeux en haut, comptant les étoiles  
Que seules j'aime et veux toujours voir,  
Coupant ce vent qui glace mes moelles,  
Je disparaiss dans l'horizon noir!  
Ceux qui m'ont vu du bord des grand'routes  
Ne sauront rien de mes vieux secrets;  
J'aime laisser aux hommes des doutes, 39  
J'aime étonner de beaux yeux distraits!

Steinlen portrayed the vagabond in an Art Nouveau style, and as the poem suggests, with a desperate look in his eyes (Fig. 54).

In "Le Vagabond" the only aspects of nature that console the poor wayfarer are the night and the stars. Similarly, in Victor Saimbault's "La Nuit," night is seen as love and as poetry, a consoler of the unfortunate:

Elle est amour, verseuse d'ambroisie,  
A qui n'a rien que de sombres haillons;  
Des astres d'or elle est la poésie,  
Et consolante à qui dort sous les ponts;  
A ces martyrs, superbes vagabonds!  
...  
Baume divin des peines de la vie,

Elle est la rose éclosée aux jeunes fronts  
 Des orphelins, dont la lèvre pâlie  
 Attend la Mort au gîte des larrons  
 Ou la Débauche aux portes des prisons....<sup>40</sup>

For his illustration of "La Nuit," published several months after "Le Vagabond," on November 17, 1895, Steinlen heightened the effect of the vagrant's wild stare. The highly expressive drawing (Fig. 55) shows him among dense shadows in a forest. He is surrounded by darkness, his highlighted face peering out of the drawing with a look of rage.

In the poem "La Nuit" there is no mention of the anger that Steinlen illustrated. However, in "Le Vagabond," which was illustrated several months before, there is specific mention of "beaux yeux distraits" (quoted above). The angry expression in La Nuit, then, is the result of a composite view of the vagrant that incorporates the rancor expressed in Bruant's "Marchand d'Crayon" and the desire to frighten, expressed in "Le Vagabond."

Steinlen drew several more illustrations of drifters for Gil Blas between 1895 and 1900. These were primarily for short stories, in which the vagabond emerges as a victim of industrialism and the displacement and unemployment that it produces.<sup>41</sup> In most of these stories, the psychology and the social conditions of the vagrant are discussed. The stories contain references to the

inequities of the class structure. In some cases, the violent actions of the drifter are seen to be the result of economic conditions, and the individual's decision to engage in stealing and other lawless acts is based on a desire to redress these inequities.

"Vae Victus," by Jean Reibrach, published on February 14, 1896, is highly sympathetic to the plight of the tramp. This is the story of a Breton worker employed as a coachman and construction worker in the province who cannot find work in overcrowded Paris. Little by little his appearance deteriorates, until he looks like a "shady vagrant," dressed in soiled clothing, unshaven, and with an emaciated face. The story describes his unsuccessful attempts to find a job, or even to locate charitable societies that might help him. He meets a well-to-do man who takes pity on him, and who offers him a meal in his home, but the vagrant is thrown out of the house because of a misunderstanding on the part of the bourgeois gentleman.

Steinlen shows the vagabond, whom we have previously associated with the countryside, in the midst of the bustling city (Fig. 56). His two usual occupations symbolized by the scaffolding, which signifies construction workers, and by a boy leading a horse-drawn carriage. In this image, there is a contrast between the flourishing

city and the hobo, with his pack on back, who seems an unhappy and alienated presence in an environment to which he cannot adapt. Jacques Demain, the vagabond in "Vae Victus," is depicted as a helpless victim of prevailing economic and social conditions.

Other stories described vagrants as violent types, who expressed their anger against the establishment in a variety of ways. Jean Lorrain created a terrifying portrait of a ruthless mugger in "L'Homme des Berges," published on March 22, 1896. Drawing on his illustration of a vagabond for the poem "La Nuit," Steinlen created an unforgettable image of a city prowler, suggesting the desperation of vagrants in the context of the city and the suburbs (Fig. 57). Just like the vagabond in La Nuit, the tramp in L'Homme des Berges has a disturbing look in his eyes. He is wearing a worker's blouse, described in the story as a "blouse-suaire"; the Seine and beyond it an island, probably meant to be the Grande Jatte, as mentioned in the story, are seen in the background. By showing the figure in a light-colored smock, Steinlen focuses attention on the face--particularly the eyes--which Lorraine described as having a "bizarre mobility."

Another effective illustration of the city prowler is Le Vilain Homme, a drawing for a story by Lucien

Descaves, published on November 19, 1897. The principal character in the story is a social rebel who roams the streets frightening people with the most "villainous" looks that he can muster. His favorite means of disturbing the public is to stare people down by peering through restaurant windows while they are eating. This vagrant described the rationale for his behavior in quasi-political terms:

On ne me plaint pas, cependant; je ne veux pas qu'on me plaigne; il est trop facile de plaindre les pauvres quand on a chaud et qu'on a bien dîné. Mieux vaut inspirer la terreur que la compassion: la terreur réconforte davantage celui qui la repand. On voit tout de suit que je ne mendie pas, on le voit dans mes yeux étincelants et sur ma lèvre amère; leur expression est pire que l'outrage et met le désordre dans les âmes!

Later he described his attitude as that of someone who demands from people, "TOUT OU RIEN!"

Steinlen shows the vagrant looking in a restaurant at a fat bourgeois man who is eating (Fig. 58 ). The tramp has a fierce expression on his face, and the characteristic "wild eyes" of many other illustrations. Behind him, one sees the outline of a well-dressed couple, whose presence further calls attention to the social divisions against which this ominous figure is rebelling.

With L'Homme des Berges and Le Vilain Homme Steinlen captured the anger and lawlessness of the city vagrant.

These images clearly grew out of his previous portrayals of vagabonds in the countryside, particularly those in Le Vagabond and La Nuit. What is perhaps most characteristic of all of these illustrations--as well as of the Wandering Jew in Romantic literature<sup>42</sup>--are the wild staring eyes of the central figure.

It is not surprising that the vagrant became a popular subject for writers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Between 1830 and 1890, the number of reported vagabonds and beggars rose from 2,500 to 20,000. In 1899, 50,000 of them were arrested.<sup>43</sup> In 1907, a Commission du vagabondage was named in the Chamber of Deputies to deal with the problem.<sup>44</sup> A classification was established defining three categories of vagabonds: 1) la route de la faiblesse--the old and sick, abandoned children, and single women without professions; 2) la route de la détresse--workers on strike; and la route de la paresse et du vice--professional vagabonds and beggars, including "le trimardeur, le chemineau, le romanichel, le bonneteur, le souteneur, l'exploiteur d'enfants, et les mille variétés de mendiants." The purpose of these classifications was to develop different ways of dealing with the various kinds of problems and, particularly, to protect the rights of the "weak" against those of the "professionals." This represented a more enlightened

approach to the problem of indigence, since it treated women and children in a more sympathetic way than before. However, male beggars and vagabonds were still viewed as hardened criminels and were treated severely by the police.

It was these criminels that Steinlen depicted in Gil Blas (see Figs. 57,58), a subject that was relatively rare in the visual arts of the nineteenth century. While there had been a great deal of interest in images of the poor during the July Monarchy and the Second Republic, it was usually the ragpicker who was given visual form by realist artists.<sup>45</sup> Manet created a large painting of the ragpicker and Raffäelli specialized in images of this type.<sup>46</sup> Ragpickers were quite different from vagabonds and beggars in that they were licensed by the government to pursue their work. Qualification for a license demanded that the ragpicker possess a lantern, a long stick, and a basket--the tools of the trade.<sup>47</sup> A close look at images of the ragpicker by Raffäelli and those in Les Français peint par eux-mêmes and Les Rues de Paris--compendiums of French "professions"--shows that this worker carries a stick, but not the long, knarled walking stick used by the vagabond and beggar. The ragpicker's stick is much smaller and straighter, with a hook on the end (see Figs. 59,60).

Steinlen, then, depicted the traditional vagabond with long walking stick, an image connected with the countryside, as well as the city's hardened vagrant--both of whom lived, like the ragpicker, on the fringes of society. Yet, the lives of the vagabond and the vagrant were portrayed as totally different from those of the proud, peacekeeping ragpickers. Steinlen captured the vagabonds' intense social rage in their highly expressive faces and demonic stares, so that these isolated figures have come to symbolize the violent unrest and alienation that is characteristic of vagrants--whether in the nineteenth century or in our own time.

Notes

1. Before the formal creation of Gil Blas illustré, four illustrated literary supplements to Gil Blas were published. Approximately 200,000 copies of the supplements were sold. See Gil Blas, Supplément, June 21, 1891, p. 8.
2. See above, Chapter I, pp. 20-28.
3. See Marilyn McCully, Els Quatre Gats: Art in Barcelona around 1900, Princeton, New Jersey, 1978, p. 132; Peter Morse, John Sloan's Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné of the Etchings, Lithographs and Posters, New Haven, Connecticut, 1969, pp. 362-63; and Stanely Appelbaum, Simplicissimus, New York, 1975, p. ix.
4. Throughout this chapter, Gil Blas will be substituted for the longer title, Gil Blas illustré, except when it is necessary to distinguish the literary supplement from the daily journal, Gil Blas.
5. This information appears in a letter dated May 18, 1895, from Eugène Navarre, an administrator at the journal, to Steinlen. (Steinlen correspondence in the possession of Marguerite Steinlen, Cergy, France.)
6. Letter from Eugène Navarre, May 18, 1895.
7. Letter from Steinlen to his wife, postmarked September 20, 1896.
8. C. H. C. Wright, in The Background of Modern French Literature, Boston, 1926, discusses the development of naturalism during the second half of the nineteenth century. His analysis of the Goncourts' influence is particularly informative. See Wright, pp. 281-86.
9. "De tous les produits parisiens, le produit le plus parisien sans contredit, c'est la grisette." Les Français peints par eux-mêmes, Paris, 1840, vol. I, p. 9. The grisette, a term coined during the Restoration and the July Monarchy, was the precursor of the working woman of the Third Republic, the midinette. See Wright, p. 116.

10. See Abel Chatelain, "Migrations et domesticité féminine urbaine en France, XVIII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècle," Revue d'histoire économique et social, 47, 1969, p. 509.
11. This is well documented. A revealing statistical study is T. Deldycke, H. Gelders, and J. M. Limbor, La population active et sa structure, Brussels, 1969. In his article "City vs. Country: The Rural Image in French Painting from Millet to Gauguin," Artforum, vol. VIII, no. 6, February 1970, pp. 44-55, Robert Herbert discussed the effect of nineteenth-century urbanization on French artists, including Millet, Van Gogh, Seurat, and Gauguin. See also Gabriel P. Weisberg, Social Concern and the Worker: French Prints from 1830-1910, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, 1973.
12. See Joan W. Scott and Louise A. Tilly, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth-Century Europe," Comparative Studies in Society and History, vol. 17, no. 1, January 1975, pp. 36-64. Linda Nochlin discusses the importance of the family in the nineteenth century to the concept of the virtuous woman, particularly with reference to the rehabilitation of the fallen woman, in her article on Rossetti's Found. See Linda Nochlin, "Lost and Found: Once More the Fallen Woman," The Art Bulletin, LVIII, 1, March 1978, pp. 139-53.
13. See Le Comte d'Haussonville, Salaires et misères de femmes, Paris, 1900, pp. 16-18.
14. See Le Comte d'Haussonville and Octave Uzanne, Parisiennes de ce temps en leurs divers milieux, états et conditions, Paris, 1910.
15. The trottin was a specific kind of midinette--a term designating all women who worked in the garment business. The trottin delivered clothing and was highly visible, as she was usually on the street, on her way to a customer. I will use the broader term midinette for garment workers, including the trottin.
16. Edmond Char, "Une Bonne Fille," Gil Blas, April 28, 1899, p. 2.
17. Jean Reibrach, "Les Trottins," Gil Blas, April 1, 1898, p. 2.

18. Trips to the countryside were often depicted in illustrations of the earlier grisettes. See Edith Melcher, The Life and Times of Henry Monnier, 1799-1877, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1950, p. 43.
19. Paul Arène, "La Midinette," Gil Blas, February 5, 1893, p. 6.
20. Arene, p. 3.
21. Rene Maizeroy, "La Bagnole aux Cérises," Gil Blas, May 28, 1897, p. 2.
22. Arène, p. 3.
23. See Alan Weill, Art Nouveau Postcards, New York, 1977, pp. 307.
24. The polarized view of women as representing extremes of good and evil was typical of the 1890s. See Jan Thompson, "The Role of Woman in Art Nouveau," Art Journal, vol. XXXI, no. 2, Winter 1971-1972, pp. 158-67; Robert Pincus-Witten, "The Iconography of Symbolist Painting," Artforum, vol. VIII, no. 5, January 1970, pp. 56-62; and Gabriel P. Weisberg, Images of Women: Printmakers in France from 1830-1930, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, 1977, pp. 29-31.
25. While most of Steinlen's illustrations are of a serious type, he, too, drew occasional caricatures on this theme. An illustration in serial format appeared in Gil Blas on April 22, 1894. In "Ça arrive tous les jours," a man pursues a woman in the first image. In the second image, the woman turns around, only to reveal that she has the face of a monkey, sending shivers up and down the man's spine. Images such as these have an obvious appeal for a male audience. That men have usually been the creators of erotic images of women, as well as customers for such work, was emphasized by Linda Nochlin. See "Eroticism and Female Imagery in Nineteenth-Century Art," Woman as Sex Object, Hess and Nochlin, eds., New York, 1972, pp. 9-10.
26. Auguste Germain, "L'Enfant," Gil Blas, September 2, 1898, p. 2.
27. H. R. Rookmaaker, Gauguin and 19th Century Art Theory, Amsterdam, 1972, p. 30.

28. Rookmaaker, P. 153ff; see also John Rewald. Post-Impressionism From Van Gogh to Gauguin, 2nd ed., New York, 1962, pp. 481-82.
29. See Rewald, p. 141, and Linda Nochlin, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, Sources and Documents in the History of Art Series, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966, pp. 112-16.
30. Dessins de Steinlen, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1968, p. 28, no. 37.
31. On laundresses in the nineteenth century, see Eunice Lipton, "The Laundress in Late Nineteenth-Century French Culture: Imagery, ideology and Edgar Degas," Art History, vol. 3, no. 3, September 1980, pp. 295-313.
32. George K. Anderson, The Legend of the Wandering Jew, Providence, Rhode Island, 1965, pp. 11-14.
33. These aspects of vagabondage are discussed in Linda Nochlin, "Gustave Courbet's Meeting: A Portrait of the Artist as a Wandering Jew," The Art Bulletin, XLIX, September 1967, pp. 209-22, and in Arthur Rickett, The Vagabond in Literature, New York, 1906, pp. 3-15.
34. Germaine Inghelbrecht, D. E. Inghelbrecht et son temps, Neuchâtel, 1978, p. 107.
35. Steinlen had previously illustrated "Alléluia du Cheminot" for Le Mirliton on October 20, 1893. In this illustration there is an image of a vagabond to the left of the music, and above the music an illustration of Christ with his twelve disciples, which indicates the Messianic element that Steinlen associated with the vagabond. The landscape depicted in the Gil Blas illustration of "Alléluia du Cheminot" first appeared in Le Chambard; it was entitled La Député aux Champs and was published April 14, 1894.
36. Steinlen's first illustration of a vagabond for Gil Blas accompanied Jean Richepin's "Noël Misérable," published December 30, 1893.

37. Vagabonds were punishable under articles 269 and 270 of the penal code: "Les vagabonds et gens sans aveu sont ceux qui n'ont ni domicile certain, ni moyens de subsistance et qui n'exercent habituellement ni métier, ni profession." Dr. A. Pagnier, Le Vagabondage, Paris, 1910, p. 193.
38. Jean Richepin, "Marche de Pluie," Gil Blas, February 18, 1894, p. 8.
39. Camille de Saint-Croix, "Le Vagabond," Gil Blas, May 5, 1895, p. 8.
40. Victor Saimbault, "La Nuit," Gil Blas, November 17, 1895, p. 8.
41. Several sociological studies were published that documented these problems, including Pagnier; Fernande Dubief, La question du vagabondage, Paris, 1911; and Fernande Chanteau, Vagabondage et Mendicité, Paris, 1899.
42. One of the most influential was Matthew Gregory Lewis's The Monk, of 1796, which stimulated many other works, including several nineteenth-century French versions of the story. In The Monk, the large, black, staring eyes of the Wandering Jew are described as having "...an expression of fury, despair and malevolence that struck horror to my very soul...." See Anderson, pp. 175-81.
43. Dubief, p. 20.
44. Dubief, pp. viii-x.
45. See Gabriel Weisberg, The Realist Tradition: French Painting and Drawing 1830-1900, Cleveland, 1980, pp. 45, 54, 190; and Anne Coffin Hanson, "Popular imagery and the work of Edouard Manet," French 19th Century Painting and Literature, Ulrich Finke, ed., Manchester, England, 1972, pp. 141-45.
46. See Weisberg, pp. 164-65.
47. Weisberg, p. 46.

## CHAPTER IV

LE CHAMBARD SOCIALISTE:  
ART AT THE SERVICE OF MARXISM

Le Chambard Socialiste was launched on December 16, 1893, and continued until June 8, 1895, under the editorship of G rault-Richard. Steinlen created illustrations for all but one issue, through July 1894: thirty-one covers and a double-page insert. The illustrator who succeeded him was B. Moloch, who worked more in the manner of a traditional caricaturist than did Steinlen. Moloch became the journal's principal visual contributor, through February 1895. He was followed by a number of illustrators who attempted to re-create the archetypal socialist imagery that Steinlen had originated and which had helped to bring a wide readership to the journal.

Le Chambard appears to have been established as a response to the growing struggle between government and the left--a struggle that was, itself, prompted by violent anarchist demonstrations.<sup>1</sup> The journal was first

published just one week after Auguste Vaillant threw a bomb onto the floor of the Chamber of Deputies,<sup>2</sup> generating repressive measures against socialism, which the magazine proposed to redress. Its aims were to act as an arm of the socialist parties, to represent all leftist organizations, and to defend the exploited and unfortunate members of the social order. It claimed that it would denounce "sans peur ni merci, les iniquités sociales et leurs auteurs, les exactions des exploitants, les canailleries et les corruptions gouvernementales."<sup>3</sup>

Beginning with its very first issue, Le Chambard was successful beyond all expectations and the printer's supply was quickly exhausted. The large-scale, full-page colored covers, measuring approximately 12 7/8 by 7 1/4 inches, must have gone a long way in attracting the public to this inexpensive weekly, which sold for ten centimes. Shortly after the newspaper was first published, it was announced that the covers--which Steinlen had signed with the name Petit Pierre (another translation of his German name)--could be purchased as original numbered lithographs through the printer E. Kleinmann. Kleinmann printed one hundred lithographs of each cover illustration on high-grade white paper.<sup>4</sup> For some illustrations additional prints on a cheaper yellow paper were also pulled from the stone. An announcement in the

journal stated that these prints could be ordered by mail from the printer--each black-and-white print cost two francs and each colored one 2 francs 25.

Steinlen's imagery for Le Chambard primarily represents the principles of Marxist socialism, which were expressed in the articles by Le Chambard's editor G rault-Richard. In these articles, some of which are quoted below, the ruling classes were indicted for exploiting the poor, and the worker was called upon to break the tyranny of capitalism by overthrowing its leaders.

Steinlen expressed these ideas in a variety of ways. Like most social commentators, his illustrations ran the gamut, thematically, from the depiction of specific historical events to the interpretation of universal principles (in this case those of Marxist socialism), and he moved from the very concrete to the most general imagery. One finds a wide range of representations: caricatures of specific leaders, such as Casimir-P rier; stereotypes of particular groups of people, such as the legislature and big-business interests; and universal symbols like Liberty, who symbolizes both the defiled Republic and the hoped-for equality of the future socialist state.

Some of Steinlen's illustrations satirized members

of the ruling class; others criticized capitalism itself. In one work, Steinlen combined an image of capitalism, represented by a stereotypically fat, ugly businessman, with an image of the exploited Republic, represented by Liberty, portrayed as a vulnerable young woman. In other illustrations that centered on the theme of the French Republic the artist also depicted Liberty heroically, often in reference to the Paris Commune of 1871. These works, as well as images of the Commune itself, were continually resurrected in Le Chambard. Perhaps the best example of socialist imagery in that journal involves the illustrations of May Day--a holiday that was charged with emotion for the socialists, coming as it did in the month commemorating the "Bloody Week" of 1871 when the Commune was violently defeated. In addition to these socialist works, several illustrations of the poor, the homeless, and the exploited--images similar to the work that Steinlen did for other journals but with captions that have the political sting of Le Chambard--will also be discussed, to be followed by a review of some of the work of those contributors to Le Chambard who followed Steinlen.

\* \* \*

In the illustrations that satirized members of the

ruling class, probably the single most-criticized figure in Le Chambard was the politician Casimir-Périer (1847-1907). In 1893, when Le Chambard was launched, Casimir-Périer was president of the Council of Ministers, having held government posts since the early 1870s, at the beginning of the Third Republic. After the assassination of Sadi Carnot in June 1894, Casimir-Périer became president of the Republic for a brief six months.

This politician's background made him a chief target for the socialists. His father had been a famous minister under Louis Phillipe, the King who had saved the July monarchy by imposing severely repressive measures against republicanism.<sup>5</sup> Because of his father's close connection to Louis Philippe, the son was viewed as an Orleanist at heart, rather than as a republican. In addition, Casimir-Périer's brother-in-law was the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, who headed a coal and iron company in Anzin--one of the largest businesses in France. Thus, the politician was believed to have close affiliations with big-business interests rather than with those of the common people.

Moreover, Casimir-Périer was instrumental in the passage of repressive laws against the left late in 1893, after Vaillant's bomb exploded in the Chamber of Deputies. In an article of December 23, 1893, in Le Chambard, "Son Ignorance M. Casimir-Périer," the politician is reproached

for having claimed that the socialists disregarded basic constitutional laws. The writer called Casimir-Périer a martinet who had probably never read the constitution! Another article in the same issue of Le Chambard, "Jean, Paul, Pandore, Casimir-Périer" (a parody of the politician's long name, Jean-Paul-Pierre), appears to have been provoked by Casimir-Périer's assertion that the left was unpatriotic.<sup>6</sup>

Steinlen's cover for the second issue of Le Chambard is related to these articles (Fig. 61).<sup>7</sup> Casimir-Périer is represented as a scarecrow, set up to protect the property of the bourgeoisie. The illustration is entitled L'Epouvantail Bourgeois and the caption at the bottom reads: "CASIMIR-PANDORE: -- Ah! C'est un métier difficile, garantir la propriété!" In his portrayal of the politician as a policeman and in the caption (where the word Pandore is used), Steinlen relied on the text of Le Chambard. However, in representing him as a scarecrow--the guardian of personal property--Steinlen invented his own personification of a mindless puppet of the bourgeoisie.

Four issues later, for a cover of January 20, 1894, Steinlen represented Casimir-Périer again as a militant force, who stood in the way of progress (Fig. 62). Here we see the politician standing in front of the sun from

which the names of Pascal, Benoit-Malon, Victor Hugo, Lamennais, Karl Marx, Fourier, Diderot, Barbès, and Blanqui radiate. The illustration is entitled Pauvre Pandore!..., and the caption reads: "...Tu n'arreteiras jamais le Soleil."<sup>8</sup>

Casimir-Périer was one of the few individuals that Steinlen actually caricatured in Le Chambard. The majority of his illustrations represented types rather than particular people. For example, in addition to the stereotype of the fat businessman, who was a caricature of big business, in Le Chambard the government was typified by ministers who cared little about their constituencies. Using these types, Steinlen created three images that are visually similar and have the same message. The first of these is of a businessman, but in the following two one sees a deputy and a minister. In all three cases, men of authority appear to be completely insensitive to the needs of the working people. The first of these covers was done for the issue of February 17, 1894 (Fig. 63). It is entitled En Carême; the caption reads: "LE BOURGEOIS: Eh bien! mon pauvre homme, les jours gras sont passés, nous voici en Carême. Il faut manger maigre et faire pénitence. LE PAUVRE HOMME: jours gras ou Carême, pour moi c'est toujours maigre, mais ça changera." In a later issue, of April 14, 1894, a similar dialogue

transpires between a member of the Chamber and a peasant, who speaks in patois (Fig. 64). It is called Le Député aux Champs; the caption reads: "Travaillez en paix. Le gouvernement vous assure l'ordre et la tranquillité. -- Il est ben honnête. J'aimerions autant qu'y nous assure un morciau de pain tous les jours."<sup>9</sup> Steinlen turned the relationship of a minister and his people into a farce in the third example, Le Jeune Ministre, which appeared June 9, 1894. The minister is speaking to a rundown old man: "Soyez fier de votre élu: me voici arrivé tout jeune au pouvoir, grâce a la République. --J'arrive, itout, Monsieur le Ministre... J'arrive à l'hôpital" (Fig. 65).

For the socialists, not only did big business and the government treat the worker in the same callous manner, but these two forces worked together against the common man. This idea is conveyed in numerous articles by Gérault-Richard, and is reflected in two illustrations by Steinlen in which the stereotyped image of the businessman, mentioned above, plays a dominant role.

In Cent Millions! of February 24, 1894, we see two soldiers saluting a big-business man as though he were a government official, showing the collusion of business and the state (Fig. 66). The caption reads: "M. le Baron est mis en liberté avec les honneurs dûs à un personnage

de haut vol." The illustration relates to an editorial by G rault-Richard, in the previous issue of Le Chambard, in which he denounced one of the ministers for having stated that "'Le drapeau rouge est le drapeau de l'arm e du vol.'"<sup>10</sup> According to the editor, the socialists were being accused of dishonesty by the government but, on the contrary--he stated--it was the ministers who were the thieves, and he named, in particular, those involved in the Panama scandal.

The Panama scandal was fresh in the minds of the public in 1894. In the previous year, both the directors of the Panama Canal Company and several deputies had been brought to trial. The deputies were accused of accepting bribes from company members in order to support a lottery-loan, eventually issued by the government to the sinking company.<sup>11</sup> Except for one deputy who confessed, all parties were acquitted--a fact that the leftists viewed with great bitterness.

In his illustration entitled Cent Millions!, Steinlen expressed this socialist attitude, depicting the capitalists as thieves who deceived the people into investing hundreds of millions of francs in their doomed company. The cover goes well beyond the editorial, incorporating facts that form an emblematic composite of the events of the Panama affair. For example, the

caption alludes to a baron who was given his liberty--most probably a reference to Baron Jacques de Reinach (1840-1892), an agent of the Panama Canal Company, and a key figure in the scheme to gain support of the Chamber through bribery.<sup>12</sup> Reinach had committed suicide two years before this illustration, certain that he would soon be exposed for his involvement in the scandal. For Steinlen, Reinach was a symbolic figure, representing the corruption uncovered by the scandal. Even though the baron had, in fact, already died, in the illustration he is being given his liberty, like those on trial in 1893. By weaving together the public's memory of the baron and his suicide--which touched off a public outcry for a complete and thorough inquiry--with the more recent event of the acquittal, Steinlen is sure to have hit on many a sensitive nerve.

Even without an analysis of the specific references in Cent Millions!, the image is readily understandable to the twentieth-century mind. Not so in the case of the second illustration with the partnership of business and government as its theme, a cover of May 19, 1894 (Fig. 67). The caption for this cover reads: "Dans les conflits entre patrons et ouvriers la place du législateur est du côté de la caisse et non parmi les grévistes. (La majorité opportuniste)." Unlike Cent Millions!, which

can be understood on a certain level without its caption, the satire of Compagnie Des Mines depends very heavily on its caption's reference. Indeed, even with the caption, at first glance one is not sure whom one is viewing. Are these two men both capitalists who are collecting their dividends? One is obviously such an individual--the businessman whom we see in five other illustrations in Le Chambard. However, who is his companion? Is he another industrialist or, rather, a minister or deputy, as the caption would indicate?

