

advantages may not be so immediate or apparent as those arising from the gigantic offspring of steam and electricity. I am inclined to view this paper as an ingenious and able treatise on the science of credulity—one in which it is as important as difficult to arrive at results which will afford safe satisfactory practical rules for our guidance. The formation of an opinion on any subject, by any man, is an exercise of credulity—is a judgment of the mind founded on testimony. A hasty opinion is one formed from testimony, not taken from the best sources, not entitled to the highest degree of credit, or not sufficiently examined or weighed as to its natural and probable result. Such an opinion, when put forward to influence the minds of others, should have but little force. But an opinion formed by a man of cool and deliberate judgment, who is known to have had good opportunities of carefully and honestly investigating the facts and premises on which the subject depends—whose character is such that we feel satisfied his object is truth, that he has no motive or wish to mislead, and that the opinion he pronounces is the honest conviction of his own mind—such an opinion would generally be a tolerably safe guide, or at all events, such an opinion so formed would become a material fact in the formation, by others, of an opinion on the same subject. To confide in the opinions of others, if not an instinct in man, is a necessity imposed on him by his imperfection. What single mind can fully grasp the bare results of the labours of many minds, each concentrating its entire vigour on some particular point. How much less can any one mind traverse the long and tedious paths which have led to those results. In a variety of the ordinary affairs of life, we unhesitatingly act on the opinions of others, the only exercise of our own judgment being in the selection of the guide we shall follow. To think for oneself is an undoubted right possessed by us all, and to act on our own honest convictions is a duty no less than a right; but with those who take the trouble so to think, it is, in most cases, nothing but a comparison of the opinions of others, and an adherence to that which, to their own mind, appears supported by the best reasons, and therefore to possess the highest authority. It has often happened, and may often happen again, that some individual may, on some particular subject, form opinions differing from those generally entertained by those most