

care well enough for me to marry me. I cannot give you the love I felt for our poor Tessa, and you would not want it. The love I have for you is an absolute devotion. I cannot live without you. This is certain."

But she did not accept the offer, definitely, till the following spring.

She, too, was prudent. There were many points to consider, and the difference in their creeds was the sorriest of all. Under the fire of the most malicious criticism, she was received into the Roman Catholic Church. Few hesitated to say that she took the step in order to marry a wealthy peer who had been infatuated with her beauty and artfulness for years. Firmalden, who suffered the most at her change of opinions, described them thus in a letter to Lessard, with whom he remained a constant friend. Is he not the one mortal with whom he can ever speak of Tessa?—

"Sophy was capable of making any sacrifice; the greatest she has ever made was this repudiation of all the prejudices she had felt—far more bitterly than my father or I—against Rome. I happen to know that Marlesford never used one word of persuasion in the matter. He regarded her as indispensable to his existence; indeed, we may judge of the strength of his attachment when he overcame his own prejudices against Dissenters against singularity in any form, and asked the penniless daughter of a Radical Nonconformist