

I

MY TWINS

Grosvenor Square.

I AM afraid the maternal instinct is not very much developed in me. I have not said it to anyone, but the twins are two terrible disappointments—chiefly, baby boy. What have I done, just heavens, to beget such ugly children? Austen is so handsome and I am—well—very passable.

I seem to be the only one able to see things clearly. Gracieuse says all new babies are raw-looking like that, with too much skin on and not enough hair—the expressions are mine, of course. As for my maid herself, she thinks that there never was anywhere (not even in her beloved France) such a pair of wingless angels. Vi, who is the godmother of the baby girl, is no longer our frivolous Lady Dare of twenty-one days ago—she has become a fixture of the nursery. She is re-learning to knit—this is her third misfit in petticoats. As for Austen, he—it seems a silly thing to write, but it's true—he is proud. Proud of what, *mon Dieu*? Am I proud? And yet, as I explained to him, I am the most important factor, he is only accidental; it just happened that it was he, that's all. What I mean is, the father of my children might have been anyone else;