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LITHOGRAPHY

BY

JOSEPH PENNELL, N.A.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENEFELDER CLUB FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
ARTISTIC LITHOGRAPHY, LONDON. JOINT AUTHOR, WITH E. R.
PENNELL, OF "LITHOGRAPHY AND LITHOGRAPHERS," AND
OF THE AUTHORIZED "LIFE OF J. McN. WHISTLER."



FREDERICK KEPPEL & CO.
4 EAST 39TH STREET
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LITHOGRAPHY

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President of the Senefelder Club for Advancement of Artistic Lithography, London; joint author, with E. R. Pennell, of "Lithography and Lithographers," and of the authorized "Life of J. McN. Whistler."



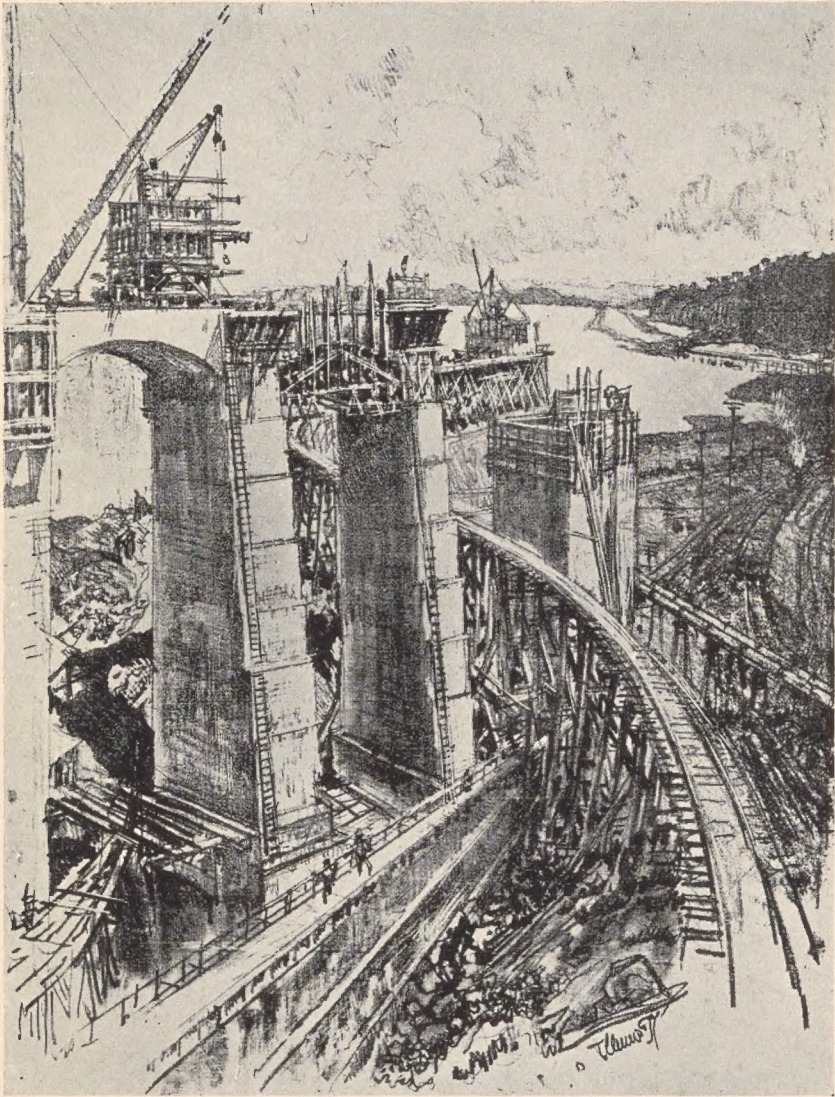
LITHOGRAPH is a print from a stone or a metal plate. But it is far more than this. In etching or engraving the incised or raised lines of the engraved design are filled in or covered over with printer's ink and the print is pressed or lifted off; in lithography the design in ink, on the flat surface of stone or plate, is transferred from it to paper and is an original autographic drawing, solely the work of the artist who made it. It is not only a print, but the multiplication of the original. It is the only genuine form of multiplying autographic art, and this transferring from stone to paper, called printing, may be done repeatedly, as the print from an etching is repeated. But in etching the artist never sees his design till it is printed. In lithography it grows in his hands exactly as it will print and he sees it all the while.

