

But there is a small difficulty to overcome; a thing of this kind does not depend upon our own will. One can sit down at any time and read, but not--think. It is with thoughts as with men: we cannot always summon them at pleasure, but must wait until they come. Thought about a subject must come of its own accord by a happy and harmonious union of external motive with mental temper and application; and it is precisely that which never seems to come to these people.

One has an illustration of this in matters that concern our personal interest. If we have to come to a decision on a thing of this kind we cannot sit down at any particular moment and thrash out the reasons and arrive at a decision; for often at such a time our thoughts cannot be fixed, but will wander off to other things; a dislike to the subject is sometimes responsible for this. We should not use force, but wait until the mood appears of itself; it frequently comes unexpectedly and even repeats itself; the different moods which possess us at the different times throwing another light on the matter. It is this long process which is understood by _a ripe resolution_. For the task of making up our mind must be distributed; much that has been previously overlooked occurs to us; the aversion also disappears, for, after examining the matter closer, it seems much more tolerable than it was at first sight.