

THE
AMERICAN MISSIONARIES
AND NORTH-EAST INDIA

(1836-1900 A.D.)

A Documentary Study

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PREFACE

The American Baptist Missionaries although played a significant role in the socio-economic-cultural life in North-East India, an objective assessment has yet to be made on their multifarious activities. Though limited in its scope William Gammell's *A History of American Baptist Mission* (1850) is the earliest authoritative account on the subject. E. W. Brown's *The Whole World Kin* (1890), E. F. Merriam's (1913) *A History of American Baptist Mission* and Herriette Bronson Gunn's *In a Far Country : A Story of Christian Heroism and Achievement* (1941) throw side-light on operations of the Baptists in Assam. A century of activities of these missionaries has been provided by Rev. V. H. Sword in his notable work *Baptists in Assam* (1936). Professor Frederick S. Downs not only covers more or less the same ground in *The Mighty Works of God* (1971) but has discussed in a wider perspective the impact of evangelisation in his well-documented study *Christianity in North-East India* (1983).

An unbiased and comprehensive study of the activities of the Baptists has been rendered difficult on account of paucity of primary sources. In our country "Only a few of the churches and associations have kept historical records. Most do not seem to have preserved even official documents like minutes, annual reports, etc., which are of such great value to the historian" (Downs). This *Documentary Study* in its first part traces early history of their evangelisation—success and failures, problems and difficulties, contributions in diverse fields : linguistic, educational, cultural and moral and incidentally political events and other developments which had affected their operations. The second part deals with the lives and conditions of cross-sections of the people with whom the missionaries worked and lived. The long introduction provides a panoramic view of the entire ground covered besides editor's conclusions and observations on the impact of Christianity both in the hills and plains.

The volume includes primarily the *Correspondence : Assam Field* (1836-1900) American Baptist Foreign Mission Society hitherto preserved at the archives Colgate School of Divinity,

Rochester NY. Addressed to successive Corresponding and Foreign Secretaries, the letters and journals, and occasional replies thereto, furnish minute reports of evangelisation apart from minutes, circulars, resolutions, appropriations and administrative measures in regard to the mission. Written in thin sheets of varying sizes, the letters were folded so as to form envelopes bearing instead of stamps figures of the amount paid as postal charges. Post-1890 documents are generally readable and typewritten, but a mass of earlier documents are partially or completely illegible. These are being supplemented for a better perspective and clearer understanding by excerpts from the Baptist Missionary Magazine, the official mouthpiece of the Home Board, official documents of the Government of India, pieces of Bronson's Family papers, available in microfilms at the United Theological College, Bangalore, Assam Mission Conference minutes besides contemporary and semi-contemporary works on the subject.

Early heads of the mission were invariably highly educated men trained for accurate observation and scholarly writing, and most of them were residents in North-East India for decades. So their accounts possess all the value of a contemporary narrative written from an independent point of view. The *Buranjis* or chronicles which had hitherto been an indispensable source material for the history of Assam are conspicuous by their absence during the period under review. The letters and journals of the missionaries, therefore, form an invaluable source materials to check-up and supplement the official documents of the period. Evangelists apart, the *Documentary Study* will be of considerable interest to the scholars, researchers and laymen alike.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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To the hallowed memory of those Christian missionaries whose ceaseless toil and dedication had revived and modernised the Assamese language and literature and paved the way for Renaissance in Assam at the close of the last century.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

- ABFMS* : Assam Correspondence : American Baptist Foreign Mission Society
- AR* : Annual Report : Assam Mission
- AS* : Assam Secretariat
- BJP* : Bengal Judicial Proceedings
- BMM* : The Baptist Missionary Magazine
- CD* : Despatch from the Court of Directors
- FPP* : Foreign and Political Proceedings, National Archives of India
- Jubilee Papers* : Assam Mission of the “American Baptist Missionary Union” : Papers and Discussions of the Jubilee Conference, Nowgong, 1886
- Selections* : Selection of Records, Government of Bengal, vii, relating to whether Assamese Language or Bengali should be taught in schools

Sources other than ABFMS are generally indicated at the end of each document

INTRODUCTION

The cross followed the British flag. The East India Company sent out from the very beginning chaplains to India to look after the spiritual welfare of its Christian employees, and incidentally to spread the message of Christ amongst the Indians. Towards the close of the eighteenth century when the Company became an important political power in India, it was realised by the authorities in England that “in matter of religions the natives of India were peculiarly sensitive”, and therefore “any interference with the religion of the natives would eventually insure the total destruction of British power”¹ in India. Religious neutrality thenceforth became the watchword of the Company. With gradual expansion of Company’s possessions the policy towards the missionaries rapidly changed from “encouragement to one of indifference, and indifference to one of hostility”. At the time of the renewal of the Charter of the Company in 1793 when the Evangelicals like Charles Grant and Wilberforce proposed to insert a clause to send and maintain missionaries and teachers for the religious and moral improvement of the Indians, the Court of Directors stood opposed to it and the proposal was turned down by the Parliament. No wonder therefore when in the same year William Carey (1761-1834), the first British missionary, arrived in Calcutta, he was prohibited from preaching in its territory and he had no option but to make Serampur his headquarters under the Danish flag.

In early nineteenth century agitation was renewed in England for sending missions to India. It was considered absurd “when non-Christian rulers in Asia often gave missionary permission to preach the gospel in their kingdoms the Christian British should deny this elementary human right to the missionary”². The vigorous agitation which Wilberforce and others continued in collaboration with the Church Missionaries Society, the Bible Society, the London Missionary Society and other organisations and the publication of a number of papers and pamphlets succeeded in winning public support for “Christianising India”. The

1. Dodwell, H. H., *Cambridge Modern History*, vi, p. 124.

2. Thomas, P., *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan*, p. 177.

new Charter Act of 1813 permitted the missionaries "to go and reside in India under certain conditions". The result was the advent of missionaries to India from England and America and the appointment of a Bishop in Calcutta with jurisdiction over Company's territories. The Governor-General in Council was, however, enjoined to impress upon the officials of the Company the need for religious neutrality and non-interference in the religions of Indian subjects.

Carey with his coadjutors, Jasua Marshman (1768-1837) and William Ward (1769-1833), established Serampur Mission as a branch of the English Baptist Mission in January 1800. The patronage he received from Wellesly, financial apart, the appointment as a teacher at the Fort William College, had enabled him to carry on his mission successfully. In a pamphlet *An Enquiry into the Obligations of the Christians to use means for the conversion of Heathens* Carey emphasised the necessity of making the heathens useful members of society and that they should be reached only in their own language. During 1801-32, he translated the Bible into Bengali and forty other languages including one in Assamese. Krishna Pal, Carey's earliest convert (1800) was deputed to North-East India for the spread of the gospel. From his headquarters at Pandua, in the district of Sylhet, Pal carried on his mission and by 1813 he is said to have seven converts ; of these two were Khasis who were baptised in the river Kushiara in presence of a large gathering including several chiefs (*siems*).¹ In 1829 a branch of the mission was set up at Gauhati under James Rae, a native of Damfriece, under the patronage of David Scott, Agent to the Governor-General, North-East Frontier. Rae's hopes to place the New Testament in every heathen temple were belied ; up to 1836 only six individuals were baptised. His successor William Robinson lamented : "There are no sign of any good here, and when I consider for how many years brother Rae had laboured among these people in vain, my spirit began to drop within me, and I fear all my labour will prove same."²

1. Nalini Nataranjan, *The Mission among the Khasis*, Shillong, p. 60.

2. *Serampur Periodical Accounts*, 1834, p. 34 ; *Ibid.*, September 1836, see Robinson Papers.

In the meantime the Second Great Awakening in America created an interest, amongst others, in foreign missions to spread the gospel in the non-Christian world. American Foreign Missionaries were inspired by the British Evangelicals in India. Carey's letters and pamphlets were widely read and the American Baptists in return provided funds and kept up regular communications with the mission at Serampur. The emergence of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Affairs in June 1810 introduced a new era in American foreign mission enterprise. It originated out of "Pious zeal" of five students of Theology of the Andover Seminary—Adoniram Judson, Luther Rice, Samuel, J. Mills, Samuel Nott and Samuel Newell who declared their determination to go abroad for evangelisation. The generous donations received from American public provided the Board necessary funds for the pioneers who left with their families in two groups for India. The first under Judson and Newell reached Calcutta on 17 June 1812, but their disembarkation was rendered extremely difficult on account of the anti-missionary policy then followed by officials of the Company. The mediation of the Serampur missionaries eventually enabled them to reach Serampur. In disgust Newell left for Isle of Man ; Judson with his wife Ann Hasseltine later arrived in Rangoon and laid the foundation of Burmese Baptist Mission. Situation altered following the Charter Act of 1813 which had enabled the Baptists to start missions at Bombay and Ahmadnagar. This was followed by the extension of operations in Assam, Telugu country (Madras Presidency) and the arrival of the American Presbyterians in the Punjab, Lutherans in Madras and Methodists in United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

