

not the less so that Agnes brought with her a good many pounds which she had saved, or which had been given to her by her friends at the manor.

In the course of the following year, Agnes presented her husband with a little boy, and Joseph was so delighted at the sight of his grandson, that he resolved on giving up the mill entirely to Edward, saying, "My old arms have had plenty of hard work in their days, and now they shall have nothing more to do but to handle my grandchildren." He accordingly installed Edward and his young wife in possession of the mill, making a singular bargain with his son at the same time. "You know, Ned," says he, "that this mill is the best for many miles round about; the water never comes in too great quantity, nor does it ever happen that we have none; and I believe the reason is, that in the good old times the spring from which it comes, on the hills yonder, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. But you know, Ned, it behoves us to be grateful, for we cannot expect our good Mother to continue her kindness if we are not at the pains to thank her for it. I, therefore, oblige you, under pain of my displeasure (and it is no light matter to displease a parent, for God takes notice of it); I oblige you to do what I have always done, and my father before me, that is, every night at nine o'clock in summer, and at eight in winter, to go round the mill, saying three Paters and three Aves, and every Sunday you shall go at seven o'clock. Go to your bed as soon as you have finished, and take my word for it the mill will go merrily next day; but if you neglect this, misfortune will follow, and remember your father said it."

There was much wisdom and foresight in the counsel, and Ned, who had a great respect for his father, followed it for many years. Agnes had borne her sixth child, and old Joseph had died a happy death, receiving the last sacraments with great devotion, and blessing his family before he gave up his spirit into the hands of his Creator, when one evening the priest called to inquire if all was going well. "Reverend father," said Ned, "I often think there was great wisdom as well as devotion in the advice I got from father when he made over the mill to me, for ye see it puts one so out of the way of temptation; now since the fine new ale house has been set up in the village, if I go drink with the neighbours, I must neglect the Paters and Aves, and, then, who knows what might happen?"—"There is much truth in your remark," said the priest: "but you will find devotion and wisdom are one and the same thing: 'the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.' But there is another thing that concerns you as a Catholic, and that is, to give example to your Protestant neighbours, who are too apt to

blame the church for the faults of her unworthy members." Ned was sure of himself; had he trusted less in his own strength it would have been better for him.

"What a clever fellow the son of our new neighbour is," said one of his customers to Ned one afternoon, as he was loading his cart with the bags of flour which had been ground at the mill. "Clever," said Ned, "I never see him doing any thing but smoking a pipe all day long at the door." "Ah," said the other, "that is because you are hen-pecked a little, and dare not take a tankard with us after work hours." "Hen-pecked!" said Ned, his face reddening with pride and anger; "I'd like to see the woman that could hen-peck me." The other gave a knowing sarcastic nod, and replied, "Oh, none of us never sees nothing of the kind, it's only our neighbours that sees for us: good evening, friend, for I'll not likely see you at the ale-house to-night, and yet that chap plays the drollest tricks with the cards." So saying he drove away, leaving his unthinking venom rankling in the heart of Ned. To be supposed hen-pecked, what man of spirit could hesitate to do all sorts of foolish things to convince the world of the contrary! Poor Ned, out of humour with Agnes, who could not imagine the cause, flung himself out of the house as soon as he had swallowed his supper, and instead of his saying his Paters and Aves round the mill, walked straight to the ale-house. Here he was greeted by his customer, who tipped a knowing wink to the others, evidently showing he had spoken to them of the hen-pecking; and this being observed by Ned, deprived him of the little self-possession he had retained. He entered into the spirit of the jolly fellows present; the son of the landlord did exhibit extraordinary legerdemain tricks, and at last a game at cards was proposed. Ned was lucky, he returned home a winner of some shillings; but he returned a little tipsy, and too late to say the Paters and Aves. Agnes who had sat up some hours watching anxiously for the sound of her husband's footsteps, was deeply grieved when she saw in what state he returned, but she hid her grief in her own bosom, and as usual received him with a joyful welcome. Conscious of his delinquencies he went hurriedly to bed, and next morning awoke with a racking headache. We know by bitter experience that the paths of sin are all on the decline; every step sinks us deeper and deeper; and as he who has once manfully resisted temptation, finds the second attack much more easy to sustain; so he who has once yielded, finds a tenfold difficulty to resist when the temptation is repeated. The circumstances are unfortunately so common, that we need not retrace the steps by which Edward became a drunkard, a gambler, a