

THE MEN OF THE NINETIES

him to take this step was the commission given by J. M. Dent to illustrate *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Any way he was launched out by the first number of *The Studio* with Joseph Pennell's article on 'A New Illustrator,' and, what was more important, with eleven of Beardsley's own works. At that time all his art was intuitive without much knowledge of modern black and white. Indeed he was artistically swamped at the moment with the glory of the pre-Raphaelites and Burne-Jones. The *Le Morte d'Arthur*, really, was intended as a kind of rival to the Kelmscott Press publications, and Beardsley in his border designs had small difficulty in excelling Morris's work.

Next year, 1893, finds these influences modified to a certain extent, although the *Salomé* drawings still belong to that cadaverous, lean and hungry world of Burne-Jones, from which Beardsley has not completely as yet rescued himself by means of Frenchmen like Constantin Guys; but his release has well arrived in 1894 with his design 'The Fat Woman,' a caricature of Mrs. Whistler. Watteau, Rops, and the Japanese, and the thousand books he is now reading throw open at last all the splendour of the *art* world to him. He lacks nothing, and he goes forward borrowing