

they know that there is a mysterious East End, full of crowded, ill-conditioned life; they know that there is a West End, of fine houses and a more elaborate existence; they have a confused knowledge of the whole, but only a part becomes alive and real, as far as they themselves are concerned. That part is the material of which I hoped to make this book.

There are a dozen flippant, merry treatises on Bohemia in London, that talk of the Savage Club, and the Vagabond dinners, and all the other consciously unconventional things that like to consider themselves Bohemian. But these are not the real things; no young poet or artist fresh to London, with all his hopes unrealised, all his capacity for original living unspent, has anything to do with them. They bear no more vital relation to the Bohemian life that is actually lived than masquerades or fancy dress balls bear to more ordinary existence. Members of the Savage Club, guests of the Vagabonds have either grown out of the life that should be in my book, or else have never lived in it. They are respectable citizens, dine comfortably, sleep in feather-beds, and find hot water waiting for them in the mornings. It is, perhaps, the unreality of their pretences that makes honest outsiders who are disgusted at the imitation, or able to compare them with the inhabitants of the Quartier or Montmartre, say