

the little budget was always of so mournful a discription, that I could not choose but use my tenderest mode of comforting her. She had, she knew not why, become more serious. She supposed it was because she was growing older, she hoped it was because she was growing better. In fine, she had determined to mend her life, and appointed me master of the ceremonies to her conscience, which, sooth to say, had been in a woful state of anarchy.

I could not, of course, have any doubt that my sweet society had been the cause of this metamorphosis, and I congratulated myself with fervency. She was becoming the very pattern for a wife, and I contemplated in her the partner of my declining years, the soother of my cares, the mother of my children. It wss cruel to postpone my declaration, but though I have no Scotch blood in my veins I was always a little given to caution. Lady Betty had been a sad mad cap, and might not this be a freak of the moment? Besides, there was a charm about the very uncertainty which a declared lover has no idea of; so I determined to observe, and act with deliberation.

Our pastimes continued the same as before, and our interchanges of kindness increased. Amongst other things lady Betty signalized me by a purse and pencil-case and in return was troubled with an extreme longing for a lilac and gold pocket-book, in which I was sometimes rash enough to note down my fugitive thoughts. It had been given me by—no matter whom—there was nothing on earth that I would not have sacrificed to Lady Betty. She received it in both her hands, pressed it to her bosom, and promised faithfully that she would pursue the plan I had adopted in it; casting up her delinquencies at the end of the year to see what might be amended.

Alas! the pinnacle of happiness is but a sorry resting-place, from which the chief occupation of mankind is to push one another head-long! Of my own case I have particular reason to complain, for I was precipitated from the midst of my burning, palpitating existence, by the veriest blockhead in life. He came upon us like the simoom, devastating every green spot in his