

her learning. Humboldt read it twice with delight. "It has charmed and instructed me," he wrote. "It showed that, to the great superiority of its author in the high region of mathematical analysis, she joined variety of knowledge in all departments of physics and natural history." Her "Mechanism of the Heavens," and her "Connection of the Physical Sciences," were objects of Humboldt's "constant admiration." "I know," he said, "in no language a work on Physical Geography that can be compared with hers. She dominates in these regions, as in astronomy, meteorology, and magnetism."

This versatility of her knowledge, combined as it was with depth and accuracy, is among the wonders of her intellectual character. Her daughter writes thus :

Although her favourite pursuit, and the one for which she had decidedly most aptitude, was mathematics, yet she was passionately fond of poetry, her especial favourites being Shakespeare and Dante ; and also the great Greek dramatists, whose tragedies she read fluently in the original, being a good classical scholar. She was very fond of music, and devoted much time to it in her youth ; and she painted from nature with considerable taste. Everything spoke to her of that great God who created all things, the grand and sublimely beautiful, as well as the exquisite loveliness of minute objects. Above all, in the laws which science unveils step by step, she found ever renewed motives for the love and adoration of their Author and sustainer. This fervour of religious feeling accompanied her through life, and very early she shook off all that was dark and narrow in the creed of her first instructors for a purer and a happier faith.

This high intellectual culture and labour (never, perhaps, equalled among women) in no wise interfered with her domestic life, or her duties as woman, wife, and mother. She brought up a considerable family, and her children

blessed her memory. Says one of them :

It would be almost incredible how much my mother contrived to do in the course of the day. When my sister and I were small children, although busily engaged in writing for the press, she used to teach us for three hours every morning, besides managing her house carefully, reading the newspapers (for she always was a keen and, I must add, a liberal politician), and the most important new books on all subjects, grave and gay. In addition to all this, she freely visited and received her friends. I must add that she was a remarkably neat and skilful needlewoman. We still possess some elaborate specimens of her embroidery and lace work.

This symmetrical and truly beautiful life was not without the usual tests of suffering. She buried children and her two husbands, and at last survived nearly all her early friends. After losing her fortune she was dependent upon a Government pension, first of one thousand, later of fifteen hundred dollars a year, and, for economy, lived many years in Italy. But her intellectual and moral life held on, self-sustained, serene, even felicitous. She unconsciously expressed the secret of her whole intellectual history when she said, "I wrote because it was impossible for me to be idle." Work is a condition of happiness, and, to a great extent, of health. A good medical authority (Dr. Wilks, of Guy's Hospital) has said: "I see more ailments arise from want of occupation than from overwork; and, taking the various kinds of nervous and dyspeptic ailments which we are constantly treating, I find at least six due to idleness to one from overwork."

To the thorough worker the so-called "mystery" of life is "an open secret." To him life is probation, and the most obvious condition of that probation is productive, beneficent labour. Most of the wretchedness of human life, at