

FOREWORD

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

ALTHOUGH the scene of this book is the West of America and, on cursorily flipping the pages, one's eye does not encounter the words *Florence, Venice, Simla, Quartier Latin, Shepherd's Hotel, or Café de la Paix*, it is not a novel of revolver-shots. A story can be written of Western America in which revolvers are in abeyance.

There is much to be said for Gilbert's

"Hearts just as pure and fair
May beat in Belgrave Square
As in the lowly air
Of Seven Dials!"

It is a whimsical plea for the open mind. Formulæ for books may make the writing of a certain kind of book easier, may make reviewing of a certain kind easier, and the life of the harassed assistant librarian easier; but they won't do for me and, I trust, for you. One should go everywhere with an open mind, meet everybody with an open mind.

The point is that one never knows. One day we may even read of a novel that "no thinking man can ignore this work," or that "here we have