

have thought of mating him—a frivolous butterfly of a creature who drags him to dinner-parties and Ascot and suppers at the Savoy, and holds Barbara's Building and all it connotes in vixenish detestation. He roars out the agony of his philanthropic spirit to Lola and myself, who administer consolation and the cold mutton that he loves. The story of his marriage is a little lunatic drama all to itself and I will tell it some day. But now I can only rough-sketch the facts. He works when he can at the beloved creation of his life and fortune; but the brain that would be inadequate to the self-protecting needs of a ferret controls the action of this masterful enthusiast, and his one awful despair in life is to touch a heart that might beat in the bosom of a vicious and calculating haddock. I only mention this to explain how it has come to pass that Lola and I are now all-powerful in Barbara's Building. It has become the child of our adoption, and we love it with a deep and almost fanatic affection. Before Lola my influence and personality fade into nothingness. She is the power, the terror, the adoration of Lambeth. If she chose she could control the Parliamentary vote of the borough. Her great, direct, large-hearted personality carries all before it. And with it there is something of the uncanny. A feat of hers in the early days is by way of becoming legendary.

A woman, on the books of the Building, was about to bring a hopeless human fragment into a grey world. Lola went to see what aid the Building could provide. In front of the door lounged the husband, a hulking porter in a Bermondsey factory. Glowering at his feet lay a vicious mongrel dog—bull-terrier, Irish-terrier, mastiff—so did Lola with her trained eye distinguish the strains. When she asked for his wife in travail the chivalrous gentleman took his pipe from his mouth, spat, and after the manner of his kind referred to the dis-