

COME SOON, DEAR HEART!

BY EDWARD OXFORD.

COME soon, dear heart! The days are lone and long,
 And each new dawning wakes my sleeping tears,
 For in my breast the old sweet memories throng,
 And hopes arise that soon are felled by fears!
 With thee afar the world all desert seems,
 For thou to me its one oasis art,
 The one sole star that o'er my being gleams,
 And now its light is lost! Come soon, dear heart!

Come soon, dear heart! I count the hours that move
 In tardy sequence, and for one I pray
 Wherein thou wilt return to me, and prove
 That love is sweeter still through love's delay!
 Didst thou but know that, as the moments pass,
 I of the earth still less and less grow part,
 That life may fail with thee still far, alas!
 Thou wouldst not leave me thus! Come soon, dear heart!



CONCENTRATION OF THOUGHT.

BY THE HON. MRS. ROBERT BUTLER.

THE great secret of mental success is concentration of thought. Talent and genius, industry and perseverance are all helpful agents in the attainment of knowledge, but they are helpful only so far as concentration of thought is brought to bear upon them. The moment the mind becomes the depository of irrelevant ideas and reflections to the study upon which it is engaged, the study comes to a standstill, for the mind cannot contain more than one thought at a time. Thoughts may follow each other so quickly that they may seem simultaneous, they may blend into each other so gradually that they may seem identical, but they are no more simultaneous or identical than the separate forms in a zootrope complete one picture, or than the different illustrations in dissolving views represent one scene. The mental vision like the bodily vision is incapable of being fixed on more than one object at once. So wandering thoughts insinuate themselves not only to the exclusion of thoughts which are relevant to the work of the moment, but also to the intrusion of thoughts which are irrelevant to it. And their harmful influence affects the student as well as the study, for they enervate the heart and the brain and render the mind less disposed to future study. Union is strength. Disunion is weakness, and disorderly thoughts are as dangerous to a mind as civil war is to a nation. We may be quite sure that no undertaking will be successful where they are

tolerated, and that few will be unsuccessful where they are excluded, and those few though apparently unsuccessful will have wrought a good work, for where concentration of thought has been applied to a purpose, a real though it may be unseen benefit must follow as surely as day follows night:

"No endeavour is in vain,
 Its reward is in the doing,
 And the rapture of pursuing
 Is the prize the vanquished gain."

Now this mighty power of success, like all the best blessings of life, is a full and free gift to man and lies within reach of us all; for it depends upon strength of will, and we are each endowed with a will, the development of which rests with ourselves. But the control of the will over the thoughts must be exercised in youth, or in mature years it will be found wanting. And we must exercise it alone, unperceived by our nearest and dearest, in the secret recesses of our own hearts. Your friends and teachers, my young readers, cannot help you in its actual application. They may tell you of its utility and expediency as I am doing now, but if you yourselves do not choose to apply it, their words will be in vain. No one but yourselves can fix your own mental energies on the occupation of the moment, no one but yourselves can chase away those intrusive little creatures of the imagination which pop up

unbidden and unwelcome in the mind, like soldiers shooting at an enemy from behind an ambuscade. Wrestle with them and you will suppress them, suffer them and they will triumph over you.

Concentration of thought, like everything else worth having, requires an effort. We are all more or less slothful by nature. Difficulties dismay us, doubts discourage us, and we need a vigilant watch over ourselves to persevere in the simplest undertaking. We embark upon a new study with the eagerness we are apt to bestow upon any new thing, and when the novelty has worn off, we listen to the whisperings of slothfulness and laziness which tell us that our study is beyond our capacity, that we are wasting our time and energies over it, and that for our profit as well as for our pleasure its abandonment is a commendation devoutly to be wished. Now these whisperings are generated by wandering thoughts, and cannot be suppressed without a strong effort of will. At the first sign of their approach, we should do battle against them. We should chase them away, and in quiet resolute patience think only of our work, and gradually our doubts and difficulties will vanish, and we shall find that our mental capacities are far greater than we imagined them to be, for the thoughts are the great centre from which the mental faculties proceed. They shed light or darkness, strength or weakness, ignorance or wisdom on the mind according to the rule brought to bear