The art of lithography was invented by Aloys Senefelder about one hundred and fifteen years ago; and, save a few details, he discovered all that is known about it, and every method that is practised to-day.

A drawing is made either with lithographic chalk, a greasy, soapy crayon or pencil, or with ink, upon a

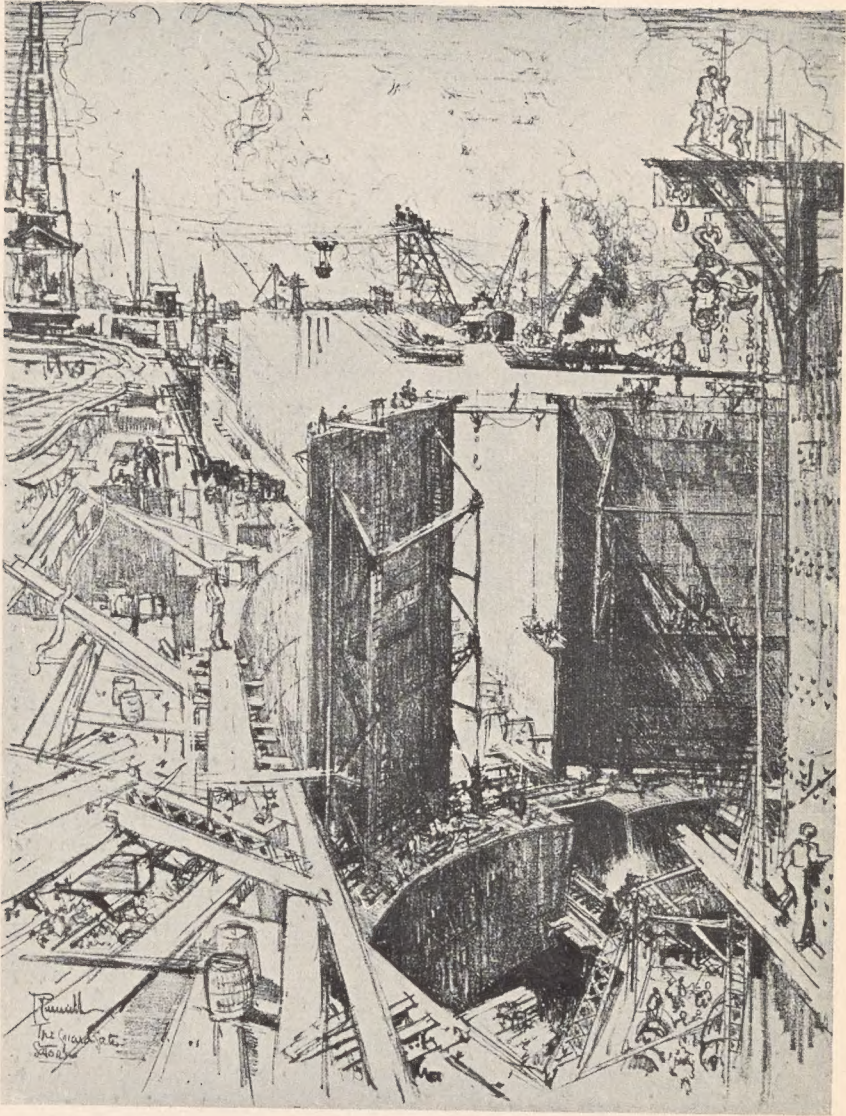
slab of Solenhofen stone—a very uniformly grained stone, easily polished, to which the greasy chalk or ink adheres—on a zinc or aluminium plate, or upon a sheet of paper. Ordinary drawing-paper will answer, but it is preferable to have it coated with a preparation of gum, size, or plaster of Paris, which takes the chalk better than uncoated paper and allows the design made on it to be transferred to the stone with more certainty. Senefelder advocated the use of paper for artists, saying in his “Treatise on Lithography” it was *probably the most important part of his discovery*. The drawing, then, is either made by the artist on a slab of stone—smooth for pen-work, grained by grinding with sand to give it a tooth for chalk—or upon paper—in the latter case, to-day, the method most generally practised by artists in Europe, including the revivers of lithography, Fantin-Latour and Whistler. The paper with the drawing on it is slightly dampened, laid face down upon the lithographic stone, and passed through the press—the fat and grease is extracted from the drawing by the stone and the design is seen upon it when the paper is removed from the stone, while if the artist and printer know how, the original drawing, from which the grease has been squeezed and absorbed (for the stone absorbs the ink and repels the water) by passing through the press, remains on the paper—the greasy drawing adheres to the stone. This must be seen to be believed. Not only this but sufficient grease remains in the design on the paper to repeat the process of transferring to another stone.

