

MODERN INCONVENIENCES.

BY A. C. CAMPBELL.

How often do we hear it said in every day conversation that some wonderful, perhaps impossible, invention has been completed, the announcement being followed with sapient remarks about our titanic century and its wonderful progress. Even before a want is felt by the people themselves, we are often told the inventor has prepared to supply it. Every human wish seems to be considered—the wish to travel and the wish to remain at home; the wish for excitement and the wish for rest; the wish to engage in money making and the wish to indulge a laudable talent for spending it. All these and a thousand others are the themes of the inventor, the discoverer and the thinker of new things. Some day, I hope, these gentlemen will turn their attention to a want very clearly defined, long existent and spread over a very large portion of the human family—the desire to be happy.

For my own part I class the desire to be happy as a very important element in human nature, and it grieves me, in a way, to see it lost sight of as often as it is by those who think they are thinking out ideas for the benefit of the people. It is well enough for a people to have a big country dotted over with big cities, producing enormous wealth, having great freedom, an enlightened public opinion and institutions of the very latest progressive brand. I do not deprecate these things, I admire them. Still I would be quite willing to lease or sell my share in them to any person who would give me in return the happiness they bring him.

It is the fashion nowadays to cultivate unlimited credulity as to the

powers of the mechanical inventor. If it were announced that a sanguine visionary was on the trail of an idea which only required to be "developed" to enable him to take a trip to the moon, many people would regard it as something only a little out of the common, and of one who declined to share their trusting faith they would pityingly demand whether every great invention had not had to pass through an era in which stolid unbelief was a greater obstacle than either the ridicule or the organized opposition that appeared later in its conquering career.

These same people, however, will tell you that it is quite impossible for an era of general happiness to come on earth. The great inventions and discoveries in which they place such childlike trust, may wipe out distance, annihilate time, extend knowledge, lengthen life, but to hope for more than just about so much happiness in the world is to be a crank. But it seems to me that when these much extolled inventors and discoverers begin to take human happiness into their calculations at all, the result is bound to be a series of improvements quite as marvellous in their way as any of those whose object was advancement along some other line. To doubt the all-perfection of the present age is to be regarded as a confirmed pessimist, as a tory "hoary white with eld." But, if to be hopeful of the future is to differ from the pessimist, I think the one who looks to a coming reign of happiness, may fairly claim to rank as an optimist. However, the idea that our ancient friend, the comforter of Jobs of all ages, Eliphaz, the Temanite, may