



1919

Posters

Théophile Alexandre Steinlen

idols. In the last twenty years of his life he devoted himself to painting flowers, animals, nude studies and portraits of women.

His name flared out once more in the glare of publicity—the war had temporarily restored his old vitality, the war that created new needs or revealed old needs anew, which offered new possibilities and developed old ones. Propaganda was wanted, in word, script and picture, for war-loans, for charity, for military exhibitions. For such purposes men were needed who understood the business of booming. They must be artists well enough acquainted with the feelings and moods of the masses to be able to put their art in the service of public announcements. But where were such interpreters to be found? The old masters of the poster had left no descendants and the impressionists of the academies and expressionists of the studios did not seem to be adequate substitutes. There was a dim remembrance of a bygone day in which the art of a Forain, a Willette or a Faivre had lent force and conviction to the ideas of a client. So it came that the French Government also called upon Steinlen to set his tried and tested art at the service of the war-propaganda; but there was no longer much interest aroused by the humanly-felt, lyrically depicted figures of men on leave, slight forms of sorrowing widows, pale faces turned expectantly towards the returning dear ones, pictures behind the front, of surgeons and nurses, railwaymen and pioneers, and the exhibition of his war-work which was held in Paris in 1917 was almost like an honorable lying in state. His last poster "War upon War", disseminated by the International Trades Unions was suppressed in France itself.

This was his ultimate burial in the year 1920. He did not die until 1923, in the sixty-fourth year of his age.

Translated by E. T. Scheffauer



Wandmalerei
Mural painting

1899