

THE MEN OF THE NINETIES

But it must be remembered, as a matter of fact, such a sweeping conclusion may not only be unjust but even impertinent. For where in all the theatres of the London of the nineties would the plays (if they had been written) of these young men have found a home? Probably the dramatic output of the nineties was nil because there were no small theatres in London at that date of the type to give these young men a hope that any works they might write could be produced. So only at the end of the decade do we see the dramatic outburst when the Irish movement founded a theatre of its own and produced J. M. Synge, and also when Miss Horniman gave Manchester a repertory theatre, and then Stanley Houghton came.

True, at the same period as the nineties Oscar Wilde was producing plays burlesquing the world of Society, and Bernard Shaw was getting ready to launch his own works by bombasting every one else's; but the little movement of the younger men remained dramatically dumb. Nothing came even when George Moore produced *The Strike at Arlingford* and John Todhunter *The Black Cat*. It is a hard thing to believe that all these young men were devoid of the dramatic instinct. I