II

Political and security reasons, not so much of evangelism, that had actuated the local authorities to welcome the missionaries into Assam or North-East Frontier. To "humanise" the Garos who were always at feuds and at times carried their raids into British districts, as early as 1826, Scott in cooperation with Bishop Herber of Calcutta sought to establish a school in their midst to instruct religious teaching apart from some useful arts. Although

a school was started at Singimari on the approval of the Government of Bengal,¹ Scott's scheme ultimately fell through on account of difficulties in having a suitable teacher to serve in the hills and his own preoccupation in the insurrection of the Khasis in the south. Soon after the assumption of office in 1834 Francis Jenkins, Agent to the Governor-General, also thought that pacification of the Khamtis and the Singphos, who continued to disturb the tranquility of the frontier, could be effectively done by the spread of the gospel ; and to that end he contacted initially the missionaries at Serampur. When the response was not encouraging the invitation was extended to the American Baptists to establish a mission at Sadiya. They were told that the language of the Shans or the people nearabout Sadiya was similar to that of the Burmese and might easily be acquired by a missionary who had resided in that country [i, 1]. The proposal reached at an opportune moment—soon after the Convention at Richmond which had decided “to enter into every unoccupied field” and “to extend their operations as widely as possible”.² Stimulated by the publication of Charles Gutzlaff's, *Journal of Two Voyages Along the Coast of China* (1831-2), the American Missionaries sought to start a mission in China. The early attempts that had been made by John T. Jones at Bangkok failed on the closed-door policy then followed by the Chinese government. The opposition of the Burmese government also prevented Rugenio Kincaid from penetrating into China from Upper Burma apart from spreading the gospel amongst the Shans in that quarter. A mission at Sadiya, it was fondly hoped, would enable the Baptists to convert the frontier tribes into Christianity and also open up an entrance into the Celestial Empire.³ Unhesitatingly the Board accepted the proposal and directed Revs. Nathan Brown and Oliver T. Cutter then working at Moulmein to

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1. On the understanding that the person employed be called a schoolmaster and not in the capacity of a missionary since the declared policy of the government was one of religious neutrality. *CD* 1831 ; 2 February, No. 4, para 70ff.
 2. Gammell, W., *A History of American Baptist Mission*, Boston, 1850, p. 211.
 3. See *infra*, p.5.

commence a mission at Sadiya. Already Brown learnt the Burmese language and Cutter had experience in printing. Accompanied by their families and with a printing press the missionaries reached Sadiya on 23 March, 1836 [i, 2].

To his utter disappointment Brown found on arrival that the only Shans within reach were a few scattered Khamti hamlets and the main body for whom he had come lived beyond the mountains. He had no alternative but to commence operations with the Khamtis and the Assamese in and around Sadiya. The Khamtis had a language similar to that of the Shans of the north of Ava while the Assamese had a written language, but no dictionary nor any grammar. Overcoming initial difficulties he printed a few tracts and text-books and made preparations for establishment of schools. A reinforcement consisting of the families of Revs. Jacob Thomas and Miles Bronson arrived in Calcutta in April 1837. On the upward voyage along the Brahmaputra, unfortunately, Thomas was suddenly killed when within sight of Sadiya by the falling of a large tree on the boat from the bank of the river. Brown and Cutter had to direct their attention to the Assamese and the Khamtis, and Bronson was to move to Jaipur which was nearer the Singphos and the Shans in the valley of the Hukwang between Assam and Burma. About this time the Serampur Mission which was on a languishing state relinquished its operation in favour of the Baptists. The resumption of Upper Assam (October 1838) followed by the annexation of Muttock (November 1839) opened up to the Baptists the whole valley of the Brahmaputra for evangelisation. Representation of the missionaries apart, Jenkins strongly urged the Board to extend operations by increasing the strength of the existing mission. The hopes of the missionaries doomed to bitter disappointment. Following Richmond Convention the operations of the Board had increased beyond its resources ; without increase in its revenue it must "either recall some of the missionaries or go deeper and deeper in debt".¹ Assam Mission was told "unless contribution to the treasury are increased a much greater

1. Domestic circular, *BMM* 1838, p. 261.

ratio...the mission cannot be supported even in their present state”.

To make matters worse the Singphos were in the meantime assuming a hostile attitude, and rumours were afloat of a Burmese invasion and the formation of an anti-British confederacy of the hill tribes on this side of the Patkais which so much alarmed the people that many passed nights in jungle while others sat up in fear of a surprise attack. In early morning of 28 January 1839, the cantonment at Sadiya was stormed by the Khamtis burning houses, cutting down everyone on the way, and killing a large number of men, women and children including Major White, the Commandant, Assam Light Infantry Battalion. Hardly was there time for the missionaries to escape ; they slipped in a little canoe to nearby river and passed the night “every moment expecting an attack from the savages who might be lying in wait to rush upon, massacre them...or take them as slaves.” “Sadiya turned out to be a barred door rather than a open gateway to China.”¹ The continued hostility of the Singphos and the Shans compelled Brown and Cutter to move to Jaipur, centre of growing tea cultivation, in anticipation of increase in population and having access to the Khamtis, the Nagas and the Singphos.

On his arrival at Jaipur in May 1838 when Bronson found that the Nagas were more numerous than the Singphos, he decided to start a mission in their midst. The task was indeed formidable. After having collected a Naga vocabulary and crossing dense forests he arrived at Naga village Namsang (at present in Tirap Frontier), a centre of salt trade on 8 January, 1839. The *Bura Khunbao*, the Naga Chief, suspected him to be an English spy who had come on a reconnoitering mission with the ultimate object of annexing his territory. Bronson’s geniality, soft words and persuasive manners eventually won the hearts of the Nagas who welcomed him, fed him and built a house to which later he brought his wife and little child Marie. To work in the Naga field there had also arrived the family of Cyrus Barkar and Bronson’s sister Miss Rhoda Bronson. Since Bronson had already opened

1. Sword, V. H., *Baptists in Assam, 1836-1936*, Chicago, 1936, p. 59.

a school and started operations Barkar returned to Jaipur and thence to Sibsagar.

Overwhelming odds notwithstanding, within a period of eight months several Naga boys could read their own language and in Romanised Assamese. Bronson's letters to Jenkins not only reveal his clear vision and political wisdom but his intense desire to uplift the Nagas from their utter backwardness [ii, 62, 66-7]. The continued illness in the family and subsequent death of Rhoda brought to an end the laudable project ; Bronson himself had to leave the hills on grounds of health leaving the Nagas like a flock of sheep without a shepherd.

The unhealthiness of Jaipur and insecurity of the south-east frontier made it also necessary for Brown to move to Sibsagar, the most important station in Central and Upper Assam. Access to the Shans and the Singphos continued to be difficult and hazardous, and the missionaries had no alternative but to confine their attention to the people of the plains. The much-hoped for Shan mission thus came to an end and towards the close of 1843 Brown and Cutter with the printing press stationed themselves at Sibsagar, Barkar went to Gauhati and Bronson moved to Nowgong. With these three stations the Baptist Church was organised in Assam in January 1845. In each station the missionaries established one or more schools in which pupils, both boys and girls, were instructed by and large the doctrine of the gospel by ladies of the mission aided by local assistants or recruits from Calcutta. Of these Nowgong Orphan Institution founded by Bronson in 1843 aimed at collecting from all parts of the province orphans and destitutes of either sex and to train them up under Christian influence knowledge of useful occupation and of the gospel.

In spite of the independent and scattered character of the missions, from the very beginning the missionaries consulted each other on matters of common interest. Major issues apart—whether of the language or of a mission and at times even in routine matters—appointment, transfer, leave, disciplinary measures—no decision was taken without the concurrence of the co-missionaries and the same was reported to the Mission Rooms for approval. In 1851 to coordinate the activities of the three missions the Baptist Association of Assam was formed, and

in its first meeting at Sibsagar, 30 October, a constitution was made “to counsel and assist each other” in extension of operations [i, 29].

In 1841 Bronson baptised Nidhiram *alias* Nidhi Levi Farwell, the first Assamese convert at Jaipur. This was followed by three others—Batiram, Ramsing and Kolibor. While the spiritual harvests continued to be disappointing, the missionaries found the field too extensive to be worked by a few scattered individuals. The repeated appeals made by the missionaries though persuaded the Board to depute in 1848 Revs. A. N. Danforth and I. J. Stoddard to the Assam field, ill-health forced Barkar to leave for home in 1851, and on the way he expired. Dauble, originally a German Lutheran who being baptised joined the mission at Nowgong, also died of Cholera in March 1853. In the same year Oliver Cutter, the soul of the printing establishment, had to be dismissed “on charges of immoral conduct”.¹ But the mortal blow to the mission was the departure of Nathan Brown in early 1855 not so much of “hard work” or reasons of health as of “mental anguish”.² Professor Soloman Peck, the Foreign Secretary, who paid a visit to Assam in early 1854 stood opposed to the policy and programme of the Assam Mission. In his view the missionaries should have communication direct with the Board not through the Association nor in consultation with each other. He wanted the abolition of the Orphan Institute which trained up native assistants so essential to the mission. “The closure of the Orphanage and the “divide and rule policy” then laid down by the Foreign Secretary were humiliating to the missionaries which the seniormost member Brown could hardly overcome.³

In fact Professor Peck simply communicated the wishes of the Home Board which had faced for several years acute financial crisis. The Baptist Churches in South following anti-Slavery agitation and impending Civil War withdrew from the Union, and this had adversely affected the finances of the Northern

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1. *Proceedings of the Assam Mission*, Letter Bronson, 17 September, 1852.
 2. Sword, V. H., *op. cit.*, p. 87.
 3. Downs, F. S., *The Mighty Works of God*, Gauhati, 1971, p. 42.

Mission. The Board would therefore neither extend its field nor even maintain the existing ones. "The home mail instead of words of cheers brought discouragement of suppression of schools, dismissal of native assistance, stopping of the press, translation of tracts."¹ What was worse, the repercussions of the Mutiny (1857-8) rendered it extremely difficult for the missionaries to carry on their operations. Whiting at Sibsagar for a while remained hidden in the north bank while Bronsons escaped in a canoe to Gauhati on way to America. "Other missionaries owing either to dread of mutiny or of disease were obliged to take furlough so that in 1858 there was only one in the field."²

III

Towards the close of 1858 the arrival of two naval brigades from Calcutta and the energetic measures adopted by the local authorities restored to some extent the confidence of the missionaries. With the end of the Civil War in America (1865) more funds and assistance were available for the Assam field. The missionaries had realised in the meantime that they must turn to the hills rather than the plains. Already the Mikirs in the neighbourhood of Nowgong had attracted the attention of the mission. In early sixties C. F. Tolman and E. P. Scott started work and toured the hills, but jungle fever drove both of them out of the hills, and Scott in his second attempt to resume operations died of cholera in May 1868. Freed from religious prejudices, the Cacharis at the foot of the hills north of Kamrup and Darrang, were found apparently ready for receipt of the gospel. Barkar is reported to have made several excursions amongst these tribes and had discussions on the subject with those who came to Gauhati Church.

