

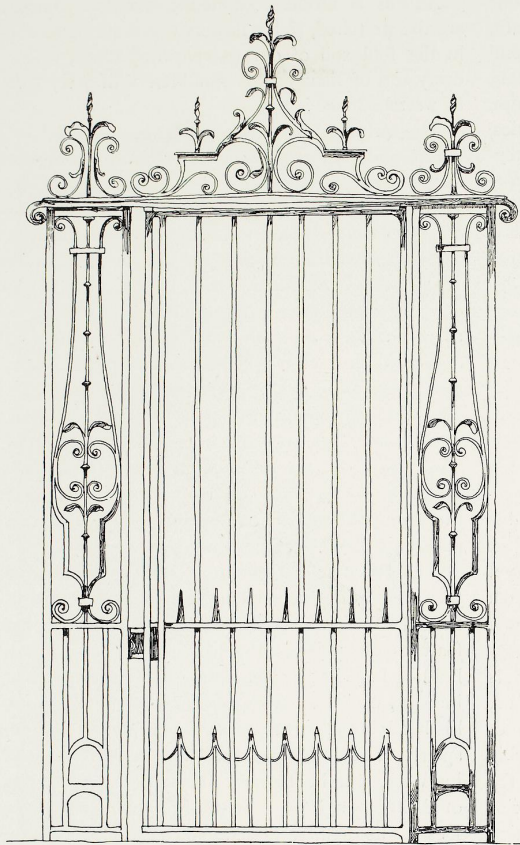
Steinlen as a Lithographer

FIG. 5. WROUGHT-IRON GATE
FROM A DRAWING BY H. S. PEPPER

STEINLEN AS A LITHO- GRAPHER. BY GABRIEL MOUREY.

THERE are few artists whose name and whose work are more widely known than those of Steinlen. The public knows him as it knows Caran d'Ache, Forain, Jules Chéret, and Willette in France, or Phil May, Raven Hill, Dudley Hardy, and the brothers Beggarstaff in England. Moreover, he has earned the admiration of artists themselves; and it is a piece of rare good fortune for a draughtsman thus to be understood and appreciated alike by the many and by the few.

His gifts, it may be said at once, are eminently "sympathetic," both in regard to the subjects he particularly affects, and the thoroughly personal

way he has of dealing with them. He catches the eye and appeals to the mind by a truly remarkable accuracy in detail, a sense of nature and life, and a great power of observation, while the feeling he arouses is frequently one of generous sympathy and respect. Unlike Forain, he is never cynical, mordant, or cruel, nor is he a caricaturist, like Caran d'Ache. Briefly, he is human, and this is the word which, I think, best describes him. And from this very humanity springs the great success his productions have achieved.

It may be objected that the society he depicts is very limited in range, being confined to the poor, the beggars, and the vagabonds, the types of the poverty-stricken outskirts. But such objection will not hold good. What, alas, is more general, more universal than this poverty? and what a world of characters and sorrowful, typical scenes it affords the draughtsman's pencil! Everything is genuine in this sad world of his. The conventions of society, the codes of cant and *snobbisme* are nothing to the men and women he shows us. They at least wear no masks; there is no hypocrisy in these poor, suffering creatures; and, with all their animalism, they are none the less our brothers and our sisters, our equals, whether looked at from the human or the divine standpoint. Their wretchedness, their crimes, their degradation, may fill us with repugnance, perhaps; but there is no denying they offer the artist a vast field of study, and one cannot but feel

interested in it all. At times these figures stand as it were a reproach to our pleasures, to our selfishness; they haunt us in the midst of our well-being, and in our life of ease and refinement we catch the mournful strain of their lament, whose echoes linger in our ears.

The work must be good and beautiful which can awake such feelings as these; and apart altogether from the admiration Steinlen's great gifts inspire, we must needs be grateful to him for the humanising influence of his productions. But having said this I will, with my readers' permission, direct their attention exclusively to the artistic side of the innumerable drawings bearing this artist's signature, and endeavour to show how personal, how truly original, is his manner of looking at things.