To my knowledge, this was first done by Charles Goulding of London. I have shown the method to Mr.



PENNELL. APPROACHES TO GATUN LOCK

Size of the original lithograph, 22 × 16¾ inches



PENNELL. THE GUARD GATE, GATUN LOCK

Size of the original lithograph, 22 x 16¾ inches

John Gregor of Messrs. Ketterlinus of Philadelphia, and he has done it perfectly, though it was unknown in the United States. Whistler, unfortunately, never heard of it—or, rather, never practised it.

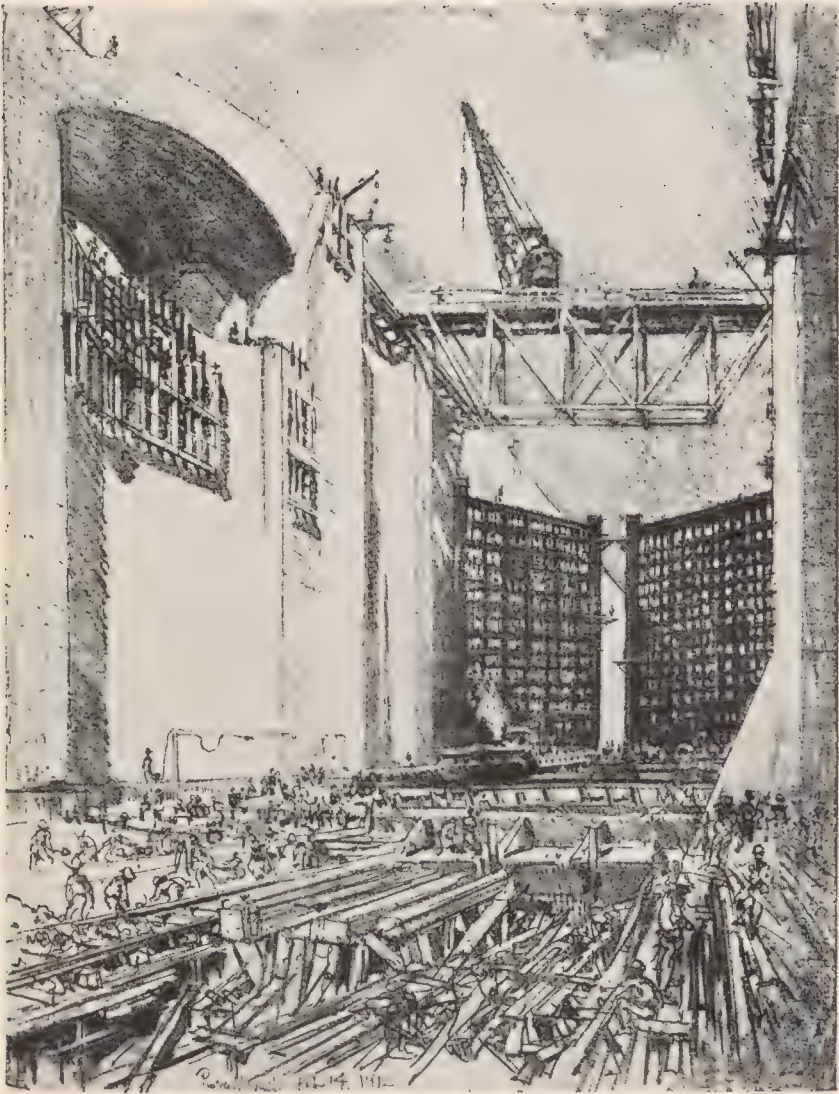
The drawing is now upon the stone, and it is washed over with weak solutions of acid, simply to fix it—not to etch it into relief or intaglio. The surface of the stone remains perfectly flat. It is then rolled up with ink, the stone being first washed with distilled water. The inky drawing only absorbs more ink; the clean wet stone refuses it. After more washing, gumming, etc., all of which processes are capable of being more or less done away with, the drawing is again washed, ink again rolled over it, a sheet of paper placed on it and run through the press, and the original drawing comes off the stone on to the paper, but the design still remains on the stone, which again only requires to be damped with a sponge, rolled up with more ink, which again only adheres to the drawing on the stone, and another sheet of paper placed on it and run through the press, and another original is made. The only resemblance to the printing of etchings is that lithographs are very sensitive. Some will yield a large number of proofs, like a bitten plate; others very few, like a dry-point. Only instead of getting weaker, the lithograph gets stronger, clogs up, and finally prints solid black. Just before that happens, sometimes, the most wonderful proofs appear. Of course the stone can be tinkered at, corrected, redrawn, but the early good proofs are rarely equaled, any more than in any other form of engraving.