The editorial for this issue gave no indication of the identity of the man who appears to be putting something in his pocket in Compagnie Des Mines. However, an editorial in the previous issue mentions several individuals, in addition to M. Casimir-Périer, who sided with the owners in a confrontation with the workers at the mines of Anzin.<sup>13</sup> One of those mentioned was the Minister of Finance, Maurice Rouvier (1842-1911), who was indicted in the Panama scandal but cleared of all charges because of a legal technicality.<sup>14</sup> This official bears a resemblance to the figure in Steinlen's illustration (compare figs. 67, 68). While the man in the illustration appears to have a larger nose than Rouvier, the glasses, moustache, and high forehead hidden behind the top hat recall Rouvier's physiognomy. Even if Steinlen did not

actually intend to caricature Rouvier, he may have used him as a prototype for the figure in Compagnie Des Mines. Taking this into consideration along with the caption, one may interpret this cover as the image of a businessman handing over a portion of his profits to a highly placed government official. This illustration, which Steinlen may have purposely left ambiguous, is a visual confirmation of the numerous assertions of corruption and thievery that G rault-Richard had leveled against the government since the inception of Le Chambard--this being one of the basic themes of the journal.

The socialists looked forward to ridding France of its corrupt government, and to a future when the capitalists would be crushed by the proletariat and a new egalitarian world would be created. There are many allusions to this idea in Le Chambard. Steinlen's two consecutive covers, Aujourd'hui and Demain (Figs. 69,70 ), of March 31 and April 7, 1894, illustrate this Marxist principle. In the first cover, the capitalist is seen as a tyrannical slave driver, who treats his workers more like animals than human beings. In the second illustration, the worker literally has broken the yoke of oppression and is master of his own destiny. These sequential drawings, which anticipate twentieth-century Russian agit-prop art, may have been the first art works to embody so clearly

the dialectics of Marxism.<sup>15</sup>

The question of whether there is anti-Semitism underlying Steinlen's illustrations of the businessman cannot be ignored, for the artist's attitude toward the Jews has been a controversial topic. The businessman's swarthy, Semitic complexion, his dark hair and large nose, contrast sharply with the Aryan features of the worker in Steinlen's many images, and show that Steinlen, like so many leftists of his generation, viewed the Jew with hostility, as a primary representative of oppressive capitalism. However, while there was some anti-Semitism expressed by G rault-Richard in Le Chambard, it was not the issue of intense debate that it would become with the Dreyfus affair. When anti-Semitism turned into a crucial issue, involving human rights and individual freedom, Steinlen sided with Dreyfus and was sympathetic to the Jewish cause, as we shall see in the following chapter.

\* \* \*

While in Steinlen's illustrations thus far, business and government were seen primarily as enemies of the people, in his next series of images the artist portrayed them as aggressive enemies of the French Republic itself.

In eight of the thirty-two images that Steinlen did for Le Chambard, the figure of Liberty personified both the corrupt Republic and the longed-for socialist state. Liberty appeared alternately as the defiled Republic, a prostitute in the hands of the government and big business, and as a heroic figure leading the people on to victory.

An illustration in which the Republic is seen as a prostitute, in the most literal way, is Celle qui a mal tourné, a cover of June 23, 1894 (Fig. 71). Here, the Republic is being abducted by a businessman. Two workers, who look on in horror, speak: "Cache-toi, salope! tu nous fais honte." While the Republic was referred to as a trollop ("la Garce") in the text of Le Chambard, this idea first occurred on the cover entitled La Cadette, on January 6, 1894 (Fig. 72). The cover shows a fat businessman eying a young girl in the Phrygian hat typical of Liberty; she carries a basket on which is written "La République Socialiste." The caption reads: "LE MONSIEUR: Eh! Eh! elle se fait gentille votre cadette, faudra nous la confier...POPULO: -- Jamais! pour que vous en fassiez une garce, comme son aînée!" Even without the caption, the leer of the bourgeois and the fear of the young girl holding the strong hand of her virile working-class father, make the symbolism of this image blatantly

obvious.

In other illustrations, Liberty appeared as a vulnerable woman, protected by the worker but maligned by the powers that be. Casimir-Périer, himself, was seen as her enemy in Enfins, seuls!, of July 5, 1894 drawn less than a month after the politician was elected president of the Republic (Fig. 73). In this illustration, a female figure who personifies the Republic, and the president, dressed ceremonially, stand alone in a room as he says: "Maintenant, ma belle, il s'agit de filer doux." This implied, of course, that Casimir-Périer was in complete control of the Republic and would do with it whatever he wished.

In yet another illustration of Liberty as the Republic, the Church was seen as the most dangerous threat to her survival. This cover, which was entitled Le Dernier Guet-Apen!, was published March 24, 1894; it shows a clergyman engineering the assassination of Liberty (Fig. 74). The accompanying dialogue is as follows: "L'ESPRIT NOUVEAU -- La voici! allons, frappe au coeur! L'ASSASSIN-- Mais elle n'est pas seule et son amoureux m'a l'air d'un gars à poil." The scene is clear, yet one wonders about the identity of "L'esprit nouveau" of the caption.

The key to this identity lies in an editorial by

Gérault-Richard published two weeks earlier, on March 10, in Le Chambard. In "La Garce," the author stated:

Il ne manquait plus à leur République bourgeoise que de se prostituer aux gens d'Eglise pour être la Garce dont parlait notre dessin la Cadette.

Aujourd'hui c'est un sacrifice accompli. La R.F. prend le voile et se fait baptiser par le pape, Spuller et Casimir-Périer lui servant de parrains.

The article continued to bemoan the fact that the Republic was a "horrible shrew," having been used by pimps on all levels -- soldiers, industrialists, political adventurers, men of finance, and now even by the clergy.

This passage, as well as the illustration, was an indictment of the papal policy of Ralliement, which had emerged in the early 1890s. Realizing that there was no longer a strong enough Monarchist force in France to undo the Republic, the Pope issued a decree that both professional clergymen and lay Catholics should give up fighting Republicanism and become actively involved in furthering the policies of the Republic.<sup>16</sup> He also encouraged Catholics, many of whom were previously associated with Monarchism and the upper classes, to concern themselves with social problems.

While this papal policy was accepted by moderates, the radicals remained strongly opposed to it and feared that the Church was laying the ground for further and

more effective political warfare against the Republic. This feeling must have been very strong among the socialists in 1894, since the politician Eugène Spuller (1835-1896) was then Minister of Public Education in Casimir-Périer's Cabinet. Spuller, mentioned in Gérauld-Richard's article "La Garce," forcefully endorsed the idea of harmony in government between Church and state, and even gave a name to this doctrine--"L'esprit nouveau."<sup>17</sup> Thus, it is Spuller's voice that speaks in Steinlen's illustration of Le Dernier Guet-Apens!

\* \* \*

Among his images of Liberty as a fighter for human justice and equality, one of Steinlen's strongest illustrations for Le Chambard was 18 Mars, published March 17, 1894 (Fig. 75). This illustration, which commemorated the day in 1871 when the people of Paris succeeded in seizing the weapons of the Regular Army and launching the Commune, shows Liberty marching triumphant, at the head of an army of workers. She is flanked on her right by a miner and a farmer, and on her left by a factory worker or artisan, and an artist--Steinlen himself.<sup>18</sup> In the background, a lively frieze of flying arms, pitchforks, axes, and spades symbolizes the multitude of workers who have joined together to fight the enemies of the true

Republic. A caption in small print reads: "...Elle aura sa revanche, vive le son du canon! (La Carmagnole)." The carmagnole was a song and dance that was popular at the time of the Revolution.

There were at least two preliminary drawings made for this cover (one is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; another is in the Musée Municipal d'Art et d'Histoire, St. Denis). The latter drawing (Fig. 76) contains the key figures in the final version--where, however, an obvious change has been made in the image of the figure at the far left. In the preliminary drawing, this figure wears a dark top hat, while the rest of his costume is only roughly indicated. In the final version, this top hat is dispensed with and the figure is portrayed as a worker. The drawing points to the influence on Steinlen of Delacroix's painting of Liberty Leading the People, in which there is a student in a top hat to the right of the bare-breasted Liberty. Steinlen had undoubtedly seen this painting in the Louvre; it had entered that collection in 1874.<sup>19</sup> Yet, aside from including a top hat and the seminude Liberty wearing a Phrygian cap, there is little else in Steinlen's drawing that is similar to the painting. Steinlen's slightly later illustration, Mai 1871, published May 26, 1894, shows the influence of Delacroix's painting more strongly

(Fig. 77 ). Here we see Liberty in battle, holding a large flag. At her feet is the leg of a dead fighter. Even without the Phrygian cap, there can be no doubt that Steinlen intended this woman to be Liberty.<sup>20</sup> Steinlen did a third illustration of Liberty for Le Chambard to commemorate May Day. The double-page illustration appeared on April 28, 1894, in the center of the magazine, rather than as a cover. (The illustration also appeared in La Petite République, another socialist journal, the following year.) In Premier Mai, Liberty leads workers from all over the world (Fig. 78 ). In her hand, she carries two branches of oak and poplar, trees that had become symbolic of revolution since 1789. Below the illustration, written in five languages--German, English, Spanish, Italian, and French--is the phrase: "Workmen of all countries be united and the world belongs to you." Steinlen's continual creation of powerful images of Liberty, right through World War I, can be traced back to Le Chambard, where Liberty was first personified by the artist as an inspirational force; Thus, 18 Mars, Steinlen's first illustration devoted to this theme, becomes the key to the later works.

\* \* \*

Steinlen's conception of Liberty in 18 Mars was

influenced by G rault-Richard's editorial "Quand viendra la Belle...", which it accompanied. The writing harked back to the glorious days of the Commune, and the spirit of the editorial--quoted, in large part; below--animated Le Chambard, and inspired Steinlen's drawing:

Voilà bien longtemps qu'on t'appelle, République des braves gens!

L'héroïque Paris vit briller ton aurore, il y a vingt-trois années. Quelle joie dans les coeurs et dans la nature, en ce jour du dix-huit mars 1871! Les fronts rayonnaient, les bras s'ouvraient aux fraternelles allégresses. On crut au grand réveil.

...  
L'agonie de Paris avait été longue; encore un peu et la mort s'en suivait. Lorsque le moribond déchira son linceul; le printemps chantait autour de lui. Il prit sa part de cette fête universelle. Il crut à la bonté, à la justice, à l'amour.

Ce fut l'éclosion de la Commune.  
Et la Commune, à son tour, enfanta la République.

Celle-ci a mal tourné. Encore une fois, le mal nous prend à la gorge. Nous étouffons: la foi, la vie, l'espérance, les belles espérances, soeurs des illusions généreuses, s'étiolent en nous.

...  
Mais voici venir les hordes des justiciers. Comme au 18 mars 1871, le même clairon qui sonne la diane printannière, le réveil des champs, des bois et des fleurs, nous appelle à la revanche. Allons, citoyens, réveillez-vous!...

...  
Votre temps est revenu avec la Belle.  
Vive la Commune!

The image and spirit of the Commune was a moving force for the socialists in the 1890s. In addition to 18 Mars and Mai 1871, Steinlen did several more illustrations of this event for Le Chambard. The first of these

was linked to an editorial on the Commune entitled "Cri odieux," published on February 3, 1894, prior to "Quand viendra la Belle..." The importance of the Commune for the socialists was first spelled out in the journal by G rault-Richard, who saw in the Commune the seeds of justice and political integrity. He also viewed the memory of the Commune as a means of uniting all socialist groups in the future. He stated:

Les discordes se taisent. Une seule voix se fait entendre pour crier aux fr res ensevelis que leur m moire illumine d'un  clat aussi vif, plus vif peut- tre   mesure que l'heure de la revanche approche, la conscience du prol tariat. Il n'y a plus ni blanquistes, ni possibilistes, ni marxistes, ni ind pendants. Tous socialistes, tous r volutionnaires, tous communeux!

Vive la Commune!

...

Vive la Commune! Cela veut dire   la fois: Vive la vrai R publique! Vive la solidarit  sociale! Vive l'humanit  libre!....

For the same issue Steinlen created a memorable picture of "Bloody Week" of May 1871, when the Communards were beaten; approximately twenty to twenty-five thousand of them died.<sup>21</sup> This cover was entitled Le Cri des Pav s!, and its caption read: LES COMMUNEUX: Votre R publique est fille de notre sang!" (Fig. 79). This gory vision of the Commune shows the Communards drowning in a sea of blood; The red flag has fallen from the hand of one of the fighters and, along with more ordinary people, cadaverous figures scream for help and lift their arms in an

attempt to save themselves from drowning. A related image is Steinlen's Au Mur des Fédérés, published June 2, 1894, in which the Communards are seen rising from the dead at the famous wall in Père-Lachaise cemetery where many of them had died fighting (Fig. 80); the wall is covered with wreaths, which were commonly placed there on May Day in remembrance of the dead. The caption reads: "Il faut des régiments entiers pour garder ces morts-là."

Dans toute sa Gloire, published on June 16, 1894, is an obvious satire on the brutality of the army, but it, too, relates to the Paris Commune. This illustration bore the caption: "Femmes, enfants, vieillards...Rien ne lui résiste." The soldier represented is General Auguste Gallifet (1830-1909), a military leader who was president of the Committee of the Cavalry in 1894. One of the high points of his career was his rigorous campaign against the Communards in May 1871. In the editorial "Gallifet," which appeared in Le Chambard on June 9, 1894; one week before Steinlen's drawing, Gérault-Richard denounced the general:

Son patriotisme se manifeste dans les pages sanglantes de notre histoire. Impitoyable envers les fédérés vaincus, il martyrisait à plaisir les vieillards, il ajoutait au supplice de la fusillade, l'insulte ordurière envers les femmes, le sadisme sur les enfants tombés entre ses pattes de fauve.

This editorial undoubtedly inspired Steinlen's

illustration (Fig. 81).

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Images of the Commune had appeared in Le Chambard since February 1894, but the idea of the Commune gained intensity with the celebration of May Day that year (Steinlen's illustration for this was discussed previously in the section devoted to Liberty). While May 1st was intended to be a day of celebration for the workers, in the 1890s it became an annual confrontation between the workers and the police force, who were armed to repress any attempts at violence.<sup>22</sup> La Sécurité des Rues, published May 5, 1895, is a satirical representation of police brutality, similar to Dans toute sa Gloire; in the illustration a pompous policeman stands in front of a group of working-class families (Fig. 82). His left hand is set firmly on his holster and on his right hand he wears brass knuckles. Below him is the inscription "Grâce a l'attitude pacifique de la police, le Premier Mai s'est passé sans incidents. (Les bons journaux)."

An examination of the police records for May 1, 1894, confirms that the struggle between the workers and the police was the major event of that May Day.<sup>23</sup> The records contain an abundance of material relating to the

holiday, dating back to February. They include letters from police agents with information about the socialists' activities as well as newspaper articles--among them Steinlen's double-page illustration Premier Mai. One of the most interesting documents in this file is a three-page report, "Décisions prises en vue de la Manifestation du 1er Mai," in which as many as twenty-three different leftist groups are named and their scheduled meetings for May 1 outlined (a graphic testimony to the multiplicity of leftist organizations in existence at this time). Another document cites the exact number of the Garde Républicaine to be called out for the day: 1,175 men. (In addition to this force, military troops from Paris and local police manned the streets.) A newspaper article described this holiday as one in which Paris split into two warring factions--the workers and the police.<sup>24</sup> Steinlen effectively evoked this spirit in La Sécurité des Rues.

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All of the illustrations discussed above are elaborations upon Marxist principles--from the critiques of big business, government, and the clergy, to the artist's visions of the future worker's State. Often, they were related to specific political and historical

events. However, an analysis of Steinlen's contributions to Le Chambard would not be complete without a brief look at a small group of illustrations that served no specific political cause, but which were scattered throughout the journal. These illustrations are sympathetic portrayals of the working class, the destitute, and the hungry. As such, they are comparable to some of the artist's work in Le Mirliton and Gil Blas, yet the biting humor of their captions bears the unmistakable stamp of Le Chambard.

In Sans le Sou, published March 3, 1894, a poor man is being taken away by soldiers for having stolen a piece of bread (Fig. 83). He laments: "Ah! si au lieu d'un pain, j'avais volé cent millions...." This image generally relates to the mistreatment of the poor by the police and the military, a theme often explored in Steinlen's art. (The scene calls to mind Victor Hugo's Les Misérables.) However, it also relates to another image in Le Chambard, Cent Millions!, which had been published in the journal the previous week.<sup>25</sup> Another illustration not directly linked to any specific political event, but expressing the philosophy of Le Chambard, is Liberté du Travail!, of March 10, 1894, a satire in which a businessman tells his weeping maid: "Ainsi, ma petite, choisissez: ou vous montrer gentille avec moi, ou quitter la maison....Vous êtes libre!" (Fig. 84). In both Sans

le Sou and Liberté du Travail!, powerful figures are shown exploiting helpless individuals much as in other illustrations they were depicted in activities that exploited the Republic.

Among Steinlen's most memorable images are two that poignantly underscore the injustices of society. The first of these is La Misère sous la Neige, published January 13, 1894 (Fig. 85). Beneath the representation of a group of men being picked up and taken to jail for vagrancy is the caption: "Ce que nos ministres intègres appellent 'Associations de Malfaiteurs.'" Both the hungry old man whom we see lying on the ground and the assemblage of vagrants behind him are popular subjects in Steinlen's work. The second illustration, Jolie Société, published January 28, 1894 (Fig. 86), may be Steinlen's most pointed statement regarding the hungry orphans who populated nineteenth-century Paris and were so frequently written about in Gil Blas. In the foreground poor children scrounge the streets for a piece of bread while a well-dressed dog passes by. The caption is unequivocal in its charge against French society: "Où les chiens des riches sont plus heureux que les enfants des pauvres."

\* \* \*

Steinlen's last illustration for Le Chambard appeared

on July 21, 1894. He was succeeded by B. Moloch (1849-1909), a pseudonym for the artist B. Colomb. Moloch, as he was more often called, contributed twenty-four covers to the journal, from July 28 through February 9, 1895. His style was quite different from Steinlen's; by grossly distorting the physiognomy of his features, he created caricatures in the most literal sense of the term. Moloch's second illustration for Le Chambard, Nouveau Diadème, a caricature of Casimir-Périer, is illustrative of the style that he used throughout his career (Fig. 87).

Moloch was followed by a succession of illustrators who persisted in recreating the style and imagery originated by Steinlen, until the journal ceased its existence on June 8, 1895. Pol Lelong and E. Couturier were two of these artists. Lelong contributed covers that often appear to be pastiches of Steinlen's work, Mort de Froid!, published February 16, 1895, is the most obvious example (Fig. 88). Its two figures are borrowed from two illustrations by Steinlen: the old man on the bench is based on the dying man in La Misère sous la Neige (Fig. 85), and the businessman is modeled after the one in La Cadette (Fig. 72). The resemblance is so great that one might think that Steinlen had reappeared with a new pseudonym. However, close examination of these illustrations shows that there is less fluidity of line in the

images of Lelong, and fussy, extraneous detail that Steinlen never bothered with in his work for Le Chambard.

After Lelong, Couturier, using his own name, began to submit illustrations to Le Chambard, employing themes that were first popularized by Steinlen. An announcement in the issue of April 20, 1895, makes clear that it was the intention of Couturier (and probably Lelong) to continue in the tradition of Steinlen:

A l'occasion du 1<sup>er</sup> Mai, la Petite République publie un Numéro Spécial. Ce numéro illustré de deux magnifiques compositions, l'un signée Petit Pierre pseudonyme d'un artiste de grand talent qui contribua si bien au succès du Chambard, l'autre signée Couturier, qui continue ardemment, ici même, la tradition de son prédécesseur....<sup>26</sup>

Couturier contributed covers to the remaining seven issues of Le Chambard, under Steinlen's influence. Frequently, he represented Liberty much as Steinlen had done. His cover for April 27, 1895, is highly similar to Steinlen's Premier Mai, in which Liberty, dressed in a red cap and red dress, bearing symbolic branches in her hand, leads a band of workers carrying tools on their belts and over their shoulders. In another cover illustration by Couturier--the one entitled Le Mur Voilé, for May 25--Liberty sits in front of the Mur des Fédérées. Her hands are shackled and pinned to the wall, but she manages to raise her fist in a gesture of defiance. Behind her, a horde of screaming skeletons clamors to

escape the site. The caption reads: "Tremblez bourreaux. Un jour viendra où nos victimes seront vengées!" By incorporating the image of Liberty, Couturier's illustration echoes Steinlen's Mur des Fédérés.

Liberty and the wall were not the only themes that Couturier borrowed from Steinlen. An illustration of June 1, 1895, Voyages Présidentiels, relates to Steinlen's En Carême, La Député aux Champs, and Le Jeune Ministre. In Couturier's illustration an official of the government, surrounded by his entourage, is speaking to a peasant. The image is accompanied by this dialogue: "FELIX FAURE.--La République est remplie de sollicitude pour les malheureux. Son premier magistrat vient vous visiter jusqu'au fond des vos forêts de la Nièvre. LE BUCHERON.--N'y donc point d'ouvriers à Paris que vous faites tant de chemin pour voir des malheureux?"

Gérault-Richard's attempt to duplicate Steinlen's work for Le Chambard with a new crop of illustrators shows the value that the editor placed on Steinlen's contributions--an opinion that was obviously shared by the illustrators themselves, who followed so closely in Steinlen's footsteps.

\* \* \*

Nevertheless, Steinlen's work for Le Chambard is

uneven. Some of the illustrations are of exceptionally high quality, while others are weak repetitions of themes that he treated earlier. For example, Steinlen's first illustration, which contains the heroic figure of Liberty--18 Mars--is a lively, well-composed drawing; later illustrations of Liberty, such as Mai 1871 and Premier Mai, do not display the originality or the compositional clarity of the artist's initial conception.

Steinlen's images of Liberty became emblematic of Le Chambard, as did his images of big business, although the latter were more consistently engaging. His gory visions of the Commune and its aftermath, such as Le Cri des Pavés and Au Mur des Fédérés, were extremely forceful, approaching the spirit of Goya's Disasters of War.

In Le Chambard, Steinlen successfully depicted the plight of the socialists: their struggle with the government, business, and the clergy; their dreams for the future; their concerns for the poor and the exploited. While Steinlen was never an avowed member of any party or political group, he was able to place his art at the service of a specific political philosophy, such as the Marxist socialism espoused in Le Chambard. Although his sympathy with many socialist causes did help him to create this work, it is a testimony to his ability as an illustrator that he was able to give himself so fully to the specific dictates called for by this journal.

Notes

1. Anarchist organizations had existed in Lyons and Paris during the 1880's, when bad times gave anarchist propaganda leverage. On May 1, 1890, instead of a day of celebration for workers, there were riots in the strongly leftist city of Vienne (they were repeated in Paris in 1891). In addition, in 1890 there was fear of anarchist violence when a group of Russian émigrés was discovered making explosives in the Parisian suburb of Le Raincy. "Propaganda by deed" in the years 1892-94 culminated in the bombings by Ravochol and Vaillant and, ultimately, in the assassination of the president of the Republic, Sadi Carnot. See Theodore Zeldin, France, 1848-1945, Paris, 1973, vol. I, pp. 775-77; D.W. Brogan, The Development of Modern France, 1870-1939, New York, 1970, vol. I, p. 301 (originally printed 1940).
2. James Joll, The Anarchists, Boston, 1964, p. 132.
3. Le Chambard Socialiste, no. 1, December 16, 1893, p. 4.
4. This was done for all but one cover, Le Jeune Ministre, no. 26, June 9, 1894, for which the stone was damaged. See Ernest de Crauzat, L'Oeuvre gravé et lithographié de Steinlen, Paris, 1913, pp. 196-97.
5. Brogan, p. 96.
6. The term Pandore was used, at that time, for policeman.
7. The majority of reproductions that accompany this chapter are photographs of the original lithographs from which the covers for Le Chambard were typographically reproduced. Because of this, in the body of the text I have given the titles and captions that appeared on the covers. In the few instances where only the newspaper covers were available these are reproduced in the dissertation.
8. Casimir-Périer was a major target of criticism in Le Chambard, even after Steinlen had ceased contributing to the journal. In late 1895,

Gérault-Richard was brought to trial for slandering Casimir-Périer, who was then president of the Republic. Gérault-Richard was imprisoned for several months. However, during his trial, he was defended by Jaurès and other respected left-wing sympathizers. This incident strongly contributed to the president's lack of confidence and to his resignation in January 1895. See Brogan, pp. 302-4.

9. All captions are transcribed exactly as they appeared in the journal, where spelling and grammar are often irregular.
10. "Instruisons-nous," Le Chambard, February 17, 1894, p. 2.
11. On the Panama scandal see Brogan, pp. 268-85; Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France, vol. 3, Middlesex, 1965, pp. 35-37; Donald Harvey, France Since the Revolution, New York, 1968, pp. 133-34; and Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, Chicago, 1960, pp. 250-51.
12. Reinach was one of several figures mentioned in the editorial "Instruisons-nous" (see note 10).
13. "Leur Bénéfice," Le Chambard, May 12, 1894, p. 2.
14. Nouveau Larousse illustré, Paris, 1898-1904, vol. 7.
15. A Russian poster of 1919, "Either We Destroy Capitalism or It Walks All Over Us," closely parallels the theme of these two prints. See Mikhail Guerman, Art of the October Revolution, New York, 1979, plate 22.
16. Brogan, pp. 257-67.
17. Cobban, vol. 3, pp. 27-41.
18. Steinlen was first identified by Phillip Dennis Cate in "Empathy with the Humanity of the Streets," Art News, vol. 76, no. 3, March 1977, pp. 56-59.
19. Charles Sterling and Hélène Adhémar, La Peinture au Musée du Louvre: XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle, vol. 2, Paris, 1959, p. 15.

20. An undated painting by Steinlen in the Louvre, Jeune femme assise sur un canapé, shows that Steinlen was, indeed, a great admirer of Delacroix. On the wall behind the woman in the painting is a freely drawn copy of Delacroix's Chevaux arabes se battant dans une écurie.
21. According to Alistair Horne in The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune, New York, 1965, p. 413, reliable French historians agree, more or less, on this figure.
22. May Day was designated a holiday for radical labor forces by the Second Socialist International in 1889. See G. D. H. Cole, Socialist Thought, Vol. 3, London, 1963, pp. 6ff; and Brogan, p. 265.
23. Archives de la préfecture de la police, Paris, May 1, 1894.
24. L'Eclair, February 13, 1894.
25. See above, pp. 113-115 of this chapter.
26. There often were references in Le Chambard to other leftist journals, such as La Petite République, to which Steinlen contributed illustrations on several occasions.

## CHAPTER V

LA FEUILLE:  
THE DREYFUS AFFAIR AND OTHER EVENTS

Steinlen's work for the newspaper La Feuille represents, in many respects, his greatest contribution to periodical illustration in the 1890s. While he only created seventeen covers in all, some of these are among his most compelling. The journal comprised twenty-five numbers, from October 6, 1897, through March 28, 1899. Its editor-in-chief and only writer was Zo d'Axa (1864-1930), a pen name for Charles Galland, a talented author. D'Axa had previously directed a celebrated anarchist newspaper called L'Endehors, which was published from May 1891 through January 1893. This newspaper did not contain illustrations; however, it published articles by many established art critics, including Félix Fénénon, René Ghil, Octave Mirbeau, Adolphe Tabarant, Emile Verhaeren, Paul Adam, and Camille Mauclair. It is particularly interesting as a document of anarchist

attitudes toward art. In addition to theoretical articles, it contained reviews and appreciations of artists and songwriters, and general information pertinent to socialist and anarchist intellectuals. Its publication came to an end after Zo d'Axa was arrested and subsequently imprisoned.<sup>1</sup>

In 1895, d'Axa published his book, de Mazas à Jérusalem. Steinlen designed the cover, which also served as a poster for the book. He portrayed d'Axa as a prophet, walking out of darkness into the light (Fig. 89). The bright future is represented by orange rays radiating from the sun, a device that Steinlen had used the year before in Le Chambard, and one that he would call upon later, on other occasions.<sup>2</sup> There is a preliminary study of d'Axa in this costume in the Cabinet des Dessins of the Louvre (RF 32833), but there the figure is standing still, rather than walking confidently into the future, as he appears to do in the finished lithograph. As announced on the poster, the book contained illustrations by Lucien Pissarro and Félix Vallotton.

