

moral, mental, physical, financial, and social ruin, and finished up in a masterly peroration.

Then, without moving, he calmly said:

"My dear Simon, you are talking through your hat!"

He had allowed me to walk backwards and forwards on the hearthrug before a blazing fire, pouring out the wealth of my wisdom, experience, and rhetoric for ten minutes by the clock, and then coolly informed me that I was talking through my hat.

I wiped my forehead, sat down, and looked at him across the table in surprise and indignation.

"If you can point out one irrelevant or absurd remark in my homily, I'll eat the hat through which you say I'm talking."

"The whole thing is rot from beginning to end!" said he. "None of you good people know anything at all about Lola Brandt. She's not the sort of woman you think. She's quite different. You can't judge her by ordinary standards. There's not a woman like her in the wide world!"

I made a gesture of discouragement. The same old parable of the wise had evoked the same old retort from the deluded young. She was quite different from other women. She was misunderstood by the cynical and gross-minded world. A heart of virgin purity beat beneath her mercenary bosom. Her lurid past had been the reiterated martyrdom of a noble nature. O Golden Age! O Heyday of Illusion! O Swantide of Geese! O unutterable silliness of Boyhood!

"For Heaven's sake, don't talk in that way!" he cried (I had been talking that way), and he rose and walked like a young tiger about the room. "I can't stand it. I've gone mad about her. She has got into my blood somehow. I think about her all day long, and I can't sleep at night. I would give up any mortal thing on earth for her. She is the one woman in the