It has been said by critics and experts that a drawing on paper is not so full and rich as a drawing on

stone. Artists know that this is false. And no expert is able to tell the difference—to tell whether the drawing was made on paper or stone. The drawing may be carried, to-day, as far on the paper as on the stone, and the artist-lithographer, when using paper, tries to carry out his design on the paper so completely that he will not have to touch the stone after his design is transferred to it; for the grain of the paper and the grain of the stone are always different, and if the artist commences to work at his drawing transferred to stone—on the stone—he may have to go all over it, as the two sorts of grain on the stone and paper “swear at” each other. Whistler frequently, for this reason, worked a few hours on the paper, and days on the stone to which his design had been transferred, in order to cover up this difference of grain and to make the transfer complete; for a very few years ago transferring was a far more uncertain method than it is to-day. The paper now is vastly improved, printers understand it better, and the results are sure.

Besides chalk and ink, drawings may be made with stump rags, wash, mezzotinted or etched, done in color or tint. There is no limit to lithography—the only limit is the number of experiments that have been made.

From the time of Senefelder, at any rate from the time of Charlet in France, Lane in England, Hanfstaengl in Germany, little experimenting has been done, and lithography has fallen more and more into the hands of the professional lithographers, artists, and printers. These men—some of them absolute masters of their trade—here and in Europe made it into a



PENNEL. THE BOTTOM OF PEDRO MIGUEL LOCK
Size of the original lithograph, 22 × 16¾ inches



PENNELL. BETWEEN THE GATES, PEDRO MIGUEL LOCK

Size of the original lithograph, 22 × 16¾ inches.

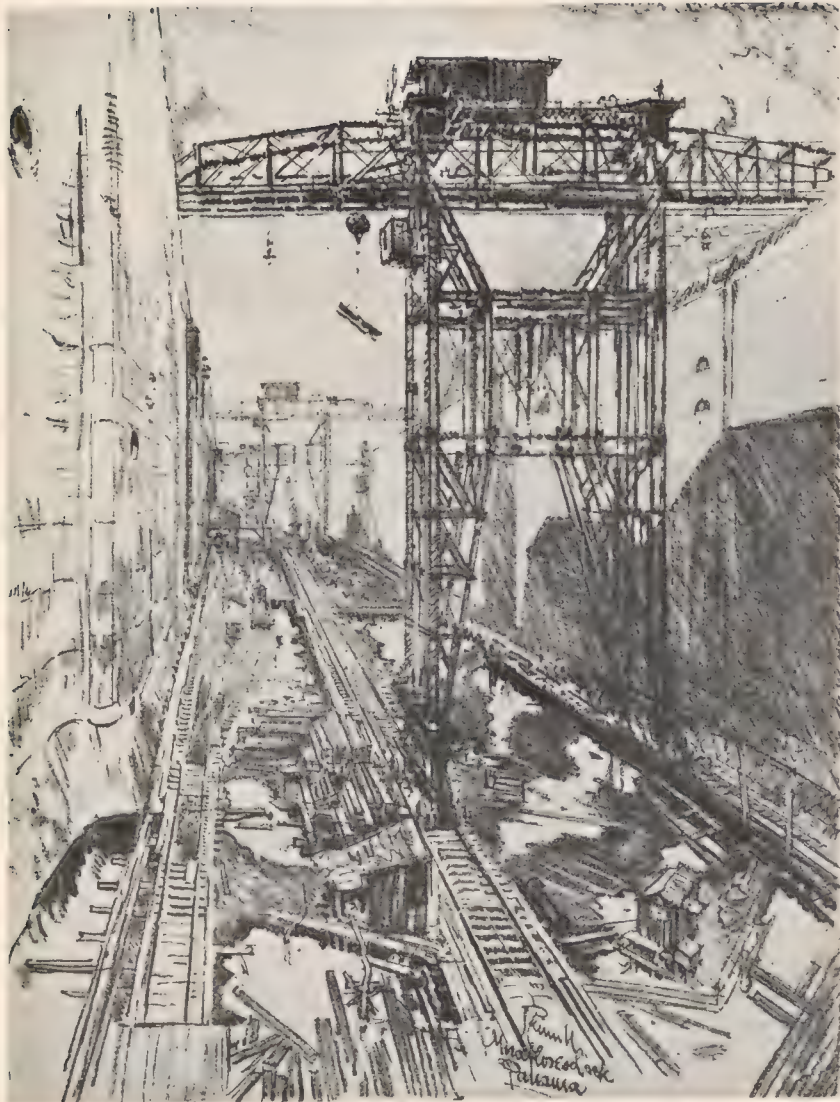
trade; and no one but themselves and their apprentices was allowed to practise it, though until fifty years ago it was as much an art craft as etching, but for nearly thirty years after it was asleep as an art. But André Marty in France, and Thomas Way in England, again induced artists to take it up, notably Fantin and Whistler, about 1880.

