

watch our mother, and stifle any unguarded expressions into which she might be betrayed, to watch you, and when we saw it was too late to prevent your sharing our secret, to make our hold upon you such that you would feel it to your own advantage to keep it with us, was perhaps only pardonable in persons situated as we were. But, Constance, while with Guy the feeling that made this last task easy was one of selfish passion only, mine from the first possessed a depth and fervency which made the very thought of wooing you seem a desecration and a wrong. For already had your fine qualities produced their effect, and in the light of your high and lofty nature, my own past looked deformed and dark. And when the worst came, and Rhoda Colwell's threats put a seemingly immovable barrier between us, this love which had sprung up in a very nightmare of trouble, only seemed to take deeper and more lasting root, and I vowed that whether doomed to lifelong regret or not, I would live worthy of you, and be in misery what I could so easily be in joy, the man you could honor, if not love. That this hour would ever come I dared not dream, but now that it has, can you, will you