Undoubtedly pleased by Steinlen's flattering cover, d'Axa made Steinlen the key illustrator for La Feuille. Contributions were also made by Willette, Hermann-Paul, Anquetin, Luce, Couturier, and Léandre. Even larger than Le Chambard, La Feuille, which measured 17 1/4 x 12 1/2

inches, called for large-scale, poster-like illustrations. As the name indicates, La Feuille was one page, with an illustration on the front and text on the back. The front-page illustrations commanded more authority than almost any others of their kind, largely because they covered nearly the entire page--only a few inches at the top were reserved for the masthead.<sup>3</sup> Except for the first two issues, the illustrations were produced in black and white, and in most cases the stark contrast of tones heightened the impact of the image. Adding to their quality, too, was the fact that nearly all the prints were made from lithographs and not photomechanically reproduced from drawings--as had been the case with Le Mirliton and Gil Blas. With these latter periodicals, an artist's drawing was photographed and printed on a zinc plate, from which the finished lithographic cover was pulled.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the artist, in making his drawing, had to imagine what the finished image would look like in its printed form. When Steinlen worked for La Feuille, on the other hand, he made the lithograph himself, which was then photographed, allowing him greater control of the lithographic process. The result was an image in which the inherent properties of the lithographic medium were brought to full force.

La Feuille was issued irregularly, about once a

month. From the fourth issue, in addition to being sold by subscription and on the newsstand, it was given as a free supplement to the readers of Clemenceau's l'Aurore (the newspaper that published Emile Zola's famous "J'accuse").<sup>5</sup> Each issue of La Feuille consisted of an illustration and one long editorial by d'Axa, covering nearly the entire back page. Occasionally, when space allowed it, or to fill up unused space, one or two items of news or commentary were added to the editorial. In 1900, these editorials were published as a book, Les Feuilles, and the illustrations were included with the text.

So d'Axa appears to have been an inspirational force for Steinlen. Whereas G rault-Richard was basically a political figure who wrote, d'Axa was primarily a writer with political interests. While Le Chambard, with its preachy propagandistic voice, appealed to the lower classes, La Feuille was more sophisticated, aimed at an intellectual group, and was anything but didactic in tone. In fact, d'Axa claimed that he belonged to no political group, and refused to be labeled an anarchist. In his definition of l'en dehors, he captured the spirit of La Feuille as well: "Celui qui rien n'enr le et qu'une impulsive nature guide seule, ce passionnel tant complexe, ce hors la loi, ce hors d' cole, cet isol 

chercheur d'au-delà...."<sup>6</sup> This sense of political independence characterizes Steinlen as well.

While La Feuille was not established in response to the Dreyfus case, as some newspapers were, it was soon drawn into the whirlpool that marked the affair. Many of its articles, or editorials, relate to this political crisis, either directly or indirectly. Among the other problems it addressed were the Franco-Russian Alliance, disarmament, the role of journalists, and the mistreatment of young soldiers in the army and poor urban youths. In some cases, the causes of unjustly condemned ordinary citizens were brought to public attention, and, in one case, the sentence of a young woman was repealed as a result of the publicity spawned by an article.<sup>7</sup> The articles in La Feuille did not recount political events, but commented upon them in a satirical manner unique to Zo d'Axa. D'Axa usually referred to several political and social problems within one article, ingeniously weaving together seemingly unrelated facts. Steinlen's illustrations demonstrate the violence, wit, and irony that characterized d'Axa's texts.

While Steinlen's work for La Feuille, like that for Le Chambard, is frequently reproduced, no one has ever discussed the political or historical issues that gave rise to it, nor the texts that he illustrated. Of the

seventeen illustrations that Steinlen produced for La Feuille, six relate to the Dreyfus affair, while most of the others represent subjects with no particular thematic connection.<sup>8</sup> A discussion of this latter group will be followed by a chronological analysis of Steinlen's illustrations pertaining to the Dreyfus case. Steinlen's stand on the affair has always been a controversial issue, and a close look at these illustrations will provide a key to his attitude.

\* \* \*

D'Axa's first editorial for La Feuille, of October 6, 1897, took as its subject the Franco-Russian Alliance. Since the early 1890s a loose alliance between France and Russia had existed, whereby it was understood that France would help Russia financially and that each nation would help to defend the other militarily, if the need arose, against the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. While agreed upon secretly in the mid-1890s, the first official statement about the existence of this alliance was made by President Félix Faure, during a trip to Russia in August 1897.<sup>9</sup> There was much criticism of the alliance, particularly among members of the left, who believed that it was scandalous for France to lend large sums of money to Russia when her own people were in need.

Moreover, the dictatorship that existed under the tsar was anathema to leftists of all persuasions.<sup>10</sup>

D'Axa's article was a bitter and violent denouncement of the alliance. In "La première aux Propriétaires," the writer set up a fictional situation--a device he often used--which ironically called attention to the repercussions of the alliance. In this case, the fiction that he created was a celebration of the Franco-Russian Alliance, in which he envisioned landlords allowing their tenants periods of free rent in honor of the protection that the landlords were receiving from Russia. After he proposed this, the writer undermined the idea himself, admitting that it was "too much to ask" and he launched an attack in which he maintained that that alliance aided the landlords at the expense of the poor.

Steinlen's illustration is as violent and ironic a statement as d'Axa's text. Under the heading, Le Terme Franco-Russe, which was the subtitle of d'Axa's article, Steinlen depicted a poor family being evicted from their home by a fierce policeman. They watch with bowed heads as their possessions are carted off, while, in the foreground, a small child plays innocently with toy flags of France and Russia (Fig. 90). This is hardly the fictional "terme"<sup>11</sup> (or period of grace for tenants proposed in d'Axa's article), but, rather, the denial of tenancy

to these unfortunate people. For Steinlen, "Le Terme Franco-Russe," was a period of utter poverty, even homeless wandering--the exact opposite of d'Axa's idealized fantasy.

The inventiveness of this image should be emphasized. Le Terme Franco-Russe was not simply an illustration for d'Axa's text, but a witty interpretation of an idea within it. While d'Axa discussed the exploitation of the poor in general terms, and specifically mentioned tramps and children being sent to abusive correctional institutions, he did not describe an eviction. So the eviction shown in the illustration sprung entirely from Steinlen's own imagination. By inverting the initial proposition put forward by the author, the artist effectively conveyed the sentiment expressed in d'Axa's article and, in so doing, he created his own satire of the Franco-Russian Alliance. Even without reference to the text, this satire would have been comprehensible in its time. What is crucial to its meaning, though, is the title, which is an integral part of the work. A study of La Feuille shows that, in choosing his imagery, Steinlen always used either the title or subtitle of an article as a point of departure for his illustration: it was the primary immediate source of an image. That Steinlen was able to produce powerful images that were so closely

linked to the titles of d'Axa's articles shows that there was a close affinity between these two men. Indeed, their friendship is discussed in Georges Auriol's biography of the artist.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Steinlen made numerous drawings of Zo d'Axa, a testament to his admiration and affection for the writer.<sup>13</sup>

While Steinlen created satires such as Le Terme Franco-Russe, he also produced images that illustrated d'Axa's texts in a straightforward manner. For example, in "Enfant Martyr," published November 19, 1898, d'Axa discussed the mistreatment of children sent, for vagrancy and stealing, to correctional institutions. He gave a detailed description of conditions in these places, particularly of the severe punishment that the children had to endure for the most minor offenses that they committed there, such as talking while at work or laughing during rest periods. The writer mentioned an institution called Aniane, where, in a recent incident, a boy had died of starvation. According to d'Axa, the boy had been locked up in isolation and allotted a thin piece of bread daily and a bowl of soup every four days. The keeper in charge of this boy had maliciously thrown out the soup and, after twenty-one days of this treatment, the boy was found dead in his living quarters. While Aniane is singled out, d'Axa mentions four other institutions that

were run in much the same way, recounting further atrocities.

Steinlen's illustration sticks closely to passages in the article, which describe a child in his cell with his hands tightly bound behind his back (Fig. 91). In this interpretation of the text, Steinlen created a moving image of exploited youth. There is no need for satire here: A strong social message is implicit in the pathetic image of a boy crouched in his cell near a bowl of gruel.<sup>14</sup> The greasy crayon effectively conveys the lugubrious atmosphere of the cell. In the next issue of La Feuille, of December 1, 1898, Maximilien Luce contributed a drawing on the same subject, based on a description of d'Axa's. The writer had described the clown-like haircut and attire forced upon the children in these institutions, and Luce depicted just that in Au Biribi des Gosses (Fig. 92). As with Steinlen's illustrations, the direct visual translation of the text underscored the cruel treatment of these homeless children.

Most of Steinlen's illustrations for La Feuille exhibit an underlying violence that parallels the tone of the writing. Among his most violent images is Désarmement, produced for the last issue of the journal, on March 28, 1899. The article that it illustrated was called "La dernière aux Anarchistes," but had

"désarmement" as its subheading. In this essay, d'Axa discussed an international conference against war to be held in Holland. He contrasted this with the news that, at the same time, a French powder factory in Lagoubran had blown up, killing sixty innocent people. While d'Axa stated that people believed this to be the act of a malicious individual, he maintained that munitions factories are dangerous and implied that they should be closed down.

Steinlen's illustration shows the Lagoubran powder factory exploding, but his intention was to symbolize the dangers of war and weaponry. A preliminary drawing for the cover, in the Cabinet des Dessins (RF 33 229), shows that uppermost in the artist's mind were the perilous effects of explosives (Fig. 93). In the lower left corner of the drawing he scrawled the words "explosions, artilleurs, bombe, bastion." He was also thinking of the title of the article, "La dernière aux anarchistes," which is written at the bottom of the drawing. Below this is the subheading "Désarmement." In the drawing, figures (presumably anarchists) huddle together in fear as a factory (seen in a fragment) blows up. The people have thrown away their rifles and they clutch at each other before this mighty power. In the final version, Steinlen eliminated these figures and focused on the

ignited powder factory--a rifle in the right foreground is the only remnant of the earlier figures. This later illustration, with the ironic title Désarmement, is Steinlen's own plea for the cause (Fig. 94).

The reader should now have some idea of the general tone of La Feuille, and the concerns expressed in its articles, as well as Steinlen's methods of treating these topics. As we have noted, the journal was not created in direct response to the Dreyfus affair, as were Forain and Caran d'Ache's anti-Dreyfusard journal Le Psst...!, and Ibel's Dreyfusard Le Sifflet. However, coming as it did at the end of 1897, La Feuille was soon caught up in the whirlwind of that historic event.

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The story began in 1894, when a bordereau (or "memorandum") was discovered by a French agent in the wastebasket of the German Embassy in Paris, and brought to the attention of the counterespionage department of the French General Staff, known as the statistical section of the Second Bureau.<sup>15</sup> The information contained in the bordereau, addressed to the German military attaché, Schwartzkoppen, indicated that an officer within the War Ministry--probably attached to the General Staff--was supplying the Germans with military secrets. According

to one of the officers consulted on the matter, Colonel d'Aboville, there were only a handful of officers who had information on all of the matters discussed in the bordereau , and among this small list was the name of Captain Alfred Dreyfus. At the time, d'Aboville had in his possession a dossier from Dreyfus, which, he stated, was in a handwriting that matched that of the bordereau. An additional factor that led to the suspicion surrounding Dreyfus was the fact that there had been adverse reports of his behavior; he was not considered an exemplary officer. Although the opinions of the handwriting experts differed, and one flatly denied that the handwriting belonged to Dreyfus, Dreyfus was court-martialed and convicted. His conviction rested on a secret dossier, which had been tampered with by members of the General Staff. In particular, a Colonel Henry manufactured forged documents that were used against Dreyfus, although the dossier was withheld from the defense during Dreyfus's trial. Among those with knowledge of it were General Mercier, Minister of War; Colonel Sandherr, director of the statistical section; General de Boisdeffre, Chief of the General Staff; and du Paty de Clam, an officer in the statistical section. The conviction was hastened by the newspapers for they had gotten wind of the alleged treason and were adamantly calling for punishment. Because he refused to

confess, Dreyfus was given the unusually severe sentence of solitary confinement on Devil's Island, where he stayed for four years.

There was virtually no conclusive evidence against Dreyfus. This officer was singled out for reasons that had little to do with the case. Dreyfus's father, who was then deceased, had been a wealthy textile manufacturer in Alsace, which had been annexed to Germany in 1871, and it was believed that the officer had financial and familial interests there. Even though Dreyfus had been a French citizen since 1872, and had an independent income with little to gain from selling secrets to Germany, his Alsatian background provided grounds for suspicion.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, Dreyfus was a Jew--one of the few Jews in the largely Catholic officer corps--and, as such, he was an outsider. Anti-Semitism was a growing force in late-nineteenth-century France. The campaign against the small Jewish community--about 80,000, of whom 50,000 lived in Paris<sup>17</sup>--was led by Edmond Drumont, who had written the anti-Semitic book La France juive, in 1886. Three years later, he founded the Antisemitic League, and, in 1892, an anti-Semitic newspaper, La Libre Parole. Drumont, along with Henri Rochefort, editor of the journal L'Intransigeant, led the campaign in the press against

Dreyfus. After Dreyfus's conviction the case was officially closed, but secret information continued to reach the German Embassy, and another treasonous document was discovered. This was the petit bleu, an express letter from someone at the German Embassy addressed to Commandant Esterhazy. The statistical section was no longer under the direction of the anti-Semitic Colonel Sandherr; he had been replaced by another officer, Major Picquart. While Picquart believed in Dreyfus's guilt, he was nevertheless determined to get to the bottom of things. He obtained a sample of Esterhazy's writing and was amazed to discover that it closely resembled that of the bordereau. Upon learning of Picquart's newly formed suspicions, the War Ministry removed him from his position and sent him to far-off Tunisia. Meanwhile, the bordereau had been published in the newspaper Le Matin, and Parisians noted that the handwriting resembled Esterhazy's. The press became so inflamed that Esterhazy demanded a trial to vindicate himself. After only three minutes of deliberation, a court-martial acquitted him.<sup>18</sup>

Since Dreyfus's conviction, his family had been working toward a revision of the case. They had enlisted the services of Bernard Lazare, a Jewish lawyer and fierce opponent of anti-Semitism. At the same time, Auguste Sheurer-Kestner, vice-president of the Senate,

rallied to their cause. Both men wrote articles in favor of revision, but not to any great effect. On January 13, 1898, two days after Esterhazy's speedy acquittal, Zola published his famous article, "J'accuse," in Clemenceau's newspaper, l'Aurore. Accusing politicians and military officers by name of concealing evidence pertinent to Dreyfus's guilt, and of acquitting someone whom they knew to be guilty, Zola began to turn the tide in the direction of revision. For publishing this inflammatory accusation, Zola was tried and convicted. The author fled to England, where he continued his campaign on behalf of Dreyfus.

Shortly after this episode, a new counterintelligence officer discovered Major Henry's forgeries in the Dreyfus file. Colonel Henry was arrested and he confessed, having realized the weight of evidence against him. The next day he was found dead in his cell--a suicide. Meanwhile, several officers, including the Chief of the General Staff, Boisdeffre, resigned, and Esterhazy fled to England. Although it was obvious that the case would have to be reopened, the Nationalist and anti-Semitic press continued to defend the army and to oppose revision. Nevertheless, Dreyfus was brought back from Devil's Island and stood trial in September 1899. Although he was convicted again, this time because of "extenuating

circumstances," he was pardoned by the president of the Republic. In 1906, Dreyfus was fully vindicated by a civilian court and reinstated as a lieutenant in the army.

At the beginning of the case, in 1894, only a small group of people cared about the problems of Captain Dreyfus, but by 1897, the public had become immersed in the affair. After Zola's "J'accuse" was published, throughout France there were outbursts of violence in the streets, involving both Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards. In some areas, Jews were beaten and Jewish shops were ransacked and plundered. Many intellectuals and artists, notably Anatole France and Marcel Proust, Claude Monet and Eugène Carrière, rallied to Dreyfus's aid, while other intellectuals, such as Maurice Barrès, fought hard for the Nationalist cause.<sup>19</sup> The significance of the battle became much greater than the struggle for the rights of a single individual, intensifying the divisions that were already present in French society. The anti-Dreyfusards, or Nationalists, were the defenders of tradition, represented by the army and the Church. They demanded national solidarity above all else, even if it meant a miscarriage of justice. The Dreyfusards, on the other hand, did not go along with the army's desire to hold itself above the judicial process, which, they believed

obviously struck a blow at the rational and democratic spirit that was at the heart of republicanism.

Among most radicals, the initial reaction to the Dreyfus affair was one of scornful indifference.<sup>20</sup> As there was an antipathy toward the officer class, leftist journalists expressed resentment that so much space was being devoted to the troubles of a rich officer, while the grave social problems of France went ignored. One of the first radicals to take sides on the affair was Sébastien Faure; in December 1897, he expressed sympathy for Dreyfus's cause in the journal Le Libertaire. Faure stated that the Dreyfus case gave anarchists an opportunity to speak out on issues of "military and civil justice, the army, leaders, patriotism, religion, anti-Semitism, the press and public opinion."<sup>21</sup> Slowly, other journalists, such as Emile Pouget of Le Père Peinard and Jean Grave of Les Temps Nouveaux, began to alter their viewpoints. Eventually, a "revolutionary coalition" of anarchists and socialists was established in support of Dreyfus.<sup>22</sup>

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The Dreyfus case became the focal point of La Feuille, beginning with the third issue of the journal, on November 27, 1897. While not every article alluded to

the affair, the majority did so. Worthy of note are six images by Steinlen on the subject and two by other La Feuille illustrators. Steinlen's illustrations indicate his growing involvement in the case, proving that, like most leftists, he eventually rallied to the cause-- although, at first, he showed no great interest in Dreyfus.<sup>23</sup> Nor was he anti-Semitic, as has been suggested.<sup>24</sup> The artist's political outlook, and, in particular, his changing attitudes toward the Dreyfus affair, may be analyzed through a chronological examination of his images in La Feuille--specifically, by comparing d'Axa's texts and Steinlen's responses to them.

The illustrations by Steinlen for the first two articles by d'Axa that discussed the affair show that the artist, like the majority of leftists, was initially not especially moved by the problem--and may even have avoided representing it directly. The first of these articles, that of November 27, refers to the tangled web of intrigue that appeared to surround the case.<sup>25</sup> D'Axa was appalled by the rumors of plots and counterplots, of papers stolen and documents suppressed. He called on the president and the army to set the record straight by speaking out on the affair. While he did not yet address the problem of revision, the author acknowledged the web of complicity at the top echelons of government, and

urged that it be broken. D'Axa vividly described the growing intrigue involving top army officials: "En vérité, j'écris: ce n'est pas nous qui sommes une Association de Malfaiteurs!"<sup>26</sup> He called the article "Association de Malfaiteurs." The significance of this title goes back to 1893, when the government passed repressive laws against anarchists in response to a bomb that the anarchist Vaillant threw onto the floor of the Senate. In addition to the "lois scélérates," aimed at the press and affecting d'Axa's L'Endehors, there was also a new set of laws redefining the term "Association de Malfaiteurs," so that it included violent acts perpetrated by anarchists.<sup>27</sup>

The illustration that Steinlen made to accompany this article is revealing. As he did in Le Terme Franco-Russe, Steinlen wed the title of the article to the design, creating his own ironic commentary on the issue at hand. Under the heading "Association de Malfaiteurs" we see, instead of a group of criminals or anarchists, men of power and means, the well-to-do members of the social order, who appear to be undermining the bourgeois society that they epitomize (Fig. 95 ). Huddled together conspiratorially, in their shiny top hats and greatcoats, these men cast dark shadows around them. Their faces are completely hidden; indeed, one man, at

the right, has pulled his coat over his face so that he cannot be seen. The sense of secrecy and fear conveyed by this image perfectly represents the element that d'Axa called on the president and the army to do away with, either by denying the rumors that Dreyfus was innocent or by bringing to light the facts of the case.

While conveying the atmosphere of intrigue described by d'Axa, Steinlen departed from the text: The evildoers whom d'Axa wrote about were all Army officers, but the figures in Steinlen's grouping include only one soldier, almost hidden, in the back. The rest are less easily identified--businessmen, government officials, or members of the middle and upper classes. Thus, Steinlen's interpretation is much more generalized than d'Axa's article, leading one to believe that the artist avoided representing the army in a strongly derisive manner. Such an illustration would certainly have been damning, at a time when information about the Dreyfus case at best was confused and incomplete. The illustration indicates Steinlen's noncommittal attitude toward the affair, one that was in line with that held by the majority of his left-wing friends and colleagues.

The next issue of La Feuille, published December 17, 1897, contained the second article dealing with the Dreyfus case. In an essay called "Réhabilitation civile

et Exécution militaire," d'Axa assailed Félix Faure, president of the Republic, for remaining silent about the affair, and throughout most of the article d'Axa speculated on the reasons for this silence. The editor condemned Faure's apparent acceptance of "la chose jugée,"<sup>28</sup> which indicated that the president believed that the decision of the military court that tried Dreyfus was above suspicion. At this point, the writer turned to a condemnation of the army, his principal concern being the severe punishment of privates for disobedience. D'Axa related several incidents in which men were treated brutally for minor offenses. In writing on behalf of a young soldier named Charles Hertier, who was condemned to death for pushing a superior, the author obviously tried to arouse public sentiment for the soldier in the hope that the boy might be acquitted. In his sardonic way, d'Axa called on the president not to lift the harsh sentence of the condemned boy, who was to shot by a firing squad four months later, but to have him killed immediately, so that the long agony of the boy and his poor mother would be cut short. The last line of the article was a plea to the president: "Clôre cette ère de scandales où maints officiers se distinguèrent, il faut un exemple, c'est certain: Fusillez vite le petit soldat."<sup>29</sup> As this incident was really quite separate

from the Dreyfus affair, d'Axa took advantage of it in order to gain support for an issue that he felt strongly about.

Instead of choosing to illustrate some aspect of the article that dealt with Faure and the Dreyfus case Steinlen drew a very sober, straightforward image of a young soldier about to be executed by a firing squad (Fig. 96) that echoed the last lines of d'Axa's article (quoted above). The illustration was obviously meant as an attack on an army that raised the banner of the Republic while killing its youth, yet only insofar as it is critical of the army is it related to the Dreyfus affair.<sup>30</sup> At this time, the fate of a young, mistreated private clearly moved Steinlen more than the plight of Captain Dreyfus.

The attitudes of both Zo d'Axa and Steinlen toward the Dreyfus affair appear to have changed after Zola's "J'accuse" was published in l'Aurore on January 13, 1898. The article was a turning point in the history of the case, creating as much of a furor as did the subsequent trial of the famous writer. Tension broke out in the form of violence. In many cities of France Jews were beaten and their shops plundered. Students stormed Zola's house, shouting "Death to Zola! Long live the

Army!"<sup>31</sup>

In his article of January 21, "Arguments Frappants," which appeared just one week after the publication of "J'accuse," d'Axa forcefully endorsed the revision of the Dreyfus case. Throughout much of the essay he discussed the problem of the mob violence that followed Zola's article, citing three specific acts of brutality taken against innocent workers. In one incident, three soldiers attacked a laborer and beat him to death. D'Axa used this as an opportunity to speak out against the injustices of a system in which privates could be shot to death for misconduct, yet given light sentences for killing a civilian. He went on to a further discussion of the prejudicial military judges who acquitted Esterhazy, and he called for a complete investigation, in order to uncover facts that obviously had been concealed. Of the three incidents that d'Axa cited in which workers were beaten, only one specifically involved a Jew. However, for d'Axa the Jew represented an individual who was defenseless in the face of injustice and mob violence:

C'est toujours la même aventure: dès qu'un pauvre diable est sans défense, il y a des braves qui se révèlent. Dans les bagarres, quand on trébuche, les talons de bottes frappent à la tête. Essayer d'arracher aux foules une des victimes de leur lynchage déchaîne des colères de bêtes auxquelles on enlève la proie.<sup>32</sup>

Steinlen brilliantly portrayed the anger of the mob in his illustration Arguments Frappants, the title an obvious pun (Fig. 97). Using the vertical format of the newspaper, Steinlen placed a fallen man at the very bottom of the page, with a jeering crowd descending upon him. Even though already downed, he is being kicked in the shoulder and about to be hit with a stick, an incident that echoed d'Axa's description quoted above. As in d'Axa's article, the helpless man was meant to symbolize Captain Dreyfus; in Steinlen's picture of humanity gone mad it was the artist's passionate and compelling portrait of the Dreyfus affair.<sup>33</sup>

Two other illustrations by Steinlen reveal his sympathy with Dreyfus's cause and his frank hostility toward the anti-Dreyfusard, Nationalist factions in French society. The first of these illustrations was drawn from an article by d'Axa that was dated February 28, 1898, "Les Moutons de Boisdeffre"<sup>34</sup> The article appeared in La Feuille five days after Zola was condemned, at the close of a trial that all of France had followed with rapt attention. It is linked to the previous article, "Arguments Frappants," but goes further in its condemnation of the army for its role in the Dreyfus case. D'Axa accused the army of being an enemy of liberty, and hence, of the Republic, and he railed

against the mob's blind allegiance to the military. Furthermore, d'Axa warned against the dangerous alliance between the Church and the army, which the affair had strengthened.<sup>35</sup>

In Les Moutons de Boisdeffre, Steinlen chose to focus on the mob--"les moutons" of d'Axa's title--as he had done in Arguments Frappants. The second composition drew on the first: the artist repeated the image of a dense crowd of people, with dramatically animated facial expressions and gestures. Since the imagery in the majority of Steinlen's illustrations for La Feuille is completely unique in the context of his oeuvre, the repetition that occurs in these two issues shows that the artist was pleased with Arguments Frappants--among his strongest lithographs--and felt that it effectively captured one of the most characteristic aspects of the affair. In fact, the hysterical public response that he depicted was rarely treated by other illustrators.

Although similar in spirit to Arguments Frappants, Les Moutons de Boisdeffre is a less literal illustration of d'Axa's article. While in both images the mob is realistically represented, in Les Moutons Steinlen introduced a symbolic image into the drawing--a sword--which seemed to be thrust into the crowd by a detached hand (Fig. 98). The situation was thus an imaginary one. At

that time, the sword was the symbol of the army, but its presence in this illustration relate more immediately to the fact that, in d'Axa's article in the previous issue of La Feuille, he condemned what he called "la Justice de Sabre!"<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Jaurès, the socialist leader whom Steinlen admired, had spoken in the Chamber of the "tyranny of the sword," in an attempt to explain the sympathy of the socialists toward Dreyfus.<sup>37</sup>

The figures in this lithograph cheer and hail the sword, but, at the same time, Steinlen's crayon adeptly captured them cowering in fear. Although it is evident that the crowd comprises several classes, most dominant are a soldier and a clergyman in the foreground. In a friendly gesture, the clergyman rests his hand on the back of his companion--an allusion to the dreaded alliance mentioned earlier. The antimilitarism expressed in this image cannot be overlooked, and it must be remembered that at this time if one criticized the army one was indirectly sympathetic to Dreyfus. Were Steinlen neutral on this matter, he would not have drawn so provocative an image as Les Moutons de Boisdeffre, at the height of the Dreyfus crisis. It appears, then, that this lithograph was the work of a Dreyfusard.

