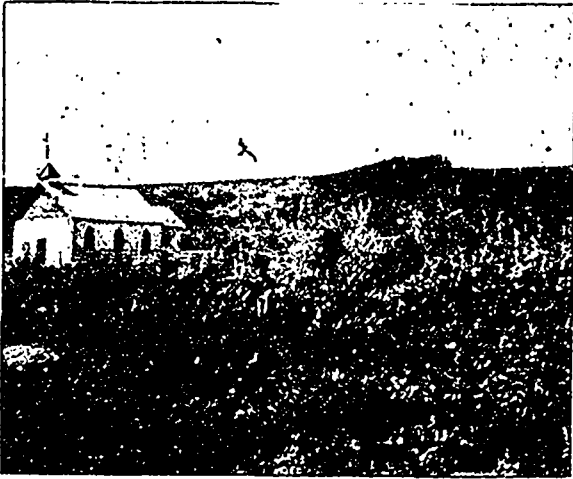




ATHABASCA : ST. PETER'S CHURCH,
Lesser Slave Lake, with C.M.S. Flagstaff : Cemetery on the hill.

BURMESE PRIESTS.

BURMA is a dreadfully priest-ridden country. The ascetic would apply better than priest, if we understand the latter in a European sense. It is the custom amongst male Burmese of all ranks to spend at least one year in a monastery. This is generally done in early manhood. The head is kept shaven, and nothing is worn beyond the single robe of yellow and sandals. I believe the priests are supposed to spend their time in meditation, which, being interpreted by what I saw, means extreme laziness. There certainly are schools in connection with the priests, and it is a remarkable fact that every Burman can read, but the great bulk of the priesthood live in idleness. Every morning the younger members go round to the houses of the village or town with baskets, and into them the natives put small quantities of rice, the priest averting his gaze if it is a female who brings the dole. As several bodies of priests exist in every place of any size, each villager receives every day a corresponding number of visits. This tax, multiplied by 365, represents a very serious inroad upon a poor man's resources in the course of a year. But no complaint is made; it is the custom of the country and a feature of its religion. After a year's sojourn in a monastery, the young priest will return to his home and pursue his worldly avocations as before. But this return to the world will depend very much upon what prospect fortune holds out to him. If he has but a poor outlook, he will in all probability remain a priest; and it is not at all an uncommon thing for some to use the monastery very much as our poor do the work-house, assuming the yellow robe in times of poverty, and doffing it when things look brighter. This ochreous garment is a veritable "cloak of religion," and on all unbiased sides it is admitted that it is shamefully abused.—*Leisure Hour.*

TEN THOUSAND PER CENT.

MR. STUART dropped into the office of his friend, Mr. Morris, in a mood decidedly depressed, occasioned by a failure. It was a little after business hours, but Mr. Morris was still in his office and alone. He laid down his pen and greeted his friend with a cheerful nod and a cheerful "How are you, Stuart?"

"Sour as an east wind," was the response, as he looked at the beaming countenance of his friend, whose counsel he had sought many a time, and scarcely ever been disappointed.

There appeared to be a little more than the usual brightness in Mr. Morris' face as he wheeled his chair round and bade his friend be seated in another. Mr. Stuart noticed it, and said:

"What are you up to, Morris? Had some good news, eh?"

"Oh, no, Stuart," he replied, "nothing unusual or new in particular. I was only thinking of a little investment I am just about making."

"I thought so," said Stuart, "and a good one, I'll be bound."

"I think so," was the reply. "What would you say to ten thousand per cent.?"

"Ten thousand per cent.! You are raving."

"Not a bit of it," said Morris. "And the very best of security—a regular royal pledge."

"Now I know you are crazy. Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"Crazy? Not a bit of it," said Mr. Morris. "This," wheeling round his chair and laying his hand upon a paper on his desk, "is a cheque which I have just signed, and intend for a poor missionary whom I know. I have just heard he is sick, and in much need. The Scripture says that 'he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord,' but I was never awakened to the fact of what interest He pays until yesterday, when our clergyman startled me by saying that He had promised ten thousand per cent.!"

I pricked up my ears at the statement, and waited curiously to hear the proof; and there it was, sure enough, in St. Matthew xix. 29: 'And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and inherit eternal life.' I was struck at the sound of ten thousand per cent., but I figured it out and found it correct. I was very much impressed at the time with the thought, and, in fact, have been ever since. It was in my mind when you came in. Not that I can lay claim for a moment to the spirit of self-sacrifice which the text quoted indicates, but my gift to the poor is a loan to the Lord, and I am not afraid but that I shall reap a good dividend."

Mr. Stuart did not commit himself, but he thought of what was said, nevertheless.—*Selected.*