The local authorities were no less interested than the missionaries in the spread of the gospel amongst the Garos on the west. Conversion of the Garos to Christianity, reference has already been made, was one of the objectives which had actuated Scott

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1. Brown, E. W., *The Whole World Kin, Experience Among Remote Tribes and other Labors of Nathan Brown*, Philadelphia, 1870, p. 270.
 2. Sword, V. H., *op. cit.*, p. 90; *AR, BMM*, July 1858, pp. 249-50.

in the establishment of a school at Singimari. In 1837 Jenkins also sought to start a mission at Gauhati inasmuch as "to put an end to their outrages, there could be no other means than a reformation of their feelings and habits through Christian religion".¹ The evangelisation amongst the Garos may be said to have begun in February 1863 on the conversion of Ramkhe and Omed through the influence of Kandura, an Assamese convert. When Bronson visited the hills in early 1867, he found under the patronage of the Deputy Commissioner Omed had established at Rajsimla a centre of the mission and Ramkhe a school at Damra. So faithfully had these assistants laboured in the hills despite "reproach, ridicule and even threat of life" that Bronson had twenty-six Garos to baptise at Rajsimla wherein a Church was organised towards the close of the year ordaining Omed as its pastor. I. J. Stoddards, then at Gauhati, and M. B. Comforts, a new missionary, were transferred to Gowalpara which had become the headquarters of the new mission. Inhospitable climate apart, hostilities of the tribesmen made it difficult for the missionaries to establish a mission at Tura in spite of repeated requests made by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Even a native preacher could not enter into the hills save at the risk of losing his head. The annexation of the hills (1872-3) and the arrival of energetic missionaries Revs. M. C. Mason and E. G. Phillips in 1874 was a turning point in the Garo field. Not only was the headquarters removed to Tura (1876) but the mission made remarkable progress at the close of the century. By 1910 the membership of the Church rose to four thousand and it proved to be one of the "most self-reliant, prosperous and promising mission".²

The immigrants who had come mostly from Chota Nagpur area to work in tea gardens afforded a fertile field for evangelisation. They had become familiar with Christianity to some extent from the missions of the Gossener Society of Germany and having a religion similar in its nature to that of the animists

1. *FPP*, 1846 ; 14 March, No. 49.

2. Mason, N. P., "These Seventy-five Years", *Minutes Assam Baptist Mission Conference*, 1911, pp. 55ff; E. F. Merriam, *A History of American Baptist Mission*, Philadelphia, 1900, p. 124.

of Assam. In the initial stages although some of the planters resisted the entry of the missionaries considering "Christian laborers would be a liability", towards the close of the century they gave way and the spread of the gospel under C. E. Petric and John Firth made rapid progress amongst immigrants. (*Infra* pp. 218-20).

The activities in the Naga field remained suspended until the arrival of Rev. E.W. Clark to the Sibsagar mission in 1869. Abandoning comparatively fruitless work among the Assamese he directed his attention to the Nagas in the south and tea-garden labourers in the district. Under his encouragement Godhula *alias* Rutus Brown learnt AO dialect and made several trips to Molungyimsen or Deka Haimong to spread the message of Christ. He was instrumental in having baptised nine AOs at Sibsagar in November 1872. Clark himself arrived at Haimong in the following month and baptised fifteen Nagas who with earlier converts erected a chapel at the village. *Inner Line Regulations* (1873) prevented Clark from opening a mission amongst the AOs. Henry Hopkinson, the Commissioner of Assam, expressed his inability to make any distinction "between a planter and missionary, and telling the one he must stop at a line which the other may transgress".¹ When the missionary was welcomed by the Nagas themselves, Government of Bengal found no reason whatever to prevent the missionary from work. In 1876 when Clark made his way to Haimong he found the Nagas raiding villages or their own village were under attack. "Even when there were no actual attacks the village was on constant alert which was just as disruptive of normal life. The Christian Nagas were naturally expected to participate in the defence of the village as well as its raids. Their reluctance to do so as well as to participate in village festivities that involved drinking made them increasingly unpopular and objects of persecution."² Despite overwhelming odds, Clark found a new centre at Molung and in the following year when Mrs Clark joined her husband the mission made much headway in evangelisation. In 1885, on

1. *BJP*, 1873 ; January, No. 49.

2. Downs, F. S., *The Mighty Works of God*, pp. 66 ; also *infra*, pp. 60-1.

the arrival of Dr S. W. Rivenburg, Clark went on furlough after nine years of unwearied service during which the Christian communities amongst the AOs grew "from nothing to 79 members"; hostilities of the natives turned into friendship for they had learned to "love and rever him".¹ In 1893 Revs. S. Perrain and F. Haggard joined the mission which was moved in the next year to Impur in the interior of the hills.

Not the AOs alone, the attention of Clark, the father of Naga missions, was directed towards the Angamis and the Lhotas. At his request the Board appointed Rev. C. D. King to start a mission among the Angamis, the most powerful and warlike of the Naga tribes. The uprising of the Kohima men compelled the missionary to settle for a time at Samaguting, near Dimapur, and thence at Sibsagar. On the restoration of peace in 1880 King moved to Kohima and started a school with the aid of Assamese convert Punaram. Kohima Baptists Church was organised in 1893 but its success was disappointing.² The Lhotas on the north-east were no less warlike and turbulent. The establishment of an outpost at Wokha following the murder of Captain Butler enabled Clark to persuade Rev. W. E. Witter to start a centre at that station. Hardly had he opened a school with Assamese as the medium of instruction, ill health compelled him to quit the hills and operation amongst the Lhotas was carried on from Kohima and nearabout stations.³

In 1895 Rev. W. Pettigrew, earlier a member of the Church of England, started evangelisation in north-east of Imphal. The opposition of the animist Nagas made it difficult in his early attempts to open a centre in the Mao area. The Hinduised Meties too prevented him to start a mission in the plains in spite of his friendly relations with Major Maxwell, Political Agent, Manipur. However, he was successful in opening a school and spreading the gospel amongst the Tankhuls,

1. Sword, V. H., *op. cit.*, p. 108 ; Perrine, S. A., "Report from the AO Field", *Fourth Triennial Conference*, 1895.

2. Rivenburg, S. W., "Historical Sketch of the Angami Naga Mission", *Jubilee Papers*, pp. 84-5. Mason, N. P., *op. cit.*, pp. 45ff.

3. *Ibid.*

and by 1901 about a dozen of Nagas and Kukis accepted Christianity.¹

At the end of the century though the Baptists made a beginning in the AO area, the progress of evangelisation was slow in the Naga field. Independent in bearing and exclusive in spirit the Angamis not only refused to accept Christianity, but openly resisted the infiltration of the new faith. Even amongst the AOs, Clark's success "has not been at all commensurate with his efforts"² mainly because of the reluctance of the Nagas to abandon their habits of eating opium, drinking rice-bear³ and participation in anti-Christian rites and ceremonies. Since 1920s the Baptists were immensely successful in the spread of the gospel amongst the AOs as well as the Lhotas and the Semas. At the end of the Second World War not only the Baptist churches were on the increase in the land of the Angamis, but the evangelists penetrated even into the unadministered area, the habitat of the Chakhsangs, Sangtams, Konyak and other tribes.⁴

IV

Opinion differs as to official patronage to the American missionaries. Gammell speaks eloquently of the liberal contributions made and keen interest shown by the British residents.⁵ Nathan Brown and Miles Bronson were on the other hand critical of patronage of the English officials [i, 85-6]. True, higher officials like Jenkins were more of administrators than evangelists; whatever assistance they rendered to the Baptists was motivated by their primary objectives—security of the frontier and welfare of the masses. Nonetheless, European officials, both civil and military, made generous contributions

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1. Downs, F. S., *Christianity in North-East India*, Gauhati, 1983, pp. 117ff.
 2. *Ibid.*, p.82, also *Census of India*, 1891, i, p.150.
 3. F. P. Haggard wrote, "A number of members were confirmed opium-eaters...and total number of converts was 100." "All drank liquor (with the exception of six or seven). Indeed these people carry drinking to such an extent that no church, however, well up in other points could stand against its ravage." *ABFMS*, February 20, 1895.
 4. Downs, F. S., *op. cit.*, pp. 133ff.
 5. Gammell, *A History of American Baptist Mission*, p. 221.

to the missionaries in their operations. Jenkins not only provided, as promised, a printing press but made regular contributions and offered constructive suggestions for the spread of the gospel. It was through his recommendations again a monthly grant of rupees one hundred was made to the Namsang mission despite religious neutrality of the government. But for the protection and aid of Captain Morton, PA Goalpara, it would have been extremely difficult for the pioneers to make much headway in the mission among the animist Garos. Contributions apart, Captain Hannay on his transfer to Sibsagar (1843) presented his brick building for the use of the printing establishment.¹ Professor Downs rightly concludes: "While the missions were primarily concerned with the propagation of the Gospel...they did find the government useful. It lent prestige to their religion...provided financial support for their institutions and gave them, government granted monopoly on education in many areas, an invaluable instrument of influence far beyond anything that such a small group of people could ordinarily have on an alien society."²

