

missionary. With all the famous lamas and pilgrims from the far interior, even from Lhasa, as also from Mongolia, he conversed on the subject, telling them what he knew about Christian doctrines, and teaching them to pronounce for the first time the name 'Yesu Ma'shika,' Jesus Christ."

If we were to select all the interesting incidents, we should have to reprint half of the book, so we limit our quotations to one passage only, because it refers to the mooted question of the trees with one thousand images, of which M. M. Huc and Gabet say that they had seen the trees and Tibetan characters on their leaves, an incident which they had no means of explaining. Mrs. Rijnhart's account of the trees is rather disappointing, for having seen them she declares that the leaves bear neither images nor Tibetan characters, but are simply leaves, just like those of other trees. Whether, perhaps, in some season of the year when the Rijnharts were not staying in Kumbum, the veins of the leaves present the appearance of Tibetan characters, which would explain the statement of M. M. Huc and Gabet, or whether the whole thing is imagination, we leave to our readers to decide. Mrs. Rijnhart says: "Of the sacred tree from which the lamasery takes its name, and which grew up from the hairs of Tsong K'aba, a word must be said. There are three of these trees in a yard near the Golden Tiled Temple. All pilgrims visiting the lamasery take special pains to pay reverence to the central tree, and to receive some of its leaves, on each one of which is clearly discernible to the eye of the faithful the image of Tsong K'aba. No one around Kumbum seemed to question this marvel but the two foreigners. We frequently visited the tree and had the leaves in our hands, but our eyes were holden from seeing the image or anything approaching it, a disability which the lamas coolly informed us arose from the fact that we were not true followers of the Buddha. This explanation is rather damaging to the reputation of M. M. Huc and Gabet, who declare they saw on the leaves of the tree, not images of Tsong K'aba, but well-formed Tibetan characters. There is nothing in Huc's narrative so perplexing as this, and without questioning his veracity one cannot refrain from wondering to what extent he fell under the magic spell of the Tsong K'aba legends; nor is it any the less clear why the leaves which in Huc's day bore Tibetan characters, should have passed on from literature to art, producing now only images of the saint! The tree has been variously classified. Rockhill, following Kreitner, first thought it was a lilac (*Philadelphus coronarius*), but later he concluded it was a species of syringa (*syringa villosa*, Vahl). We saw the tree once when it was in bloom—the flowers are very much like lilacs, but the leaves seem to be stiffer."

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THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE LIBRARY EXCLUDED BY THE  
POSTAL AUTHORITIES FROM THE PRIVILEGES  
OF SECOND-CLASS MATTER.

We understand that there has long been an abuse of the postal laws with reference to second-class matter, which admits periodical and paper-bound literature to the right of very cheap carriage by post; and that the postal authorities have therefore deemed it wise to restrict as much as possible the privileges granted by Congress to this kind of literature. The abuse of the privileges in question has been mainly for advertising purposes and for pandering to vulgar tastes through the circulation of cheap novels and sensational news, which only serve to warp the imagination of the reader.

The postal authorities, in their justifiable endeavor to reduce the privileges given to second-class matter, have, as a result of mistaken zeal, suspended also the Religion of Science Library and withdrawn from it the privilege of being sent through the mails as second-class matter. They inform us that they have examined two copies of it, and have found that they partake of the nature of *books*, which, according to the law as they understand it, are to be excluded.

According to this interpretation of the law, it seems that only such publications should be granted the privilege of second-class matter as contain current news and other materials of only transient interest: while anything that might have permanent value or should bear the character of method and system, so as to form a unity and thus partake of the nature of a book, should be excluded.

We differ from the postal authorities, for the spirit of the law obviously is to grant the privilege of reduced postage to such publications as will help to educate the public and to make everything that is educational as accessible as possible; and in fact such is the law. It reads as follows:

"The conditions upon which a publication shall be admitted to the second class are as follows:

"*First.* It must regularly be issued at stated intervals, as frequently as four times a year, and bear a date of issue, and be numbered consecutively.

"*Second.* It must be issued from a known office of publication.

"*Third.* It must be formed of printed paper sheets, without board, cloth, leather, or other substantial binding, such as distinguish printed books for preservation from periodical publications.

