

## THE MEN OF THE NINETIES

young men of Henley must not be therefore confused with the *Yellow Book* group. They were often deliberately coarse, not because they liked it, but because it was part of their artistic gospel. And when one considers the methods of the feeblest of them, one sees more ruffianly sturdy British horseplay than art, more braying and snarling than sounding on the lute. But among the best of them, Stevenson, Kipling, and Steevens, was a fine loyalty to the traditions of the leading spirit of the *Observer* Henley—Pan playing on his reed with his crippled hoofs hiding amid the water-lilies of the purling stream. All these last writers and artists were men of the Anglo-Saxon tradition; while, on the other hand, the young men who had, so to speak, just come to town, were full of the Latin tradition. The main thing in the lives of these last was French literature and art, and out of this influence came not only the art, but the eccentricities, of the coterie, which is so often called the nineties. Theirs was a new spirit. They were of the order of the delectable 'Les Jeunes.' Epigram opened a new career with Oscar Wilde; Beardsley dreamed of a strange world; Ernest Dowson used to drink hashish and make love in Soho in the French manner of Henri Murger's Latin Quarter—for a time,