

as bad—but without candor, fairness, intelligence, his positiveness is nothing but stupidity. It is not with the holding of opinions that we have to do now, but what we contend for is, the honesty that admits facts, even though they may conflict with one's own strongly-held beliefs, and even though they upset one's favorite theories. Public journals hold, to a certain extent, the place of guides of public opinion, they are looked up to with some degree of respect, their position is one of responsibility: it is therefore, above everything to be expected, they should be free from slavish subservience to party demands.

A journal to have any value ought to be fair and unprejudiced—to command respect, there is need of self-respect and honesty. It is well known that the *dicta* of the most learned counsel have no weight when made *ex parte*, or as representing one of the parties, in a case; he is not then speaking as an unprejudiced onlooker, but is making use of every argument for his client.

In like manner we cannot put confidence in a partizan press, that twists everything to suit its own purposes, or rather the purposes of its party: he who supports such a press is one who is determined to vote with his party, quite regardless of whether it is right or wrong, and is thus not open to conviction. What is wanted in the press is truth: honest reports, unbiassed judgments, free discussions—independence. It is almost too much to expect, however that such a consummation will soon be realized; human nature is very frail, it loves to be coaxed and flattered—and deceived. It is indeed a mark of unusual virtue, that a man should change his opinions, when he finds himself, in the wrong, or perhaps that he should admit himself to be in the wrong at all. So we suppose a partizan press will long continue to be popular. But when, in a clearer political atmosphere, and with a more enlightened electorate, men will demand to know the truth, which we hope will be before the Millennium—then will the merely partizan journals take a secondary place, and due pre-eminence be awarded to an independant press.

The task of criticising some one is rarely a pleasant one; the impression that remains is always disagreeable, one is tempted to say nothing about a matter, if not good. And is there no good in a partizan press? Perhaps we will hear the weakness of each side if we read *both* of the partizan organs—but in the great body of the people, do we not find the opinion prevalent that the other party organ is what their own party organ calls it—a worthless sheet, and therefore is not read? But we have reason after all to hope for brighter things, and it is to be allowed that the press of to-day is better, fairer, more candid than ever before: and with a true sense of its tremendous power, its great responsibility, it will rise to its proper position, a position of perfect dignity and truth.

SCIENCE COLUMN.

MODERN DOUBT.

John Stewart Mill uses the expression "plurality of causes,"—a term which is applicable to the complex problem regarding the phenomena of modern scepticism. This "plurality of causes" of Modern Doubt has been classified as literary, scientific, philosophical, and theological. Of these causes which operate to the production of a distrustful spirit, science occupies a prominent place, for which there are obvious reasons:

The accuracy of our knowledge obtained through the medium of scientific investigation makes science the accepted and mutual friend of almost every other avenue of truth.

Science, too, is placed in the foreground partly on account of the facility it offers to test by methods of analogy less modern sciences, including theology. The immense almost bewildering progress of scientific knowledge during the present century has placed it aloft as a beacon light which may enlighten dark and unexplored regions of thought, confirm opinions already entertained and set aside as dubious or false, others which have been the legacy of centuries.

Whilst in many cases this noble function may with justice be granted science, yet it must not be forgotten, that she herself must be, and is being constantly submitted to tests which prove the possibility of error. It is not fair to say that science is untrustworthy as a test because "in innumerable instances the confident belief (?) of one generation has been falsified by the wider observation of a succeeding one." Theories are not always science. Everything is not placed on so certain foundations as the universal law of Gravitation or the mechanical Theory of Heat; and the prudent scientist will only attach the weight to any theory which is consistent with his evidence. Evidence often grows, but slowly—but its attainment proves that more is needed to make known all the phrase of an opinion or theory.

Herein however lies a dangerous element in the moulding of human thought, viz.,—the tendency, such processes for the acquirement of knowledge, engender to bring everything to the touchstone of mathematical logical or scientific demonstration—and there is often a "swift and brief transition to the conclusion that concerning the existence and will of a Divine Being nothing whatever can be known. This is surely a conclusion as undemonstrable as the most complex phenomena of nature. Agnosticism admits nothing because it can prove nothing—a sweeping conclusion incapable of demonstration.

Another dangerous element in the application of science to the moulding of human thoughts is the facility and avidity with which every good and every evil cause adopts its facts to the establishment of some pet theory