

2 The Honourable Mrs. Garry

innocent as a baby's; and a tremulous curved mouth which had once been lovely, but was now rendered ridiculously small by the enlarged pendulous cheeks and manifold chin. Lady Clow met her daughter's direct look with an eager smile, pathetic from the very readiness of its response.

"You have not spoken for a long time, darling. I hoped you might be asleep."

"I don't generally sleep with my eyes open."

"I have had a little nap myself," said Lady Clow, apologetically.

"You have had a couple of hours' sound sleep," said Erica, with sardonic truth, "so I hope you've forgiven me for rousing you so early this morning to catch the train."

"Oh, my dear! Forgiven you!" Anything in the nature of an appeal moved Lady Clow's too soft heart to melting. "I hope you've not been worrying yourself—straining your dear eyes looking out of the window for hours—over that. It is true I was a little cross," she said, remorsefully. "From a child I have always felt inclined to cry when roused from sleep. And to end a visit so suddenly—a visit to the man you are engaged to, and when he was ill—but the moment you said you were in trouble I gave way—even though I am still all bewildered with the shock——"

"Do you want me to explain?" said Erica.