

world for me! She's the dearest, sweetest, tenderest, most beautiful creature God ever made!"

"And you honour and respect her—just as you would honour and respect Maisie?" I asked quietly.

"Of course I do!" he flashed. "Don't I tell you that you know nothing whatever about her?" She is the dearest, sweetest——" &c., &c. And he continued to trumpet forth the Olympian qualities of the Syren and his own fervent adoration. I was the only being to whom he had opened his heart, and, the flood-gates being set free, the torrent burst forth in this tempestuous and incoherent manner. I let him go on, for I thought it did him good; but his rhapsody added very little to my information.

The lady who had "houp-la'd" her way from Dublin to Yokohama was the spotless queen of beauty, and Dale was frenziedly, idiotically in love with her. That was all I could gather. When he had finished, which he did somewhat abruptly, he threw himself into a chair and took out his cigarette-case with shaky fingers.

"There. I suppose I've made a damn-fool exhibition of myself," he said, defiantly. "What have you got to say about it?"

"Precisely," I replied, "what I said before. I'll repeat it, if you like."

Indeed, what more was there to say for the present about the lunatic business? I had come to the end of my arguments.

He reflected for a moment, then rose and came over to the fireplace.

"Look here, Simon, you must let me go my own way in this. In matters of politics and worldly wisdom and social affairs and honourable dealing and all that sort of thing I would follow you blindly. You're my chief, and a kind of elder brother as well. I would do any mortal thing for you. You know that. But you've