

THE MEN OF THE NINETIES

prefer for my part to blame the London theatrical world for the lack of those minute theatres which have become so much a part of the night life of big continental cities and are so admirably adapted for the production of the works of new dramatists.

Indeed, the theatrical atmosphere of London at that time was in its usual perpetual state of stuffiness. There was not even a beneficent society then such as we now have in the Pioneer Players, whose theatre (if one may so symbolise it) is the charity house for emancipated dramatists. Ibsen's *Dolls House* had been produced in London just before the nineties' epoch began, and, like anything new in popular art over here, raised the hue-and-cry. Then, too, the big 'star' curse, which Wilde himself so justly spurned, was permanently settled on our own insular drama like a stranglehold on the author.

Outside England, in the big art world of the continent, Schnitzler was beginning in Vienna.¹ Maurice Maeterlinck, in Belgium, had begun² too the drama of expressive silences which came to light in Paris. There were Sudermann and Hauptmann in Germany; Echegaray in Spain; D'Annunzio in Italy; Ibsen

¹ *Anatol*, 1889-90. ² *La Princesse Maleine*, 1889.