Many of the best modern artists are trained lithographers, men who started their career in lithographic offices, and made a living as "litho-artists," drawing circus posters and cigar labels and candy-box covers as well as making chromolithographs of pictures. Menzel in Germany, and Twachtmann in the United States, are notable, but these men got out of the drudgery as soon as possible, and Menzel is one of the few well-known artists who returned to lithography for the love of it in later life. But Marty and Way both wished artists, when they had made their drawings on stone, to allow them to be printed. This seemed very fine till the printing began, and the artists found it "wrapt in mystery." The drawing on paper or stone, taken from them, was returned again a proof, but how that proof was obtained was none of their affair; and later, too, a bill came. And usually the pleasure of making the drawing, and the excellence of the proofs, were all that resulted, as no collectors, scarcely, would look at lithographs. All but the few artists who cared for it, and could afford it, or could get credit, dropped lithography. Expense and mystery and trade-unionism again stifled it, but within the last few years certain artists, notably in England, have either set up presses of their own, or forced their way into printing-offices, and learned

that there are no secrets in lithography; that it requires only practice to transfer, etch, and print; that everything is in the text-books. And finally, the County Council of London has established technical schools of lithography, and many artists have attended these and learned from practical lithographers who teach in these schools all there is to learn, which, as in the case of practical copperplate printing, is mighty little, though it, too, is surrounded with a wall of seriousness only equaled by the lithographic tower of mystery. Practice is the only secret in both cases.

Another cause for the advancement of artistic lithography was the introduction, or rather the substitution, of zinc and aluminium plates for stone. These can be handled by an artist and do not necessitate a staff of trained athletes to manage to lift and to carry. For work out of doors, weight is the unsurmountable objection to stone. Stone is simpler and more direct, and surer to draw on—that is, there is less chance of accident. It is impossible, however, to carry about a stone weighing three or four hundred pounds.

Artistically there is no difference in the results whatever between paper and stone. But artists have found that in their hands the graining of the stone and the preparation of the paper are artistic matters which never entered into the mind of the professional lithographer to consider. That the artist may draw on the stone in hundreds of ways, the lithographer knows nothing about. That the talk about dirty fingers, dampness, spots, smears, is twaddle and tommyrot. That accidents, as in etching, if made use of intelligently, contribute to the confusion of the profes-



PENNELL. CRANES AT MIRAFLORES LOCK

Size of the original lithograph, $22 \times 16\frac{3}{4}$ inches



PENNEL. THE CUT TOWARD CULEBRA

Size of the original lithograph, $22 \times 16\frac{3}{4}$ inches

sional, but the joy of the artist. These have found that the etching of a lithograph is as much a work of art, and as difficult, as the biting of a copperplate, yet lithographers do it with their eyes—certainly their brains—shut. The professional lithographer, as a rule, knows nothing about the art of etching, and can't be taught; he usually has his method—the shop method—and by that he stands or falls,—and the artist does, too, if he depends on the professional. These artists now practising lithography have discerned that half the things the professional lithographer does, should not be done, and never were done in the early days of the art, probably.

And finally, that the printing of a lithograph may be as artistic as the printing of an etching. This to the professional lithographer is a crime, to the artist a delight. To the professional printer the prints must look just like the artist's drawing, and all be alike. The fact that the artist sees the glimmer of new grace in his work as he prints—the germ of an idea as he goes on—a new scheme of color as he experiments—is to be suppressed, and the professional lithographer suppresses it; he has been trained to believe lithographs ought to be as like as two peas.

