

has a tendency, as every one knows, to give to the original powers of mind, a degree of strength and grace, which they otherwise never could possess. Mrs. Wilson's education appears to have accomplished all this in a high degree. She was indeed, in the fullest sense, an educated woman. Her learning was extensive, solid and useful. Such an education as this is by no means commonly furnished in our fashionable seminaries. It is true, female education has for some time past been undergoing a very salutary change. There is still, however, abundant room for improvement.—The great object hitherto, both with parents and teachers, has been, to quicken the secondary powers of mind, and give a high polish to the surface of character. It is sufficient to say, of such a plan of education, that it is both metaphysically and morally wrong. It is neither fitted to call into action the native elements of the mind, nor does it furnish motives of sufficient strength either for bearing the trials, or for performing the duties to which women are especially called, in the various relations of life. The resources of the human mind can be developed only by a thoroughly intellectual training. Solid information, and christian principles can alone invigorate and properly direct these powers when called into action. Not that cultivation of fancy,—for it is rather this than taste,—and the acquisition of the lighter graces are entirely useless. Much of the happiness of social life depends upon things abstractedly of little value. Minds of refinement feel sensibly the want of ornament; yet mere ornament cannot satisfy persons of sound judgments and just moral perceptions. What is real and solid, and in the proper sense, useful, must form the basis of character; and just for this plain reason, that qualities of this sort can only be of essential service in life. And surely it cannot be affirmed, that those who are destitute of substantial excellence, can be in a rational sense, objects of interest, love or esteem.

Nor should it be overlooked that the educating of the *secondary powers* does but imperfectly cultivate what is properly called taste. On this matter a great deal of error and misconception prevail in society. With many, refinement of taste will, in truth, be found to be but sickness of imagination. Weakness is mistaken for refinement, and a morbid sensitiveness for delicacy of feeling. While it not unfrequently happens, that the cultivation of the *secondary powers* produces an affectation of

character which, as it but poorly hides, so it never fails to increase the depravity of the heart. Persons distinguished for this sensitiveness or affectation, have often as little claim to genuine taste as they have to good sense and sincere piety; and are indeed as incapable of relishing the higher productions of mind, or admiring *honestly* what is beautiful or grand in nature, as they are of ministering comfort in the hovel, in which sickness and poverty languish. In fact, education must reach the understanding and conscience, before the heart can be improved. What we desiderate then, in female education, is the substantial, as well as the ornamental,—a thorough training of the thinking powers; so that young minds shall see things as they really are, and shall realize vividly at every point, their obligation to the various duties which they owe to God and their fellow-creatures.

If we are to judge by the fruits of her mind, as well as from what is stated in the memoir, Mrs. Wilson's education must have embraced all that is needful, to give to the female character vigour, purity and embellishment. Although she enjoyed all the advantages of the best public seminaries, yet there is abundant reason for concluding, that her domestic advantages were those to which she was mainly indebted for the development of her peculiar excellencies. She was blessed in parents remarkable for their piety, social worth, good sense and intellectual endowments. It was unquestionably under the parental roof, that this excellent woman, as well as other members of the family, acquired those lofty sentiments, that sincere love of truth and ardour of feeling, which through the divine blessing have been of so much service in the Church of Christ. Her father was a man of genuine piety and of great vigour of mind; and as he was peculiarly careful in educating his daughter, there can be no doubt, that under God, to him she was chiefly indebted for those acquirements which made her the most accomplished female missionary of modern times. Little do parents know to what extent their good instructions may reach. Millions may have been directly benefitted by the precious lessons which have been taught around the hearth of *one godly family*. It were well if all parents would deeply ponder how much Providence in giving them children, has committed to their care; and how little indeed can be done for the young, by out-door appliances, if domestic education be neglected.

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