



Der Schauspieler

The Actor

also found in most of Rössing's woodcuts; he works with definite, very simplified contours, omits the half-shades in the lightest places, illuminates the dark surfaces very sparingly, and endeavours to achieve a flat decorative effect. These are the fundamental rules according to which Rössing solves his artistic tasks, and they are also the laws observed in the models described above. This adherence to effect, which is based on the qualities of the material, namely metal, which is always less yielding than wood, means loyalty to the implement and to its original logic. The contrasting of the surfaces, of darkness and light, its organization and mastering, is the fundamental tradition of German graphic art. Rössing is a worthy representative of it.

The perfection attained by metal engraving also compelled wood engravers to seek for new means of expression. There were constantly fewer "really convinced" wood engravers. There was a tendency to attach less and less value to wood as a material and to the scalper as a tool. Rössing forms a pleasing exception. He pursues no complicated aims, and he is not interested in the enrichment of the graphic palette which the French school is striving for. Wood engraving is the art of black and white, and Rössing simply endeavours to show both as well as possible. One should have thought that Rössing would have the largest following among contemporary German wood engravers, for there is a certain hereditary predisposition to adopt his technique.

The way in which Rössing arranges his themes is also absolutely German. It is the expression of the undying German romanticism. Romanticism is attachment to the past. All Rössing's woodcuts are marked by this romanticism, in the technique and in the subject. But his romanticism has also another specially individual feature; he not only thinks of the past but also dreams of it.

There are many visionaries among German artists, but there is no one except Rössing who can reproduce so