The artist has collapsed under expense—mystery—and this artless lithographic ideal. The few who forgot these lithographic canons, the trade-unions tried to stifle and drive from the practice of the art.

But in a very short time these artists will be showing lithographs which depend as much on the etching and printing as a copperplate. And to-day even, lithographs are in existence which rank with the finest etchings. What of Whistler's? Yet, alas! he

knew but little save of drawing—nothing of etching and printing his lithographs. Had he known what we who have tried to follow him know, there would have been twice as many lithographs by him; he would have made ten times as many experiments, and had a hundred times less difficulty. Mystery and expense drove him from lithography.

Lithography is an art absolutely on the same high summit as etching, and just as few people will ever be great lithographers as great etchers—fewer—because it is not so easy and so cheap to dabble in and play with. When lithography again comes to its own the professional lithographer will have no part in it—no more than the professional printer has in etching.

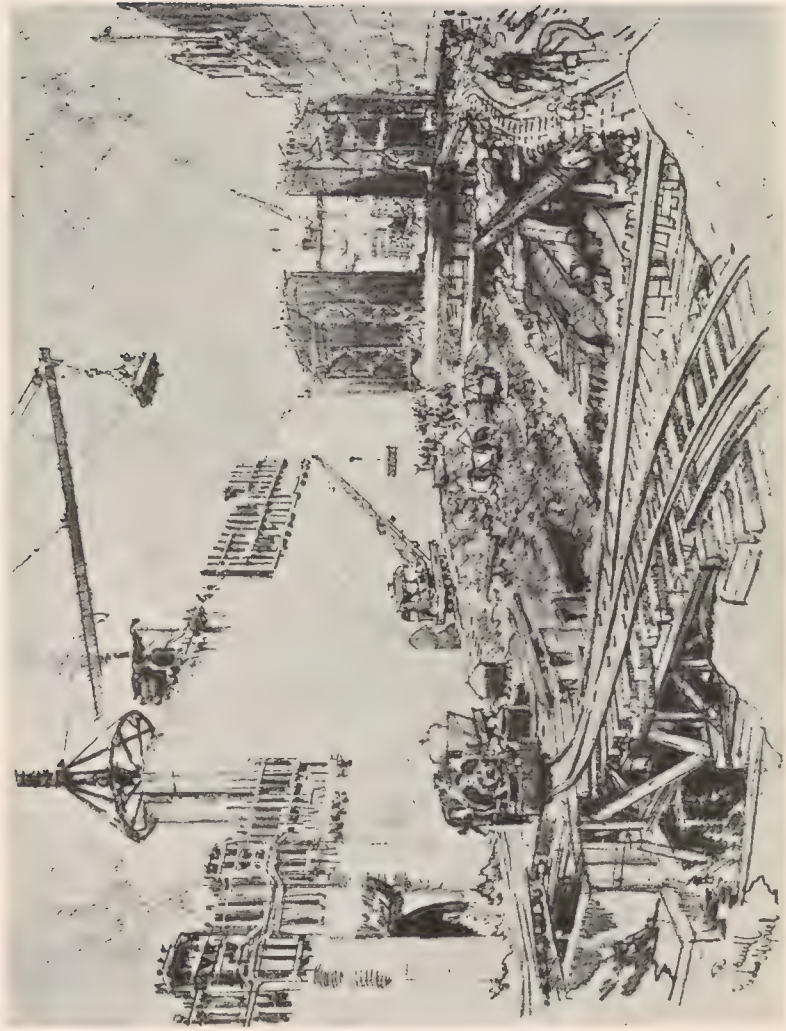
Lithography is going again to be appreciated, and appreciated by collectors, as it never has been. The signs are all about us—the artists are among us.

