

present myself in a fair light to the woman upon whose good opinion rests all my future happiness. Constance, I love you——”

But at this word I had hurriedly risen.

“Oh!” I somewhat incoherently exclaimed;
“not here! not under your own roof!”

But at his look I sank back.

“Yes,” he imperatively cried, “here and now. I cannot wait another day, another hour. My love for you is too great, too absorbing, for any paltry considerations to interpose themselves upon my attention now. I must tell you what you are to me, and ask you, as you are a just and honest woman, to listen while I lay bare to you my life—the life I long to consecrate to your happiness, Constance.”

I looked up.

“Thank you,” he murmured; but whether in return for my look or the smile which his look involuntarily called up, I cannot say, for he went on instantly in continuation of his former train of thought, “Constance, you have read this confession from Mr. Barrows which you have just placed in my hands?”

“Yes,” I nodded gravely.

“You can, then, understand what a dilemma