

THE MEN OF THE NINETIES

his late illustrations for Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* he was clearly working towards water-colour work, while at one time he began under Walter Sick his only oil painting (unfinished), 'Women regarding a dead mouse.' By no means least, he became a leader in English poster work. All of this was essentially creative work. And when death came he was very far from his artistic or intellectual maturity. So is it not just to say that this young man who practised nearly all the forms of art, and who was also an avid reader and student, remains the chief creative figure of the nineties?

Indeed, there is no more pleasing personality in the whole period than this 'apostle of the grotesque,' as his own decade loved to hail him. Born at Brighton in 1872 he was educated at the local Grammar School, whose magazine, *Past and Present*, contains his earliest work. The Kate Greenaway picture books, it is said, started him drawing. At school he was neither keen on his work or games, but used to be continually doing 'little rough, humorous sketches.' Reading was his great refuge, and when he fell in with some volumes of the Restoration dramatists he had already begun to find his feet in that world