Active cooperation and help notwithstanding, immense were the difficulties that had to be confronted by the missionaries in their operations in Assam. From home to reach the field of operation hitherto the boat took over six months. The hazards in a upward voyage along the Brahmaputra could better be imagined than described. In the field they were to labour in a difficult terrain interseced or bordered by hills and trackless forests infested with wild animals and under an enervating climate wherein malaria, *kalazar* and cholera were once endemic, and which carried away not infrequently heavy toll of human lives. Communication was extremely difficult even in plains where no other transport other than human bearer was available. To ascertain customs, usages, languages and temperaments of diverse racial elements posed indeed a problem for the missionaries, for which carrying their kits they had to travel

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1. C. A. Bruce, Superintendent, Government Tea-plantation, J. T. Gordon, PA Nowgong and Furnell, Medical Officer, Sibsagar rendered all possible assistance for the success of the mission. *The Whole World Kin*, p. 224.
 2. Downs, F. S., *op. cit.*, p. 279.

villages one after another invariably on foot¹ resting at night in open or at *Namghors* which served in those days as rest house to weary travellers. Apart from forlorn nature of the station, rigours of climate and lack of assistance, the missionaries had to encounter distrust and suspicion of the hillmen to whom all the *sahibs* or whitemen were the spies of the English.²

The indomitable courage and fortitude with which the Baptists braved the distance, isolation, deaths and discouragements had enabled them to sow the seeds of the gospel both in the hills and plains. They have succeeded so far, in establishing not less than four thousand churches having over three lacs of members.³ Nonetheless as V. H. Sword remarks : “Assamese for whom the mission had yielded Sadiya and Jaipur had failed to accept Christianity.”⁴ In 1886, i.e., after half a century, the membership of the Brahmaputra Valley stood at 845, of which 496 were Garos and 43 Mikirs. According to Professor Downs only 92 of the plains Assamese were Christians. Even in 1936, as he says, the Gauhati field reported as membership of 3,516 but only 464 were classified as Assamese.⁵ Considering the population of the valley and the untiring efforts made by the Baptists, small percentage of converts was definitely a sign of the failure of evangelisation in the plains. The reasons were not far to seek. The fundamental difference between Christianity and Hinduism made it difficult for average intelligent Assamese to accept Christianity. To them Hinduism is not dogmatic but synthetic and comprehensive “seeking unity not in a common creed but in a common search for truth”.⁶ They would regard Christianity as true, but they would not accept it ; for they

1. Thus towards the end of 1844 Brown travelled on foot from Sibsagar to Guwahati over two hundred miles in order to visit interior of villages to ascertain personally the characteristics of diverse racial elements who inhabited in them.
2. In this regard the Assamese priests and religious heads were placed on an advantageous position (*Infra*, p.lv).
3. *The Baptist Leader*, xxxiv, 1895, No. 2, p.1.
4. Sword, V. H., *op. cit.*, p. 119.
5. Downs, F. S., *The Mighty Works of God.*, pp. 82-3.
6. Radhakrishnan, S., “Hinduism and the West” *Modern India and the West*, p. 339.

would consider Hinduism as equally true. In fact, as A. K. Gurney realised, "they had an accommodating theory". They would say "for the Europeans Christianity is good ; for the Hindoo Hindooism ; for the Mussalmans Muhammedanism".

V

The missionaries never failed to bring to the notice of the Home Board the political events which had affected their operations. On their arrival they found Lower Assam under the authority of the government while Upper Assam was held by a tributary Ahom prince—Raja Purandar Singha. The territory east of the river Buridihing was occupied by the Moamaria or Muttock chief subject to the payment of a nominal tribute. The frontier was in turmoil on account of the threatening attitude of the Singphos and the intrigues of the Burmese with a view to reoccupying their lost possessions. Graphic was the narrative of the tragedy at Sadiya in the wake of the insurrection of the Khamtis, 28 January 1839. References have been made of the deposition of Purandar Singha (1838) and the annexation of Muttock (1839) which had extended their field of operation. In regard to the causes, nature and extent of the Mutiny (1857-8) the mission archives provide corroborative evidence to official documents. Danforth's belief that the Mussalmans joined hands with the rebels with the object of establishing "Islamism once and for ever", is not borne out by the fact that several Muslim officers of the Regiment actively supported the cause of the Ahom monarchy.¹ In any case the preparations made by the rebels and the alarm thereof spread far and wide. To protect the lives of English men and women there was not a single European soldier in the North-East Frontier. Every precaution had to be taken, and the missionaries then assembled at Gauhati had to undergo military training. They heaved a sigh of relief on the arrest of the ring-leaders, including the young Raja ; but the situation continued to be disquieting until the arrival of two naval brigades from Calcutta for the defence of the frontier.

The American missionaries not being involved in political fortunes of Great Britain were not unoften critical of the policy

1. Barpujari, H. K., Assam : In the Days of the Company (1980), p. 185.

and action of the government. Rightly they traced the origin of the uprising of 1862, the Phulaguri revolt, to the multiplication of taxes, particularly the imposition of license and income tax. In their view European officials were largely responsible for the use of spirituous liquor amongst the natives in and around Gauhati. Condemning the introduction of government opium Whiting maintained "this act of the government has done more than anything else to spread the use of opium...it is hopeless that a confirmed opium eater will ever leave off the use of the article". The missionaries were no less critical of the administration of justice and police in the days of the Company, and their views receive corroboration in the *Observations on the Administration of Assam* by Anandaram Dhekial Phukan.

VI

The journals and letters throw a flood of light on growth of townships in the valley of the Brahmaputra. In early thirties *Sadiya* was the headquarters of the district of the same name. Located in the vicinity of several rude tribes, it had a strategic importance of its own. The insurrection of the Khamtis and the growing insecurity of the frontier compelled the missionaries to take asylum at *Jaipur* on the Buridihing enroute to Ava. Its location in the midst of tea areas and the vicinity of coal-bed, oil and salt-springs hold out before them the prospects of a growing township. The hopes were soon belied ; hostilities of the Singphos apart, insalubrity of climate again forced the mission to move to *Sibsagar*, the most important township in Central and Upper Assam with a population not less than five thousand. In 1841 the headquarters of the district was shifted to *Sibsagar* from *Jorhat* which was the capital of the last Ahom monarchy. Situated on the bank of the navigable *Dikhow* communication by water from *Sibsagar* was highly convenient. Two hours by boat would take one to *Brahmaputra*, two days ride to *Dibrugarh* and one day to *Jorhat*. Several roads constructed by the former government linked up *Sibsagar* with *Jaipur*, *Muttock* and even *Gauhati*. Besides the court, jail and hospital, *Sibsagar* had a government school where English and Bengali were taught.

The mission premises and official quarters were located on the bank of the long tank Siva-sagar [i, 74].

In close proximity to Sibsagar located *Rangpur*, *Gorgaon* and *Jorhat* “places which the original Assamese (Ahom) made the centre of their power and influence, where kings always resided and in which Assamese language is spoken in its greatest purity”. During cold season Ahom kings resided at Rangpur, two miles from Sibsagar, where Barkar found in 1842 two temples, a two-storey building (*Rang-ghar*) formerly used by the kings for witnessing sports of wild beasts, remains of a palace and other buildings. During rains the Rajas spent at Gorgaon on the Dikhow where Brown saw a magnificent palace, several brick edifices and an arched gateway at the entrance of the fortified town surrounded by a light wall. On the other side of the river located *Nazira* then developing into a flourishing township, the headquarters of the Assam Tea Company. Importance of Jorhat had dwindled since the transfer of the district headquarters to Sibsagar. Situated on the bank of the shallow Disoi or Bhogdoi, with its zig-zag and muddy roads, it continued to be the residence of the former royal family and a section of the learned Assamese. *Titabar*, *Kacharihat* and *Golaghat* were the centres of cotton trade with the Nagas.

Already in 1850 Dibrugarh had developed into a cosmopolitan town of commercial importance. Besides Assamese, as Whiting records, the population consisted of “Bengali, Nepali, Manipuri in the regiments”, and in bazar “Khasi, Nora, Abor, Mishmi, Nagas and others” each having a dialect of its own, but Assamese was the medium for all those who resorted to for trade. *Tezpur* on the north bank was considered to be the healthiest station in Assam and was the headquarters of the district of Darrang. But the most populous part of the district was fifty miles below Desh *Darrang*, the present *Mangaldoi*, accessible by a branch of the Brahmaputra. This was hitherto the headquarters of the district ; on account of its unhealthiness it was moved to *Pura* or *Tezpur* in 1835. The importance of *Bishwanath*, too, ceased since 1839 on the transfer of the headquarters of Assam Light Infantry to Sibsagar.

In 1835 the headquarters of the district of Central Assam or Nowgong was also shifted from Rongagora to the new village or *Nagaon* on the bank of the Kolong. The people of this village were reported to be very enlightened and the total population as estimated by J. T. Gordon, PA Nowgong, was over two lakhs and considerable number of them were Mussalmans. From Nowgong by road one would reach Kaliabar with an industrious and thriving population. Writing in December 1841 Brown says : "Nowgong to Gauhati 70 miles. The banks of both sides of Kullung for about 30 miles below we find covered with dense population, surpassing anywhere I met any part of Assam."

