



E M I L  
O R L I K

Holzschnitt 1902  
Wood-cut

Plakat 1895 Poster



THIS summer he celebrates his sixtieth birthday. If the fact had not been proclaimed in the entire daily press, none of his friends would have been inclined to believe it. Orlik has always been an energetic and vital personality, and he remains one to-day as much as ever.

We therefore will not pause to talk about his birthday, but will rather speak of the period of great artistic development extending over the past 35 years. The whole modern history of book art in Germany is bound up with Orlik's name, not that he has ever identified himself with the whole problem of artistic style—on the contrary, Orlik has always gone his own way. In contrast to the purely graphic artist, in whom the form itself gives birth to the idea, Orlik's form is shaped by the idea. Thus it happens that his work is so original, so temperamentful and apparently so free from any formalised idea. The thought, once comprehended, is at once committed to paper: this is true of his posters as well as of his wood-cuts and his lettering, in short, of everything he creates. His oldest poster, made for the "Verein bildender Künstler" in the year 1895, is the only one which contradicts this theory. At this time the young artist was undoubtedly too much under the influence of the artistic currents of the age. As early, however, as the poster for the first performance of Gerhart Hauptmann's "Weavers" in the year 1897, we find a true Orlik piece of work. Here the artist already stands complete before us: his originality has the same effect upon us to-day as it had thirty-three years ago.