Etching owes much of its fascination to its uncertainty; for the great etcher, though he knows what he wants to do, does not know what he has done till he sees the proof he has pulled with his own hands come off the press—and then frequently it is not at all what he wants or what he meant it to be. No one who cannot and does not print his own proofs is a true etcher—a true artist. The great lithographer sees his drawing on paper, or on stone, or on metal, “finished from the beginning,” just as he will see it in the proof, the multiplied original; and he can make any changes for improvement at any time that he likes. If—and I admit there is—there is a charm in the uncertainty of etching, there is an equal charm in the absolute certainty of lithography. Of course the artist must be a master of the craft—its master and its servant. To



PENNEL. THE JUNGLE

Size of the original lithograph, 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 22 inches



PENNEL. WALLS OF PEDRO MIGUEL LOCK

Size of the original lithograph, $16\frac{3}{4} \times 22\frac{1}{2}$ inches

the amateur, the collector, there should be, and there will be, in the near future, an equal delight in both the oldest and the newest of the graphic arts.

PRACTICAL.

IF the artist proposes to lithograph a subject which he can draw in his own studio, he should make the drawing on stone—always on a grained stone, unless for pen-work. If he proposes to work out of doors, he must usually work on paper, as the stone of any size is far too heavy to carry about; though he may use zinc or aluminium plates—they are excellent, but their color is unsympathetic. If the drawing is made on stone or metal, it will print reversed, if made on paper correctly. The Scotch transfer-paper made by Cornelessen, 22 Great Queen Street, London, is far the best, and there are many grades of it. There are endless makes of lithographic chalk. If working with a professional printer, it is best to ask him the sort he likes. At the present times Korn's chalks, Centre Street, New York, are excellent and in very general use in England and America. Those made in the form of Blaisdell pencils I use altogether, and so get rid of the clumsy crayon-holder. Whistler simply held a bit of chalk in his fingers. In hot or damp countries this could not be done. The ink is simply chalk ground with distilled water like dry water-colors or India ink, and put on the pen with a brush, in the stupid old fashion, by the professional litho-artist. There is no reason why it should not be sold in bottles like liquid India ink. Washes—of ink, litho-tint—may be made by washing the ink, thinned more or less,

on to paper or stone—the ink dries much lighter than it looks when washed on the stone. It is very tricky stuff and requires much practice, or happy accidents and much scraping.

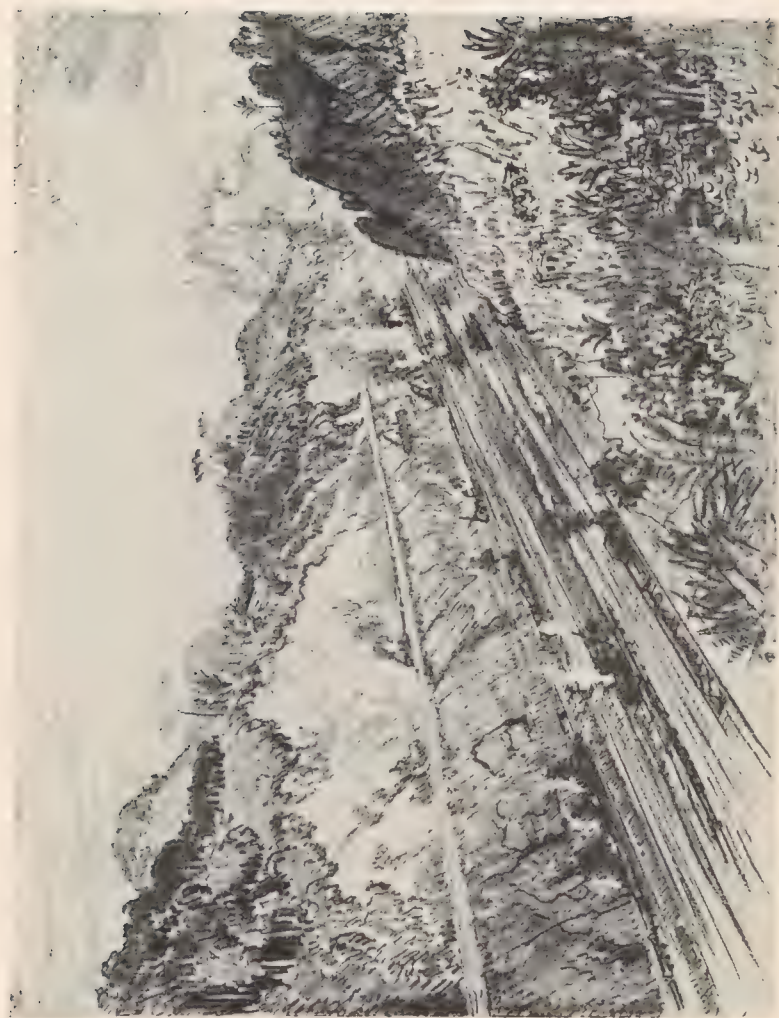
I always draw with a soft chalk out of doors, for masses, using the side of it; and for delicate passages use copal—the hardest. All decent transfer-paper may have lights or corrections made on it, and much modeling done with a pocket knife—the best instrument; but the artist should restrain himself till the drawing is finished, as frequently the scraped parts print—not a little lighter, as they look, but quite white, the preparation being removed. And the scraped parts cannot be drawn over on the paper; but as soon as the drawing is transferred to stone, before it is etched or rolled up, it can be scraped or drawn on without trouble, and all imperfections removed or effects added.

