

THE POWER OF IMAGINATION.

THE efficiency of an engine is largely measured by the heat that it utilizes; the success of a military campaign depends upon the constructive ability of its commanding officers; and so, to the power of imagination we may trace one of the chief sources of our development as individuals, and indirectly the degree of civilization we have attained.

In considering the relation that imagination bears to the race we may distinguish two kinds; first, the *passive* which, without any effort of active attention, or exercising of the will, images pass back and forward through the mind, manifesting themselves in dreams or idle fancies; and secondly, the *constructive* imagination in which by an effort of the will we bring up past images, mould them into new forms and create words entirely unknown to our world of sense. It is this latter form that has influenced the character and progress of man so much.

No doubt we have never given thought to what extent, the happiness and wisdom of our lives is due to the mental activity. Conceive for a moment what would remain to us if this psychical process were eliminated from our lives. The world would only reveal itself to us through the senses. We could think of friends, but could not picture their smiling countenances or realize inspiring qualities; we could not reproduce a beautiful landscape or work of art by memory, but would have no content until imagination would come to our rescue and infuse it with the sparkle of life; and we might ponder over the pages of a book for hours and not be able to picture any of the scenes until imagination would breathe the breath of life into them.