

wonderful than the structure of the Pyramids or the Pantheon. Yet boys and other bipeds, who think they have some claims to respectability are in the habit of murdering woodpeckers without provocation and without remorse!

Mr Cornelius Cowing, of Roxbury, once informed us that he found in the stomach of a woodpecker no less than 23 worms, which had been recently extracted. The tongue of this bird is sharp pointed and bearded, on which he impales the insects which reward his labors. The efforts of the woodpecker, however, are often misunderstood, and they are stoned or shot for their good deeds by the stupid bipeds in whose service they are engaged. The perforations they make to extract insects are, by some thought to injure the tree which they are ridding of the worm in its vitals, and death is the reward which ignorance inflicts on the benefactors.

Mr Nuttall, in his *Ornithology*, in speaking of the habits of this bird, observes that "The ancient live oak, his cradle and residence, is cherished as a domicile; he creeps around its ponderous withered arms, views the passing scene with complacence, turns every insect visit to his advantage, and for hours together, placidly reconnoitres the surrounding fields; at times, he leaves his lofty citadel to examine the rails of the fence, or the boards of the adjoining barn; striking terror into his lurking prey by the stridulous tappings of his bill, he hearkens to their almost inaudible movements, and discovering their retreat, dislodges them from their burrows, by quickly and dexterously chiseling out the decaying wood in which they are hid, and transfixing them with his sharp and barbed tongue. But his favourite and most productive retreat is to the adjoining fields of dead and gnarled trees; amidst whose bleaching trunks and crumbling branches, he long continues to find an ample repast of depredation and boring insects. When the cravings of appetite are satisfied, our busy hunter occasionally gives way to a frolicsome or quarrelsome disposition, and, with shrill and lively vociferations, not unlike those of the neighbouring tree frog he pursues, in a graceful curving flight, his companions or rivals round the bare limbs of some dead tree to which they resort for combat or frolic."

N. E. Farmer.

#### NARRATIVE.

##### WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

We have all heard of read of a poor ass, which pined away in melancholy mood between two hay-ricks, because he found it impossible to decide whether the dexter or sinister mound was most worthy to be saluted by the first bite. They both shed their balmy fragrance upon the air, and each pouted out its tempting sides with an equality of beauty and curve marvellously perplexing. Poor fellow; there he stood ruminating upon the point of etiquette, a subject upon which your genuine donkey studieth much, and acquirith strange and intricate notions. The sight must have been most moving and most melancholy to any of our species who might have beheld him in his embarrassment.

We have, however, great doubts whether there ever existed so stupid a four-legged ass upon the face of the earth. But, supposing the tale to be really true, we could find it in our heart much more easy to commiserate with such

an ass as this, than with those of our own species, who, surrounded by a thousand sources of joy and comfort, and having well-known and unperformed duties, are ever exclaiming, "What's to be done?" The most delicious clover that ever was raked together by the blooming nymphs of the valley, never afforded so exquisite a treat to long-eared quadruped, as man experiences when conscious that he hath not left undone those things which he knows he is bound to perform. His mind is then filled with joy, and gladness, and gratitude, and praise. Light are his slumbers; and his dreams are soothing and airy as the flutterings and warblings of the feathered songsters of the woods. The whole creation hath then for him a new, and pure, and glorious charm; and he seemeth to have a feeling, as far as in this frail and ephemeral state he may be able, of "Good-will on earth and peace toward man." There is not one among the innumerable comforts which man enjoys, that doth not acquire a double zest from such reflections.

But no—he gazeth listlessly upon his duties, and neglecteth them till they either accumulate, or, by perpetually recurring to his mind, they seem to address him in the language of reproach, and then he endeavours to avoid or forget them, for the present, by engaging, with feigned avidity, in schemes of idle folly or mis-called pleasure, or saunters, grovelling on, with his feelings benumbed, into the paths of apathy and dreaming procrastination! Alas! this is no imaginary picture. Well do we remember the worthy Dr. Smithers, who was the rector of a village scarcely a mile from the small town whereat we were first bewildered in the mazes of Greek verbs. He was a good man withal, and truly he might well be called a gentle man, for "he bore his faculties so meekly," that he would not, by any act of his, have given pain to a worm; but he seemed ever to be in perplexity, and inquiring "What was to be done?"

