

as something more than mortal; this naturally led to a closer intimacy than had formerly existed between them, which the gossips, with their ever busy tongues made the most of, till it became generally whispered, and continued so for years, that they would at last make a match of it; but the courtship continued so long, that the curate's wife, the great match-maker of the parish, had entirely given them up. "I wonder what she'd do if we *were* married, as they say we are to be," John continued to grumble on, as he adjusted his nicely powdered wig, which she had sadly deranged, *hinc illic lachryme*, as, in her hurry and alarm, she brushed past him on the narrow staircase; "I suppose my head will be deranged then."

But if John had been at all aware of Maud's anxiety or of the cause of it, she might with impunity have deranged both his head and his wig, and I know not which was of most importance in his estimation. This, however, he found out afterwards, which, together with other similar manifestations of maternal regard and affection for his master, so wrought upon him as to overcome all his scruples, and induced him (I may as well mention it now) to make certain formal overtures to Mistress Langton, which, after obtaining the master's consent and approbation, were accepted; and a grand wedding was the consequence, to the great joy and satisfaction of the clergyman's lady, as the curate's wife styled herself, who declared she had always said it would come to this at last. But I am grossly anticipating, for other thoughts were pervading the breasts of the faithful domestics of Hell-Beck Hall that mournful morning.

Mistress Maud Langton was a shrewd, clever, sensible woman, and the Rev. James Fallowfield, the worthy and respected curate of the parish, was equally so in his superior station in life—his marrying a very silly wife to the contrary notwithstanding; and this Mr. Fallowfield was master Henry's tutor; and these two clever persons had had the sole management of his education, in every sense of the word; and among other good, useful and virtuous, I had almost said religious, habits, they had accustomed him to that of early rising, with the firm belief in the truth of the old adage, that

"Early to bed, and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

Such were, therefore, master Harry's habits, that his non-appearance in the breakfast room at nine o'clock, was, to say the least of it, a very unwonted circumstance, which created no little surprise; this begat inquiries, to which, as no satisfactory answers could be obtained, his foster-mother, with the anxious affection of a real pa-

rent, became at first rather alarmed, and at length instituted a more minute and searching investigation.

"He had taken a walk in the park, perhaps?"

"No one had seen him."

"He had taken a ride to get an appetite for his breakfast?"

"The horses were all in the stable."

This, however, had been ascertained by the gardener, who knew nothing of his having purchased a new one the day before, and Lanty, the abbreviated soubriquet of the groom, had been absent all the morning, and as Billy Stone had performed his duties for the mester, and would not tell, the doubts darkened into mystery, and mystery is always fearful; and wherever it is found, affection turns and tortures it into something fatal; and if the truth must be told, Magdalen Langton had wrought up her feelings to the thorough conviction, when she went up to his room, that there were only two alternatives left; the one was, that he was sick in bed; the other, that he was a livid and swollen corpse in the deepest tomb in the Eden, and consequently when she found him not, she set up a hue and cry, long before she reached the foot of the winding stair leading down to the eating room, wringing her hands and exclaiming—"What could have become of her poor darling child?" forgetting in her grief and terror, that he was not now the same thoughtless, helpless boy, as when first committed to her charge; with his sainted mother's expiring breath, some eighteen years before, and to this affecting circumstance, in the ebullitions of her grief, she naturally adverted, and in a manner too, that evinced more feeling than a casual observer would ever have supposed, from her fretful and crabbed manner, she could possibly have been possessed of.

"His pair mother!" she went on, "had I but been carried after her to my own rest, under the green sward, or ever I sud hev leaved to see this day! My pair bairn!"—nay, that was't what she said, when I went in to her bedside, to tak her the last drop of any thing that iver wetted her parched and fevered lips, and that was but a spoonful o' cauld water.

"Oh! what a blessin! how precious and refreshin!" she said, when she had tasted it, gasping for breath like, 'tween ivery word, an' it was to be her last; 'and hoo thankful,' she continued, 'an' she'd not said us much for three lang days before; 'and hoo thankful we ought to be for what we see lightly esteem, because it is common,' and she again stopped for want o' breath, for she was terribly wake, when I felt her not to talk sae mickle, as it girly worried her, but the sweet angel meekly replied, I mind her varra words,