Steinlen's antimilitaristic and anticlerical attitude is further expressed in an illustration for the

article "Rochefort se meurt! Rochefort est mort!", which appeared on June 16, 1898. At first glance, one would think that Henri Rochefort, the political journalist, had died, since we are looking at his body being carried away from a funeral service (Fig. 99). Actually, Rochefort was very much alive in 1898 (he was born in 1831 and died in 1913). At one time he was linked to the left. While he did not actually participate in the Commune, his approval of it caused him to be imprisoned and then sent to New Caledonia. When amnesty was declared in 1880 Rochefort returned to Paris and, through his Nationalism, he became allied with the more conservative elements of French society. During the Dreyfus affair Rochefort wrote virulent articles against Dreyfus in his newspaper L'Intransigeant.

D'Axa accused Rochefort of opportunism: Rochefort exploited certain aspects of the Dreyfus affair so that he could sell more papers to the mobs of France. Rochefort's defense of militarism was anathema to d'Axa, who claimed that the old socialist was spiritually dead:

Le militarisme est la clef de voûte du monument d'iniquité, de misère, de laideur, d'exploitation que représente cette société. Le soldat est le chien de garde des receleurs capitalistes -- et c'est le chien de fusil des grèves...

Marcher avec la soldatesque n'est pas l'acte d'un insurgé; mais c'est le fait d'une bonne d'enfant: Rochefort est une nourrice sèche pour troupiers de

l'état-major.<sup>38</sup>

There is little doubt that Steinlen agreed with d'Axa, which put him clearly on the side of Dreyfus. In Steinlen's illustration of the writer's mock funeral (Fig. 99), Rochefort's body is being honored by several groups. Most prominent are the army officers, depicted in their official uniforms. These figures may be caricatures of specific officers: the man in the foreground resembles General Billot; the one who is second from the bottom, General de Saussier; and the fourth from the bottom, Colonel Sandherr.<sup>31</sup> This satirical representation of the army--which has come a long way from the barely visible kepi in Association de Malfaiteurs of just seven months before--includes, in the background, a bishop, surrounded by choirboys and a priest, who blesses the body. Steinlen's combination of anticlericalism and antimilitarism goes beyond anything in d'Axa's text.

This illustration, along with Arguments Frappants and Les Moutons de Boisdeffre, constitutes a strong statement by the artist on the Dreyfus issue. Collectively, the three images oppose the army, the clergy, Rochefort (a leading anti-Dreyfusard), and the anti-Semitic mob. They are three of Steinlen's best-drawn and most incisive journalistic works, a testament to the strong emotions provoked in the artist by the affair.

They point to the fact that Steinlen, like his friends Zo d'Axa, Gérault-Richard, Jean Jaurès, and Anatole France, to name but a few, was a confirmed Dreyfusard.

As the scandal continued to mount, other artists contributed illustrations to La Feuille that criticized the government, the army, and the anti-Dreyfusards. The September issue of the journal followed the critical events of August as well as those of the current month: Colonel Henry had committed suicide; General Boisdeffre and the Minister of War, General Zurlindin, had resigned; and Esterhazy had fled to England. For this issue, Hermann-Paul, in a powerful illustration, showed the Second Bureau overcome by corruption and besieged by violence, while Félix Faure watched in silence (Fig. 100).<sup>40</sup>

Louis Anquetin captured the violent mood in an illustration of October 3, 1898, Drumont et Vacher, one of his rare contributions to periodical illustration (Fig. 101). Vacher was a former soldier who, in a highly publicized case, in 1897, had been condemned to death for murdering a group of shepherds. Apparently, when Vacher was on trial, he claimed that God had called on him to commit the murders, for which he was not responsible. D'Axa likened Drumont--who hid behind God and the clergy in his defense of anti-Semitism--to Vacher; he stated that both

men were deranged and suffered from "manie du mensonge et des faux, folie du meurtre et des grandeurs."<sup>41</sup> At the end of his article, d'Axa described Drumont and Vacher talking idly at the foot of the cross.

It is d'Axa's final description that Anquetin used as the basis for his illustration. While Hermann-Paul's realist style perhaps was closer to Steinlen's than any other illustrator's was during that period, Anquetin's approach was quite different. He portrayed Drumont and Vacher with huge, fierce heads, at the foot of a cross around which a sinister looking snake crawled--a symbol of treachery and deceit. The angry faces and the dense blackness of the bottom two-thirds of the image give this illustration a startling quality, although, in general, the work is more in line with traditional caricature than with Steinlen's narrative realism. Like Steinlen's illustrations of 1898, those of Hermann-Paul and Anquetin also contributed to the Dreyfusard tone of La Feuille.

Steinlen's final illustration of the Dreyfus affair was produced for the January 18, 1899, issue of La Feuille. In the article entitled "Saluons-les!" d'Axa spoke primarily about the criticism that the courts were undergoing as they examined the Dreyfus case anew, after the suicide of Colonel Henry. In October, the Criminal Chamber of the High Court of Appeal considered a petition

put before them for the revision of the Dreyfus case and decided on a rehearing.<sup>42</sup> The inquiry was to last through early February 1899.<sup>43</sup> Throughout this period the Nationalist press denounced the courts, claiming that an examination of the secret dossier about Dreyfus would be detrimental to the national interest. They went so far as to excuse members of the Criminal Chamber of being bribed by the Germans.<sup>44</sup>

D'Axa discussed this battle between the army and the court: "Les robes de la magistrature et les culottes de l'armée s'entre-déchirent."<sup>45</sup> In a rather smug way, d'Axa applauded the Nationalists who denounced the judiciary, maintaining that they had totally destroyed any notion of patriotism that was left among the French:

Une nation, en effet, peut se passer d'une armée. Mais quelle figure lui fait-on faire quand on dit qu'elle ment en justice?...L'idée de Patrie était malade, les patriotes l'auront tuée.<sup>46</sup>

In the final analysis, d'Axa welcomed this confrontation, believing that only through the reexamination of the case would France be able to lift herself out of the mud.

In Steinlen's illustration, the two pillars of French society, the judiciary and the army, find themselves, literally, back to back (Fig. 102). Through the use of lines and scratches, Steinlen created a turbulent atmosphere around the two figures, pertinent to the

immediate controversy surrounding the ongoing inquiry. This storm of controversy might also have stood for events that began in 1896, and seemed to have found some degree of resolution in the ultimate confrontation between the law and the military.

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No study of La Feuille would be complete without a discussion of En Grève, one of Steinlen's best-known images for the journal (Fig. 103). While En Grève did not represent the Dreyfus affair, it illustrated an article that must be examined in light of the Dreyfus case. In the fall of 1898, as the scandals of the affair intensified, construction workers preparing the site for the World's Fair of 1900 went on strike and were joined by 20,000 additional men. Workers building the Paris subway also went on strike. Rumors of a coup d'état of workers and Dreyfusards circulated. Troops numbering some 60,000 were called into the city, in order to suppress the much-feared riots.<sup>47</sup>

In response to the strike, Zo d'Axa wrote an article that he provocatively titled "La Grève des Juifs." Having previously spoken out for the cause of revision, he now chastised well-to-do Jews for refusing to contribute to a public fund established in support of the

striking workers. If these Jews were crusading for the rights of a single army officer, he asked, why did they not have the sensitivity to help those underdogs fighting for a better standard of living? With this article, d'Axa showed the spirit of independent thinking called for in his definition of l'en dehors.<sup>48</sup>

While "La Grève des Juifs" was related to the Dreyfus affair, Steinlen eschewed all such links in his illustration of the article which appeared on October 20, 1898. Since this illustration had little to do with the thrust of d'Axa's essay--and possibly because of the provocative nature of the essay's title, Steinlen used the subheading of the article, "En Grève," as the title of his illustration. Ignoring the problem of Jewish hypocrisy at the core of d'Axa's argument, in En Grève Steinlen exhibited the deep concern for the working class that was the backbone of his art.<sup>49</sup>

In this illustration, Steinlen concentrated on construction workers--actually the subway workers whom d'Axa had specifically cited in his article. Steinlen always had had a special interest in construction laborers and coal miners, and this illustration was an elaboration of previous images that the artist made of construction workers and striking coal miners. One of Steinlen's favorite works was his illustration for "Tu

t'en iras les pieds devant" (Fig. 104), which originally had appeared in Gil Blas in 1895; he made several studies for this illustration, as well as copies of it, including a large-scale drawing and a painting. In 1896, the artist repeated the image of two workers on a high scaffolding for the socialist journal La Petite République. He also created a fine painting of construction workers, similar to the figures in En Grève, in which he paid careful attention to the wide sashes and broad pants worn by the men. This painting probably dates from about 1900 (Fig. 105). In addition to its inclusion in Steinlen's images of workers, scaffolding appeared as an incidental motif in numerous drawings and illustrations by the artist. For Steinlen, scaffolding represented the changing shape of the city--this was particularly evident in Montmartre in the latter part of the 1890s--and he often found himself uprooted by new building projects that had forced him to move.

The confrontation of strikers and soldiers inspired an earlier, powerful illustration of the poem "La Mine" (Fig. 48 ) that appeared in Gil Blas in 1895. The construction of the picture space of En Grève is similar to that of La Mine, but in the latter, a prominent figure on the left side of the page faces a column of soldiers who recede, along a diagonal, into the picture space.

Although the soldiers are on the left and the workers on the right in En Grève--a reversal of the earlier work--spatially the compositions are similar. In La Mine, a screaming mother holds aloft her starving infant, while her young daughter keeps her from throwing herself on the soldiers. En Grève is a very quiet scene, almost understated. Its power lies in the dignity with which Steinlen characterized the workers and in the threat of violence represented by the well-armed soldiers; they seem an unnecessarily bellicose presence among the innocuous looking laborers who stand around idly, their hands in their pockets. In this poignant scene of workers coming face to face with their own countrymen, Steinlen created a classic image of the strike in modern times.

Notes

1. The arrest of Zo d'Axa is noted in L'Endehors in issue no. 79, of November 5, 1892. See also Jean Maitron, Le mouvement anarchiste en France, Paris, 1975, t. 1. p. 137; and Eugenia W. Herbert, The Artist and Social Reform: France and Belgium, 1885-1898, New York, 1971, pp. 101, 123.
2. This symbolism was used for La Bonne Année, the cover of Le Chambard, no. 3, of December 30, 1893, in which a worker looks out over the horizon at the rising sun on which is inscribed 189-. A similar motif appeared as the cover for the Almanach de Bibliophile, Paris, 1900. Steinlen also designed the poster for La Feuille, which will be discussed in another chapter.
3. This was true for all but one issue, no. 12, of May 19, 1898, in which text and illustration shared space on both pages of the journal.
4. I am grateful to Phillip Dennis Cate for his helpful discussion of photo-mechanical processes.
5. Ernest de Crauzat, L'Oeuvre gravé et lithographié de Steinlen, Paris, 1913, p. 109.
6. Quoted in Maitron, p. 137, n. 103.
7. See Zo d'Axa, Les Feuilles, Paris, 1900, p. 266.
8. Not every illustration that Steinlen did for La Feuille is discussed. Illustrations were chosen on the basis of their quality of expression, and when they afforded insight into either the working techniques or the political attitudes of the artist.
9. D. W. Brogan, The Development of Modern France, 1870-1939, New York, 1970, vol. I, p. 318 (originally published 1940).
10. Jacques Lethève, La caricature et la Presse sous la III<sup>e</sup> République, Paris, 1961, p. 122.
11. During this period, rent was paid by the "terme," which was a quarter of a year, or a period of three months.

12. Georges Auriol, Steinlen et la Rue, Paris, 1930, p. 15ff.
13. A study of Steinlen's drawings shows that he made numerous drawings of men he was known to have admired. Those he drew extensively include Anatole France, Maxim Gorki, and Zo d'Axa.
14. This image may have been influenced by Goya's drawing of 1824-28, Loco furioso. See Pierrea Gassier and Juliet Wilson, The Life and Complete Work of Francisco Goya, Fribourg, Switzerland, 1971, p. 265.
15. The following account is primarily drawn from Brogan, pp. 305-10, 329-87; Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France, Middlesex, England, 1965, vol. 3, pp. 48-57; Donald Harvey, France Since the Revolution, New York, 1968, pp. 134-42; and Douglas Johnson, France and the Dreyfus Affair, New York, 1966.
16. Johnson, p. 17.
17. The figures quoted here appear in Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, Chicago, 1960, p. 252.
18. Brogan, p. 335.
19. Harvey Goldberg, The Life of Jean Jaurès, Madison, Wisconsin, 1962, p. 223.
20. See Maitron, pp. 331-42, for a discussion of anarchist attitudes toward the Dreyfus affair.
21. From Le Libertaire, no. 115, January 29-February 5, 1898. Quoted in Maitron, pp. 335-36 (in French).
22. Maitron, p. 338.
23. Marguerite Steinlen, the artist's niece, who lived with Steinlen in Paris prior to his death, has written that Steinlen fought for a revision of the Dreyfus case. See Marguerite Steinlen, "Steinlen," Du, May 1953, p. 31.
24. Robert Byrnes, in Antisemitism in Modern France, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1950, p. 291, includes Steinlen in a list of anti-Semitic artists. Alexander Seltzer maintains that Steinlen was

neutral on the issue; see Alexander Seltzer, Anarchism, Antisemitism and the Press: A Critical Evaluation of Three Artists' Response to the Dreyfus Affair, Masters thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1972 (unpublished).

25. At this time, the suspicious conduct of Esterhazy and other officers was becoming more and more evident. The previous November, Le Matin had published a facsimile of the bordereau and Esterhazy's handwriting was identified with it. By late 1897, there was increased public debate about the commandant's involvement in the affair; on November 15, one week before d'Axa's article, Bernard Lazare wrote an open letter to the president of the Republic, denouncing Esterhazy. For a detailed chronology of the affair, see Louis L. Snyder, The Dreyfus Case: A Documentary History, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1973, pp. xi-xx.
26. D'Axa. p. 33.
27. Laws were passed that severely restricted freedom of the press, resulting in the dissolution of several left-wing journals and in the arrest of editors and writers. In addition to these "lois scélérates," legislation that redefined the term "Association de malfaiteurs" was put into effect. This term came to include those with knowledge of, or the intent to commit a criminal act, rather than referring solely to those who had actually committed such acts. These laws were aimed at anarchist organizations and, since they were somewhat vaguely worded, they could be applied on a broader basis. See Maitron, p. 252.
28. This may be translated as "legally over and done with." See Brogan, p. 329, n.2.
29. D'Axa, p. 50.
30. It is tempting to construe this work as an allegory of the affair, but I don't believe that this was intended by the artist. If Steinlen had wanted to create such an effect, he could easily have done so by relating the figure at the stake to Dreyfus, the officer class, or to Judaism. The boy, with his regular features, is clearly a young private.

31. Nicholas Halasz, Captain Dreyfus: The Story of a Mass Hysteria, New York, 1955, p. 136.
32. D'Axa, pp. 76, 79.
33. Ralph E. Shikes, The Indignant Eye, Boston, 1969, pp. 229-30, also interprets this illustration as an allegory of the Dreyfus case.
34. Boisdeffre was the chief of the General Staff and was one of those accused by Zola of hiding evidence pertaining to the question of Dreyfus's guilt.
35. The role of the Catholic clergy in the Dreyfus affair is well known. The mouthpiece for the anti-Dreyfusards was the Assumptionists' newspaper La Croix. While anti-Semitism had existed among priests of peasant origin in the past, they could now express their beliefs aloud. The role of the clergy was substantial and-- barring some individuals who were Dreyfusards--they rallied to the side of the Army. At this time, the forces of progress represented by Zola's group, and the growing number of socialists who backed Dreyfus, vied with the reactionary forces represented primarily by the army and the Church. See H. R. Kedward, The Dreyfus Affair, London, 1965, pp. 71-89.
36. D'Axa, p. 68.
37. Marguerite Steinlen mentions Steinlen's friendship with Jaurès, as well as with Clemenceau, in "Steinlen," Du, May 1953.
38. D'Axa, p. 167.
39. Colonel Sandherr had been director of the statistical section; General Billot, Minister of War; and General de Saussier, the Military Governor of Paris, who had been involved in the initial decision to try Dreyfus. See Brogan, p. 306.
40. Hermann-Paul also worked on the Dreyfusard journal, Le Sifflet. His illustration of the Second Bureau was parodied by an artist in the British journal Punch, on August 30, 1899. The British work is reproduced in Snyder, 344f.
41. D'Axa, p. 220.

42. Halasz, p. 186.
43. Johnson, p. 157.
44. Halasz, p. 187.
45. D'Axa, p. 268.
46. D'Axa, p. 273.
47. Guy Chapman, The Dreyfus Trials, New York, 1972, pp. 178-79; Halasz, p. 184.
48. See above pp. 142-143 of this chapter.
49. Steinlen may have purposely avoided representing the Jews in a derogatory way, a further indication of his sympathy toward Dreyfus and with the revision of the case.

CHAPTER VI  
STEINLEN'S POSTERS

Thus far, the main focus of this study has been Steinlen's magazine illustrations and the way in which they reflected the social and political trends of his time. Steinlen evolved a rather "realistic" style of illustration in response to specific literary themes in Le Mirliton and Gil Blas illustré, and to political ideas in La Feuille. For the didactic Le Chambard, allegory and caricature were used, devices somewhat uncharacteristic of the artist, but showing his flexibility as an illustrator.

Steinlen's posters represent an important aspect of his career as an illustrator. During the eighties and early nineties Steinlen gained recognition primarily as a magazine illustrator. With his posters of the mid- and late 1890s, his reputation as a poster maker equaled or surpassed his reputation for journal illustration. He was celebrated, along with Chéret, Grasset, Mucha, and

Lautrec, as one of the leaders in French poster art of his time.

In this genre, Steinlen displayed his talent for decorative design. Although he is often considered outside the mainstream of Art Nouveau, many of his mature posters may be linked with that style, in their use of flowing curvilinear contours and interlocking forms.

The poster movement, which dominated the graphic arts of the 1890s, coincided with a decorative arts revival that began in France about 1889 and lasted until the 1920s. There was a reciprocal relationship between the print revival--in which posters played such an important role--and the decorative arts revival, each reinforcing and furthering the goals of the other. A good deal has been written about the poster revival and the dealers, printers, and publications connected with it,<sup>1</sup> but very little has been said about the French decorative arts revival<sup>2</sup> and its proponents, many of whom were also spokesmen for the poster and the print.

The fin de siècle revival had its roots in writing, which was stimulated by the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. In France, the principal commentator on the exhibition was Léon de Laborde, an art historian and critic who was officially commissioned to report on the applied arts. Like the better known British critics like

William Morris and Owen Jones, Laborde was struck by the inferior quality of so many of the objects exhibited. He was particularly critical of the French section, in which the lifeless imitation of Empire styles was the rule. Laborde felt it was important to revitalize the applied arts, and pleaded for a new approach in which industry would be accepted on an equal footing with the beaux-arts. He argued that industry and art were both equal faculties of man's creative impulse:

Les arts, les lettres, les sciences, le vêtement de son corps, l'ameublement de sa demeure, sont autant de branches de son industrie, considérées dans la juste extension du mot. L'art embrasse, donc toute l'activité de l'homme.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of wedding art and industry had existed for many years, and, was a moving force behind French industrial exhibitions since the late 1700s. But the matter now seemed more urgent, in view of the vast markets for material goods that were emerging with the growth of the middle class. In order to do away with the mediocrity of taste that dominated the marketplace, Laborde called on the state to educate the new consumers aesthetically, and drew up a three-fold program to this end. He recommended that drawing be taught to school children as an integral part of their basic education, discussed specialized instruction in design for those who wished to pursue art professionally, and advised on a variety of ways to

improve public taste, with reforms in such areas as architecture, museums, and public parades and festivals.

Because of the rigid and fully entrenched academic system, and severe criticism by the artist, Ingres and conservative critics like Gustave Planche, very little progress was made along the lines envisioned by Laborde during the Second Empire.<sup>4</sup> It was not until the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris that a full-fledged movement for the revival of the decorative arts emerged in France. A decade later, at the next Paris Exposition in 1900, the results of this movement were in full view, in what came to be known as Art Nouveau.

While Laborde was championed by French critics as the apostle of the "new art," the British Arts and Crafts Movement had a more direct and immediate influence on the French. Throughout the 1890s and during the early twentieth century, books and articles in France appeared in praise of William Morris and the English decorative arts revival.<sup>5</sup> Many French writers, including Gabriel Mourey, Jean Lahor, and Roger Marx, emphasized the democratic basis of the movement. Their statements may be seen as another aspect of the growing concern for the masses that was characteristic of the period, and which is reflected in Steinlen's prints.

The critic most responsible for bridging the gap

between the decorative arts revival and the print and poster craze was the beaux-arts official Roger Marx (1859-1913). From 1889 until his death, Marx wrote numerous articles in which he outlined his theories about art and society.<sup>6</sup> Like Morris and Laborde before him, Marx was appalled by the poorly made products of modern industry and by the imitation of past styles that dominated international exhibitions in the second half of the nineteenth century. He believed that the quality of life would be enhanced by simple but well-made objects that reflected modern civilization; that is, by objects that were of their own time, rather than of the past. By incorporating art into everyday objects Marx believed that the life of the worker and the peasant could be enriched in a way that was never achieved before. This idea was at the heart of Marx's philosophy, expressed most forcefully in his book L'Art Social, published just before his death in 1913:

Il est acquis maintenant que ce besoin de beauté est le signe par où s'affirment les désirs de l'instinct et le progrès des civilisations. Quand l'art se mêle intimement à la vie unanime, la designation "d'art social" seule peut lui convenir; on ne saurait restreindre à une classe le privilège de ses inventions; il appartient à tous, sans distinction de rang ni de fortune; c'est l'art de foyer et de la cité-jardin, l'art du château et de l'école, l'art du bijou précieux et de la broderie paysanne; c'est aussi l'art du sol, de la race et de la nation....<sup>7</sup>

Marx advocated a unity-of-art thesis: he believed that the decorative arts and the fine arts should not be distinct, but joined together to create a more beautiful environment for modern man. From 1889, Marx fought for greater status for the applied arts. His work was partially rewarded in 1891 when the applied arts were exhibited, for the first time, at the second annual Salon of the Société Nationale. In 1895, even the more reactionary Salon des Artistes Français began to exhibit the applied arts at their yearly exhibitions.

Marx wrote many essays on prints, including the preface to Ernest de Crauzat's catalogue of Steinlen's graphic art.<sup>8</sup> He encouraged printmakers to extend their work to include book illustration, sheet-music covers, and other genres, praising especially the work of the Nabis in these areas.<sup>9</sup> Among his most important critical contributions were the five prefaces he wrote, from 1895 to 1900, for the series Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, which issued major posters in a reduced format.<sup>10</sup>

For Marx, the poster represented one of the most successful contributions to the decorative arts. He saw posters as modern-day frescoes that enlivened the gray, uniform boulevards of Baron Haussman's Paris. Accessible to the common man outdoors, they could also be obtained cheaply and used as wall decorations in apartments. Be-

cause of this easy access, they were useful in the aesthetic education of the masses.

The concept that art should represent its own time was central to the decorative arts revival. Marx saw the poster as an exemplary document of modern civilization. This positivist view is stressed in Marx's writing on Chéret, the father of the modern poster:

Feuilletez l'oeuvre lithographié de Jules Chéret; il semble la chronique illustrée de l'époque, la documentation préparée aux historiens curieux de nos dehors et de nos moeurs. A ses affiches il appartient de fixer la mode qui passe, de rappeler l'appât d'une mise en vente, la trêve de décembre vouée aux jouets et à l'enfance, de dire le roman à tapage et la gazette qui se fonde, la nouveauté d'un panorama ou d'une exposition; elles dévoilent la vie artificielle du soir, le passe-temps de nos veilles, les patinages galants des skatings, les spectacles de l'hippodrome et du cirque...<sup>11</sup>

While the dynamic compositions and lively colors in Chéret's posters make them exciting works of poster art, many of the most important posters of the 1890s exhibit design principles more typical of Art Nouveau. The sinuous lines, flat areas of strong color and pictorial abstractions common to this movement animate the works of Lautrec, Grasset, Mucha, and De Feure, to name just a few of its exponents. While in vivid contrast to his prints and paintings, many of Steinlen's posters are also closely linked to the Art Nouveau aesthetics and thus place his posters stylistically in the vanguard of fin de siècle French art.

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Steinlen's earliest works, those dating from 1885 to about 1891, are typical of many posters that were created from the 1860s through the 1880s. He used diminutive figures and excessive details to produce picturesque narratives.<sup>12</sup> It was not until 1893 that he produced his first important poster, Mothu et Doria, where clarity of composition and simplicity of form replace the older standard.

Mothu and Doria were performers who often sang the repertoire of Albert Pajol, the lyricist and publisher who commissioned the poster. Mothu generally played the role of a vagabond and is seen in Sur le tas, a sheet-music cover of 1893, one of four that Steinlen produced for Pajol that year. Whereas in the music cover two vagabonds are depicted, in Mothu et Doria (Fig. 106), Steinlen calls attention to the distinct social classes of the Paris of his day with his image of an elegant aristo lighting the cigarette of a working-class drifter. The confrontation of one class with another was a theme that Steinlen had explored earlier in his illustrations for Le Mirliton, and, in 1894, it would dominate his work for Le Chambard.

Comparing Mothu et Doria with Le Rêve (Fig. 24), a large-scale poster of 1891, one sees how far Steinlen has

progressed in the use of a new vocabulary. In La Rêve, which is heavily infused with japonaiserie,<sup>13</sup> a ballerina in the foreground acts as a repoussoir, or foil. Behind her is a large group of dancers whose tiny faces are barely perceptible. In addition to complex details Steinlen used a conventional three-dimensional perspective system and tried to underscore the feeling of depth even further through the use of both foreground and background shadows. All of this has the effect of weakening the immediate impact of the poster which is meant to be taken in at a glance.

In Mothu et Doria, Steinlen concentrated on only two figures, who cover nearly the entire frontal plane of the composition; they stand out prominently against an abstracted foggy night sky punctuated by street lamps. Steinlen used bright colors for the work, primarily red and yellow, in addition to black and white. A reddish tint colors the face of the vagrant, giving him an appropriately swarthy complexion, while the street lights are animated by the use of pure yellow. The artist has used crachis, or splattered ink, extensively in the poster, which adds variety of texture signalling his awareness of advanced lithographic techniques. The entire composition, including the flat outlined lettering, has a forceful appearance that attracts the viewer.

Mothu et Doria was influenced substantially by the work of Toulouse-Lautrec. Lautrec's first poster, Moulin-Rouge, appeared in 1891; in 1892 he published five posters, and in 1893 four more. The dynamic lines, emphatic outlines, and flattened forms of Lautrec's posters were outstanding features that would not have escaped Steinlen's notice, as he had been interested in his colleague's work since the late 1880s.<sup>14</sup> In an illustration for Le Mirliton, of June 1893, Steinlen included Lautrec's poster Aristide Bruant dans son Cabaret (Fig. 5 ). Lautrec's art and especially his Bruant poster had a great impact on Steinlen, for he adopted elements from it for his own poster: the two figures silhouetted against a neutral background probably derived from the radically simplified form of Bruant while the broad cape and the dynamic effect of the red scarf in Mothu et Doria also find parallels in Lautrec's poster.

It is probable that Steinlen completed Mothu et Doria in the latter part of 1893--that is, after Lautrec's third poster of Bruant. A letter of Steinlen's dated February 27, 1894, asks for the return of his two lithographic stones and two hundred copies of the poster against 200 francs owed the artist for his services.<sup>15</sup> It is unlikely that Steinlen would have waited until the

end of February, 1894, for payment, if he had created the poster during the first half of the previous year.

Early in 1894, Steinlen produced his most celebrated poster, Lait pur Sterilisé de la Vingeanne, for the company of Quillot Frères.<sup>16</sup> This was the first of several important commissions that Steinlen executed at the printing shop of Charles Verneau, who would later become his principal printer.<sup>17</sup> Lait pur (Fig. 107) was the first poster in which Steinlen exhibited his own highly personal style; and it was to be the first of several posters which earned Steinlen a reputation in the 1890s as a principal exponent of the poster medium.

