

HOW MONGOLIANS PRAY.

Rev. James Gilmour, an English missionary who has labored much among the Mongols, gives in *The Children's Record* an account of the way in which these people pray. It is a strange and sad story of ignorance and superstition:

"Almost nine out of every ten Mongols you meet will have rosaries in their hands, and be rapidly repeating prayers, keeping count of them by passing the beads through their fingers.

THEY DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF THEIR PRAYERS.

One of the prayers most commonly used consists of six syllables. Ask one man what these six syllables mean, and he will tell you one thing; ask another, and he will have another version of the meaning; ask a third, and he will most likely give an answer which all will agree in—namely, that it does not matter what they mean; the efficacy depends, not on the meaning, but on the repetition of the prayer. Acting on this belief, the Mongols rattle away at their prayers, hoping thereby to make merit which will, among other things, cancel their sins.

THE HAND PRAYING WHEEL.

But mouth repetition is a slow process, and to expedite matters a praying wheel has been invented, into which are put a large number of printed prayers; the wheel is turned round, and by this simple act all the prayers contained in the machine are supposed to be repeated.

THE FAMILY PRAYING WHEEL.

In some tents there is a stand on which is placed a large wheel, bearing about the same relation to the hand wheel as a family Bible bears to a pocket Bible. A thong is fixed to a crank; the inmates take their turn in pulling it; but the aged grandmother, as having most leisure, usually spends most time over it; and the grandchildren keep a sharp look-out, and raise an outcry when, from inadvertance, a wrongly timed pull sends the cylinder turning backwards, and, according to the

Mongol idea, makes sin in place of merit.

THE ROASTING JACK PRAYING WHEEL.

In one house I saw a wheel placed over the fire, and driven by the upward current of hot air, after the manner of a roasting-jack!

THE CLOCKWORK PRAYING WHEEL.

Sitting in a tent once, I heard behind me a curious clicking noise, and looking round, found a praying wheel going by machinery. The master of the house, being a mechanical genius, had bought an old clock in a Chinese town, taken out and rearranged the spring and wheels, and made them drive a cylinder filled with prayers. When he got up in the morning he simply took the key, wound up the clockwork, and then the thing made prayers for the whole establishment.

THE PRAYING FLAG.

He that is too poor to buy a hand wheel gets a prayer flag—a piece of common Chinese cotton cloth printed over with Tibetan characters—fastens it to a pole and sets it up near his tent, believing that every time it flutters in the wind all the prayers on it are repeated.

The whole thing would be laughable were it not too serious a matter by far for laughter. *The deluded worshippers really believe that this charm repeating and wheel turning and flag fluttering makes merit which cancels sin.* They live in this belief, and they die with this lie in their right hand. This idea, too, is the cause of much sin."

WHAT BECOMES OF OUR SINS.

"I cannot understand," said a little boy, "what becomes of our sins when God takes them away."

"When you do a sum, Willie, and take a sponge and wipe your slate, what becomes of the figures?"

"Oh I see now," he said, "they are all gone."

And so God says he will blot out our transgressions, and will not remember our sins.