

divers came up as to whether the inspector was satisfied with the work done. That it does not stay about the spot except when the divers were there and that it knows the time of their arrival, is shown by the fact that on three different occasions when they had to go back unexpectedly the inspector was not there. He always turned up next morning, however, as usual. For seventeen days now the inspector has been watching this job, and if any future accident should occur, he will, no doubt, apply for work at the company's office. Anyone doubting this statement of fact can have it verified by Mr. Nixon or by the divers, Llewellyn and McHardy. — *Vancouver News-Advertiser*.

PRAYING MACHINES.

The most common prayer used in Tibet is a mere formulary, the constant repetition of which is one of the most amazing instances of the tyranny of superstition to be found in any part of the world, says Sir Monier Williams. It consists of the six-syllabled sentence: "Om mani padme Hum." "Om! the jewel in the lotus! Hum!" This prayer, or mystical sentence, is supposed to have been composed by Padma pani (Avaloktesvara) and to have reference to his own manifestations as the patron saint of Tibet. It is sometimes called the Mani or "jewel" prayer; and, if brevity is a valuable quality, its excellence is undeniable, since it consists of merely two Sanskrit words between two mystical, untranslatable auspicious ejaculations, Om and Hum.

Whatever be its origin and meaning, no other prayers used by human beings in any quarter of the globe is repeated so often. Every Tibetan believes it to be a panacea for all evil, a compendium of all knowledge, a treasury of all wisdom, a summary of all religion. If you ask Northern Buddhists to give you the reason for this belief, very few are able to give an intelligible reply. But the oftener this mystical formula is repeated, the shorter, it is said, will be an individual's course (gati) through some of the six gates or courses of being, every one of which involves misery or evil. Or it may be that by repeating it he will be able to escape some of the six existences altogether.

Strange, indeed, as it may appear to us, it is impossible to shake the faith of a Lamaistic Buddhist in the absolutely infallible efficacy of his six favorite mystic syllables. He repeats them, not at all as if he were praying in a Christian sense, but as if he were a farmer intent on planting the very best seed in the most productive soil and watering it incessantly according to the most scientific principle of irrigation. A bountiful harvest is absolutely certain to reward his efforts.

It need not, therefore, surprise us if these six syllables are murmured morning, noon and night, by every man, woman and child, wherever the Lamaistic hierarchy has extended. And, if not repeated by the

voice, an incessant stream of repetition—an incessant scatterlog of the six mystic seeds—is kept going by the hand.

The words are written or printed on roll within roll of paper and inscribed in cylinders, which, when made to revolve, either by educated monks or illiterate laymen, have the same efficacy as if they were actually said or repeated. The revolutions are credited as so much prayer merit, or, to speak more scientifically, as so much prayer-force, accumulated and stored up for the benefit of the person who survives them.

The cylinder is generally made of metal, the prayer being engraved on the outside, as well as written on paper and inserted inside. It is held in the right hand and whirled round, like a child's toy, by means of a handle in a particular direction (with the sun.) If made to revolve the other way, its rotations will be set down to the debtor rather than to the creditor side of the owner's account.

It sometimes happens that quarrels arise from rival claims in regard to the use of the prayer cylinders. In illustration of this an amusing story is told by the French missionaries:

"One day when they happened to be passing a prayer-machine, set up near a monastery, they saw two Lamas engaged in a violent quarrel; and, as it appeared, all on account of their zeal for their prayers. The fact was that one Lama had come, and, having set the barrel in motion for his own benefit, was retiring modestly and complacently to his own abode, when happening to turn his head to enjoy the spectacles of the wheel's pious revolutions, he saw the other Lama stop it and set it whirling again for himself. Indignant, of course, at this unwarranted interference with his own devotion, he ran back, and in his turn, put a stop to his rival's piety, and both of them continued this kind of demonstration for some time, till at last losing patience they proceeded to menaces, and then to blows, when an old Lama came out of a neighboring cell and brought the difficulty to a peaceful termination by himself twirling the prayer barrel for the benefit of both parties."

PRINCE KRAPOTKIN ON SIBERIA.

Prince Krapotkin, in a lecture recently delivered by him, said that in Western Siberia, with an area thirty-six times larger than the United Kingdom, there was a population of a million and a half, and in the whole of Siberia, which was fifty times the size of the United Kingdom, there was a population of over five millions, equivalent to the population of London. He described from actual observation the Russian government's plan of colonization. They had, he said, an immense river 2000 miles long to colonize, and they made up their minds that there must be villages every fifty miles on the river. A functionary came along in a boat, took out his watch after a certain time, said he thought they

had come fifty miles, and then put up a pole to indicate the situation of a village, no matter whether the ground was marshy and unfit for settlement or not, and without regard to the fact that a little distance off there might be a most suitable place in which a village community could thrive. Hence the village communities were continually changing place. From Moscow to Eastern Siberia, 4700 miles had to be traversed by exiles on foot until twenty years ago, the journey occupying two years, but now the government had decided that the place of exile was not sufficiently remote, so that they had now to go 3000 to 4000 miles further to the northeast, where in some parts the cold was fifty-three degrees below the Fahrenheit scale. In 1862 the Russian government were discussing the best cart for the transport of exiles to Siberia. They invented the most foolish carts possible, and they were discussing the best mode of locomotion still. Of the 20,000 prisoners yearly transported to Siberia, on the average the vast majority were neither murderers nor criminals of any kind. Fully half would be political offenders, transported without having seen any sort of judge or magistrate. A man was transported merely because the police officer or chief of the district thought it would be better to free the village of his presence. People imagined that Siberia was populated with exiles. This was not so. Out of half a million exiles transported in twenty years only 200,000 remained on the list, and of this number 120,000 had disappeared—vanished. Out of the half million 70,000 perhaps remained at the places where they were originally taken. Where were the remainder? No one knew. They had perished in the gold mines in the far north, or by the way in the long journeys they were compelled to go. There was, too, a continuous current of runaways, numbering probably from 20,000 to 30,000 men, who were constantly going slowly west and trying to reach Russia, their native country. They could be seen in the forests living on mushrooms, and the peasants, who knew what it was to be transported, would always give them bread, and sometimes milk. There was no such criminality in Siberia as they might expect. He, himself, in the course of five years traveled 50,000 miles in that vast country, was never attacked, and merely carried with him a knife to cut his foot. Transportation to Siberia was an absolutely useless cruelty, and he thought it would be very much better for the government to put an absolute end to it. Europeans had done nothing to civilize the natives of Siberia except by introducing among them whisky and gunpowder. Of the honesty and brotherly kindness of the natives the lecturer spoke, in conclusion, in the highest terms. — *Millennial Star*.

The Hague, Dec. 8.—Queen Regent Emma today took the oath of office.