

so thorough, that every power of the mind appears to have been cultivated with equal care and success. This uniform culture of all the powers, gives to the mind the fullest advantage for producing fruit. When she began to read and think for herself,—and this was at a very early period,—her active mind took in a wide range, and gathered information with wonderful avidity from almost every source.—Such a mind soon collects materials out of which the wealth of wisdom is extracted. But not satisfied with an intimate acquaintance with the common and popular branches of knowledge, and that sort of information which ordinary minds may by diligence acquire, she turned her attention to these severer kinds of learning, which are supposed, in their higher departments at least, to belong exclusively to a select circle of literary men. To the higher metaphysics, mathematics, astronomy, and other kindred subjects, did she devote herself with such ardour and ability, as to have made very high attainments at a comparatively early period of life. This keen attention to science was afterwards regretted by her, as she thought it interfered with her spiritual duties, and the exercise of her christian affections. The balance, when disturbed in such a mind, is soon righted. It was righted in her mind, as we think, not by loving science less, but by loving the Saviour more. The throne of her affections she gave to her Redeemer,—the fruits of her genius and labours she laid at his feet. Yet doubtless her intimate acquaintance with the abstract sciences invigorated her mind, and enabled her to think and write with a degree of perspicuity to which she otherwise might never have attained. Intimately acquainted with English literature, in the legitimate sense of that pregnant phrase, and having mastered several ancient and modern languages, she was enabled to draw with facility on all the grand sources of wisdom. And possessing the most ardent thirst for all sorts of information, it is not wonderful that she should have acquired a great mass of varied and useful knowledge.—Her knowledge was so completely digested, that every part of it had become truly her own, while the whole was so thoroughly systematized that it seemed to lie all at once under the eye of her intellect, so that she could at any moment command whatever was required for argument or illustration. Yet she was far too humble, and may we not add, too learned, ever to make any formal display of her acquirements. Hence her learning is never obtruded on the

reader's notice, yet it is ever visible; he meets with it in every paragraph, and finds it often in the most incidental allusions. Certain proof this, in either speaker or writer, of an active and well furnished mind. It is not the exaggeration of praise to affirm, that few women have ever possessed a richer stock of knowledge, nor do we know any female author that has thought more profoundly, or has written with greater force and beauty. One is at no loss to perceive, that this accomplished female was not only indebted to the sacred volume for the peculiar grandeur of her sentiments, but also in a great degree for the singular elegance of her style.

Her letters,—and the greater part of the memoir is made up of these,—are the most interesting productions of the kind with which we are acquainted. They possess all the ease and simplicity of epistolary composition, with all the precision and strength essential to the elaborate treatise. Indeed many of her letters are finished treatises, in which some interesting topic is taken up, and very fully discussed; yet while the reasoning is close, and the conclusion irresistible, there is nothing of technicality, and extremely little didactic stiffness. Let those who regard with contempt,—the contempt can hardly be too strong,—that mass of inanity by which our literature is disgraced, under the title of epistolary correspondence, read with candour the letters in this work, and they will hardly fail to come to the conclusion, that in what form soever persons of piety and genius choose to express their sentiments, they are always instructive and entertaining.

It is genius that can alone give to any work a high and durable interest. But as mere learning is not intellect, so learning and intellect together will not constitute genius. The capacity to produce great and original sentiments, to place these in a new and striking light,—or to form vast and beneficial undertakings,—to point out the way by which these may be accomplished, demands indeed a rare combination of mental elements. This combination is genius. Learning may help to bring the fruit to maturity, but the seeds of genius must be implanted in the mind by the Creator. Mrs. Wilson possessed all the elements essential to genius. Her understanding was active and powerful, her memory retentive, her fancy creative, and her affections pure and ardent. The few specimens of her poetry which have been given to the world, possess the various attributes which are considered peculiar to the lofty