"*Fourth.* It must be originated and published for the dissemination of information of a public character, or devoted to literature, the sciences, arts or some special industry, and have a legitimate list of subscribers: *Provided, however,* That nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to admit to the second-class rate regular publications, designed primarily for advertising purposes, or for free circulation, or for circulation at nominal rates. (Act of March 3, 1879, Sec. 14, 20 Stats., 359, Sec. 277, P. L. & R., 1893.)"

Now, it is true that *books* are excluded under the *Third* section; but the definition of *book* is expressly given,—the condition being that second-class matter must be "formed of printed paper sheets, *without board, cloth, leather, or other substantial binding, such as distinguish printed books for preservation from periodical publications.*" The meaning of the law is to reduce the price of reading material and to help publishers to comply with this special demand. Those who are excluded from this privilege are the book-binders, for book-binding does not properly belong to the publication of literature, and is merely an ornament and an additional expense which must be classed with any other line of business, such as furniture-making, house-building, farming, the provision of food stuffs, etc., etc., which although useful in themselves do not, according to the ideas of Congress, serve the educational wants of the people.

The law is so explicit that we cannot understand how the postal authorities can deny the Religion of Science Library the privilege of classification under second-class matter. They continue however the *Police Gazette* because its publications do not partake of the nature of books. It is "published for the dissemination of information of a public character," but perhaps not in the sense of the law, and it will be difficult to say that it is "devoted to literature, the sciences, arts or some special industry."

The logic of the postal authorities is obviously sound if they think that any-

thing that proves to be first-class in intrinsic worth ought not to be tolerated in the category of second-class matter. Since the publication of the Religion of Science Library, consisting of some of the works of the foremost philosophers of mankind : Descartes, Hume, Berkeley, Kant, Leibnitz, Locke, etc., etc , are unequivocally first-class, it seems to be a matter of course that when they travel in the mails they should not pay second-class postage, but according to such a standard they ought to go by letter rate, first-class.

Now, we can do one of two things: Either we can quietly submit, or we can try to overthrow the ruling of the postal authorities. If we do the former, we by no means recognise the justice of the ruling, but simply yield because the expense of the other course would be too great, and the benefits to be gained therefrom are too small. The Religion of Science Library is not published for gain, but for the accommodation of the public, and it is by no means a mine of wealth. The privilege of the reduced postage rate granted to second-class matter plays an important part in the plan of its publication. The reduction of the postage is only one consideration ; the saving of time and labor through the facility of paying the cost of carriage in one bill, doing away with the stamping and weighing of each single package, is probably more important.

The public which we serve is at any rate limited, nor is it organised to exercise any political pressure, consisting mainly of professors, teachers, students, clergymen, etc. Yet the reduction of labor to the Post Office in handling the second-class mails, caused by the exclusion of these books, will prove a drop in the bucket only.

We shall continue, however, to serve the public as well as we can under the changed conditions, but we shall be obliged in all cases to add to the regular prices of the books the cost of carriage. The old numbers shall be sold at the stated price, merely adding thereto the postage for carrying them through the mails as ordinary printed matter.

P. C.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GĀYATRĪ.

The Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco's<sup>1</sup> article on the *Aum and Gāyatrī* is an interesting contribution to the history of our knowledge of Sanskrit literature and the Brahman religion. It is natural that any Hindu Samnyasi would be reluctant to initiate foreigners into their ceremonies or to recite to them their most sacred prayers. But Sir William Jones might have found the text of the Gāyatrī more easily and without any special sacrifice, if he had known that it was contained in the Rig-vedas, where we find it in Book III., 62, 10.

The Gāyatrī is the most sacred prayer of the Hindus and takes about the same place in their religion as the Lord's Prayer does in Christianity. It is addressed to the sun, and Sir Monier Monier-Williams calls it "that most ancient of all Aryan prayers, which was first uttered more than three thousand years ago, and which still rises day by day toward heaven, incessantly ejaculated by millions of our Indian fellow-subjects."

The ancient Indians worshipped many divine powers, but the true gods of the period of the Veda were three ; First, the fire god, the earth-born Agni ; secondly, the rain god, the earth-born Indra ; and thirdly, the sun god, the sky-born Sūrya,

<sup>1</sup>The Countess Evelyn Martinengo Cesaresco is a granddaughter of Sir E. C. Carrington. and is thus in a position to verify the data concerning Sir William Jones's discovery of the Gāyatrī.