In this scene Steinlen was inspired by his own domestic surroundings. The poster depicts a young blonde girl sipping milk from a cup. Three large cats sit at her feet, staring up at the milk. The girl is Steinlen's daughter, Colette, and the cats, Steinlen's own pets. Steinlen's interest in cats persisted throughout his life. At one time, his home was dubbed by his friends le Cat's Cottage, housing as it did, as many as fifteen cats.<sup>18</sup>

More than any other work Lait pur established Steinlen as a masterful illustrator of cats. Until then--and primarily during the eighties--Steinlen had drawn small black cats like the one in Le Chat et la Grenouille

(Fig. 1 ) for his series in Le Chat Noir. However, for the large-scale poster Lait pur, Steinlen was able to create cats with greater anatomical accuracy than he had achieved in his illustrations for Le Chat Noir.

Cats appear in several posters by other artists during this period, but they were never used as effectively as in Steinlen's work. In Chéret's 1888 poster for Alphonse Willette's exhibition (Fig. 108 ), a black cat stalks an artist's paint box. Unlike most posters in which we find cats, this cat is a symbol--here, of the café Le Chat Noir, with which Willette was associated --but it is clearly a detail that is not necessary to the principal components of the design. In another poster of Chéret's, Quinquina Dubonnet of 1895, the white cat is used to enliven the composition, by balancing the puffy white feather in the hat of Chéret's model. In George Meunier's poster of 1894, aside from its use as a formal device, the cat has little to do with the product advertised (Fig. 109 ).

Closest in intent to Steinlen's poster is Lucien Lefèvre's Cacao Lacté (Fig. 110) of 1893. In this work, a small boy holds up a bowl of cocoa while a dog jumps up in pursuit of it. The lettering and the background owe a great deal to Chéret, and the work is notable for the bright colors employed. However, Steinlen's poster is

much more effective. Very important is the fact that Steinlen's subject matter is perfectly geared to the product being advertised. Perhaps his experience as an illustrator taught him how crucial the nature of the product was to the design: cats and milk were an obvious and a natural combination.

This was not the only reason that Lait pur was considered so important, or why it has become a classic of poster art. The work fulfilled postermaking criteria that contemporary critics emphasized: bright colors, prominent lettering, simple lines, and clarity of composition.<sup>19</sup> As he had in Mothu et Doria, Steinlen used yellow and red. In the later poster, however, the colors were not muted in the least by the superimposition of darker tones. The red dress and blond hair of Colette are represented by broad, flat areas of color. Steinlen replaced black outlines with green lines, or "verdâtre", which are softer and against which the other colors stand out more boldly. Moreover, the poster's lettering appears prominently at the top, drawn in a fluid script like the lines used to define the rest of the composition. This fluidity of line is essential to the "modern" look of the poster. The repetitive curvilinearity that defines the cats and emphasizes the simplified lines of the main figure situates this work squarely in the context

of Art Nouveau.

In general, Art Nouveau exhibited a tendency toward asymmetrical composition, a decorative quality evident in a concern for surfaces and simplified, two-dimensional forms.<sup>20</sup> Often the concern for the curvilinear became a dominant factor in posters, especially with Grasset and Mucha. Although Steinlen's style is not as ornamental as the work of these artists, the imprint of Art Nouveau does play a role in Lait pur and in other posters he made during this period. One of the most successful of these is Compagnie Française des Chocolats et des Thés (Fig. 111), a work of 1895. Again, the artist drew upon two of his favorite images, Colette and the pet cat. The woman at the left was probably based on a portrait of Emilie, the artist's wife; the same figure appears in several other works by the artist.

This image is even more closely related to Art Nouveau principles of design than Steinlen's previous work. Whereas in Lait pur the primary Art Nouveau element is the flowing curvilinearity that defines the three cats, in Compagnie Française the whole composition seems to be animated by energetic lines that connect one form with the next. The uppermost compositional line moves uninterruptedly from mother to daughter to chair, and all elements in the work, particularly the woman and child,

are defined by lively curves. This curvilinearity is echoed in the tabletop, a surface composed of negative space and shown in a radically cropped perspective. The energetic line, the tight interlocking forms, and the interest in negative and positive spaces are all characteristic of the Art Nouveau style.

In the following year, 1896, Steinlen produced a monumental poster measuring 238 by 304 cms. La Rue (Fig. 112) was an advertisement for Charles Verneau's printing shop. Fifteen nearly life-size figures form a frieze on a Parisian street.<sup>21</sup> In the center is Colette, being led along by a dark-haired woman who resembles the mother in Compagnie Française. Along the frontal plane of the poster are a laundress, a young woman with a baby, a well-dressed middle-class lady, a corpulent businessman, a milliner, and a trottin. In the background, several other figures are indicated, including two laborers, an old woman, a nurse, and a man in a checkered suit.

Like the posters discussed above of the mid-nineties, La Rue contains Art Nouveau elements, although they are not used consistently throughout the work. It is on the left of the poster that one sees the sweeps, curves, and the movement typical of this style. (The figures on the right side appear much more wooden than their counterparts on the left.) The most prominent figure at the

left is the laundress with a large laundry basket. Her entire form is defined in graceful twists and curves and she adds tremendous vitality to the poster. She is surrounded by images of motherhood, by figures that are also composed of decorative sweeping lines and that form the most exciting part of the composition.<sup>22</sup>

Much has been written about the depiction of women in the art of the late nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> In posters, women were used extensively as sexual objects to attract the viewer. The fantastic creatures in Chéret's posters were absolutely essential to his concept of advertising. Grasset's idea of women was close to one aspect of the Pre-Raphaelites' portrayals of women as innocent and pure. To some extent this was also true of Mucha, although his women are more overtly erotic in their appeal. In contrast, Georges De Feure portrayed women as purveyors of evil, the epitome of the femmes fatales, and Lautrec's performers were, more often than not, embodiments of fin de siècle decadence. Yet, Steinlen's treatment of women was quite different from that of his contemporaries.

In La Rue, Steinlen ennobled the working woman. (In fact, his portraits of the laundress and the trottin are rare instances of the inclusion of members of the working class in posters of la belle époque.) Except for the corpulent businessman who eyes the trottin, all of

the figures in the foreground of La Rue are women. The dominant figures are the three women on the left. The laundress is seen as a rather alluring figure, who carries her great weight with ease and pride. When compared with later images of laundresses in Steinlen's art one sees just how romanticized this woman is (Figs. 113, 114).<sup>24</sup>

The remaining women that are shown most prominently reveal that Steinlen's positive concept of womanhood was linked to the female role of mother and nurturer. Even the milliner at the right has a look of maternal concern as she walks close to her apprentice. The idea that maternity was a mark of the virtuous woman had existed in art for centuries but it was particularly prevalent among artists of the 1890s. Paul Gauguin, Maurice Denis, and Eugène Carrière were among those artists who created archetypal images of the "Good Mother."<sup>25</sup> Although women are viewed in a somewhat narrow context in La Rue, Steinlen's images of motherhood are part of a dignified portrayal of ordinary working women that distinguishes his art.<sup>26</sup>

In the same year as La Rue, Steinlen produced a poster for Salis's Le Chat Noir that was placed outside the renowned café (Fig. 115).<sup>27</sup> This was an iconic image

of a black cat. The poster was probably influenced by the work of the Czechoslovakian artist Alphonse Mucha. It is reminiscent of Gismonda, Mucha's celebrated 1894 poster of Sarah Bernhardt (Fig. 116).

In Mucha's poster, Bernhardt stands on a corbel, like a great sculpture flanking a portal of a medieval cathedral. Above the highly ornamental form of the actress is a halo of light in which her name is inscribed and, above that, is the name of the play. Steinlen's Tournée du Chat Noir (Fig. 115) is a good deal less ornate, but the overall design is similar to Mucha's poster. The black cat sits on a rough pedestal over which its tail is curled, much as Bernhardt's dress overlaps the sculptured corbel. The cat's head is surrounded by a halo bearing the inscription, "Mont Joye Montmartre", another similarity with Mucha's poster. The whole notion of a rigid Byzantine form in a shallow space may derive from Mucha. Perhaps Tournée du Chat Noir is Steinlen's homage to the medievalist style that originated in France with Eugène Grasset, and which became a fundamental aspect of Art Nouveau.

Between 1896 and 1900 Steinlen produced ten more posters. Several of these continue the style of Lait pur and Compagnie Française displaying a flowing curvilinearity and closely knit figures. Most notable in this

regard are La Trait des Blanches, Cocorico, and Motocycles Comiot, all of 1899.

Departing from the compositional principles of Art Nouveau, several other posters from these years deserve attention. In these works Steinlen's political attitudes are more apparent. The first of these was a poster of 1897 for the journal La Feuille, printed in only one color--yellow--in addition to black and white. When the poster was issued, it was aptly described in L'Estampe et l'Affiche:

Comme les prospectus-réclames jetés, les jours de Mardi-gras et de Mi-carême, du haut des chars sur la masse compacte, béante des curieux et des badauds, le long des boulevards, La Feuille voltigeant, s'éparpille sur un océan grouillant de têtes, officiers, bourgeois et prolétaires, proprios et ouvriers, à la grands joie des uns, au grand mécontentement des autres. On trouve dans cette affiche toutes les qualités maîtresses de Steinlen, science de la composition et du mouvement, vérité des types vécus et parfaitement rendus.<sup>28</sup>

La Feuille (Fig. 117) is not related stylistically to Art Nouveau, yet it displays an advanced style that was influenced by the work of several of Steinlen's contemporaries. In 1892, Maurice Denis had created a poster for La Dépêche de Toulouse in which sheets of the journal sail down on an enthusiastic crowd, whose members reach up to grab them. This is in quite a different spirit from Steinlen's work, where the crowd seems to be assaulted by the anarchist notices, but Denis's poster must be cited

as a possible precedent for Steinlen's. More important, though, was the influence of another Nabi artist and a compatriot of Steinlen's, Félix Vallotton.<sup>29</sup>

Steinlen's La Feuille is structurally similar to the black-and-white woodcuts that Vallotton had produced from about 1893, some of which depicted large crowds. These crowd scenes were reproduced in popular journals with which Steinlen was familiar and, in 1896, many were published in the book Les Rassemblements: Physiologies de la Rue, edited by Octave Uzanne. In these works, Vallotton "flattened the image by eliminating the horizon line... and by cutting off heads in order to bring the figures up against the frontal plane of the picture."<sup>30</sup> In most of the works, the faces of the people are barely indicated, with just a few dots and dashes. Such abstractions were in keeping with the avant-garde theories set forth by Vallotton and his Nabi colleagues.

Steinlen's La Feuille is constructed in much the same way as Vallotton's woodcuts. (The fact that it was printed primarily in black and white may have led Steinlen to adopt some of the younger artist's ideas.) The entire surface of the poster is filled with figures, arbitrarily cut off by the picture frame. While the faces of those in the foreground are fairly detailed, most of the figures--men in bowlers and top hats--have a

ghostly quality. These are reminiscent of the abstractness of Vallotton's faces, but the eerie quality shows a kinship with the alienated expressions on the faces in the work of Edvard Munch, whose lithograph Anxiety (which also contains figures in top hats) appeared in Vollard's 1896 edition of l'Album des Peintres-Graveurs.

The grotesque faces in La Feuille are intended to satirize the bourgeoisie, most prominently represented in the foreground by a fat couple with beak-like noses. An officer is also seen in the foreground, a premonition of the Dreyfus affair, which was to become a focal point of the journal. On the right is a young working woman who stands beside a paper boy. The woman is golden haired and looks wistfully up at the sheets of paper. With youth by her side, she may represent a more harmonious future for the working class.

In two other major posters of the late 1890s women are seen symbolically--this time as allegorical personifications of Truth and Liberty. The first of these is a poster for Zola's novel Paris, which was serialized in Le Journal in 1898. Paris was the third volume of Zola's great trilogy, Rome, London, Paris. It depicted various aspects of Parisian life, from the political machinations of those in power to the squalor of the city's most impoverished citizens. The book focused on the anarchist

movement, seen through the eyes of one of its principal characters, Guillaume Froment, an idealist who becomes involved in political violence. In his examination of this character, Zola deals with the ideals and the shortcomings of the movement.

Paris was originally planned as an extremely large poster but, because of problems with space for posting bills, its size had to be reduced. Verneau, the printer, first broached the idea for a poster to Steinlen in August, 1897,<sup>31</sup> but sometime in September Steinlen wrote to his wife:

Je suis très ennuyé pour l'affiche de Zola. J'allais commencer définitivement la grande toile que j'avais commandé pour la faire était arrivée, quand voilà qu'hier matin je reçois une dépêche de M. Letellier qui me dit de passer le soir au "Journal". J'y vais en sortant du Louvre.

Ils ne veulent plus entendre parler d'une très grande affiche. C'est une plutôt petite qu'ils veulent (à cause de l'affichage et de la place sur les murs) il faut que je fasse tout autre chose que ce à quoi j'avais pensé et travaillé. Bref, tout est à recommencer. C'est très ennuyeux parce qu'on perd un temps énorme et que ce n'en est pas plus payé. On ne veut pas que je demande plus de mille francs. Enfin!<sup>32</sup>

The finished work, which was published in 1898, was, in fact, one of Steinlen's larger posters (only La Rue was larger). Paris had the same dimensions (140 x 200 cms.) as La Feuille, l'Assommoir, and Motocycles Comiot.

Despite Steinlen's frustrations, he followed an

ambitious plan for the poster, which obviously excited him, as there are three references to the project in his letters. The outcome was a powerful political image with a mythic view of the capital, seething with corruption, violence, and lust (Fig. 118). In the background are the rooftops of the city and Sacré-Coeur, surrounded by scaffolding, looming large on the horizon. The church, funded by a campaign by the fanatical Assumptionists,<sup>33</sup> was conceived as a kind of national penance for the defeats of 1870-71. In Zola's novel, Guillaume plots to blow up the church on the day of its opening ceremony.

Below this somber cityscape, speckled with golden rays of light, the city's inhabitants are depicted as a mass of naked bodies locked in struggle. Many of the figures are actually fighting; their fierce arms and fists, ready to strike, rise up from the crowd. On the left, a large figure carries a jug over his head, from which coins fall, as eager hands grab wildly for them. In the right foreground a savage-looking man grins at the young girl he is embracing.

Truth rises above this heap of humanity--in the form of a naked female with flowing hair. In 1893, Steinlen had already represented Truth as a naked woman in a program for La Société Républicaine des conférences populaires. In that work, surrounded by masses of

people, Truth advances on a bishop who is nearly knocked to the ground by her force. While the program anticipates Paris in some respects, the muscular proportions of the figures in the poster are new to Steinlen's art. The highly sculptural quality of these figures, the way in which they are intertwined, the violence, and the dramatic play of light and dark all recall Rodin's Gates of Hell, which also had as its subject the moral dilemmas of society. It is unlikely that Steinlen had seen the maquette for the Gates, which Rodin showed to only a few friends in his studio. However, Steinlen could well have seen two large volumes of Rodin's drawings that were published in 1897 with a preface by Octave Mirbeau.<sup>34</sup> Most of these drawings relate to the Gates and are of muscular nude figures such as Steinlen drew in Paris.

If Paris is one of Steinlen's most visionary works, Le Petit Sou of 1900 is one of his most openly propagandistic (Fig. 119). This poster for the leftist journal of the same name shows Liberty, with three workers, descending on a large crowd that stands in front of the Sacré-Coeur and worships a golden calf.<sup>35</sup> The church is armed like a fort with soldiers and cannons, symbolizing the partnership of Church and state. Not since his illustrations for Le Chambard has Steinlen created anything that so fully embodied the revolutionary power of

the workers.<sup>36</sup>

La Feuille, Paris, and Le Petit Sou all have definite political implications. Steinlen did not choose to do them in a style related to Art Nouveau. He used that style--of which he was, nevertheless, highly conscious--for commercially oriented works: book covers and sheet-music covers, in addition to many commercial posters.<sup>37</sup> Of course, the three posters cited above, like all posters, were ultimately made to sell a product, but they were linked to leftist political currents to which the artist had committed himself. He may have felt, therefore, that a purely decorative style was inappropriate to such a sober purpose.

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Although the posters just discussed depart from Art Nouveau, the majority of Steinlen's most enduring images in the realm of poster art contain elements of this style. The contrast between the Art Nouveau tendencies and the more realistic style of the artist's work is underlined when these posters are compared to the individual prints and murals that Steinlen created for the numerous dealers and publishers involved in the print revival. Many of his finest prints coincide chronologically with his greatest years of productivity as a poster artist. Two of Steinlen's most impressive prints, as large as many of

the posters, were made for the dealer Kleinmann, in 1895. Filles et Souteneurs (Fig. 120) and Dispute de Filles both represent the world of prostitution, which Steinlen first illustrated in his work for Le Mirliton. In these prints, the severe and rugged faces of the prostitutes stand out against dense night shadows. A highly expressive quality is achieved through the masterful manipulation of black, white, and gray. Whereas in the posters Steinlen was working with line and color, in these black-and-white prints the emphasis is on mass and tone. The artist adeptly utilized charcoal to create eerie atmospheric effects and to strengthen his characterizations.

In the same year, Steinlen was asked to contribute a lithograph to Andre Marty's series Etudes de Femmes. He created an uncompromising portrait of a working woman. The harshness of working-class life is conveyed by the lines and scratches that define the grim expression of his Type Populaire (Fig. 121).

In 1896, Steinlen produced La Rue Caulaincourt (Fig. 122) for Loys Delteil's publication, L'Estampe Moderne.<sup>38</sup> On a cold and windy night, two working-class men are seen walking down a dark and lonely street--the street on which Steinlen actually lived. The atmosphere is almost palpable. The cold is evident in the stiff poses of the

two solitary figures, who walk with their hands in their pockets, their collars upturned. The wind is effectively conveyed by energetic lines that recede dramatically into the distance, and by the angle of the two men, who have to fight their way forward.

In the early 1900s, Steinlen continued to produce prints related to realist themes. At this time he was particularly inspired by Daumier, creating several versions of laundresses and his Tramway Interior, which was very similar to Daumier's Third Class Carriage.

While he continued to produce drawings, lithographs, and etchings in a naturalist style, Steinlen ceased to create posters with the decorative panache of the 1890s. After about 1900, the poster mania had come to a close and the Art Nouveau movement had ended. Many of Steinlen's posters remain as notable examples of both of these important developments in art and continue to advance his reputation as an important figure of la belle epoque.

Notes

1. See Phillip Dennis Cate and Sinclair Hamilton Hitchings, The Color Revolution: Color Lithography in France, 1890-1900, Peregrine Smith and Rutgers University, 1978.
2. See Douglas Druick, "Books in Review: The Color Revolution: Color Lithography in France 1890-1900", The Print Collector's Newsletter, vol. X, No. 1, March-April 1979, pp. 25-26.
3. Léon de Laborde, De l'Union des Arts et de l'Industrie, Paris, 1856, vol. II, p. 2.
4. H. A. Needham, Le Développement de l'esthétique sociologique en France et en Angleterre au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris, 1926, pp. 167-69.
5. See Jean Lahor, "M. William Morris et l'Art décoratif en Angleterre", Revue encyclopédique, t. IV, No. 89, August 15, 1894, pp. 349-59; Gabriel Mourey, "William Morris", Revue encyclopédique, t. VI, No. 168, 1896, pp. 805-10. Both critics wrote books on the subject. See Lahor, W. Morris et le mouvement nouveau de l'art décoratif, Geneva, 1897; Mourey, Passé le Détroit. La Vie et l'Art à Londres, Paris, 1895.
6. Marx's writing was stimulated by the Exposition Universelle of 1889. See Marx, La Décoration et l'Art Industriel à l'Exposition Universelle de 1889, Paris, 1890.
7. Roger Marx, L'Art Social, Paris, 1913, pp. 50-51. This book comprises essays written between 1889 and 1913.
8. Ernest de Crauzat, L'Oeuvre gravé et lithographié de Steinlen, Paris, 1913, pp. IX-XV.
9. See Roger Marx, "Les Arts Décoratifs", Revue encyclopédique, t. IV, No. 77, February 15, 1894, pp. 73-81.
10. See Masters of the Poster 1896-1900, New York, 1977.
11. Marx, L'Art Social, pp. 159-60.

12. These are illustrated in Crauzat, pp. 130-31.
13. Steinlen had been aware of Japanese art, at least since 1884. In that year he created an illustration for Le Chat Noir (July 19, 1884)--a page of cats in diverse poses--that echoes a sheet of drawings from Hiroshige's Ukiyo Ryusai Gwafu. His drawings of 1888-89 for La Semaine artistique et musicale also reflect his knowledge of Japanese art.
14. Steinlen first paid homage to Lautrec in 1888, when he included a copy of Lautrec's Le Mirliton cover, Saint-Lazare, in Bruant's book, Dans la Rue.
15. Letter from Steinlen to M. Baume of February 27, 1894. Steinlen correspondence in the possession of Marguerite Steinlen, Cergy, France.
16. A reduced version of this poster was issued by the British company of Waterloo and Sons, Ltd., for Nestle's milk. See Phillips Gallery Auction Catalogue, Poster Classics, New York, May 1980, No. 542.
17. Verneau became well established when, in July 1894, he decided to create a series called l'Estampe Murale. He commissioned artists to do large-scale prints, collaborating with Willette, Moreau-Nélaton, Metivet, and Roy, among others. Ernest Maindron, Les Affiches illustrées, Paris, 1896, p. 179ff. Steinlen created two prints for l'Estampe Murale. See Crauzat, Nos. 181, 182.
18. Maurice Pianzola, Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, Zurich, 1971, p. 48.
19. Ernest de Crauzat, "Les Estampes et les Affiches du Mois", L'Estampe et l'Affiche, 1898, p. 69.
20. Robert Schmutzler, Art Nouveau, Stuttgart, 1977, pp. 9-15.
21. A pendant to La Rue, Le Boulevard, was planned, but it was never executed. "Artistic French Lithographs", The Poster, No. V, vol. I, November, 1898, p. 194. La Rue was exhibited in April, 1897, at the Salon de Figaro, in an annex of Le Figaro, where posters were frequently shown. L'Estampe et l'Affiche, 1897, pp. 93, 127-38.

22. Steinlen created an enamel of the woman and infant that he hung in the kitchen of his country home in Cergy. His niece, Marguerite Steinlen, now lives there.
23. See Jan Thompson, "The Role of Woman in the Iconography of Art Nouveau", The Art Journal, XXXI/2, Winter 1971-1972, pp. 158-67; Robert Pincus-Witten, "The Iconography of Symbolist Painting", Artforum, vol. VIII, No. 5, January, 1970, pp. 56-62; Gabriel P. Weisberg, Images of Women: Printmakers in France From 1830 to 1930, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, 1977.
24. On laundresses in the nineteenth century see Eunice Lipton, "The Laundress in Late Nineteenth-Century French Culture: Imagery, ideology and Edgar Degas", Art History, vol. 3, No. 3, September, 1980, pp. 295-313.
25. See Wendy Slatkin, "Maternity and Sexuality in the 1890s", Woman's Art Journal, vol. I, No. I, Spring/Summer, 1980, pp. 13-19.
26. The posters l'Assommoir and Motocycles Comiot also represent positive images of working women.
27. Ernest de Crauzat, "Les Affiches illustrées en 1896", L'Estampe et l'Affiche, 1897, p. 15.
28. L'Estampe et l'Affiche, November, 1897, p. 227. The poster was published the previous month.
29. Vallotton was from Steinlen's hometown, Lausanne. He came to Paris in 1882, one year after Steinlen. Ashley St. James, Vallotton: Graphics, London, 1978, p. 25.
30. Ashley St. James, p. 11.
31. See the letter to the artist's wife, Emilie, of August 27, 1897. Steinlen correspondence.
32. Undated letter. Steinlen correspondence.
33. Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France, Middlesex, 1965, vol. 3, p. 16. Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, Chicago, 1960, p. 237.

34. Les Dessins d'Auguste Rodin (preface by Octave Mirbeau). Paris, 1897.
35. Liberty is quite obviously based on Rude's La Marseillaise of 1833-36.
36. In 1903, Steinlen repeated this image in a slightly different form in La Libératrice, a print for Grave's Les Temps Nouveaux.
37. Probably the earliest work to display strong Art Nouveau tendencies was the sheet-music cover for the song Séparation. It is dated 1892 by Crauzat, although it must have been completed at the end of that year, as a copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale is stamped 1893 by the Dépôt Légal. Later, in 1894, the artist created a related work for another song, Déclaration, by Georges Herbert and Alfred Bert. The same female figure appears in this cover, and again the composition is heavily infused with Art Nouveau elements. These elements continued to appear sporadically in Steinlen's work through the second half of the nineties. Two of the most notable examples were the book cover of 1895 for Fernand Vanderem's novel Asche, and Franfreluches, an illustration for Paul Delmet's Les Chansons de Femmes of 1897.
38. L'Estampe Moderne, no. 4, February 25, 1896. La Rue Caulaincourt also appeared in the German periodical Simplicissimus, vol. II, No. 18, 1897/8.

## CHAPTER VII

## CONCLUSION

The discussion of Steinlen's work thus far has encompassed the years from 1881, when the artist arrived in Paris, to about 1900--a period that saw the growth and flowering of illustrated periodicals, the revival of interest in prints, as well as the poster movement. By 1900, the great surge of activity that had occurred over the last two decades in the graphic arts--particularly in lithography--had begun to decline, as photographs replaced graphics in the commercial arts. Steinlen's contributions to Gil Blas illustré ceased in 1900, although the journal continued to be published through 1903. In 1900, he also produced his last two major posters, L'Assommoir and Le Petit Sou. Moreover, by the turn of the century, Steinlen had already developed the themes that would come to characterize his art--themes that he would persist in exploring in his drawings and paintings after 1900--and he was fully established as a socially motivated artist whose deep

concern for humanity was at the very core of his work.

Let us briefly review Steinlen's artistic development, up to 1900. As we have seen, Aristide Bruant, whose poems and songs Steinlen illustrated for Le Mirliton, was the first decisive influence on the artist in the 1880s. It was for Bruant's journal that Steinlen began to create images of the poor--prostitutes, pimps, vagabonds, and drunks--to accompany the songwriter's verses. Steinlen, as Le Mirliton's key illustrator, quickly developed a personal style. With the publication of Bruant's first book in 1888, volume one of Dans la Rue, which had a much broader readership than the underground Le Mirliton, Steinlen gained wide recognition as a proselytizer for the downtrodden.

Steinlen's art took on a new and compelling dimension with his large-scale illustrations for the periodical Gil Blas illustré, and he became known throughout Europe and in the United States for his sympathetic portrayals of the working classes. He continued to focus on such images as the prostitutes and vagabonds that had appeared in Le Mirliton, and he also illustrated stories, poems, and songs about the trottin, the coal miner, and the construction worker.

Beginning in the mid-1890s, the artist contributed to left-wing periodicals--most importantly, to Le Chambard

Socialiste, and to the anarchist journal La Feuille. For Le Chambard, he represented the struggle of the worker against the repressive forces of capitalism and an unfriendly government. He also depicted the hopes and aspirations of the socialists with his images of Liberty, marching triumphant, at the head of an army of workers. In La Feuille, he lashed out against human injustice, denouncing the mistreatment of urban youths in penal institutions and of privates in the army. In his denouncement of brutal mob violence, he spoke eloquently for the cause of Alfred Dreyfus.

In reexamining Steinlen's illustrations for the various journals to which he contributed, and his posters, what stands out is the artist's remarkable ability to adapt his drawing style to different modes of representation, in order to meet the demands upon him as an illustrator. His images for the journals all differed somewhat in style. In Le Mirliton, the figures were treated rather stiffly, very much in the manner of most illustrations prior to the 1890s. Many of these magazine covers were satirical, accompanied by humorous captions that poked fun at the men and women who were depicted in a friendly and benign way.

