

of amendment, for his daughter Emma, with whom he consulted on the subject, was utterly ignorant of all household concerns, and candidly confessed she did not know "What was to be done?" So the decision rested with himself; and he gloomily poroed over his Christmas bills, wondering how it was that they could amount to so much and resolving to reduce his expenses, if not his establishment, but could not decide on the precise step most proper to be taken for the effecting of so desirable a purpose and was consequently content, *for the present*, to dwell over the old mental inquiry.

Thus much it was necessary to say, in order to account for his not having adopted the plain straightforward course of sending Charles to some one of the numerous respectable young clergymen, fresh from their reading, who would have been happy to receive him as a companion to cheer and employ their time in the retirement of a country village. There was, however, another plan which appeared likely to answer the purpose quite as well, and would not interfere with his domestic arrangements; and that was, to engage the son of an old friend, whose widowed mother had contrived to economize so well for many years, as to be enabled to send him to Oxford, where he was at this period "reading for his degree." Therefore young Blackwell came to the Rectory; and, after a visit of some few weeks during the vacation, it was settled that he should consider himself as one of the family and return and take up his abode with them immediately after his "great go." As the young man was thus secure of a title for orders from the Doctor when he should attain the age of three-and-twenty, besides other "considerations," the arrangement seemed perfectly to the taste of all parties. The good Rector was particularly delighted: for, during his late inquiries about "What was to be done?" he had been harassed with a sad conviction that it was absolutely necessary to do something in order to reduce his expenditure. Yet he could not part with his old servant Peter, because Thomas, they boy, was fit only to wait at table and do indoor work, and knew nothing about the garden; and there was not a better manager in the county than his cook; and as for parting with Martha, who had been his dear wife's own maid, and who was now transferred to Emma, —that was quite out of the question; and the services of the kitchen girl were absolutely necessary, —besides, her wages were so very trifling. For these reasons, therefore, was the Doctor, as usual, utterly at a loss. But now, as there would be an addition to the family, he resolved to make himself perfectly easy, and to feel convinced, magre some certain misgivings, that it was right and proper to let matters go on as usual until the time should arrive for Charles's departure for Oxford. And then, when his family would be reduced to only two persons, he might easily curtail his expenditure.

It was some months before our return that young Blackwell became an inmate of the Rectory. He was a strange fellow; alternately bashful and presuming; awkward and uncouth in his manners, yet sping every mincing dandy. As a certain grade, that fell in his way, and over talking of this, that, and the other thing, custom, and mode, being "gentlemanly." He had withal an exceeding good opinion of himself, and seemed to consider the situation in

which he stood as a tacit acknowledgment of his superior abilities, though it afterwards appeared that he had barely passed his examination.

During the progress of these events, poor Emma had been suffering from the effects of her parent's "What's to be done?" system. Left entirely to herself, her time was divided between the contents of the circulating library (then much more "trashy" than at present) and hearing and telling town "news;" and the latter occupation being more amusing, and perhaps rendering her more acceptable in society, soon engaged almost the whole of her time. The worthy Rector too, at first, listened with interest to her town and village gossip, inasmuch as it served to beguile the tedious progress of time, which ever marches heavily along with the man who has no pursuit or settled plan of action. But, it is due to the character of the Rector to add, that, when his daughter's news assumed the character of scandal, as, in due course, it inevitably did, he was exceedingly alarmed, and began to think seriously upon the manner in which the dear girl was spending her time. The result was, as usual, "What's to be done?" Divers plans, ay, and excellent plans too, flitted before him as he lay cogitating on his pillow, or "daundering" in his garden with his hands in his pockets. He would write to an accomplished lady whom he had formerly known, who resided at Bath, and received into her establishment a limited number of young ladies, who had the advantage of the best masters, and were introduced into the best society under her own eye. But then the state of his finances, considering that Charles must go to Oxford, compelled him to relinquish that idea for the present; and other schemes were abandoned for similar reasons.

It may perhaps appear that we are unworthily reflecting upon the Doctor for an indecision for which poverty were a sufficient excuse. But the fact is, that the state of his finances was the consequence of his want of decision. He knew that if his children lived, they must arrive at years of maturity, and he knew that unto him only could they look for support; and when he dared to think, he felt that he was not treading in a path that was likely to terminate in their happiness.

"At thirty men suspects himself a fool;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;
At fifty blames his infamous delay;
Yet lingers on till sixty—and again,
In all the magnanimity of thought,
Resolves and re-resolves. Then dies the same."

This was the state of the Doctor's mind. He spent his days in fruitless conviction of error, ever inquiring "What's to be done?"

The reason why we have chosen to speak of the worthy Doctor, rather than of some others of the class of "What's to be done," people who have come under our cognizances, is, that from the certainty of his resources he seemed to be in less danger of suffering from giving way to habitual procrastination. His duties were simple and specific: well understood and admitted even in the midst of neglect. When these are numerous and complicated, the abandonment of mind to that miserable state of weakness which we have endeavoured to describe, must be more speedily fatal to happiness. Besides, this one if such a mode of speaking of any mortal being

may be allowed, was the Doctor's *only* failing. All his other duties, wherein his master-vice did not interfere, were performed with the strictest and most conscientious exactness; and his name will not cease to be spoken of with respect, till the present generation shall be gathered to their fathers.

Never was the assertion, that "as the twig is bent the tree's inclined," more fully proved than in the case of Emma and Charles Smithers. The latter felt that he had lost much time, but, notwithstanding, lost much more time before he went to Oxford, and, when there, exhibited a complete counterpart of his father's conduct, neglecting, and ever bewailing the neglect of his duties. The extent was as might be expected. After putting off the evil day from time to time he went up for his examination, and was "plucked." He was then transferred to Cambridge, where, it was hoped, his classics might pass, but there, the mathematics started up as a bar in his way, and truly it might be said, that when poring, or rather dreaming, over what appeared a chaos of figures and problems, he knew not "What was to be done?"

From amid these difficulties, the poor fellow was summoned home to a scene of deep distress. His father was on his deathbed on his arrival, and a few weeks terminated his mortal career. Then was poor Charles left in the world, in his twenty-fourth year, without profession or property; for it appeared that the Doctor's estate was not even adequate to defray the expenses and disbursements which had been for years in progress at the Rectory, unheeded or neglected.

The Colonel, with his usual goodness of heart, resolved to uphold him at college, provided his pecuniary assistance was likely to be serviceable; but he never took a step without previously reconnoitering; and after exchanging some letters with Cambridge friends, was compelled to abandon the idea, as being little better than sending the poor youth on a "forlorn hope," in which his character afforded small chance of success; and where defeat, after past occurrences, would stamp him with irredeemable disgrace.

From that period, Charles Smithers's life has been of a very different nature from that which he might in his youth have fairly anticipated would have been his lot. His first useful occupation was that of an assistant at the grammar-school where we were both educated; but his worthy clergyman at its head was compelled to tell our uncle, that he could not retain him in that situation, consistently with the duty he owed to his pupils. Perhaps the painful feelings which must have been his lot, in the midst of those whom he had known and felt upon an equality with in happier days, might have rendered him unfit for his office. They must have been acute; for, till his parent's death, he had no idea of his circumstances, or perhaps he might, ere habit had grown to strong, have shaken off his hereditary apathy.

The next effort made by our uncle was, perhaps, injudicious, for he never reflected thereon with pleasure, and we have often thought was persuaded from it contrary to his better judgment; but he was not one of those who, when they have taken an active part in anything, that is unsuccessful, endeavour to throw the odium of defeat upon their colleagues. Among the intimate friends of the late Doctor, a