

Mrs. T.—Mrs. Silkie, this from you? Oh, the ingratitude of this world! Were you young and inexperienced, as my niece, I should think it advisable to use a little address; but, as it is, I think it my duty to speak out candidly. The idea of rejecting a young gentleman of Mr. Greenish's standing—so amiable—so wealthy—to say nothing of the gross insult to my better judgment. And who is his rival, pray? Speedwell! Why the fellow, for aught I know to the contrary, may be as poor as a church mouse.

Mrs. S.—Pardon my haste, dear Mrs. Topton—do, I beg. I must of course yield to your better judgment; but do you not think, on reviewing the case, that Mr. Speedwell would be a more eligible match? Perhaps he is not so poor as you suppose. But even if he were, I would not make that an objection. I received the addresses of my former husband, on account of his supposed wealth. He married me for mine. We were both deceived, and you know some of the results.

Mrs. T.—Julia, are you seeking occasion to insult me? Have I brought an adder into my house—

Mrs. S.—Again, I beg that you will pardon me. Say not another word. I trust my fate wholly to your hands. I have every confidence in your judgment.

Mrs. T.—I commend your discretion. Yes, you may put every confidence in me. I flatter myself that, with a little clever manœuvring on my part, all may be well yet. If I thought that young man had been led to entertain any hopes, I would certainly forbid him the house immediately.

Mrs. S.—Oh, do not, I beg. The notoriety of such a step. You may be sure I did not give him any reason to hope. He could see my widow's weeds too.

Mrs. T.—Well, I will not do so, trusting to your prudence in future. And now I trust you will exert yourself to erase any false impressions you may have made on Mr. Greenish's mind—dear young man!

Mrs. S.—Oh, I will certainly do so.

Mrs. T.—Very well; you have only to use a little address. And now, my dear, I must bid you good night.

Mrs. S.—Good night. (*Exit Mrs. Topton.*) How very patronising! Ha, ha! use a little address indeed? I certainly shall. What if he is not very wealthy! Faugh! That poor ninny Greenish. Oh, Speedwell! He is mine—there is already a little secret between us. What an enviable faculty it is to be able to shed tears just to suit the occasion. I don't believe that he is poor. What a figure we shall cut in a ball-room! Yes, Mrs. Topton, your dear Julia will save you the trouble of arranging this little affair. (*Exit.*)

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SCENE III.—*Laura's Dressing Room.*

*Laura, Solus.*

LAURA.—Oh, the degradation of living in such a state! To have any human being suppose that I can be moved as a mere automaton!—to have a