The artist's style evolved considerably in the course of his work for Gil Blas illustré, reflecting principles of design borrowed from the art of Toulouse-Lautrec and from

Japanese prints. The expressive quality of these prints was heightened by a sophisticated handling of light and dark to create mood and atmosphere. Steinlen achieved this by developing a technique of drawing with greasy ink and coarse paper that adapted well to the demands of the photo-mechanical press. His sober and moving portrayals of the poor and the working classes evoked a sympathetic response from the viewer.

The stylistic advances visible in this work, however, were abandoned in the illustrations for Le Chambard. For this didactic tabloid, Steinlen produced a series of obvious stereotypes, and of allegorical figures that stood quite apart from the rest of his work. The drawing style that he used for these images--crisp outlines and touches of local color--reflected his aim of communicating an easy-to-grasp message to a working-class readership. The effectiveness of these propagandistic illustrations may be measured by the fact that many of them were imitated by later contributors to the journal.

In La Feuille, which followed three years after Le Chambard, Steinlen returned to a primarily tonal handling of composition. The artist conveyed a sense of gloom and violence with his illustrations for this anarchist periodical that paralleled the pessimism of its editor, Zo d'Axa. These somber images, marked by strong contrasts of black

and white, had an unsettling, even a frightening, quality. Like the texts that they illustrated, they were designed to shock and, thereby, to awaken the reader to those deep-seated problems within the society that were most in need of change.

Steinlen's posters are in a style that is quite different from that of his magazine illustrations. The harsh realism of the latter was replaced by a more decorative style that is akin to Art Nouveau. Deriving inspiration from his personal life, the artist created such classics of poster art as Lait pur de la Vingeanne and Compagnie Française des Chocolats et des Thés. The bright colors, prominent lettering, and simplified designs of flowing curvilinear contours and interlocking forms in these images attracted the admiration of the viewer. Steinlen also made several political posters for the leftist journals La Feuille and Le Petit Sou, and for Zola's novel Paris, but these do not employ the principles of design of the Art Nouveau style--perhaps, an indication that he probably viewed this style as a purely decorative one that was particularly well suited to advertise commercial products.

As summarized above, Steinlen's work of the 1890s, in which his distinctive style reached maturity, represents his principal contribution to the history of art. After 1900, his art, as a whole, lost much of its vitality, par-

alleling the decline in activity in printmaking that occurred at the time. Exceptions to this decline are Steinlen's illustrations for the periodical L'Assiette au Beurre (of 1901-12), in which he scathingly satirized domestic and international issues from the sale of adulterated milk to imperialist atrocities in Africa, and the series of prints he created representing the victims of World War I.

Steinlen, who reached the peak of his fame at the turn of the century, was a source of inspiration to artists in Europe and America. Picasso, undoubtedly the most important painter to be affected by Steinlen's art, first learned of him through the artistic community that developed around the Barcelona café Els Quatre Gats. There, a modern art movement was formed under the leadership of Ramón Casas and Santiago Rušínol.

During the 1890s, Casas and Rušínol spent a few months each year in Montmartre, immersing themselves in the Parisian art world, where they would have become familiar with Steinlen's work.<sup>1</sup> Back in Barcelona, they held shadow plays, in the tradition of the Chat Noir café (some of which were created by Steinlen), and exhibited the work of French graphic artists. They also published periodicals patterned after French precedents. In 1899, the creation of the periodical Pel & Ploma was announced as "a

publication of the stature of the most celebrated foreign journals in the genre cultivated by Forain, Steinlen and others...."<sup>2</sup> Casas, Ricardo Opisso, Joaquim Sunyer, and Isidro Nonell were among the Catalan artists whose work was strongly influenced by Steinlen's humble scenes of everyday life. Several of Picasso's efforts, prior to 1900, bring to mind Steinlen's illustrations. Picasso was particularly taken with Steinlen's depictions of embracing lovers, an influence that already has been discussed in the Picasso literature.<sup>3</sup> However, a number of Picasso's images from 1901--which have not yet been discussed in connection with Steinlen--show an even greater dependence on Steinlen's art. For example, Picasso's Mère Tenant Deux Enfants (Fig. 123 ) is strikingly similar to Steinlen's Menagère et Enfants Rentrant du Lavoir, of 1899 (Fig. 124 ). Picasso simplified the forms to heighten the expressive quality of his painting, while Steinlen's image remains essentially illustrational. Yet, the placement of the woman and the child whose hand she holds, the silhouetting of the figure against the sky, and the inclusion of the buildings at the left, are all compositional devices shared by the two works. (Picasso's image is more closely linked to Steinlen's etching than to Daumier's paintings of laundresses--the ultimate source of Steinlen's work.) Picasso's Personnages dans la Rue (Fig. 125 ), of the same year,

reflects the mood of many of Steinlen's street scenes, such as the drawing in the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne (Fig. 126 ). Even more striking, however, than either of these comparisons is the relationship of Picasso's The Absinthe Drinker, a major painting of 1901, and one of Steinlen's illustrations for Gil Blas illustré. In Picasso's painting (Fig. 127 ), a woman with an extremely bony face, pointy chin, and long, thin fingers, appears in profile at the right of the canvas, sitting at a table with a glass of absinthe before her. The harshness of her life is reflected in her coarse features and in the distorted expression on her face. In the background are the shadowy forms of other figures, dressed in black, that add a further note of foreboding to the scene. The woman's face, the position of her hands, and the atmospheric background are very similar to Steinlen's highly expressive portrayal of the prostitutes in Les Marcheuses (Fig.45), of 1893. The combination of the naturalism in the detailed description of the foreground figure, and the more suggestive, symbolist background in Picasso's painting, were the "two fundamental components of the modernista painting developed by Rušinol and Casas"<sup>4</sup> in Spain, and explored by Picasso during his early years in Paris. These elements were, undoubtedly, derived, in part, from a study of Steinlen's art.

In addition to the great importance that his work held for these Spanish artists, Steinlen was highly regarded in the United States. There his oeuvre exerted a marked influence on the output of the poster artists of the 1890s, as well as on the art of the realists affiliated with the Ash Can school and with the periodical The Masses. Edward Penfield was a leading American poster maker whose art resembled Steinlen's in its clean lines and its everyday subject matter. Steinlen's influence on Penfield's poster style can be seen by comparing the American artist's Poster Calendar (Fig. 128 ) of 1897 and Steinlen's Compagnie Française des Chocolats et des Thés (Fig. 111 ), of about 1895. The overall design of Penfield's poster--which utilizes the negative space in the foreground to represent the table, behind which sits a figure--and his placement and treatment of the cat, vividly recall Steinlen's illustration. Another American poster artist whose work was influenced by Steinlen was Claude Fayette Bragdon. In his autobiography,<sup>5</sup> Bragdon, who later became an architect and theatrical designer, discussed Steinlen sympathetically. Bragdon's poster for The Chap-Book, of 1895, is patterned after Steinlen's cover for Bruant's Dans la Rue of 1888. In both works, men are shown wearing sandwich boards that advertise these publications.

Among the American realists, John Sloan, especially,

had been influenced, early on, by Steinlen--a fact that he acknowledged in his autobiography, Gist of Art.<sup>6</sup> Sloan had first become aware of Steinlen's work at about the turn of the century. In his paintings of street life, he represented a wide variety of New Yorkers very much in the way that Steinlen had portrayed Parisians. In 1911, Sloan helped to found the left-wing periodical The Masses (1911-16), whose contributors, in addition to himself, included George Bellows, Art Young, Robert Minor, Boardman Robinson, Maurice Becker, Glenn O. Coleman, and K. R. Chamberlain.<sup>7</sup> The styles developed by these artists reflected their study of Steinlen and Forain. Sloan's images of rich and poor confronting each other on a New York street, and those depicting young female office workers returning from work arm in arm,<sup>8</sup> are very much in the spirit of Steinlen's illustrations. K. R. Chamberlain's work shows an even greater dependence on Steinlen: Some of his images seem to have been lifted directly from Steinlen's illustrations for Gil Blas illustré and L'Assiette au Beurre.<sup>9</sup>

Steinlen's impact on the younger realists can be seen in the early work of Edward Hopper. Although the French influence on Hopper has been well documented,<sup>10</sup> Steinlen's name, specifically, never before has been mentioned in relation to Hopper. As a young illustrator, Hopper spent a good part of 1906-7 in Paris, and made subsequent trips

there in 1909 and 1910. About five years later, in 1915, he began to make etchings based on memories of his Parisian sojourns. Among these etchings is a series in which working-class men and women are shown relaxing on the barricades that skirted the city of Paris. In La Barrière, of 1915-18, three solitary figures are on a hill overlooking the city (Fig. 129 ). The dress of these figures--the mens' caps and the woman's topknot hairdo--locates the image in the late nineteenth century. In 1923, in Aux Fortifications,<sup>11</sup> Hopper represented larger groups of figures socializing atop similarly barren hills. A cruder version of this theme by Hopper may have been executed as early as 1906 (Fig. 130 ). Steinlen had first portrayed pimps and prostitutes lolling about the Parisian fortress walls in his work for Le Mirliton, in the mid-1880s (Figs. 131 & 132). He had, in fact, created a whole series of journal covers based on this theme, images which remain unique to the artist.<sup>12</sup> These illustrations were probably seen by Hopper during his 1906-7 visit to Paris, when he was earning his living as an illustrator and would have been particularly sensitive to magazine illustrations by French artists. Hopper's watercolor (Fig. 130) captures the satirical quality that Steinlen achieved in his captions. (The caption for Figure 131 reads, "Si on pourrait vivre toute sa vie comme ça, on penserait jamais à faire

des sales coups.") In his later prints on this theme, however, Hopper emphasized the sense of solitariness that would become so important to this subsequent work.

Picasso and Hopper were attracted to Steinlen's art because it was quintessentially Parisian; since Steinlen's work embodied the "real" working-class Paris, it was perceived as honest and spontaneous. The Parisian flavor that permeates Steinlen's images was cultivated by the artist on a personal level, as well. After Käthe Kollwitz met the artist in 1904, she wrote: "Besides Rodin, I visited Steinlen, the creator of l'Assiette au Beurre, in his studio. He too is someone I shall never forget. He was a typical Parisian. The loose tobacco in his wide pants pockets, his continual rolling of cigarettes, his wife, his many children[sic]--all combined to produce that Parisian atmosphere."<sup>13</sup>

Steinlen achieved a pronounced "Parisian atmosphere" in his work by recording the dress, the gestures, and the manners of the people of Montmartre among whom he lived. His keen observation of contemporary life was recognized by critics during his own lifetime: "Le caractère principal de l'oeuvre de Steinlen, c'est l'étude approfondie des physiognomies et la reproduction de la vérité dans la pose and dans les détails."<sup>14</sup> "...Steinlen se distingue... par la beauté sociologique de son art... dans les types

populaires qu'il a choisis, il a découvert ces traits généraux, ces nuances psychiques qui identifient entre eux tous les hommes."<sup>15</sup>

Although, upon reflection, there is some degree of sentimentality in Steinlen's art, his work is an informative document of life in the 1890s. Steinlen's view of this life was essentially optimistic. The artist believed deeply in man's ability to alleviate human suffering through kindness and justice. From the early 1880s, through World War I, Steinlen persisted in representing the underdog, in images that exposed the existing social inequities. In this he was motivated more by a deep concern for humanity than by a commitment to any political system. His feeling for his fellow man, which was revealed in his depictions of contemporary life and in his highly charged political imagery, unquestionably, was the quality that most strongly shaped Steinlen's art.

Notes

1. My discussion of Els Quatre Gats is taken from Marilyn McCully, Els Quatre Gats: Art in Barcelona around 1900, Princeton, 1978.
2. McCully, p. 26.
3. See Anthony Blunt and Phoebe Pool, Picasso, The Formative Years: A Study of His Sources, Paris, 1962, n.p.
4. McCully, p. 14.
5. Claude Fayette Bragdon, More Lives than One, New York, 1938, p. 39. A photograph in the Bragdon file in the Art and Architecture Division of The New York Public Library shows Bragdon standing in front of Steinlen's poster A la Bodiniere, of 1894.
6. John Sloan, Gist of Art, New York, 1939, p. 1.
7. See Richard Fitzgerald, Art and Politics: Cartoonists of the Masses and Liberator, London, 1973.
8. These are reproduced in Fitzgerald, Figures 29, 34.
9. For example, the figure in one of Chamberlain's illustrations for The Masses, of January 1914 (reproduced in Fitzgerald, Figure 38), is based directly on a worker in a Steinlen illustration from Gil Blas Illustré, of May 14, 1893, p. 5.
10. See Gail Levin, Edward Hopper: The Complete Prints, New York, 1979. The account of Hopper is taken from Levin's book.
11. See Levin, Plates 89, 90.
12. Some of these are discussed in Chapter II, pp. 46-48.
13. The Diary and Letters of Käthe Kollwitz, edited by Hans Kollwitz, translated by Richard and Clara Winston, Chicago, 1955, p. 45.
14. Maurice Lenoir, "Steinlen et Son Oeuvre," Le Mirliton, December 15, 1895, p. 3.

15. H. Fiérens-Gavaert, "Un Maître Affichiste: Steinlen," Art et Décoration, 1897, p. 19.

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La Caricature  
 La Chambard Socialiste  
 Cocorico  
 Le Chat Noir  
 Le Courrier Français  
 L'Endehors  
 L'Estampe et l'Affiche  
 L'Estampe Murale  
 La Feuille  
 Le Figaro illustré  
 Die Fliegende Blätter

Gil Blas illustré

L'Illustration

Le Mirliton

Le Père Peinard

The Poster

Revue des Deux Mondes

Le Rire

Psst!

Le Sifflet

Simplicissimus

Les Temps Nouveaux

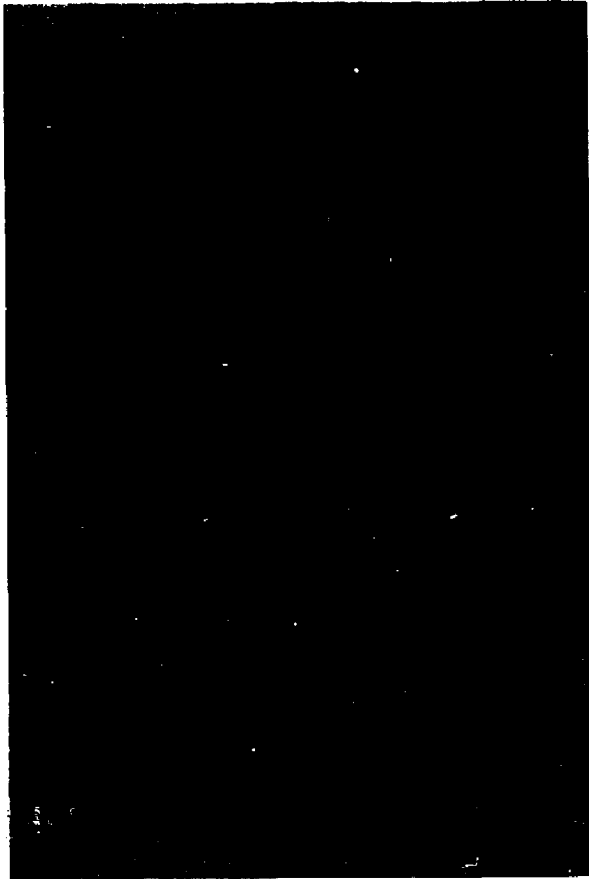


Fig. 1. Le Chat la Grenouille.  
Le Chat Noir, 1884.



Fig. 2. Les Dos.  
Le Mirliton, 1886.



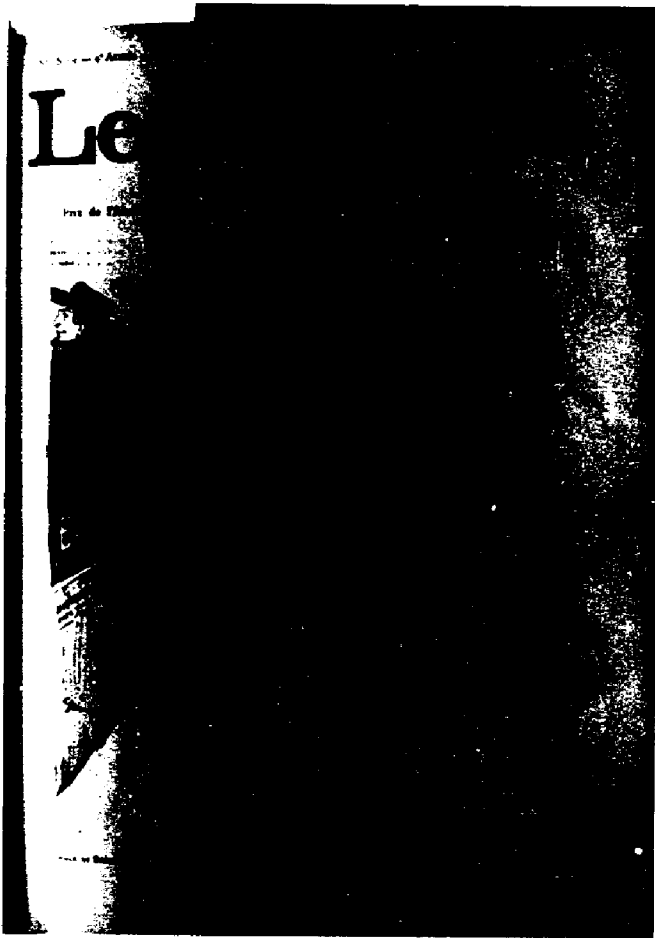


Fig. 5. Les quat'pattes.  
Le Mirliton, 1893.



Fig. 6. Sheet of drawings, c. 1893.

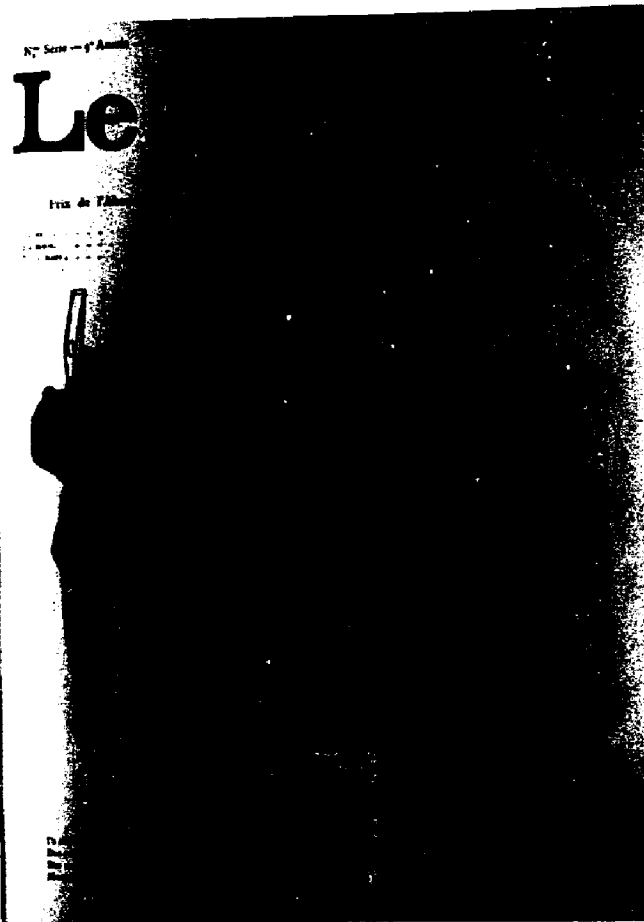


Fig. 7. Fins de Siècle.  
Le Mirliton, 1893.



Fig. 8. Les Dos.  
Le Mirliton, 1885.

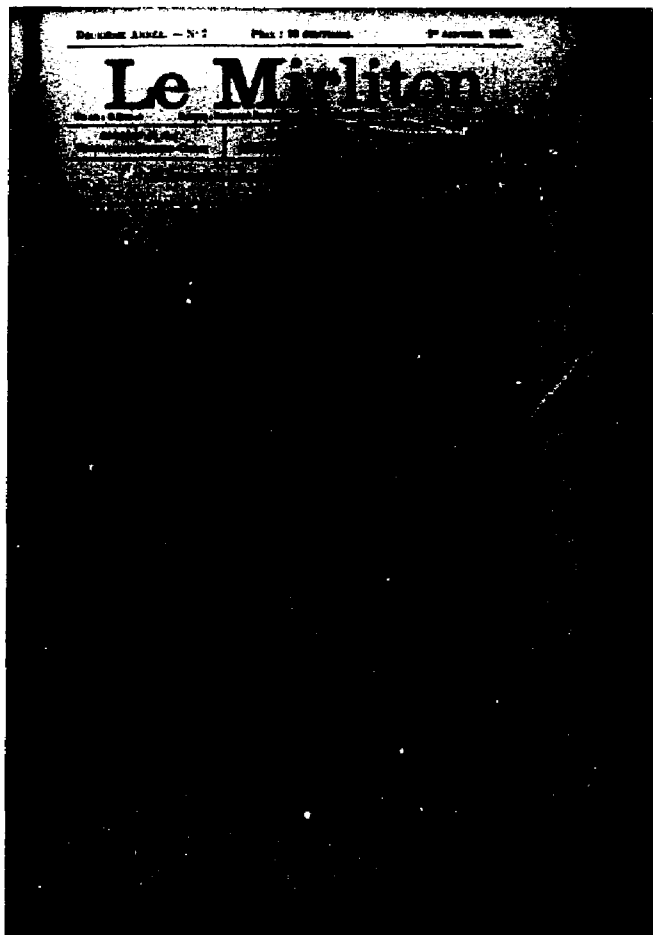


Fig. 9. T'as étrenné!...  
Le Mirliton, 1886.



Fig. 10. Soulauds.  
Le Mirliton, 1888.

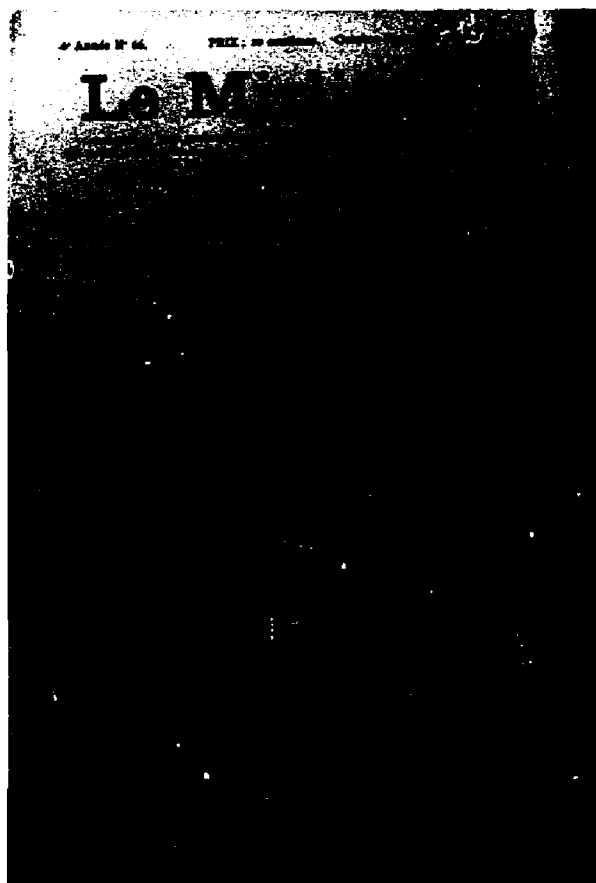


Fig. 11. Dans la Rue.  
Le Mirliton, 1890.

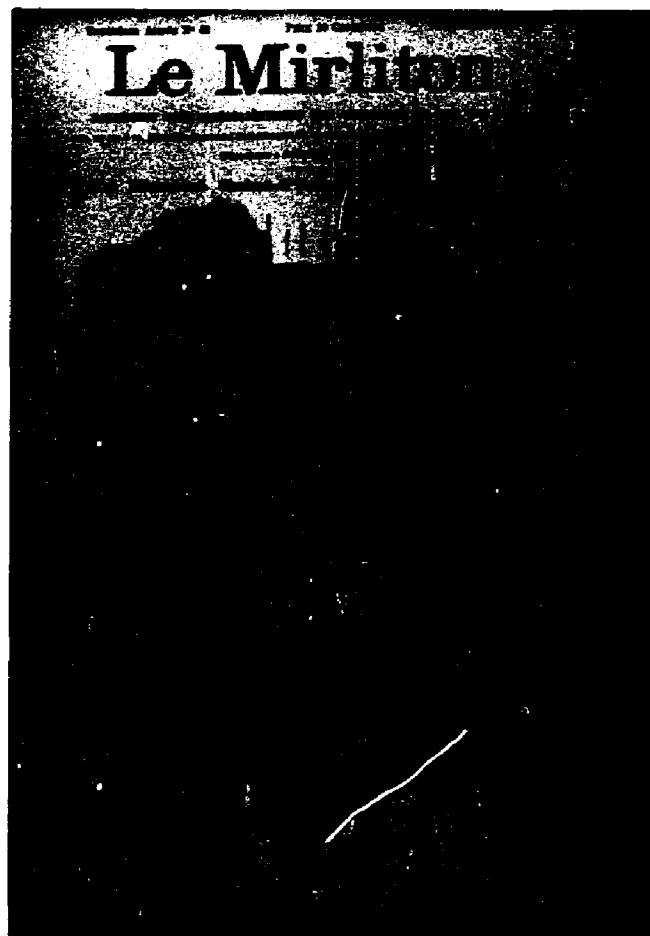


Fig. 12. Oswald Heidbrinck, Le  
Marché Saint-Pierre, à  
Montmartre. Le  
Mirliton, 1887.

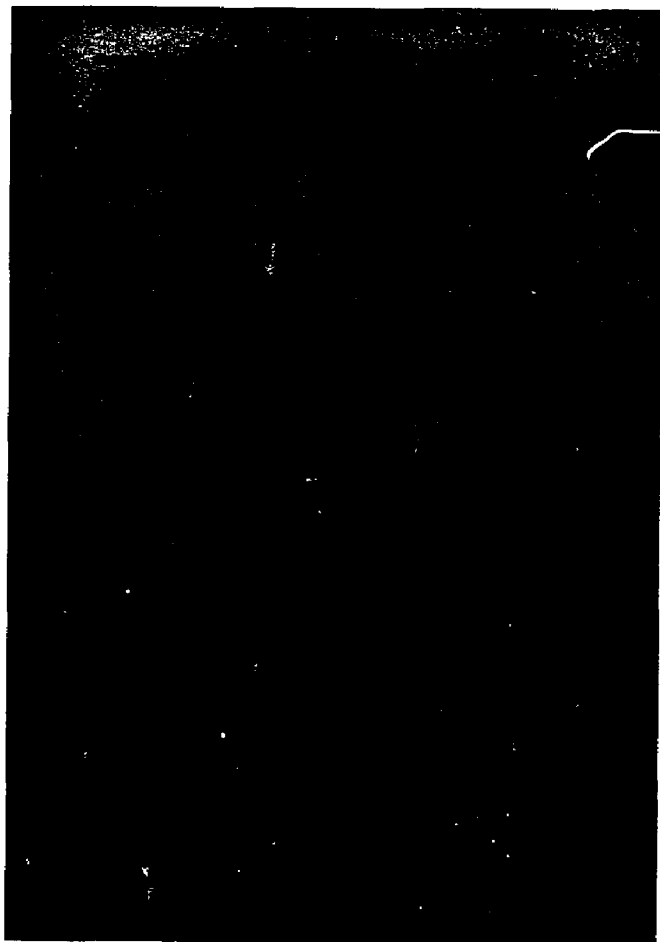


Fig. 13. Toulouse-Lautrec, A  
Saint-Lazare. Le  
Mirliton, 1887.

