

## THE MEN OF THE NINETIES

and Björnstjerne Björnson finishing their work for the Scandinavian drama; while the playwrights of Paris were, as always, feverishly fabricating all sorts of movements, as when Paul Fort, a boy of eighteen, founds in 1890 the Théâtre d'Art. But what was going on in England? Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, Wilde's *Salomé*, and his light comedies, together with stuff by Henry Arthur Jones, Sydney Grundy, etc., represented the serious drama. The critics were perturbed, as they generally are. The musical comedy and its singing, pirouetting soubrettes deluded the populace into the belief that it had a great drama, when all these spectacles should really have been housed in London in spacious tea-rooms for the benefit of that multitude which is fond of tinkling melody and teapots. There was not even in London a single Überbrettbühnen, the Germans mouth it, where those who love could go to hear poets recite their verse. In London, like Otto Bierbaum, let alone little theatres where what we so dolefully term the serious drama could be played.

Even, too, in those days, the newspaper critics, muzzled by the business department, which has never any wish to lose its theatrical advertisements, said little, with a few honest