

WINTER'S LAUGHTER.

The sleighbells are the Winter's laughter
That through the veiling snow comes flowing
When flakes are hither, thither blowing
Like airy sprites in all ways going
Blown on by winds that follow after.

It ripples with a mirth beguiling,
With gladness in its joyous greeting,
Fair, bygone memories repeating,
To hearts grown old in time's swift fleeting,
Till sad, grave lips unbend in smiling,

And with the sound of light hoofs prancing,
The laughter all its joy is flinging
Now here, now there, in strains of singing,
Till quick, young feet are gaily springing
And roguish eyes with glee are dancing.

It ripples with a sweet intoning
Across the snowdrifts' ghostly trailing
And sends its merry challenge hailing
The voices of the Old Year's wailing,
And mocks their soft and plaintive moaning.

The frozen forest waits and listens
To catch the laughter, pealing, shaking
In trills, the sleeping trees awaking,
Till crystals from the branches breaking
Fall ringing where the ice stream glistens.

O sleigh-bells are the joy-bells swelling,
When roadsides are with jewels twinkling,
To rise and fall in chime and tinkling,
Their showered tones of music sprinkling,
With Winter's laughter through them welling!

—MARY FRENCH MORTON.

MINISTER WU TALKS UPON CONFUCIANISM.

Mr. Wu Ting Fang, the Chinese minister to the United States, last Sunday morning addressed the ethical society of Philadelphia at Carnegie Hall upon, "The Teachings of Confucius."

Just now when there is so much talk about expansion and the extension of our religion as well as commerce to the Orientals, it is interesting to note how the intelligent classes, among the objects of our unsought philanthropy, view our benevolence, and how they would compare their philosophy and our religion. THE CONSERVATIVE doubts if the diplomatic representatives at Washington, of the Christian powers could express sentiments more helpful to right living than the following from Mr. Wu, a devotee of heathen philosophy:

"In the strictest sense of the word Confucianism is not a religion. It is not a system of doctrine and worship. It is perhaps easier to say what Confucianism is not than what it is.

"The immortality of the soul is a beautiful doctrine, I admit. I wish it were true, and I hope it is true. But all the reasoning of Plato cannot make it more than a strong probability. And all the light of modern science has not brought us one step further. Now, Confucius would be called an agnostic if he were alive today. There were four things that he would not talk about—extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder and spiritual being.

"How are we to serve spiritual beings?" he asked. "When you do not

know how to serve men, how should you hope to serve spirits?" he replied.

"Horace Greeley said that those who discharge promptly and faithfully their duty to those who linger in the flesh have but little time to peer in the affairs of those who have passed away. Confucius was intensely human and practical. He did not spend time speculating as to what will happen after death."

Love Your Enemies.

The minister then compared the practical teachings of Confucius with those of Christ. He read a passage from the New Testament declaring that evil be not resisted with evil, and that if a man smite you on one cheek you should turn the other cheek. Of this doctrine Mr. Wu said:

"This, it seems to me, is meekness with a vengeance. I am inclined to think that no sensible man has ever followed this injunction faithfully. A man who will smite on the cheek is a dangerous man and needs no second invitation. A man who will take your coat is a thief and would doubtless take your cloak, too, if he could lay his hands on it.

"Love your enemies.' Such a standard of excellence is too high for humanity. There is no likelihood that many people will follow it. At this very moment Christian missionaries are calling for bloodshed and vengeance, and Christian armies are devastating the land, sparing neither age nor sex. There is, indeed, a vast gulf between doctrine and performance. Could you love one who had killed your father or destroyed your home? Confucianism does not require such a thing. It enjoins that kindness be requited with kindness, and an injury with justice. It does not sanction retaliation in a vindictive spirit, such as, I regret to say, is shown by some persons professing to be governed by the tenets of Christianity.

"The most striking instance in which the teachings of Confucius and of Christ meet is the golden rule. Confucius puts it negatively, to be sure. 'Do not do to others what you would not wish them to do to you,' but anyone who will follow that rule either way it is phrased, will be a thoroughly good man.

"A good Christian is a good Confucian and a good Confucian is a good Christian. I do not believe that Heaven is an exclusive place. The advocates of various religions are all trying to make a private park of it for their own adherents. Whatever Heaven may be, I believe it is a place for all good men, irrespective of dogma.

"The Chinese are eminently practical. Confucius did not run away from the world, but did his duty in it. He teaches men to do good for the sake of good and not for any promise of reward or through any threat of punish-

ment. The world is gradually coming to Confucius. One of the signs is the growth of agnosticism. I will not say whether we are growing more callous or more civilized, but they are not terrified when the terrors of the next world are proclaimed from the pulpit."

OLD FRIENDS.

There are other things in the newspapers besides reports of railroad accidents and police court doings. Occasionally one runs upon the continuation of a story begun long before.

In a nice little tale by Mr. Barrie, now nearly ten years old, called "When a Man's Single," dealing largely with literary life in London, one character relates how he is haunted by a particular piece of work of his own. This is a story about a stick that bred a disease in the owner's hand, owing to his pressing so heavily on its handle. He got the story of a friend from the country, touched it up a little, and made half a guinea out of it. Having once put it in circulation, he never could get rid of it, though it was not much of a story and he was soon weary of it. First the London correspondents telegraphed it over the world as an occurrence to a cabinet minister; then the Paris papers told it of Gladstone; then it came back to London with Thiers' name attached. Then an American introduced it in a lecture, and showed the stick; then it came from the Alps as something that had happened to a well-known guide. Since then he had heard from it in Melbourne and Arkansas, seen it in two biographies and noted with regret its growing popularity as a club story. So he wished his rural friend had smothered it before it was born.

Having this grievous complaint in one's mind, it was gratifying to read, in October, 1898, in an article from the Pittsburg Leader, the following: "William Michaels, of Armstrong county, Pa., recently returned from New York, where he has spent several months receiving treatment for a very remarkable disease. Mr. Michaels has for years had a habit of using an umbrella as a walking stick at all times and places. The constant pressure of the handle upon the ball of the thumb finally caused a diseased condition but rarely recognized by the medical profession." In fact there is a half column about it, winding up with the amputation of Mr. Michael's arm. It is to be hoped that some friend brought this too to Mr. Barrie's notice.

Again, an incident reported in the public prints last August brought forcibly to mind Little Billee's ambition for his married life with Trilby, the ever fair. "I must have her back," said Little Billee, among many other things, on page 202; "I can't live without her; we were to have lived together at Barbizon—all our lives—and I was to have painted stunning pictures—like those other fellows there. Who cares for their