

## THE MEN OF THE NINETIES

at the Cheshire Cheese and evenings in the Domino Room of the Café Royal. Symons wrote of the ballets of Leicester Square; Dowson of the purlieus round the docks; Davidson made poems of Fleet Street; Binyon sang of white St. Martin's and the golden gallery of St. Paul's; Crackanthorpe sketched his London vignettes; Street talks of the indefinable romance of Mayfair. In fact the nineties brought the Muses back to town. In a cabman's shelter, in Soho restaurants of doubtful cheapness, in each other's rooms, they rejoiced in each other's company. At the same time Beardsley, by a stroke of luck through the good services of friends, was commissioned by Mr. Dent to illustrate *Le Morte d'Arthur*. The Bodley Press had begun in Vigo Street in 1887. Symons, Yeats, and others had already published their first books. The curtain had gone up on the drama of the nineties, of which this is intended as a brief appreciation.

At the date of the appearance of these young men amid a mass of lucubrators, there was actually a band of genuine young writers (besides the big Victorians like Meredith and Hardy), who were turning out good work, and who were under the sway of that old Pan of poetry, Henley of *The National Observer*. These