Gauhati was not only the headquarters of the district of Kamrup but the residence of the Commissioner of Assam. By official sources population was six thousand in 1831 ; rose to ten thousand according to the estimate made by Danforth in 1849, majority being Assamese, about one-tenth Bengali and a few European residents. In 1874 on the shifting of the capital to Shillong, Gauhati became the gateway of Assam. Stretching along both sides of the river Brahmaputra for several miles, communication between two parts was kept up by steamer-ferry making several trips each way. Even in 1853 it appears from an article in the *Orunodoi pucca* court building and the treasury had been erected on the bank of the Brahmaputra and the Commissioner's office near the Dighali tank. The cantonment was located near present Paltan bazar and police outposts at Latasil and another on the Bharalu. The mission premises, six acres, lay on the bank of the river with a Macadamised road on the river side with large trees both ornamental and protection against encroachment. Of the three important bazars, two at the either end of the town catered to the need of the local people while the Planters Stores and Agency of the third (present Panbazar) supplied the requirement of European residents.¹

Since sixties, mention has been made in journals and letters, Assam was fast rising into importance. Lands were occupied everywhere by the planters, and even the hills nearabout Gauhati were covered with tea-gardens. A beginning was made for the

1. *The Orunodoi*, vii, June 1855, pp. 90-2 ; Burdetti, C., *Jubilee Papers*, p. 45.

construction of a trunk road through the valley from Bengal to Sadiya ; and already telegraph line extended from Bengal had reached Gauhati. Weekly steamers carried passengers and freight from Calcutta while two railway lines connected the interior of the valley with the main artery of commerce—the Brahmaputra. The upward voyage to Sadiya by country boats, hitherto, took over three months ; in eighties mail steamers connecting Dhubri with railways from Calcutta enabled passengers to reach Upper Assam in less than a week. The close of the century saw, as recorded by Rev. Clark, the completion of the Bengal-Assam Railway throughout the valley and the preparation of an ambitious project connecting it across the south-eastern hills with the Burman Railways which had already been proposed to extend to the borders of China.

On the other hand, post-Mutiny period saw acute scarcity and abnormal rise in prices of essential commodities. This was occasioned by the occurrence of a famine in the wake of an abnormal draught, but mainly because of the importation of labourers to meet the increasing demand of the planters, and no less of the government in the construction of roads, telegraph lines and other public works. In food stuff Assam was not a surplus area, and hence the prices of every article of consumption increased three to four times and as a corollary the cost of labour shot up several times. “Flush with money”, wrote Bronson, “European tea-planters were eager to employ every man, every servant, ready to buy up every article of food for themselves and their labors at any price”. The outcome was depreciation in monetary value : “A Rupee now goes about half as they formerly”. The salaries of the government officials increased all round. The missionaries appealed for relief in yearly appropriations.

VII

Evangelisation was the primary objective of the missionaries. *Zayats* (preaching booths) were set up at places where people would come and hear the gospel and enquire into the mysteries of truth. Frequent tours were made by the preachers to address gathering at *hats*, markets, fairs and religious assemblies

distributing portions of scriptures, tracts and catechisms which set forth in a pointed manner errors of Hinduism or Islam.

The spread of elementary education became necessary so that the Bible could be read and understood. Within two months of her arrival Mrs Cutter started a school at Sadiya with an enrolment of six which soon rose to twenty. She taught some of them in English elementary books—Mission Primer, Nursery books, etc., published by American Sunday School Union. It posed a problem for her to teach in English principles of Christianity unless books were prepared in Spelling Lessons, Primer, Nursery books and Scriptural Lessons in vernacular. In 1837 Mrs Brown also opened a school for girls at Sadiya and in its vicinity three village schools were started by Cutter followed by one each at Japiur and Namsang, the latter for education of the Nagas. Mission schools were gradually on the increase. In 1844-5 in the district of Sibsagar there were eleven schools and in and around Gauhati five in operation. To cater to the needs of the orphan and destitute children of either sex an Orphan Institute was started at Nowgong in 1843 [i, 100]. They were to be trained up with the object of producing teachers and catechists, and those manifest less ability to be taught in elementary education and such trades as would enable to earn their own livelihood. The Baptists emphasised the education of women, and to that end at each station started boarding schools for girls.

With the publication of a number of textbooks instructions were imparted in Assamese, Tai and English on reading, writing, arithmetic and elements of geography. Classes were usually started with prayers and endeavours were made to instil lessons on Christianity. The employment of Brahmin teachers were avoided lest they would neutralise the effects of religious teaching. Sons and wards of the priestly classes were, however, admitted into these institutions where medium of instruction was Assamese ; all the more there was a growing demand for these schools which provided the three R's—the passport for minor posts under the government.

The missionaries were under the impression that the masses in Assam were illiterate mainly because of the influence of the priestly classes who deliberately kept them ignorant. Their

strategy was not to attack them personally, but to enlighten the masses by opening up village schools. The Baptist Union in its meeting at Nowgong in 1850 proposed to have more village schools under supervision of mission heads and this would “hasten the desirable day when the Assamese would be able to read in their own language the wonderful work of God”.¹ These schools would of course be *auxiliaries* to the work of evangelisation—the legitimate work of the mission. They would expose the false science inwrought with idolatry and so to help their common overthrow. They would afford opportunities for preaching to the public with them and would raise up native authors who would give their masses a Vernacular Christian literature. The Foreign Secretary, during his visit to Assam, doubted much whether such schools should be multiplied to retain their role as *auxiliaries* in consideration of heavy cost and labour involved. It was brought home to the Assam Mission that “schools are not a pre-requisite to the preaching of the gospel” and that “the demand for common school will be met at no distant day...by the civil government” and that “language in these schools will be the Vernacular as soon as suitable textbooks can be obtained”.²

The radical change in policy and consequent retrenchment dwindled the number of schools and enrolment. The first casualty was the Orphan Institute which ceased to exist in 1856. The enrolment at the Sibsagar girls’ school dropped down to three in 1862 while in two schools at Gauhati to twelve which stood at one hundred and twelve in four schools in 1851. The mission received its final blow on the transfer of power to the Crown in 1858 when the authorities in England reverted to the policy of religious neutrality in education with a feeling that the missionaries were no less responsible for the outbreak of the Mutiny. Missionary institutions were placed under supervision and control of secular officials and religious courses were totally excluded from the curriculum of studies.³ A sudden change was, however, considered impolitic in tribal areas of Assam wherein teaching in

1. Annual Meeting of the Assam Mission, 1850, *BMM*, May 1852, pp. 137ff.

2. Report of the Foreign Secretary, *BMM*, February 1855, p. 37.

3. *CD*, 1859 ; 7 April, No. 4, paras 4 and 59.

the Bible and scriptures was considered neither “objectionable nor dangerous”.¹ Without adhering to the directives therefore Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, rendered grant-in-aid to the Baptists for the spread of education. In 1871 in the district of Nowgong eight schools were located in Mikir hills—all receiving grants from government.² In the same year besides a Normal School as many as eleven schools were started by the native Christians in Garo Hills. In 1878 the Government of Assam entrusted the entire education of the Garos to the Baptists assuring them with necessary funds. As a result by 1892 the number of mission schools in Garo Hills rose over a hundred.³ The success of the missionaries in the field of female education was also remarkable. In 1907 the number of school-going girls in hills stood at 16% and in Garo Hills 25%.⁴

VIII

On his arrival Brown found the tribes nearabout Sadiya had diverse dialects and possessed no script of their own. Neither the Khamtis nor the Singphos understood the Shan language which was reported to be the language of these people and which Brown learnt on his way to Sadiya from Gowalpara by the Brahmaputra.⁵ From an Ahom *pundit* (teacher) he learnt that the Ahom language was identical with the Tai of the Khamtis and slightly varying from the Siamese. But this was subverted by the Assamese which he then thought to be “a sort of Barbarous Bengali”. The immediate task before him was to give the people a written language. He had two alternatives : “expensive and difficult Bengali” and English. The choice fell on English for reasons explained in document [i, 112].

The tragedy at Sadiya and consequent insecurity in the frontier forced the Baptists to abandon the Shan mission and to concentrate on the Assamese whose language was intelligible to almost

1. CD, 1864 ; 23 January, No. 2, para 2.

2. *Fifty-Eighth AR*, July 1872, *BMM*, p. 264.

3. Carey, W., *The Garo Jungle Book*, pp. 141-3, 237 and 241 ; *Garo Hills Administrative Report*, 1878-9.

4. Orange H. W., *Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India*, Calcutta, 1909.

5. Ward, Mrs S. R., *Glimpses of Assam*, p. 207.

all tribes in the neighbourhood. Though Roman script was used in the hills, they had to switch over to the Bengali rather to Assamese script in regard to Assamese publications and this received the approval of the Board. A linguist of repute¹, Nathan Brown discovered before long the independent character of the Assamese from the Bengali language and spoke eloquently of "its open, agreeable vocalization, its picturesque Sanskritic characters, its quaint inflexious idioms".² He not only wanted to make the Assamese the language of teaching and preaching, but to have the Assamese of the purest form as spoken in Upper Assam [i, 114]. It was this missionary who raised the earliest note of warning against the introduction of Bengali in the newly started village schools. "This makes it pretty certain," rightly he apprehended, "that Assamese as a distinct language in course of a few years will become extinct and Bengali supply its place". All the more, "This project has been for sometime in contemplation and now the government have set about the work very vigorously. There will be little doubt that it will succeed in effecting the change..."

The difficulties of obtaining duly qualified staff and paucity of the Assamese "to transact business in the manner practised under the Bengal Government" forced on the local authorities in the early days of the Company to recruit the *amlahs* or subordinate officials from the neighbouring districts of Bengal. The general belief that these *amlahs* introduced Bengali as the language of the courts and schools in Assam is not only unhistorical but wholly fallacious and not based on positive evidence.³ For their

1. *Infra*, see *Biographical Notes*.

2. *The Whole World Kin*, p. 416.

