

THE MEN OF THE NINETIES

of some of the silks his women wear, and his white is the plain white of the paper, not the Chinese subterfuge. A few rhythmic pen-strokes on the virgin sheet and strangely vital people live. The hand of Salomé may be out of drawing, the anatomy of Lysistrata wrong; but, all the same, they live with a rich malevolent life. One has to go back to the Greek vase-painters to find such a vivid life realised with such simple effects. This simplicity and austerity of lines, these few dots for the telling eyelashes, these blank spaces of untouched paper almost insult one with the perfect ease with which everything is accomplished. But, as a matter of fact, how different, how difficult was the actual creation of these designs! What infinite pains, what knowledge went to their composition! 'He sketched everything in pencil, at first covering the paper with apparent serawls, constantly rubbed out and blocked in again, until the whole surface became raddled from pencil, indiarubber, and knife; over this incoherent surface he worked in Chinese ink with a gold pen, often ignoring the pencil lines, afterwards carefully removed. So every drawing was invented, built up, and completed on the same sheet of paper.'¹ 'But

¹ *Aubrey Beardsley*, by Robert Ross, pp. 38-39. 1909.