

the perversity of her sex—"you are mistaken. There is no love so constant, but that in after life some coolness may occur : and what, then, is to bring forgiveness—to recall the word, the look of tenderness? Memory it is that must rebuild the fairy castle, that must breathe upon the spark of love that else would be extinguished. It is by bringing to remembrance the first hours of affection—the stolen bliss—the kind endearments—the agony we suffered to obtain the object—the wild throb of joy when it was ours : these are the recollections which must now re-unite us. Surely, then, that love must be most easily re-kindled that can claim those holy charms, which have thus been justly termed 'the spells which preserve constancy.' "

Lucy rather regretted her enthusiasm, when she had finished. She had entered on the subject in a calm and philosophical mood, but her own feelings had for once unconsciously obtruded. She rose from her seat, and they continued their walk homeward.

"You may be right," said Tracey, "but if so, the love of which you speak may exist in the breast of one who knows not how ardent it really is. We may feel that our love is constant, is undying : but we may not know all the force, the power of its current. Such a love as this may exist, not founded on a fascination caused by personal beauty, but springing from the knowledge and the admiration of noble character. That such a love as this may be, of whose imperishable truth we are conscious, although not always aware of its strength and fervour, I know, because I feel it in my heart."

There was a slight tremor in Tracey's voice, as he said this, which was not undetected by the ear of Lucy. She would fain have changed the subject, when the approach of the carriage at this moment closed the conversation. Both had their eyes fixed on the ground, but as they raised them, discovered it was not the vehicle they expected. It contained a lady and gentleman, both of whom bowed, waved their hands and smiled, and seemed about to stop. Their intention, however, changed, the carriage drove on, and could be again discovered, a short time after, between the trees, as it took the road which led towards the manor house. Its male occupant was the Earl of Erpingham—the female, Lady Florence Elthorpe.

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The illusion was renewed ; the chain was again woven around the victim—woven far more securely than before. His character was now

known : his weak and his strong points, his failings and his virtues had been noted down, and coquetry, wit, beauty, the thousand assistants of female art were brought to bear upon him,—and he fell beneath them. In his calmer moments of reflection, Tracey could not but repent that he had been drawn within the influence of this fascination. He resolved to withdraw himself from it but he could not do so now by mere caprice, and desire. While Lady Florence remained in the house, to be cold to her charms, to remain undazzled by her brilliancy, to fortify, to support his better nature by a stern and unassailable determination, required a moral energy which he did not bring into action. Did not, we say, because the power was still there, but he culpably neglected to awake it. Had anything occurred to have called forth a more noble, a more tender passion, to have excited powerfully his love for Lucy, if that love actually existed, that affection which was unreal would have died quickly away with the false and glittering taste which had called it into being. To have aroused the real, the lofty affection it would once have sufficed to have watched for awhile day by day over the object of it—to have noted the departing roses of her cheek—to have beheld her eye grow more dim—and have heard her voice become more feeble, to have seen her form wasting away as it shrank beneath the hand of disease, but above all, to have seen an exhibition of affection in *her*—to have seen her amid the pain and languor of sickness, when thoughts deep and solemn come crowding on the heart—to have seen her then, looking for him, expecting his voice to soothe her, and his care and tenderness to cheer her—this would once have sufficed—nay, surely *this* would now suffice, to call back to his heart the truant love that had glowed there. How, often, too, in his moments of reflection, did Tracey bitterly reproach himself that he had half expressed a passion for Lucy, while he was now drawn in a contrary direction. As he thought of this, one afternoon, he ordered his horse and rode over to the village. He found Lucy confined to the house by the dullness of December. Her form was more slight, but it had lost nothing of its symmetry, while the beauty of her face was only more touching and more expressive. He spoke to her long and earnestly of the feelings of his heart—he told her of the illusion under which he knew he yet remained—he offered her his hand, and he assured her that when he felt himself bound by a strong and noble tie, the chain which now entralled him would easily be severed. Lucy rejected him, not scornfully,