It is as well to have drawings put on the stone—or etched, if on the stone—as soon as possible; but drawings I made in Panama, in dampness and heat, were carried six thousand miles and transferred perfectly, to every one's amazement, including my own, in Philadelphia, after some months' delay.

The artist, if he remembers the few details I have mentioned, and can find a responsive intelligent printer, should draw on paper or stone, trying only to get a decent drawing. There is nothing special in the technique of drawing to bother about, provided he can draw—most artists cannot. He should draw with the lithographic chalk as he does with pencil or charcoal. If he wishes to become a good lithographer, he must study the whole art, science, and chemistry of it, set



PENNELL. THE END OF THE DAY, GATUN LOCK
Size of the original lithograph, $21\frac{3}{4} \times 16\frac{3}{4}$ inches



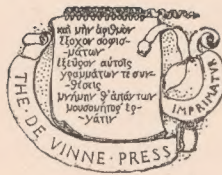
PENNEL. LOOKING UP THE CUT FROM BAS ORISPO
Size of the original lithograph, $16\frac{3}{4} \times 22$ inches

up his own press, and do the work himself as etchers do. It is the only way to excellence—and worth while. There is no use going to a lithographic printing-office unless one understands lithography and can “boss the job” and the printer. Even a printer in one’s own studio is a difficult proposition, but almost indispensable for the heavy, dirty work. But good men will often come overtime, and mutual benefit may result. In England laziness—another name for unionism—is rampant. But at present the trade-union and the stupid commercial lithographer—the Americans are the worst—do everything to prevent the practice of lithography by artists and collectors, and dealers have done little to encourage it. But it has a great future, for it is a living, vital art. There are three large firms who do encourage artists: Lemercier’s, Paris; Way’s, London; Ketterlinus’, Philadelphia.

My experiences with my Panama pictures may show what may be expected by the would-be lithographer. The United States Government, to my surprise, had no lithographic press in the Canal Zone, and I did not see a sign of one on the entire Isthmus. In San Francisco I found no one—could hear of no one—who knew anything about artistic lithography, but many were willing to make experiments with my work. In the city of New York, in one—the American Company—I was asked how many hundred thousand million dozen gross of reams of goods I wanted. When I explained I should be contented with a few dozen proofs, I was n’t even shown the door.

The second experience began with a letter. I asked if there was not some one I could find in New York who really worked at lithographic printing for him-

self. I was told, No. I could do one of three things: buy a press and do the work myself—most excellent advice; take the drawings to England—which I did not want to; or join the trade-union. I chose the last. The union hesitated. I would have to be elected, and it would cost thirty dollars to join. I said if the union could manage the election, I would try to raise the thirty dollars. After the usual delay of this hustling country, I received notice that I was not elected or eligible. Maybe I was blackballed. I only know that I lost an amusing experience—and the union a member, and one who would have given them the time of their lives or broken trade-unionism. I came over to Philadelphia. I was first refused by one firm, absolutely, permission to work, or even see the work being done; and then, by another—the Ketterlinus Lithographic Manufacturing Company—received and treated with the greatest courtesy and consideration and intelligence, as well as being allowed to work in the printing-office, with the result that at the hands of Mr. Gregor, their chief prover, I got a large number of excellent proofs, and they got some ideas which may be of some service to them. I wish most strongly to recommend this firm; the manager of the Art Department, Mr. Leinroth; and the chief prover, Mr. Gregor, and his assistants. Mr. Gregor is the best printer, the broadest-minded, most enthusiastic lithographer, I ever worked with. His work is his delight, and it is a pleasure to work with such a master craftsman; and when you find such men you find the most serious and enthusiastic craftsmen in the world. The trouble is, you usually meet the business man, and the business man usually has no time to bother with artists.





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