3. Mention may be made in this connection that Persian was then the court language of the Presidency of Bengal. In Assam, which then formed a part of the Presidency, Persian writers had to be recruited at a much higher salary, and were found to be extremely difficult to replace in cases of death or of long absence. As a panacea Persian was replaced by Bengali in the courts of Assam. In 1836 *Assam Code* was translated into Bengali. A year earlier Bengali formed a major department in the newly-started government school at Gauhati while in twenty-one village schools referred to by Brown, Bengali was taught to turn out minor officials in the revenue department. In fact the process was accelerated by Jenkins as explained by him in document i, 122,

administrative convenience the local authorities, not the *amlahs* of Bengal, introduced Bengali as the language of the courts and schools in Assam. To raise the voice of protest a middle class intelligentsia was yet to emerge¹ while the masses in general with the horrors of the Burmese marauders still fresh in their minds dared not to antagonise their saviours on the language issue. Whatever might be the policy of the government instructions were imparted in mission schools in Assamese. Bengali text-books were in use so long as these were considered indispensable for the preparation and printing of Assamese books.

The controversy over the language actually started in June 1853 when A. J. M. Mills, Judge, *Sadar Dewani Adawlat*, visited Assam to enquire into the state of administration in Assam. Missionaries apart, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, Sub-Assistant, Nowgong, in his *Observations on the Administration* strongly urged substitution of Assamese in place of Bengali in schools of Assam.² “We made a great mistake”, admitted Mills, “in directing that all business should be transacted in Bengali, and that Assamese must acquire it”. Since it was too late to retrace the steps he recommended for consideration of the Council of Education, Dhekial Phukan’s proposition—“the substitution of the Vernacular language in lieu of Bengalee, the publication of series of popular works in Assamese language and the completion of the course of Vernacular education in Bangalee”.³ This was stoutly opposed by William Robinson, the Inspector of Schools, on grounds he explained in document, i, 118. A decision on the language issue became imperative to give effect to the essential recommendation of Wood’s Despatch in 1854—the education of the masses in vernaculars at the elementary level. Towards the close of the same year, forwarding comments of all the

1. The Assamese gentry, hitherto, not only remained silent a spectator of the language issue, but a section of them advocated promotion of commercial and cultural contacts with Bengal. Even Haliram Dhekial Phukan, father of Anandaram, wrote a history of Assam in Bengali apart from contributing articles to the Bengali periodicals of the age. Anandaram and his close relative Gunaviram Baruah pressed for the replacement of Bengali by Assamese in all probability under the influence of the missionaries particularly Miles Bronson.

2. *Infra* p. 142_n.

3. Mills, A. J. M., *Report on Assam Appendix J*, (1854) para 29.

missionaries on Robinson's remarks, Bronson made a fervent appeal to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to open to the Assamese "the natural means of their elevation to the means of learning sciences—and of reading in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God" [i, 119]. Robinson's remarks were forcefully refuted in a pamphlet *A Few Remarks on the Assamese Language and Vernacular Education in Assam*, by "A Native" printed and published by the Baptist Mission Press, Sibsagar (1855). Bronson himself addressed a letter to the Editor *The Friend of India* [i, 121] to espouse the cause of the Assamese, and in this he was immensely successful which is borne out by an editorial in the same paper extracts of which were published in the *Baptist Missionary Magazine* (November 1855, p. 452).

On the departure of Brown and the premature death of Dhekial Phukan in 1859, Bronson had to carry on the protracted struggle almost single-handed against pro-Bengali elements who had in the meantime raised their heads.¹ It was no small compliment to Bronson that he created the public opinion which was hitherto non-existent in Assam. Scattered representations apart, over two hundred Assamese elite headed by Bronson submitted a memorial² to George Campbell on 9 April, 1872 which convinced the Lieutenant-Governor that the demands made by the Assamese were reasonable; that "Assamese was still the vernacular of the people", "it is taught in Missionary Schools", and that "there are books and Dictionary published in the Assamese language". Unhesitatingly Campbell decided on 9 April, 1873 that Assamese be introduced in schools and courts in the valley of the Brahmaputra subject to the condition that "when a class of twelve or more boys wish for it Bengali may be separately taught to them as a language".

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1. There is hardly any evidence to show that they were vocal prior to the publication of the pamphlet by "A Native". Not only was there divergent views on the subject amongst the higher officials, no unanimity existed even among the Assamese as to whether Assamese of the purest form as advocated by the missionaries should replace Bengali in schools and courts in Assam. This had inevitably emboldened the pro-Bengali elements to carry on counter-agitation until it was resolved in April 1873.
 2. Memorial of Bronson and others, 9 March, 1872; see *Assam Commissioner File No. 471, 1862-73*.

To follow up the successes demanded rejuvenation and strengthening of the Assamese language and literature particularly reading materials for higher classes in schools. The American missionaries, though continued to publish literary works on useful subjects, the number of text-books published by them dwindled mainly because of the radical change in educational policy which laid stress on secular education and textbooks free from religious bias. It must, however, be remembered that they rendered yeoman service at a time when that was greatly needed. Even in the thirties they brought out *A Spelling Book, Alphabets and Spelling*, translation of *Worcester's Primers, History of Flood, History of Creation* and a hymn book in Assamese. Text-books apart, they published a series of children's literature, and innumerable of tracts, catechisms and hymns in Assamese. The Bible translated by Carey being found extremely faulty, Brown commenced its translation into Assamese in 1838 and completed it in 1846-7. His *Grammatical Notices of the Assamese Language* (1848) and particularly Bronson's monumental work on *Assamese-English Dictionary* (1867) laid the foundation of Assamese language on a solid basis. A revised version of Mrs H. B. L. Cutter's *A Vocabulary and Phrases* (1841) was published in 1864 by Mrs S. R. Ward under the title *Brief Vocabulary in English and Assamese*, and a second part of it by E. W. Clark as *Phrases in English and Assamese* was printed in 1877. A regular contributor to the *Orunodoi*, Nidhi Levi translated the Indian Penal Code and gave a new orientation to the Assamese poetry in his religio-literary poems. The translation of the Old Testament started by Bronson was completed in 1903 by A. K. Gurney who is also credited with several literary works.

In the collection, preservation, publication of manuscripts, both Ahom and Assamese, the American missionaries were the pioneers in the field. They also made a beginning of the ethnological, particularly numismatic studies in Assam by publishing facsimiles of innumerable coins of Ahom and Koch kings and Mughal emperors. It was to the lasting credit of these Baptists that they paved the way for Assamese journalism by the publication of *Arunodoi-Sambad Patra* later *Orunodoi*, the first Assamese newspaper periodical in January 1846. Primarily intended for

the spread of the gospel, through the pages of *Orunodoi* Pilgrim's Progress in a serial, scripture narratives, sketches of martyrs, A brief History of Apostles, Parables of Sower and Accounts of our Saviour "found their way into heathen homes". Even orthodox Assamese found it interesting and instructive since it embodied new ideas in attractive form besides subjects of general interest. Illustrative articles on geography, astronomy, natural history conveyed useful information while temperance, truthfulness, self-reliance and themes of similar nature attracted the attention of reading public. Disseminating western thought and learning the *Orunodoi* inspired the younger generation and prepared the ground for an intellectual awakening.

In regard to the tribal areas, whether in the hills or in plains, the general principle of the Baptists was that "all are to be taught in their own tongues the wonderful works of God". It was considered expedient in the initial stage that after preparation of two or three elementary books containing fundamental principle of Christianity efforts should be made to send native agencies to instruct their co-villagers through the medium of their own dialect the truths of the gospel. In cases of those tribes who were in the vicinity and had acquaintance with the Assamese operation might be commenced by preaching in Assamese. With respect to the Mikirs (Arleng) Miris (Mishing) Cacharis and Nagas, therefore, preaching and teaching were conducted in early stages through the Assamese language. The case was, however, otherwise with the Garos who were originally monosyllabic and had no alphabet or literature of their own. Their contact with plainsmen, Assamese and Bengali, in course of time brought about a process of assimilation, and as a result on the eve of British conquest numerous Sanskrit words enriched the vocabulary of the Garos. No wonder therefore the early missionaries carried on teaching and preaching through Assamese or Bengali language. Of the various dialects the Baptists accepted eventually *Chisak* and *Awe* as the standard form of dialects and directed their attention to the compilation of several religious and secular books.¹ The Nagas, whether western or eastern, carried on trade with the people of the plains

1. Kar, P. C., "An Outline History of Garo Literature", *North-Eastern Affairs, Annual*, 1973, pp. 29ff.

as well as with different tribes through the medium of Assamese. So much importance was given by the Nagas to learning of Assamese that youths of the powerful tribes, Khonomah and Jotsomah, were sent to Nowgong and Gauhati for education.¹

In view of infinite variety of dialects in the hills, in 1864 the Governor-General in Council laid down that the instructions be imparted either in English or in indigenous language of the hill people expressed in Roman character, and that Bengali may be continued as medium where there was a public demand for it.² At the official level therefore there were two schools of thought ; while Captains Jenkins and Gordon sought education of the Nagas through the medium of Assamese, Gregory, PO Naga Hills, desired, that instructions be imparted through English and Angami in Roman script. Hill people along with the acquisition of the plains language, he argued, had learnt "all the worst habits of chicanery and trickery of plainmen as well as absurd prejudices of caste from which they were originally free".³ In Garo Hills, while J. C. Haughten, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, desired Romanization of Garo language and instructions in English, Lieutenant Williamson, the Deputy Commissioner laid stress⁴ on Bengali on the ground that "The Garos are all desirous of acquiring Bengalee. When we consider how they are situated, surrounded as they are by Bengali speaking races with whom all their trading transactions must be carried on, I am not surprised at this wish and I think it should be gratified". Till the closing years of the last century, the local authorities depended by and large on the American Baptists for the spread of education and production of necessary literature and text-books in the hills. The role of the government being only a subordinate one, the ultimate decision was made by the missionaries. The American Baptist Union in its Conference at Tura in 1893 resolved that

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1. Barpujari, S. K., "Naga Education in the Nineteenth Century", *Highlander*, i, 1973, pp. 24ff.
 2. *Bengal Educational Proceedings*, 1864 ; 8 January, No. 25; Resolution 8 January, 1864.
 3. *BJP*, 1866 ; October, No. 57.
 4. *FPP (A)*, 1874 ; August, No. 274.