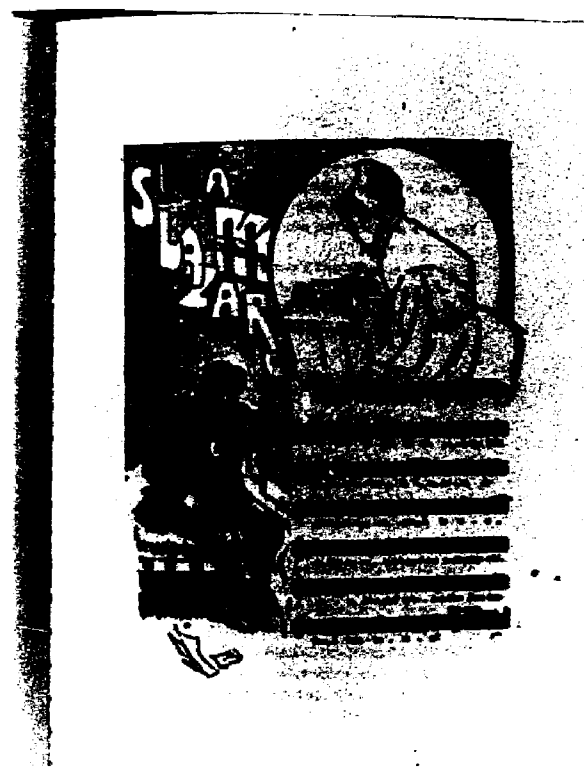


Fig. 14. A Saint-Lazare.  
Dans la Rue, 1888.

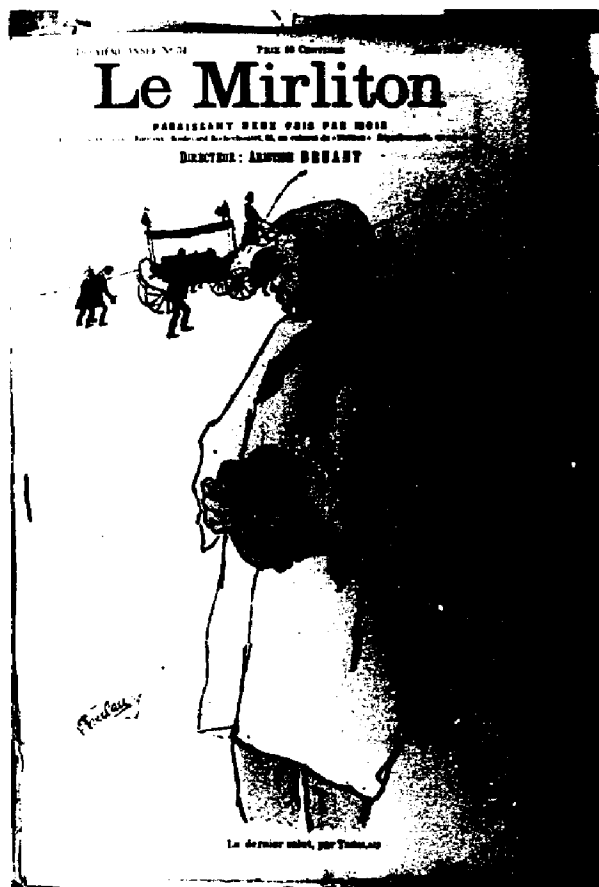


Fig. 15. Toulouse-Lautrec.  
Le dernier Salut.  
Le Mirliton, 1887.

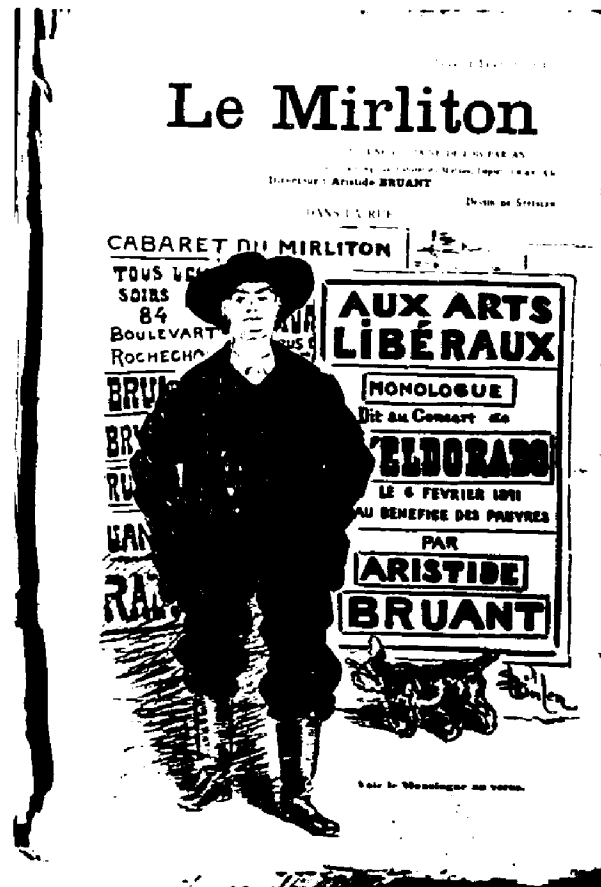


Fig. 16. Portrait de A. Bruant.  
Le Mirliton, 1891.



Fig. 17. Mlle. Yvette Guilbert au  
Théâtre d'Application.  
Le Mirliton, 1891.



Fig. 18. Au Bois de Boulogne.  
Le Mirliton, 1891.

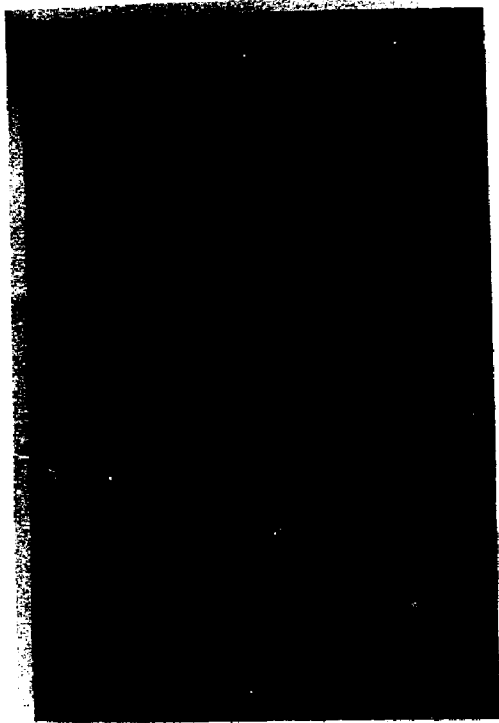


Fig. 19. Hiroshige. The Asakusa  
Kinryūzan Temple. One  
Hundred Views of Famous  
Places in Edo, 1857.

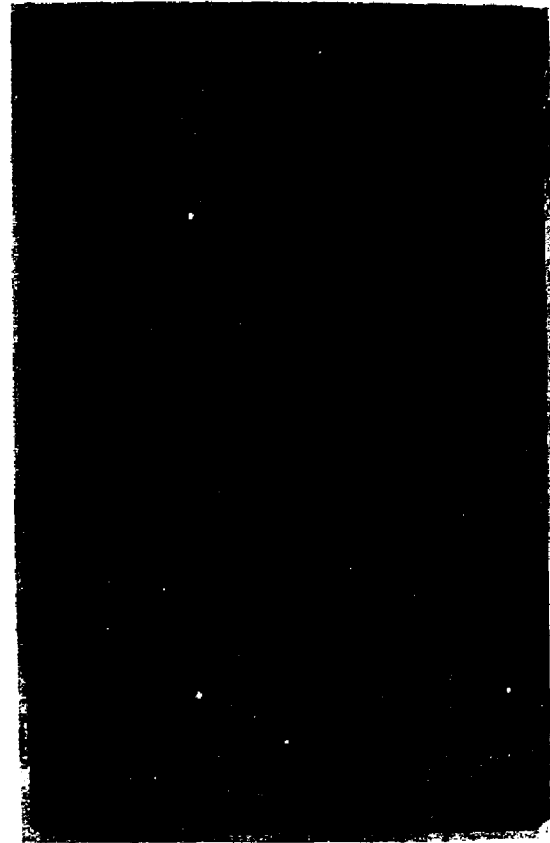


Fig. 20. Hiroshige. Nighttime  
in Saruwa Ka-chō. One  
Hundred Views of Famous  
Places in Edo, 1857.



Fig. 21. Les ancêtres de Maigriou.  
Le Chat Noir, 1884.



Fig. 22. Hiroshige. Page from  
Ukiyo Ryusai Gwafu.



Fig. 23. Solidarité. La Semaine Artistique et Musicale, 1889.



Fig. 24. Le Rêve, 1891.

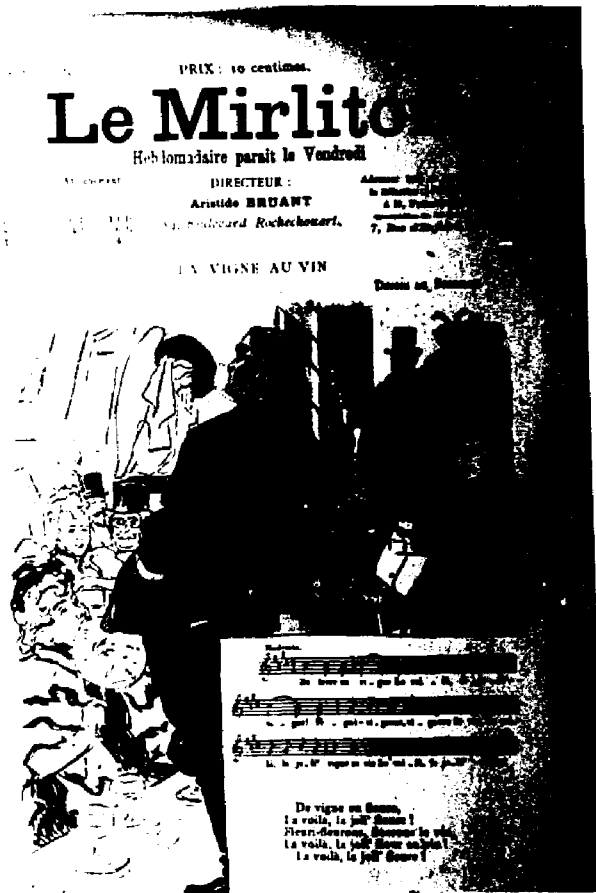


Fig. 25. La Vigne au Vin.  
Le Mirliton, 1893.



Fig. 26. Toulouse-Lautrec.  
Ambassadeurs, Aristide  
Bruant et Son Cabaret,  
1892.

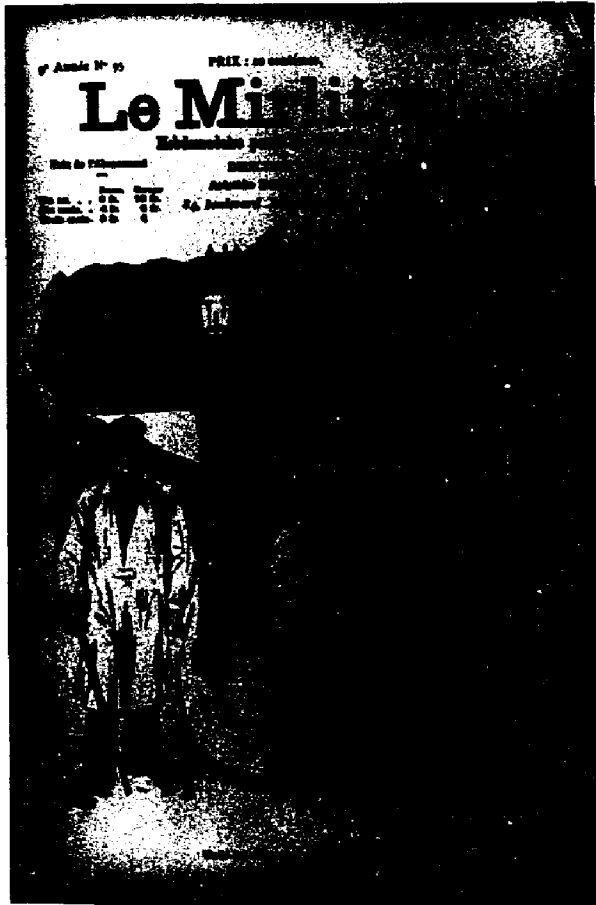


Fig. 27. A la Glacière.  
Le Mirliton, 1893.



Fig. 28. La Veuve d'Arsène.  
Le Mirliton, 1894.



Fig. 29. Une Bonne Fille.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1899.

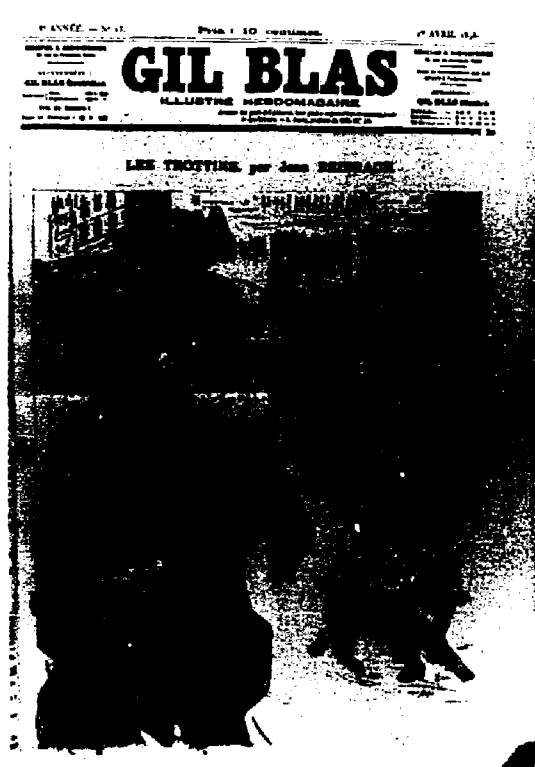


Fig. 30. Les Trotteurs.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1898.

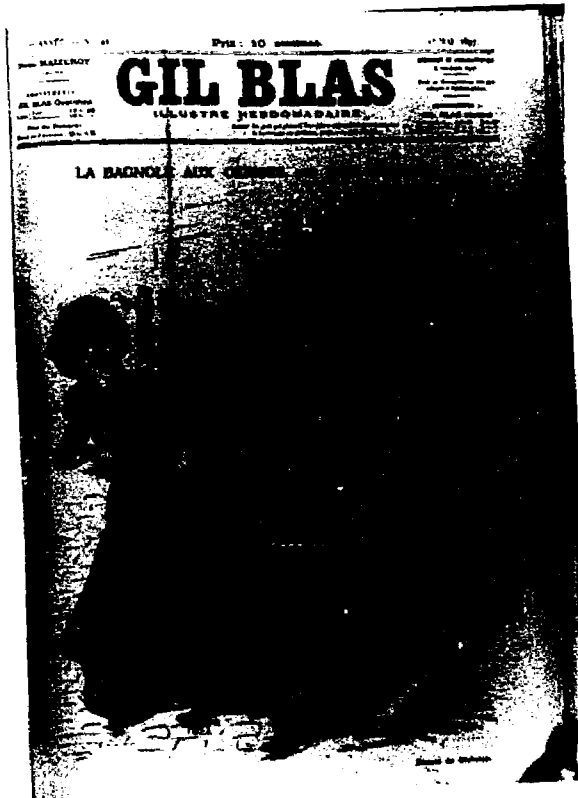


Fig. 31. La Bagnole aux Cerises.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1897.



Fig. 32. Innocence.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1898.



Fig. 33. L'Heure de Déjeuner.  
Les Maîtres de l'Affiche,  
1899.



Fig. 34. Quatre midinettes, 1900.



Fig. 35. Ton Nez.  
Chansons de femmes, 1897.



Fig. 36. Richard Ranft, Trottins.  
L'Estampe originale,  
1894.



Fig. 37. Edgar Chahine.  
Midinette, 1904.



Fig. 38. Parisienne.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1894.



Fig. 39. La Poupée.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1894.



Fig. 40. Toulouse-Lautrec. Sur le Pavé. Le Mirliton, 1887.



Fig. 41. Hermann-Paul. Le  
Trottin. Le Rire, 1897.



Fig. 42. Nocturne.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1895.



HIRONDELLE DE NUIT, par THEO-CRITT.



Fig. 43. Hirondelle de Nuit.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1899.



L'ENFANT, par AUGUSTE GERMAIN



Fig. 44. L'Enfant.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1898.

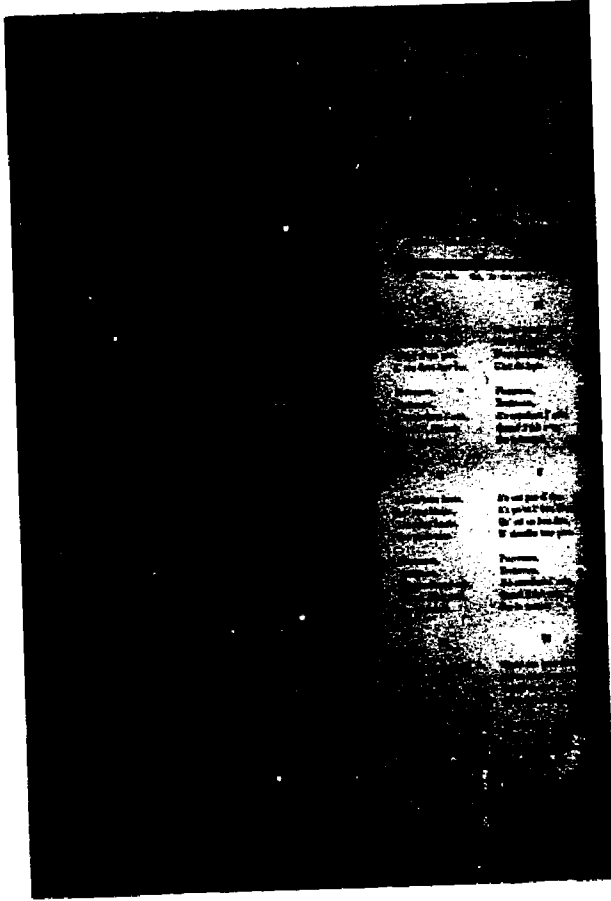


Fig. 45. Les Marcheuses.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1893.

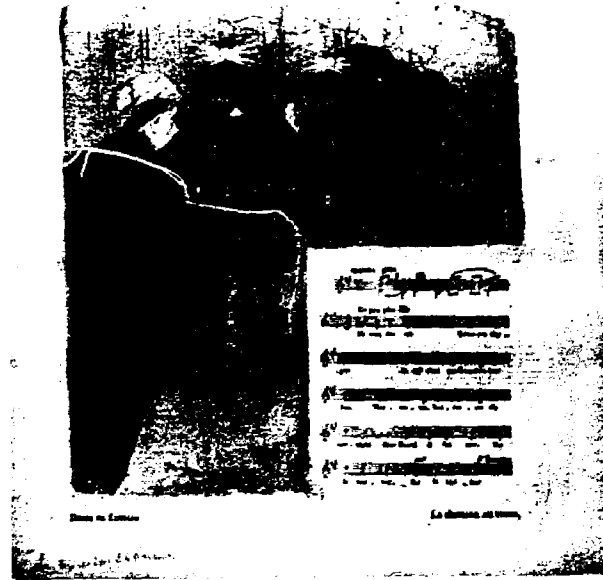


Fig. 46. Les Marcheuses.  
Le Mirliton, 1893.

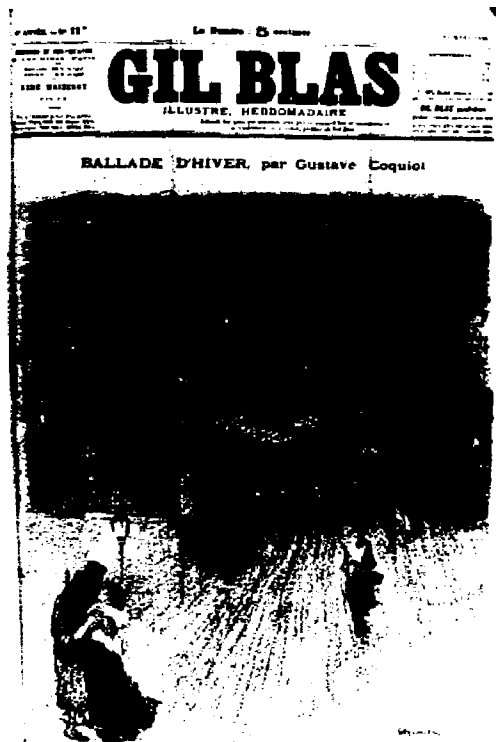


Fig. 47. Ballade d'Hiver.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1896.

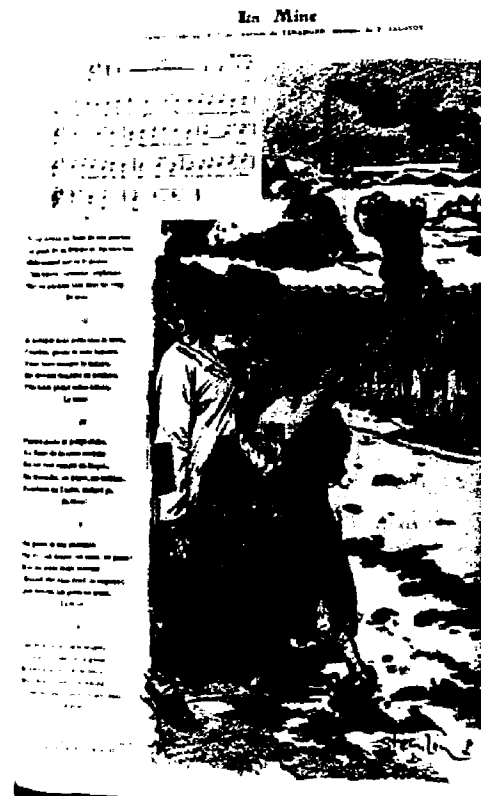


Fig. 48. La Mine.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1895.



Fig. 49. La famine en Russie, 1922.

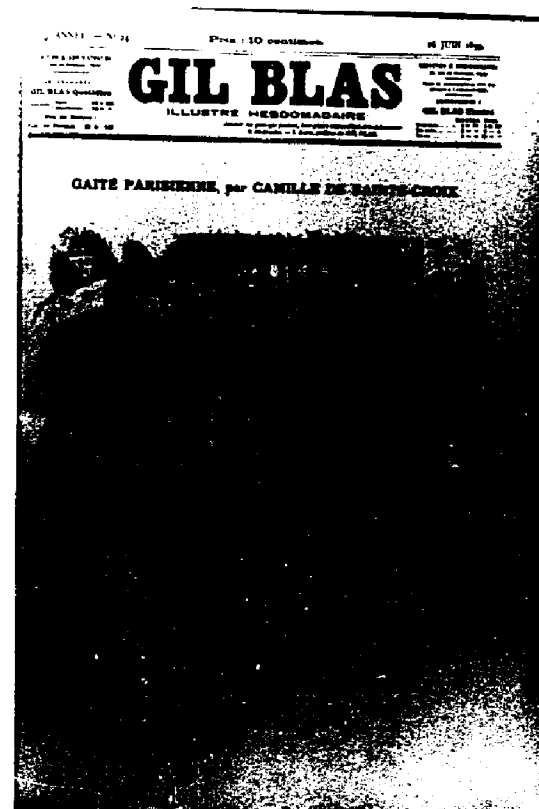


Fig. 50. Gaité Parisienne.  
Gil Blas illustré,  
1899.

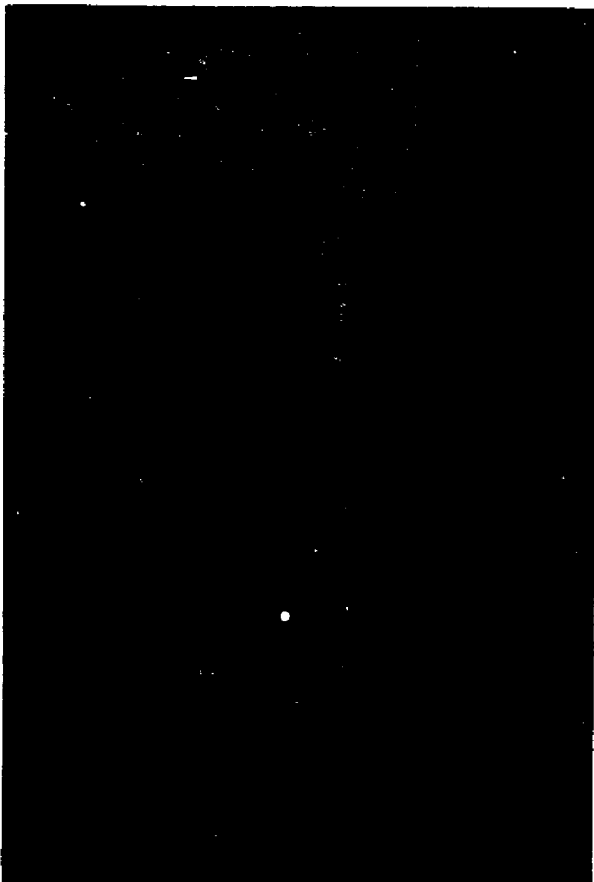


Fig. 51. Alléluia du Cheminot.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1894.



Fig. 52. Anon. Le Mendiant.

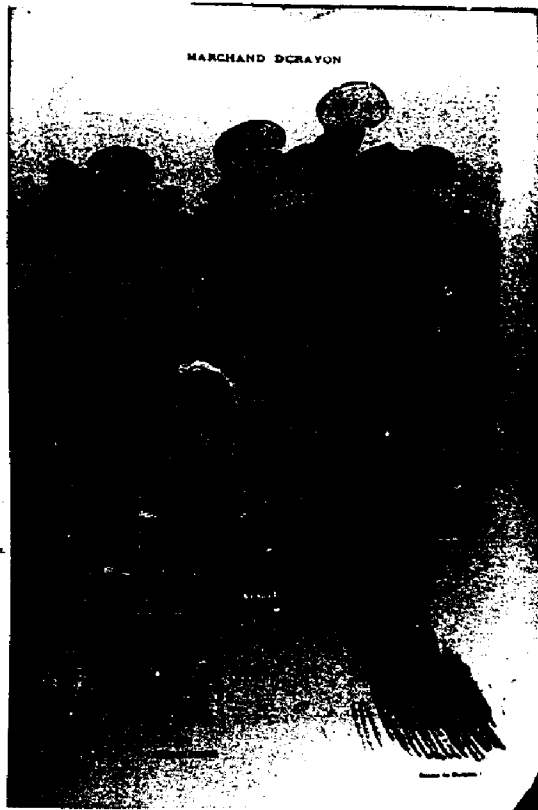


Fig. 53. Marchand d'Crayon.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1894.

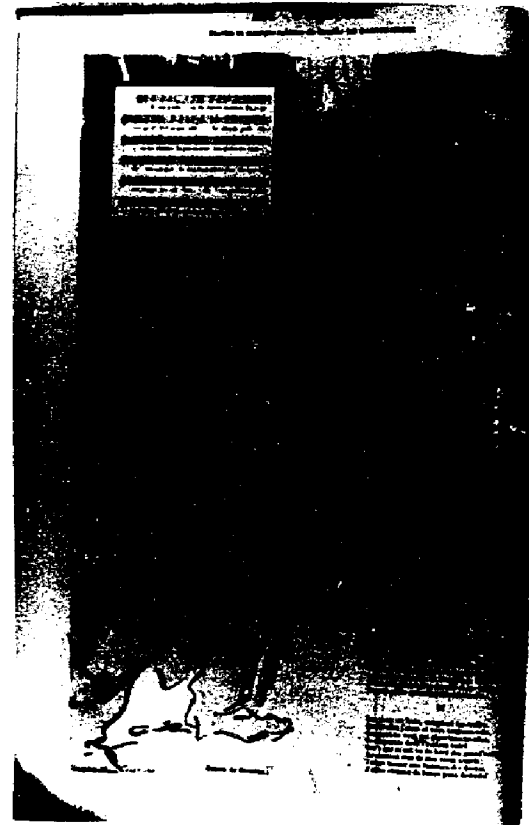


Fig. 54. Le Vagabond.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1895.



