

saw less and less of the baby, and left it more than ever to Vincenza's care.

Vincenza's own children were with their grandmother at a hamlet three miles from San Stefano. The grandmother, generally known as old Assunta, used to bring one or another of them sometimes to see Vincenza. Perhaps they took the infection of fever in the course of these visits; at any rate one of them was soon reported to be seriously ill, and Vincenza was cautioned against taking the Luttrells' baby into the village. It was the little Lippo Vasari who was ill; his twin-brother Dino was reported perfectly well.

Some days afterwards Mr. Luttrell, on calling at the cottage as usual, noticed that Vincenza's eyes were red, and her manner odd and abrupt. Old Assunta was there, with the baby upon her knee. Mr. Luttrell asked what was the matter. Vincenza turned away and burst into tears.

"She has lost her baby, signor," the old woman explained. "The little one died last night at the village, and Vincenza could not see it. The doctor will tell you about it all," she said, nodding significantly, and lowering her voice. "He knows."

Mr. Luttrell questioned the doctor, and received his assurance that Vincenza's child (one of the twins) had been kept strictly apart from the little Brian Luttrell; and that there could be no danger of infection. In which assurance the doctor was perfectly sincere, not knowing that Vincenza's habit had been to spend a portion of almost every evening at her mother's house, in order to see her own children, to whom, however, she did not seem to be passionately attached.

It is to be noted that the Luttrells still learned nothing of the existence of the other baby; they fancied that all Vincenza's children were dead. Vincenza had thought that the English lady would be prejudiced against her if she knew that she was the mother of twins, and had left them both to old Assunta's care; so, even when Lippo was laid to rest in the churchyard at San Stefano, the little Dino was carefully kept in the background and not suffered to appear. Neither Mr. Luttrell nor Mrs. Luttrell (until long afterwards) knew that Vincenza had another child.

Two months passed before Mrs. Luttrell was sufficiently restored to health to be able to see her children. The day came at last when little Richard was summoned to her room to kiss a pale woman with great, dark eyes, at whom he gazed solemnly, wonderingly, but with a profound conviction that his own mamma had gone away and left her place to be filled up by somebody else. In point of fact, Mrs. Luttrell's expression was