Roman script be used for the hill tribes about Assam which have no written language on the ground that at no distant future they would “touch hands across the hills”.¹ Simplicity of the script apart, the facilities of printing books all over the world, the convenience of working with the Burmese mission and the apprehension of contamination from the evil of mixing with non-Christians weighed heavily in their minds. Consequently as S. K. Chaube rightly observes :² “The Khasis and the Garos are on the process of forgetting Bengali and the Nagas are estranged from the Assamese though the *lingua franca* of the Naga even today is a broken form of Assamese.”

George Gillespie refers³ that the Baptists had reduced to writing as many as nineteen tribal dialects in which they brought out dictionaries, grammars and vocabularies. The foundation of the Garo language was laid by Miles Bronson’s *Phrases in English and Garo* (1868) followed by W. J. Williams’ *A Vocabulary of Garo and Koch Dialects*, Rev T. J. Keith’s *Garo-Bengali-English Dictionary* (1873) and Ramkhe Momin’s *Bengali and Garo Dictionary*. For the spread of the gospel the Baptists started translation of scriptures and the gospel. In 1871 Keith got the *Matthew* translated and the following year saw translations of *Matthew*, *Mark* and *John*. With the arrival of Revs, M. C. Mason and E. G. Phillips theological literature multiplied. Within a period of three years Mason completed translation of *Genesis* and Phillips *Galatians*, *Ephesians* and *Philippians*. By 1895 besides tracts, catechisms and hymns *The New Testament* was translated into Garo language. In 1879 the monthly *Achikni Ripen* (Garo’s Friend) appeared and continued its publication for over thirty years. Compared to theological literature production of secular works, even textbooks was rather small. The close of the century saw the publication of a few Garo and Bengali Primers, Rapid Readers, an arithmetic and a book on hygiene *A Way to Health*. These were merely translations not original works.

1. *Assam Mission ; Third Triennial Conference*, 1893, p. 8.

2. Chaube, S. K., *Hill Politics in North-East India*, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 57-8.

3. Gillespie, G., “The Missionaries and Dictionary”, *Indian Church History Review*, June 1977, pp. 31-44.

Secular textbooks were in use in government schools since the thirties of the present century.¹

In the Naga field, too, although stress was laid on theological literature some useful books were published in different dialects. By 1927 *The New Testament* was translated into AO and Angami language in addition to *Life of Joseph, Matthew, John and The Acts*. Rev and Mrs Clark were the pioneers in production of Primers, Readers, an arithmetic and an *AO-Naga Grammar with Phrases and Vocabulary* (1893), but Clark's significant contribution was his *AO-English Dictionary* (1911). Besides a Primer, spelling, arithmetic and a book on hygiene, Rivenburg brought out *Angami-English Phrases*. In addition to a few text-books W. E. Witters published a grammar and vocabulary of the Lotha tribes.²

IX

The journals and letters regularly forwarded by the missionaries, though embodied mostly their operations, programmes and policies, form an invaluable source material for the modern period of the history of Assam. Early heads of the missions were invariably highly educated men trained for accurate observation and scholarly writing and most of them were residents of Assam for several years. So their accounts like Father Monse-rett's *Commentaries* possess all the value of a contemporary narrative written from an independent point of view while these had an additional and unique claim to our attention as they illustrate better than any other source the lives and surrounding of the people at large with whom they came in closer touch in the propagation of their faith. We do not have in the accounts of these missionaries the chronicles of kings and warriors, their wars and conquests, successes and failures ; but a glimpse into the history of the people, their lives and conditions, customs and prejudices, hopes and aspirations and herein lies their significance.

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1. Kar, P. C., *op. cit.* ; *Minutes of the Assam Mission Conference, Eleventh Session*, 1911, pp. 66-7.
 2. Alemchiba, M. AO, *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland*, Kohima, (1970), pp. 160-1 ; *Third Triennial Conference*, p. 29 ; *Fourth Triennial Conference*, p. 42.

The missionaries found the valley of the Brahmaputra or Assam proper broadly divided into two parts—Lower and Upper Assam, and each again sub-divided into several districts. Demographic changes referred to by the missionaries support to a great extent official records of the period. These were approximations since no official census was taken till the seventies, and the data on which the estimates were made based on number of houses in each division and an average occupancy was taken. Naturally this was exclusive of the migratory elements like the boatman, petty traders, slaves, bondsmen and the *morokeas* or those who hired their services. Again for fear of enhancement of revenue innumerable houses were concealed from enumeration. On the other hand, amongst the tribals like the Mikirs and the Miris several families lived under the same roof which made the enumeration fictitious. The population which was 1,50,000 in 1850 rose to four millions in early 1880, the majority being Assamese, both Hindus and Mussalmans, and the rest, according to missionary papers, aboriginals and semi-Hinduised aboriginal nationalities. The bulk of the latter consisted of the Cacharis of the district of Goalpara and also of certain areas of Kamrup and Central Assam. The Ahoms of the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur were put in the same category. Over half of the Rajbansis and almost all the Hajongs of the valley were found in the district of Goalpara. The Lalungs and the Mikirs lived mostly in the districts of Nowgong and Kamrup while the immigrant Santals in the tea districts of Upper Assam.

Details of racial elements apart, flora and fauna and topography of the land, the mission records occasionally provide meteorological charts of climate and rainfall of some areas of Assam. Extreme humidity and heavy rainfall are the peculiarities of the climate of Assam. A tract covered with jungles and marshes under a subtropical climate is a dumping ground of malarial germs while dysentery, *kalazar* (black fever) and cholera were then endemic and at times carried away heavy toll of human lives. In 1851 one-tenth of the population of Gauhati was swept off by cholera. “The river has been filled with dead bodies and which now and then lodging upon the sand besides inviting crows, vultures and jackals caused such effuvia as almost to

prevent the passage of boatmen." When cholera broke out again in 1853 in several areas of Assam, Danforth reported "over 9,000 died in the district of Nowgong ; in Kamrup and Sibsagar the casualties were much greater. It was in every sense of word a land of death." Rigours of climate and epidemic notwithstanding, Brown remarks, "Assam is likely to be the richest country in India". Besides tea, iron and coal in immense quantities, the forests abound in *sum*, mulberry and other trees which fed three or four varieties of silk-worms, oil and salt-springs.

Agriculture was the mainstay of the people who raised by and large paddy, sugarcane and poppy. They produced only what was necessary, hardly was there any for sale or for a rainy day. Consequently in years of scarcity food had to be imported and in any case to feed the immigrants whose number steadily increased towards the close of the century. No wonder, therefore, a foreigner had to import from outside his requirements of daily use. The journals of course refer to the beginning of local trade at *hats* or markets which were resorted to by neighbouring villagers. In 1853 Barkar found at Rajabahar *hat*, south of Jorhat, Naga men and women bartaring ginger, cotton, pepper for salt, pewter, etc. The Nagas near Namsang, Bronson writes, lived entirely upon profits of their salt-springs and were daily seen on plains exchanging salt for their necessaries. He distributed tracts and addressed hundreds of Lalungs, Mikirs and Cacharis who thronged at the weekly *hat* at Sonarigaon on the bank of Kalang wherein rice, clothes, axes, hoes, *dahs*, etc., were bartared. Reference has also been made of a "splendid fair", for several weeks, north of Darrang. This was no other than Odalguri fair to which besides the Bhutias and the Tibetans, the Chinese and people from every part of Bengal assembled for trade.

Though extremely idolent and lacking in enterprise, the Assamese were simple-minded, good-natured and law-abiding people. The Baptists spoke eloquently of the hospitality of the Assamese. During his visits to the principal *satras* of Majuli Whiting was offered plantains, coconuts, rice and milk on behalf of the *Satradhikars*. In 1851 when Danforth refused to accept a fish from a poor man without paying for it, the latter begged

him to accept the same since he honoured him by visiting his place.

The accounts of the missionaries shed interesting light on the dress, jewellery, customs and usages of the age. In these they made no change even amongst native Christian girls although they preached a crusade against the social evils of the age—degraded position of women, child-marriage, widowhood and polygamy. To them the “twin sisters, ignorance and superstition held almost indisputable sway mutually rivalling each other in completing the degradation of the mass of the people”. In curing diseases divinations and incantations were more often resorted to than medicine which was a taboo if offered by a Christian. Barkar saw in January 1842 a Brahmin stirring some water, reading a holy book and occasionally blowing driving spirit and disease. In 1838 when the Sadiyakhwa died, it was believed that he was killed by *Dainis*. Interesting details are available in a journal of Brown, 22 October 1838, about the *Dainis* and *Bhutias* [ii, 19].

Again caste system had such a strong hold that even the poorest beggar will not receive charity if it did not conform to the doctrine of caste. The dying men would refuse medicine offered by a Christian lest he lose his caste. People refused to attend upon the sick or bury the dead who did not belong to the same caste. The Baptists felt that caste and opium were the curses in Assam. “Of the two”, Whiting remarks, “opium by far the most to be despised. An opium-eater now is not an exception, but one who does not eat it is an exception.” Without it, opium-eater would say, “his flesh would be squeezed with a thousand pincers, his throat would fill up, and it would seem he must die for want of breath.” They never failed to refer to the introduction of spirituous liquor into Assam and for this “no one was more responsible than those who bear the Christian name”. The government had, the Baptists alleged, encouraged consumption by licensing the sale and making that a source of revenue. Many of the higher classes of the natives who had abandoned Hindu faith, if not ostensibly, took to drinking and the use of liquor in general led to dissipation and ruin.