"November skies were chill and drear," when the weak, though really worthy couple, were sitting by their fireside, and Mrs. Smithers addressed her spouse, "Really, my dear Charles, it's high time that we settled what's to be done with the boy. He's now near sixteen, and yet!"

"Ah! I know what you would say," yawned the prebendary, for so high up what he sometimes hoped should be the episcopal ladder had the good man climbed, "I have often thought of it. Charles, you know, my dear, is no common youth, or it would be easy to dispose of him. But, I have several plans in my head—yes—let me see—Well, just at present—I hardly know what's to be done—however"—and thus he would go on prising for some half hour or so, with the kind intention of satisfying his wife's mind by what he said: yet more especially bewildered within himself, and continually thinking, "What's to be done?"

He had thought proper, on taking possession of his prebend, which was in fact little better than a nominal honor, to take his doctor's degree, and consequently became a marked character in our thinly-populated neighborhood. The advancement of one grade in society was gratifying to him, and as much perhaps on his own account as on that of his daughter and his son Charles; and, though last not least, because his dear Emilia looked with most benign complacency upon his well-powdered wig. Well do

we remember it, and the awe with which it inspired us in our boyish days. It was a full-blown caxon, one of the last of the cauliflowers; and might be seen, surmounted by a most orthodox "fire-shovel" hat, moving to and fro about the little market-town above the doctor's slender figure, which, supposing the wig to have been really one of Flora's sportive productions, might well have represented the stalk thereof.

The whole neighborhood was delighted when the Doctor's promotion was made known; for he was a general favorite, and never suspected to have been unduly puffed up by his new dignity save once, and that was upon the occasion of his walking into the "County Bull" room with his wife hanging upon his arm, followed by his daughter Emilia and the aforesaid Charles. It was a proud day for the good man, for the great ones of the land thronged around him, and offered their congratulations; and the son of the Lord Lieutenant danced with Emilia; and upon there came about him, and were introduced unto him, some odd dozen of people, who either remembered him at Oxford, or had met him at Squire Smith's, Brown's, Jones's, or Robinson's. Then was the Doctor sensible that he had become a "lion," and he felt that there was an opening made for the way of his children in the world, and his fond paternal heart leaped within him for joy, and he resolved, in every possible way, to avail himself of every advantage in his power for the welfare of those so dear to him. So, when he got home, he sat himself down seriously to consider "What was to be done?"

Weeks and months rolled on, but he had come to no decision. Indeed, it was unlikely that he should, seeing that dreams and visionary hopes and wishes were all that occupied his fancy, and could form no solid basis whereon to commence his plans. In this dilemma he consulted our uncle, a military man, who retained to the last that decision and energy of character so essential in his profession, and of which the Doctor stood so woefully in need.

"What's to be done?" exclaimed the veteran, repeating the words with which his revered friend concluded what he meant to be a distinct explanation of his hopes, expectations, resources, &c. "What's to be done! I'll tell you what's to be done. Send your boy to college as soon as he can be admitted. Neither you nor I are young. Don't talk about your family, but act—act—act. A pretty tale should I have had to tell in America, when the French sloop was rounding a point in the Penobscot river, to take a position which must have given her the command of our station, if I had begun to snivel! What's to be done?" There she came with the tide, and we had just as much chance of stopping her, as you and I have of being obeyed if we were to cry, Halt! to the quick march of old Time.—So, keeping a wood between her and our line of march, we took a fresh position, leaving her to amuse herself with the empty stockade; and—well—well—you know the end—I won't bore you with an old story—we took her—changed the tables. It was a monstrous good joke, to see the fellows whom we spared our fire upon them. Well—well—the affair stands thus. Time is either your friend or your enemy. The fellow's never neutral, Doctor—make him your friend, say I, and lose not a moment."

Some other advice our uncle gave concerning