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TO begin with Aubrey Beardsley has many advantages, for it brings us at once not only to the type of mentality most representative of the period, but also to the man whose creative power was probably the greatest factor of the period, to the boy who changed, as has been said, the black and white art of the world, and to the artist, from whose work we can most easily deduce the leading contemporary characteristics. The art of these men was in a way abnormal, while the men themselves who produced it were exotics; and Beardsley's is not only the most abnormal art of them all, but also he himself is the greatest exotic. As Robert Ross well said as a mere comment on the decade, he is invaluable: "He sums up all the delightful manias all that is best in modern appreciation—Greek vases, Italian primitives, the "Hypnerotomachia," Chinese porcelain, Japanese kakemonos, Renaissance friezes, old French and English furniture, rare enamels, mediæval