

time flatters the foolish modern passion for everything precise, also serves in a masterly manner to preserve the distance between illustration and text. All objects are forced to become ornament and thus lose their disturbing reality. When Karl Holtz draws an old man it is rather old age that he draws, the graphic symbol of old age—no rival to the old men spoken of in the text. This explains two things: first, that Holtz is one of the few artists who knows how to draw vignettes, for the vignette is a playful thing, half ornament, half picture. Secondly, we see that he has the rare gift of illustrating not only stories, but also thoughts, abstract things. In certain pictures for Hans Reimann's new handbook of Saxon speech (Pub. by Piper, Munich), we can observe this with especial clarity. Here Holtz plays with ideas and illuminates them. Printed letters range themselves organically in the picture, they become characters in the play, even caricatures. Holtz high intelligence, a factor often found in artists with a strongly marked sense of form, aids him to an astonishing degree of sympathy with the author's manner of thought and the peculiarities of a satirical style.

Karl Holtz originality is not so evident when he tries to be true to nature—as for instance in his landscapes, which easily deteriorate into the superficially decorative—nor yet in physiognomical characterisation. Here many of his colleagues are as good, if not superior. His strength is in the abstract Morse code, applied with unusual feeling for space and form, with which he designates rather than draws the things of this world. He gives us a uniform picture of the world, in which the organic is but little differentiated from the inorganic, the high and venerable closely related to plain everyday matters: he designs a telephone and a stork with the same circles and right angles, and uses the same spiral ornament to indicate the curls escaping from under a judge's cap and the pattern on the plates of a turtle's shell. And yet the leaning to calligraphy scarcely ever tempts him to sacrifice the living individuality of an object in favor of its ornamental quality. For, like every good artist, he loves both, his models as well as his tools.

Translated by E. T. Scheffauer

Bühnenbild

K A R L H O L T Z

Stage Setting

