

there are 400 authors. We wonder how many there must be in the whole United States? And yet after we have counted some five or six American celebrities on our fingers, we are at the end of our tether. Good, really good books, are scarcely more numerous than they used to be.

In Great Britain, there may, perhaps, be 30,000 sermons preached every Sunday, which would make a couple of thousands of substantial volumes of professedly original matter. Perhaps 30 of these—perhaps not so many—in a literary point of view, would bear publication. Intellect walks the earth alone, and its grand proportions used to be easily recognised. In the long run it is so still, but is often jostled, and sometimes literally buried amidst literary rubbish. Nova Scotia, British America, has few authors of any mark or likelihood, and the fault lies with the prevailing rage for the trash with which the market is inundated from the States. Tennyson would be sure to starve in our midst, and we question whether Dr. Whewell could make enough by his books to buy himself a new coat once in a twelvemonth. And yet we are a reading people—an intelligent people, and so on; but we are rapidly becoming a superficial people. The 400 Boston authors are rapidly making us so, between whom and the six select there is as much difference as there is between the real diamond and the imitation of paste.

Life Jottings.

THE VILLAGE DOCTOR.

WE never knew an instance in which the outer afforded so slight a key to the character of the inner man as that of Dr. McKinlay. Rude and abrupt in manner, scornful and profane in speech, a professed hater and despiser of all mankind, especially bitter and abusive whenever the subject of religion happened to be introduced, he lived almost alone, keeping the world at arms length, swearing at it with appalling emphasis. The Church he avoided much more carefully than he would a pest house, for in such a place he would have felt himself engaged only in an ordinary professional duty. Nevertheless, he was never heard to declare himself an actual unbeliever! He was never known, like the common class of small infidels to make the Bible the subject of criticism. Indeed, we rather think he avoided that sort of subject altogether. He was a misanthrope rather in expression than in feeling, for in reality he possessed a large amount of reverence for goodness, though slow to own it. The rich man who had nothing to boast of but his riches, he would delight to find an opportunity of insulting, but he would travel a dozen miles on a stormy night, and at the end of his journey

give the coat off his back to relieve even a beggar. Regard for the privations and sufferings of the poor man was with him not so much a hobby, as a consuming passion. By the sick bed of suffering humanity, especially in its humblest phase, his sympathies were ever ardent, his voice ever low and tender. It was indeed a strange and touching sight, to see this man with so rude an exterior in the sick chamber. Every moan extorted by pain seemed to be tearing his own heart, and sometimes, especially, in the case of the very young, when it burst out into unrelievable agony, we have seen the tears coursing down his cheeks like a child. Yet there was no shadow of sentimental weakness about him, quite the reverse. No man ever held an instrument with a firmer hand, or used it with a cooler eye or a wiser judgment, when an operation had to be performed. For the pain caused in this way he cared but little and did not hesitate to express his contempt if he thought it unnecessarily manifested. But to that suffering for which the medical man can at best do little, he was indulgent, tender and soothing as a mother.

It might be supposed from what has been said, that Dr. McKinlay was in practice a sensualist. Nothing could be further from the truth. In his eating he was almost a Pythagorean, in drinking nearly a practical teetotaler, and though adopting the cause of the poor man with the enthusiasm of passion he was no politician, and no sight was more apt to drive him to the verge of madness—than that of the mountebank, preaching up extreme political nostrums. For such a man to have come into close contact with him would have been most dangerous. Imposture, falsehood, meanness or deception in any shape were to him the most hateful and abominable of all things.

Dr. McKinlay had few associates—almost none—and yet a better read, or in the general sense of the term, a more accomplished man, one would not meet with in a summer day. His information on nearly every subject, was full, flowing and exact, and there was not a better assorted or more valuable private library than his, within a radius of twenty miles. At the time of which we write, the down was beginning to appear on our lip. We had somehow managed to gain access to the doctor's books, and did our best to keep on the sunny side of our gruff friend for their sake. He, no doubt, saw our motive, and was good enough to humour it, by permitting a free range over his shelves. One evening while he was reading a favourite passage, from his favourite author, Pope, to me, a knock came to the door, and a small, barefooted, ragged, bleared and begrimed urchin was ushered in, who, without waiting to recover breath, proceeded to deliver his message. "Oh, doctor, come awa' fast, my mither's hurt awfu' and she's lyin' in bed, and a' the neighbours are about her, and my faither's bad tae, come fast."