

and deaths for her sake. And so we parted: poor Inez crying bitterly: my heart broken.

"She came no more to our theatre. In twelve months they all forgot the Spanish ballet-girl—all but me—I thought of her always, by day and by night—till thought of her wore me to the likeness of a withered skeleton whom no one saw without shuddering. I heard nothing of Jordan or his wife—how could I, who knew no one? So twelve months passed away, when one dreary night, as I was thinking of Inez, a pale stricken creature, with an infant on her bosom, staggered into my room. It was Inez!

"Richard," she said, 'I have come to die,' and fainted away in my arms. My poor darling! what a woful wreck she was! I could read every moment of that twelve months' anguish in the wan cheeks, in the hollow eyes. For some days she was in a raging fever, crying piteously for her child, and I thought she never could have recovered. I watched her all that terrible time, and at last she recovered consciousness. Then she told me all her woes. The story sickens me to repeat it.

"Poor darling! in marrying John Jordan she took an adder to her bosom, to rob her of her beauty, and then leave her a poor poisoned thing. For all her entreaties, he would insist on having their marriage kept a secret: he said it would injure him professionally, and she believed him, and only kept praying for the day he could avow it. But when it became impossible any longer to keep it a secret, she went to him again and besought him for the sake of their child to leave her no longer under the cruel suspicion of the world. It was only then, driven to his last resource, he told his heart-broken wife that their marriage was no marriage at all! In her innocence, she had never dreamed that, in pretending to marry her according to the rites of her own Roman Catholic church, the wretch only went through a form which the cruel law of England pronounced a farce to be repudiated at will!

"The terrible truth almost drove her mad. She appealed to him for her own sake, for her child's sake, for God's sake, not to drive her out on the world a polluted outcast, and fix a nameless mark of scorn on her child. She appealed to a demon who had no pity; who, heaping outrage upon outrage, suggested a compromise ten thousand times more shameful than her shame. She rushed from his presence with a broken heart, never to see him again. She was not long in learning the secret of his

fiendish treachery. The young widow of a rich old money-lender had caught his eye: rather the rumour of her untold wealth: and so well had he played his devilish game, that the money-lender's widow had consented to be his wife. They were married: poor Inez was chained to a fever-bed when their marriage bells were ringing. When she got well, there was a little dark-eyed miniature of herself by her side, and a mother's love drew her back again out of the grave. Shunned and pointed at, for a while she dragged out her wretched life, more dead than alive, for her child's sake, till, at last, want and misery having done their worst on her poor frame, she came that dreary November evening to old Richard's room to die.

"I thought that perhaps she might still live, and that I might be a father to poor Inez, and her child: but her heart was broken. On her dying bed she gave into my charge the certificate of her marriage with John Jordan, and the baby. 'Richard, you will see her righted,' were her last words as her dying eyes met mine. This was all she said, and then she died. Rose Marton, you are Inez' child!"

"Oh! Rose, dear Rose, what a sad story!" sobbed Cressy Artslade.

"My poor mother!" was all the weeping girl could say. "Yet how sweet are even such melting memories since they tell me at last I had a mother, and oh! such a mother! Poor wronged angel! how light are my wrongs in contrast!"

And the girls fell sobbing again on one another's necks.

"But, darling Rose, you said I was your sister—"

"Hush, hush, a moment, darling. You have not read it all!"

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

##### "INEZ' CHILD."

Here there was a long blotted gap in the manuscript, as if tears had fallen and as if a hand had shaken, in telling how poor Inez died. Then the narrative proceeded:

"I did not forget my trust. It gave me a new life to have something to care for, something that always reminded me of Inez. I sought everywhere for the husband of my poor darling. Now that she was dead, and could no longer accuse him, I thought he might at least save her child from a worse fate than death. But I lost him in the great wool of London. He had given up his old cham-