

CONTRIBUTIONS.

THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENCE.

This nineteenth century was called the age of progress before its claims to that appellation had accumulated to their present extent; before our streets were lighted even with gas; before the most expeditious rule of travelling had exceeded a dozen miles an hour; before it was found practicable to cross the Atlantic in six days, and when steam-voyages were deemed chimerical; before the application of the arts in manufactures had set to the power loom its wholesale work; before observation of the heavenly bodies had made us acquainted with several members of our solar system; before geology had unfolded the records of the earth's past ages; before it was found practicable to multiply literary works in such a manner as to bring our great authors within the reach of the mass of the people in the cheapest form; before engraving had multiplied pictorial representations, so that they were sent out by scores of thousands instead of by hundreds, and that at a twentieth part of their former price; before the knowledge of the human mind had been rendered so popular as phrenology—whether it be true or false in all its details—has now rendered metaphysical phenomena; before the art of ratiocination had been rendered so systematic, powerful and lucid, as it has by the work of John Stuart Mill, whose "Logic" has done in the present age what Bacon did in his for the advancement of learning; before all this, the appellation of the age of progress was rightfully applied to the present century; and now, with all these means so accumulated, when we are so much in advance, it cannot but be admitted that it is a description which essentially belongs to our time.

The application of science to the useful arts is that by which the pages of the future historians of these times will be long characterized. This cannot be without its results—upon the great mass of society, although, I grant, not in proportion with the power of such agencies. The light of science by no means finds its way so easily to the cottage as to the palace—the influences of discovery are often long in extending themselves over the broad surface of society—long in penetrating the depths of some of its ravines; the light is often gleaming on the mountain-top, while the vales below are in mists and darkness; still, if we take the broad and striking features now characterizing the great mass of the people, and compare them with what they were a few generations back, we cannot but perceive that there is a difference, and a most important one: a difference which associates itself, not with the exertions of benevolence in high stations, not with the charity put forth by one class for the aid of another, not with the efforts of legislation to raise the condition of those whose well-being should be the object of legislation; but which connects itself distinctly and exclusively with the progress of science, and which should lead us to regard science as one of those great means by which the life of man is rendered more glad,

more productive of benefit to himself and of good to others than it has hitherto been in this world of ours.

Science is the friend of man—raising and dignifying man, and qualifying him more and more for the full possession of his rights, the exercise of his powers, and the accomplishment of whatever is good and great in this world; and of all that its various means and appliances are capable of rendering.

H.M.

THE SLUGGARD AND THE FIG.

AN ALGERINE LEGEND: ALPHONSE DAUDET.

In the indolent and voluptuous little town of Blidali, some years before the French invasion, lived a brave Moor, who, after the name of his father, was called Sidi Lakdar, but to whom the townspeople had given the nickname of the Sluggard.

You must know that the Moors of Algiers are the most indolent men in the world, those of Blidah above all; doubtless on account of the perfume of oranges and sweet lemons in which the town is steeped. But in the matter of idleness and supineness, among all the men of Blidah none could hold a candle to Sidi Lakdar. That worthy gentleman had raised his vice to the dignity of a profession. Others were embroiderers, shop-keepers, spice merchants; as for Sidi Lakdar, he was a Sluggard.

On the death of his father he had inherited a little garden in the outskirts of the town, with low white walls falling into ruin, and a door that wouldn't shut, some fig and banana trees, and two or three living springs sparkling amidst the grass. Here he passed his life, stretched at full length, silent and motionless, his beard full of red ants. When he grew hungry he stretched out his arm and picked up a fig or a banana crushed upon the turf beside him; had he to raise himself and pick the fruit upon the branch he would soon have died of hunger. Moreover, in his garden the figs were rotting as they lay, and every tree was sifted by the little birds.

This unbridled sluggardliness had made Lakdar very popular in his country. He was looked up to like a saint; when passing by his little place the ladies of the town, going out to eat sweetmeats at the churchyard, would rein their mules to a walking pace and speak in low tones behind their white masks. The men bent reverently as they passed, and every day, at close of school, might be seen upon the walls of the garden a whole crowd of gamins in striped silk jackets and red caps, who came to disturb, if possible, that admirable Sluggard, calling Lakdar by name, laughing, jeering, and pelting him with orange peel.

Labor lost! The Sluggard never stirred. From time to time one might hear him shout from amongst the weeds: "Take care! Look out now, if I get up—!" But he never did get up.

Now, it happened that one of these little rogues, from playing tricks in this fashion upon the Sluggard, was in some way touched by grace, and taken with a sudden liking for horizontal life; he declared to his