

## INTRODUCTION

A VERY natural difficulty presents itself in regard to any prefatory remarks concerning this book. In the case of all the other books for which an introduction in this series has been written, time had elapsed (in some cases over twenty years) between the first publication and the issuing of this subscription edition. *The Judgment House*, however, goes into the subscription edition almost contemporaneously with first issue in individual form, and there is little that can usefully be said now. Time is necessary to give a book its true place; for whatever first impressions may be, there is only one true test of a book, and that is permanency. The popular book which dies at the end of a season requires no historian's or commentator's hand; and the book that is not the book of a season, but is to extend its life through years and not through weeks and months has not found its definite place either in the mind of the public or of its author—certainly not in the mind of the latter—soon after original publication. Something very like a reaction is set up in the mind of the author after his manuscript has ceased to be his very own, having become anybody's at the price in printed form, and a coldness in his own relation to it emerges. He needs time to adjust himself to a work on which the outer world has breathed with ban or blessing.

I will not say what my feelings now are concerning *The Judgment House*. I am too near its creation, and I am still jealously concerned for its place and reputation, while uncertain of my own regard for it—the inevitable reaction to which I have just referred. But this I can say, that the part of the book which