

## FOREWORD

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Precarious the lot of the author who elects to show his public what it does not know, but doubly exposed he who in the indiscreet exploration of customs and manners publishes what the public knows but is unwilling to confess! In the first place incredulity tempers censure, in the second resentment is fanred by the necessity of self-recognition. For the public is like the defendant in matrimony, amused and tolerant when unconvinced of the justice of a complaint, but fiercely aroused when defending its errors.

In the present novel I am quite aware that where criticism is most risked is at the hands of those entrenched moralists who, while admitting certain truths as fit subjects for conversation, aggressively resent the same when such truths are published. Many such will believe that in the following depiction of a curious and new type of modern young women, product of changing social forces, profoundly significant of present unrest and prophetic of stranger developments to come, the author, in depicting simply what does exist, is holding a brief for what should exist.

If the type of young girls here described were an ephemeral manifestation or even a detached fragment of our society, there might be a theoretical justification for this policy of censure by silence. But the Salamanders are neither irrelevant nor the product of unrelated forces. The rebellious ideas that sway them are the same ideas that are profoundly at work in the new gen-