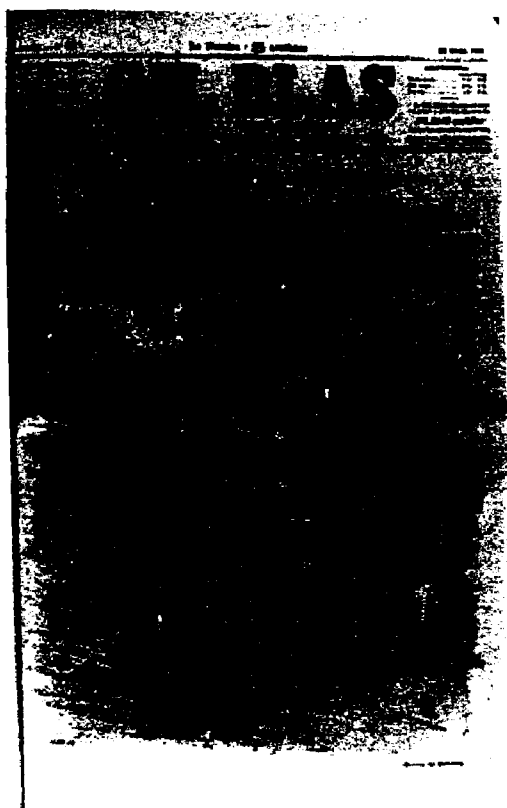


Fig. 57. L'Homme des Berges.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1896.



Fig. 58. Le Vilain Homme.  
Gil Blas illustré, 1897.



Fig. 59. Traviès. Le Chiffonnier.  
Les français peints par  
eux-memes, 1841.



Le Chiffonnier.

Fig. 60. Anon. Le Chiffonnier.  
Les Rues de Paris, c.  
1859.



Fig. 61. L'Epouvantail Bourgeois.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1893.

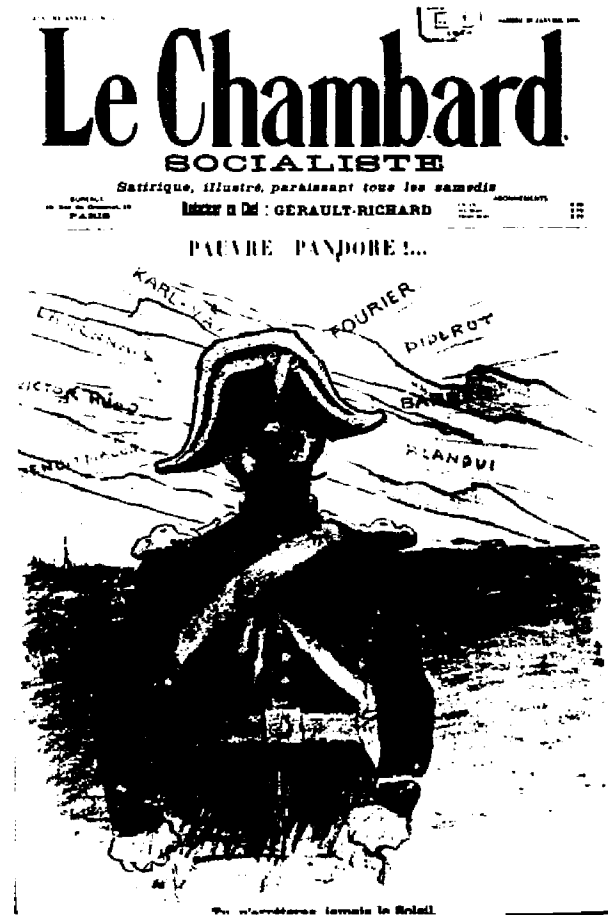


Fig. 62. Pauvre Pandore!...  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.



Fig. 63. En Carême.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.



Fig. 64. La Député aux Champs.  
Le Chambard Socialiste, 1894.

10 Centimes

# Le Chambard

**SOCIALISTE**

125 rue Montmartre - Paris

Botanique - Illustré - Paraissant tous les Samedi

Abonnement en Chef: GÉRAULT-RICHARD

Le Jeune Ministre



Fig. 65. Le Jeune Ministre.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.

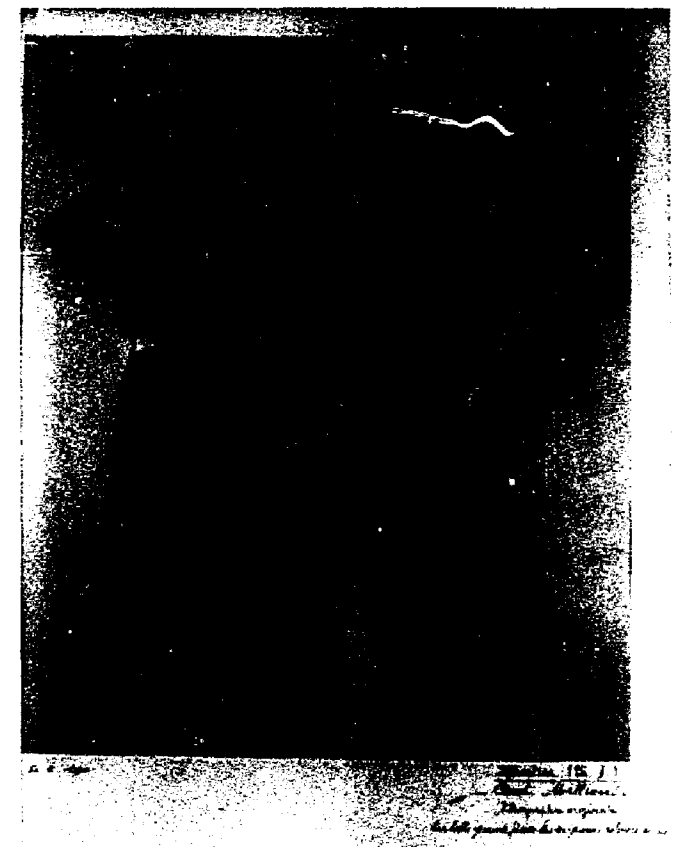


Fig. 66. Cent Millions!  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.



Fig. 67. Compagnie des Mines.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.



**Maurice Rouvier.**

Fig. 68. Anon. Maurice Rouvier.  
Nouveau Larousse  
illustré.



Fig. 69. Aujourd'hui!  
Le Chambard Socialiste, 1894.



Fig. 70. Demain!  
Le Chambard Socialiste, 1894.



Fig. 71. Celle qui a mal tourné.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.



Fig. 72. La Cadette.  
Le Chambard Socialiste, 1894.



Fig. 73. Enfins, seuls!  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.

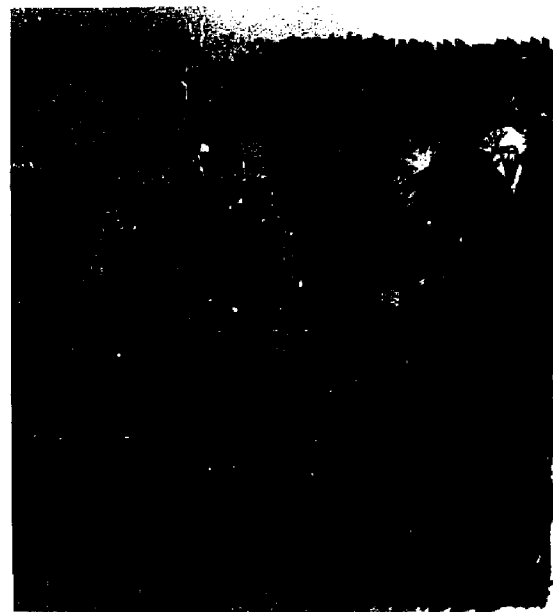


Fig. 74. Le Dernier Guet-Apens!  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.



Fig. 75. 18 Mars...  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894



Fig. 76. 18 Mars...1894.



Fig. 77. Mai 1871.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.

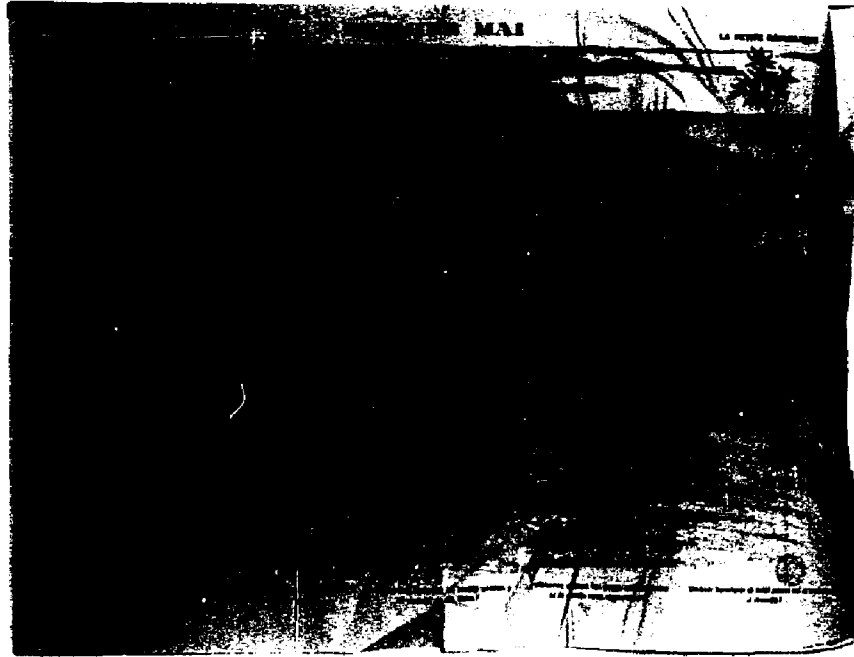


Fig. 78. Premier Mai.  
Le Chambard Socialiste, 1894.



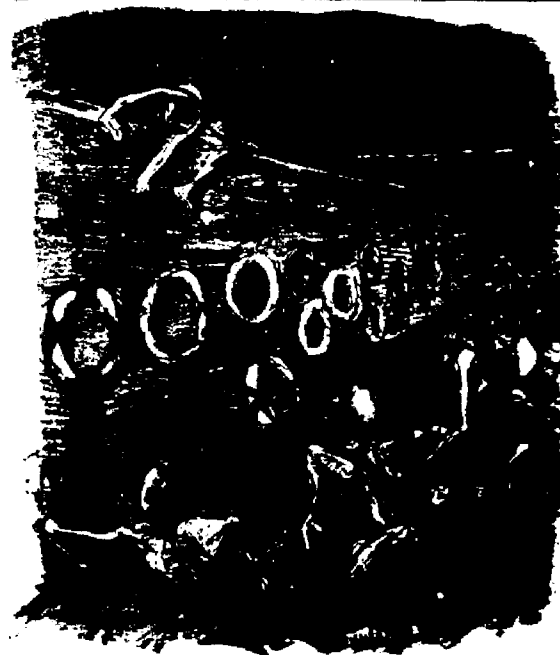
Fig. 79. Le Cri des Pavés!  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
 1894.

10 Centimes

# Le Chambard

**SOCIALISTE**

ABONNEMENTS  
 Directeur: Sauterque Émile Paraissant tous les Samedis  
 Rédacteur en Chef: GIRAULT-RICHARD



LE MUR DES FÉDÉRÉS — Il faut des vêtements entiers pour garder ces morts-là.

Fig. 80. Au Mur des Fédérés.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
 1894.



Fig. 81. Dans toute sa Gloire.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.



Fig. 82. La Sécurité des Rues.  
La Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.

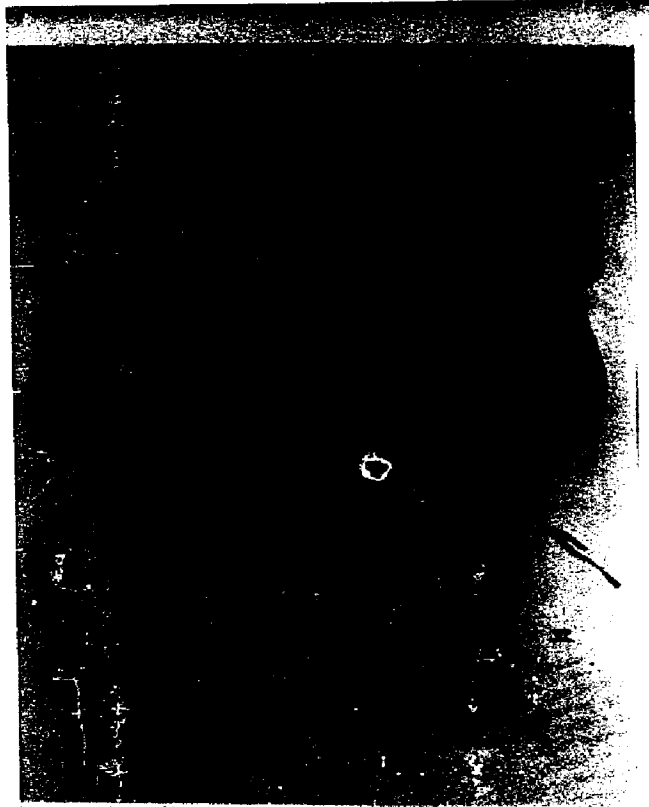


Fig. 83. Sans le Sou.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.

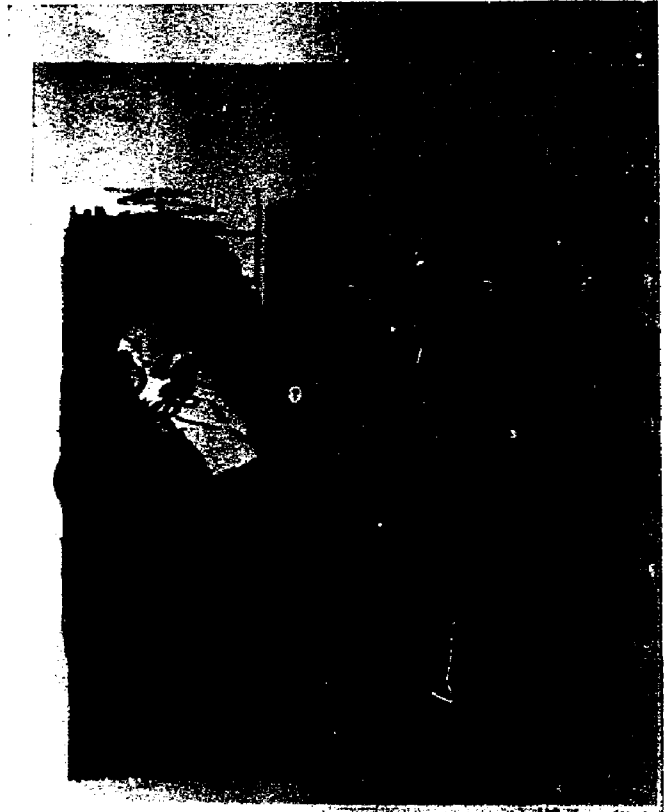


Fig. 84. Liberté du Travail!  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.



Fig. 85. La Misère sous la Neige.  
Le Chambard Socialiste,  
1894.



Fig. 86. Jolie Société!  
Le Chambard Socialiste, 1894.



Fig. 87. B. Moloch. Nouveau Diadème. Le Chambard Socialiste, 1894.



Fig. 88. Pol Lelong. Mort de Froid! Le Chambard Socialiste, 1894.

VIENT DE PARAÎTRE

# de Mazas à Jérusalem



Zo d'Axa

Dessins de LUCIEN PISSARRO, STEINLEN,  
FELIX VALLOTTON

CHAMUEL 3 fr. 50 Éditeur.

EN VENTE ICI

Fig. 89. de Mazas à Jerusalem, 1895.



Fig. 90. Le Terme Franco-Russe.  
La Feuille, 1897.



Fig. 91. Enfant Martyr.  
La Feuille, 1898.



Fig. 92. Maximilien Luce.  
Au Biribi des Gosses.  
La Feuille, 1898.



Fig. 93. Drawing for Désarmement, 1899.



Fig. 94. Désarmement.  
La Feuille, 1899.



Fig. 95. Association de Malfaiteurs. La Feuille, 1897.



Fig. 96. Réhabilitation Civile et Exécution Militaire. La Feuille, 1897.



Fig. 97. Arguments Frappants. La Feuille, 1898.

10 CENTIMES  
A CHAQUE COPIE  
**la feuille**  
LES MOUTONS DE BOISDEFFRE  
RENTREES DE 4 A 6 HEURES, DE 7 A 9 HEURES. 2e CADERN



Fig. 98. Les Moutons de Boisdeffre, La Feuille, 1898.

ROCHEFORT SE MEURT!  
**la feuille**  
ROCHEFORT EST MEURT!  
RENTREES DE 4 A 6 HEURES, DE 7 A 9 HEURES.



Fig. 99. RocheFORT se meurt! RocheFORT est meurt!, La Feuille, 1898.



Fig. 100. Hermann-Paul. En joue  
...Faux! La Feuille,  
1898.



Fig. 101. Louis Anquetin.  
Drumont et Vacher. La  
Feuille, 1898.



Fig. 102. Saluons-les!  
La Feuille, 1899.



Fig. 103. En Grève.  
La Feuille, 1898.



Fig. 104. Tu t'en iras les pieds devant. Gil Blas illustré, 1895.



Fig. 105. Ouvriers du bâtiment, c. 1900.



Fig. 106. Mothu et Doria, 1893.



Fig. 107. Lait pur Stérilisé de la Vingeanne, 1894.

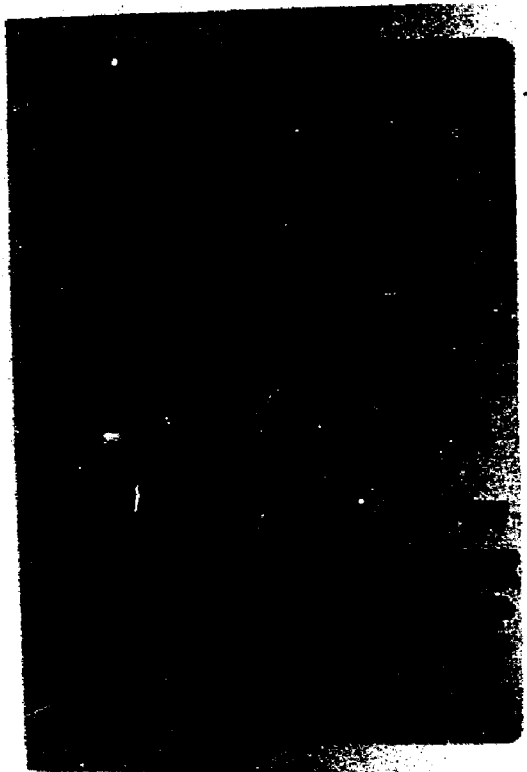


Fig. 108. Jules Chéret.  
Exposition de A.  
Willette, 1888.



Fig. 109. Georges Meunier.  
Papier à Cigarettes,  
Job, 1894.



Fig. 110. Lucien Lefèvre. Cacao Lacté, 1893.



Fig. 111. Compagnie Française des Chocolats et des Thés, c. 1895.

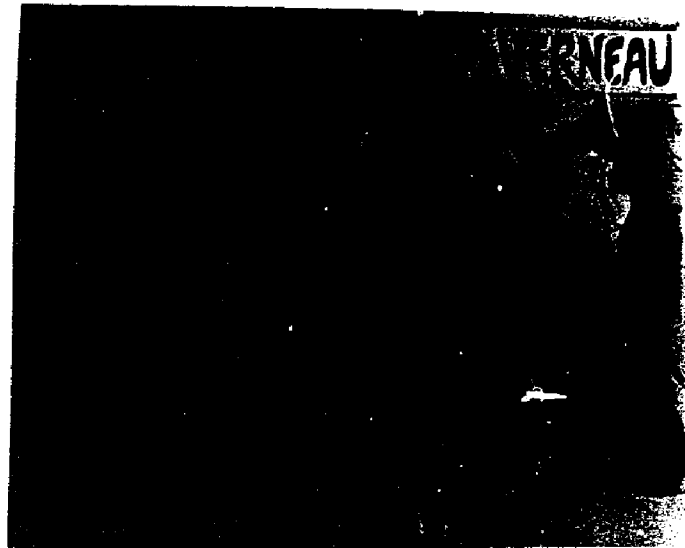


Fig. 112. La Rue, 1896.



Fig. 113. Laundresses, c. 1898.



Fig. 114. Laundress.

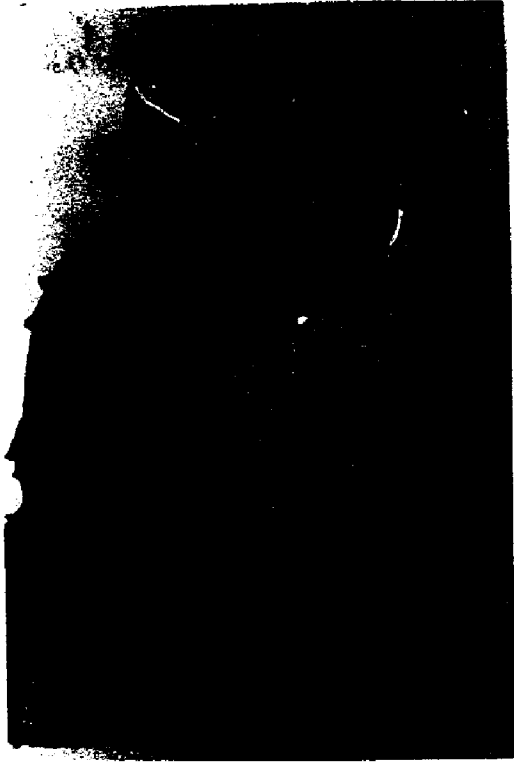


Fig. 115. Tournée de Chat Noir,  
1896.

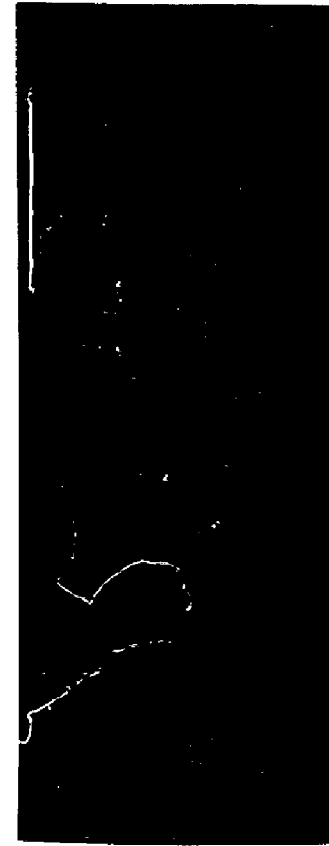


Fig. 116. Alphonse Mucha.  
Gismonda, 1894.



Fig. 117. La Feuille, 1897.



Fig. 118. Paris, 1898.

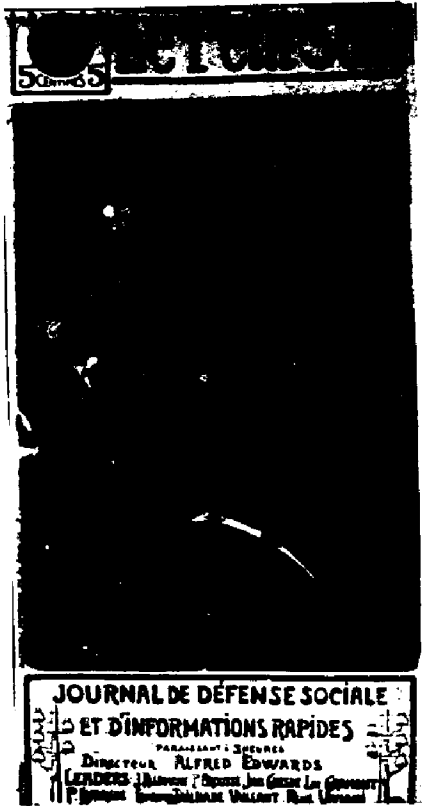


Fig. 119. Le Petit Sou, 1900.

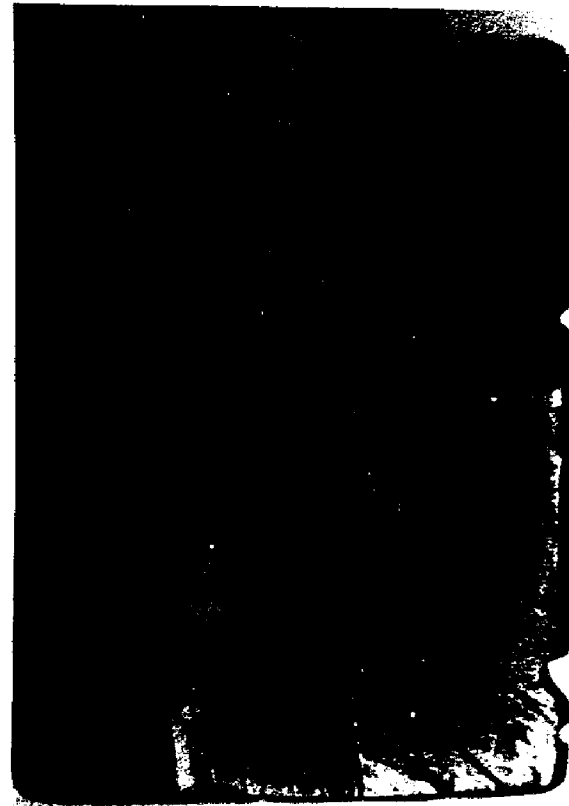


Fig. 120. Filles et Souteneurs, 1895.



Fig. 121. Type Populaire, 1895.



Fig. 122. La Rue Caulaincourt,  
1896.



Fig. 123. Picasso. Mère Tenant  
Deux Enfants, 1901.



Fig. 124. Menagère et Enfants  
Rentrant du Lavoir,  
1899.

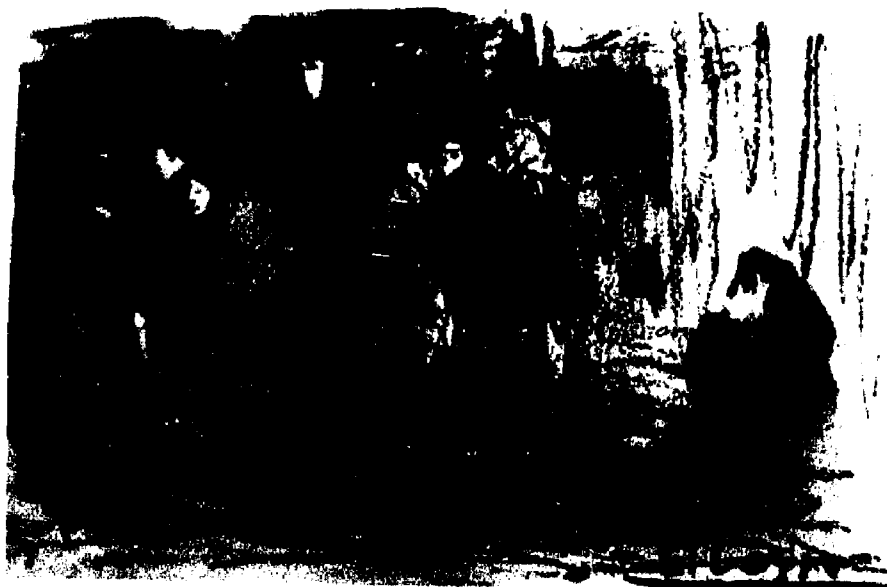


Fig. 125. Picasso, Personnage dans la Rue, 1901.



Fig. 126. Drawing.



Fig. 127. Picasso. The Absinthe Drinker, 1901.



Fig. 128. Edward Penfield, Poster Calendar, 1897.



Fig. 129. Edward Hopper.  
La Barrière, 1915-18.



Fig. 130. Edward Hopper. French  
Couple on Embankment,  
1906-14.



Fig. 129. Edward Hopper.  
La Barrière, 1915-18.



Fig. 130. Edward Hopper. French  
Couple on Embankment,  
1906-14.



Fig. 131. Les Dos.  
Le Mirliton, 1886.



Fig. 132. Idylle.  
Le Mirliton, 1887.