The Baptists arrived in Assam during the closing years of the Ahom monarchy when the leadership of the community was about to pass from the feudal nobility to the middle-class elite. They joined hands with celebrities like Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, Hemchandra Barua, Gunaviram Barua not only in their relentless fight against the imposition of Bengali in courts and schools in Assam but also in eradicating the social evils in Assamese society. Remaining true to their faith the gentry had free and frank discussions with the Baptists on the new religion. Bronson was highly impressed with ex-*raja* Purandar Singha when in an interview the latter made many queries about Christianity. Kameswar Singha, then called a king, despite his drunkenness, was no less inquisitive about interpretations of astronomy and geography of the missionaries whom he requested to set up a school at Jorhat. He was very anxious to learn English as well as the sciences. What was most striking to the missionaries was that even at their decadent state members of the royal family maintained their earlier pomp and dignity. When in January 1853 Mrs Whiting was received in a royal state by the widow of Purandar Singha, she found her arrayed in a magnificent dress embroidered in gold, and was surrounded by a retinue of kneeling women. On the next morning Whiting found the young prince seated in a chair over which was thrown a richly embroidered cloth. A sword rested between his knee and a pipe was clenched firmly in his hand. He smoked continuously, seldom spoke. The conversation was carried on by the attendants. Whiting thought that the family was too proud and arrogant to be the subject of the Company.

While the ex-nobility and civil officers received them cordially, Brown writes, the priests and spiritual heads disputed and bitterly opposed the missionaries. The reasons were not far to seek—the latter condemned idolatry, caste and priesthood so dear to the Hindus whether the Saktists or the Vaisnavites. They lost no opportunity to preach through their sermons, books and tracts a crusade against Hinduism and all that it stood for and spoke eloquently of the virtues of the new faith. Every Hindu, they said, had a place of worship, a temple or a *Satra* presided over by a priest or gossain who read the *sastras* and superintended

the pujas. References were made of celebration of *Durga Puja*, *Rashjatra*, *Falgutsav* and also of occasional *nam* or *hobah* where the priest read the *sastras* and dough distributed unbaked with plantains. A *Satra* was formed, writes Barkar, by a large range of continuous houses in three sides of a square, the principal building occupying the centre. *Tamul* trees (betal-nut) thickly set were in rear of the houses covered with what is indispensable to any and every Assamese the *pan* leaf. To each *Satras* was attached a number of *Bhakats* or disciples ; of these the *kewalias* remained celibate and dedicated themselves to the services of God. "Some of the *Bhakats*", says Brown, "were so precise in their sense of cleanliness that they would wash all the wood they used in cooking rice and all the money they received so that they may not be polluted. On the same care they will not touch our books nor sit with our shadow falling upon them."

Bronson compared the *Satras* with Jewish Synagogues. These were daily visited by the disciples who came to worship the priest who was called a *mahunt* or *mahajan*. With their *Bhakats* the latter subsisted on offerings and yearly payments of the disciples. Collectors frequented annually distant villages where disciples lived, and if any one refused to pay he was at once denounced and made to suffer as an outcaste. The British had also done much to uphold, as in earlier times, the power of the priests by grant of rent-free lands and the people inferred that they were favoured so because they were worthy. On religious matters, therefore, they were considered to be the supreme authority who would attend to matters necessary for their salvation. The disciples called their priests *Prabhu* or God and were much more afraid to disregard their word than to disobey the command of God.

Mention is made in the journals of the principal *Satras* of Assam—Auniati, Dakhinpat, Kamalabari and Moamara. Auniati, Barkar wrote in 1842, commanded the allegiance of about two-thirds of the people and next in importance was Dakhinpat. Whenever the high priest of Auniati move, "it is in great state, with drums and trumpets blowing and numerous retinue attending him". The *Satradhikars* of Kamalabari and Moamara, in their view, were liberal in their outlook. We have in Bronson's

journal an interesting account of the Bordua Than. "There is a great attempt", he writes, "to show an increasing effort to obtain for it a celebrity, as a holy place, like that of Benaras and other places." Even the local magistrate lent support to it by requiring the witnesses to swear at the *Manikut* (temple) of the *than* to speak the truth.

While admitting a few Brahmins to be very respectful and appeared reasonable, they deplored, priestly classes in general manifested "a surprising bitterness towards the Gospel". If books were offered they regret with scorn declaring that they should be polluted by touch. They would say, "we are afraid to send our children (to school) lest being turned away from Hindu faith, they become Christian". "If Christianity is introduced into this country", Bronson declared, "it must be through the rising generation. It is as hard for grown up Assamese to alter his customs, as it is for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard to change his spot".

There may be a certain element of exaggeration in the allegations made by the missionaries against the Brahmins and priests. Admittedly, the exactions made by the spiritual heads on their disciples, as Bronson alleged, were greater than they could endure ; all the more when they were subjected to ever-increasing demands of the government.¹ It cannot also be denied that the influence of the gossains continued to be unbounded, and in case of failure of disciples to meet their multifarious demands, they were liable to be excommunicated. They failed to realise that, as elsewhere in the country, orthodoxy was the order of the day ; yet *kulinism*, sati rite and other disabilities of men and women were conspicuous by their absence in Assam. Professor Peck made a realistic assessment when he remarked : "Compared with Bengalis now...the Assamese, though devotees of the same faith and some of the most revolting forms, may be regarded as the more hopeful, inasmuch as idolatry with these is less inveterate and priestly power more lightly hold." In fact they were "then in a process of transition". Even in the forties Barkar wrote, "The days of priestly prosperity here have passed away,

1. Barpujari, H. K., *Political History of Assam* (ed.), 1976, pp., 88ff.

the days of their existence, even, are numbered and will soon be finished." The fortunes of the priestly classes hitherto depended on the patronage of the former government. For their support the rulers not only made large rent-free grants, but provided them with *pykes* or attendants. With the change in government some of the grants had been cancelled and at the same time *pykes* were emancipated : the wealth of the country gradually passed into the hands of the cultivators and traders and consequently the condition of the priestly classes had become deplorable. As Bronson writes : "they are now put on a footing with other subjects. Their influence and income are decreasing, their places of worship tumbling down, their slaves all liberated and dissension are springing up among them". The mission reports corroborate the statement made by Jenkins that the minor religious heads were losing their respect and influence mainly because of their internal feuds and litigation in the civil courts.¹ Bronson writes that two-thirds of the cases in the court of Nowgong had their origin, directly and indirectly, of the disgruntled gossains.

The American missionaries maintained that Mussalmans in Assam being by and large descendants of the converts to Islam belong to the same ethnical stock as the Hindus. In spite of their opposition to polytheism and idolatry, they corroborated to some extent the views of Shihabuddin Talish, that "Many of them hold the doctrine of Islam very loosely, or are very ignorant of what they are".² Danforth noticed in 1853 at Basgaon on the Barnadi followers of *Ratikhowas* of the Brahmins, Sudras, and Cacharis having feast at night of the forbidden food and spirituous drink of rice. The infiltration of the cult of Shri Chaitanya and particularly the Brahmos constituted a potential danger to the missionaries. The latter had its nucleus at Nowgong and elsewhere, and its adherents composed mostly of young Hindu elite on whom the Baptists counted most for their future. The tribesmen in the plains were generally demon-worshippers ; each had its own demon and ceremonies connected with it. Some of them, the Baptists recorded, embraced Hinduism by paying an annual

1. *Infra.*, p. 194n.

2. *Infra.*, p. 217n.

fee to the religious heads, and the latter too raised no objection to their taking pork and fowl which were otherwise taboos to their disciples.

The American Baptists were the pioneers in the ethnological studies in Assam. Besides a series of articles in the *Orunodoi* they published interesting accounts of their own of the Garos, Mikirs, Miris and Nagas with whom they lived and worked. Though sketchy, Revs Clark and Rivenburg have provided salient features of the government and racial characteristics of the AOs and the Angamis [ii, 71-2]. In his journal of 1843 Barkar records that the Nagas brought down in their *horas* (baskets) cotton, ginger, pepper, etc., to the Rajabahar *hat*, south of Jorhat, where they bartared for salt, pepper and pewter. Unlike the Nagas of Namsang they were not tattooed and were well-dressed; they wore cotton cloths of their own manufacture and dyed in dark blue. Bronson papers (pp. 231ff) shed interesting light on the Eastern Nagas. Jealous of "onward March" of the English they were alarmed at the sight of Bronson whom they suspected as a spy who had come on a reconnitering mission with the object of annexing their territory. Not to speak of the Angamis, who were intensely democratic, even the *Khunbao* or the chief of the Namsangias could not arrive at a major decision without concurrence of the Council of Elders. Clans were always at feud with one another; the young had to guard the village and fight with enemies while the women had to attend to household duties and manufacture of salt—the sole means of their subsistence. As soon as they reached manhood they put into their hands *dao* and spear and taught them how to fight and make salt. Security and economic reasons thus determined the day-to-day life of the Nagas. With their limited wants they loathed hard work and in any case as a porter or day labourer. Though "dirty and blood-thirsty", the missionaries spoke eloquently of the purity of life, truthfulness and hospitality of the Nagas.

Head-hunting and inter-tribal feuds were common to both the Nagas and the Garos. While taking of head was considered by some clans essential for the image of Naga manhood, the Garos felt it to be the religious duty to provide skulls of the enemies to grace the funeral ceremonies of the deceased. Relatives

of the Garos were bound by customs "to demand blood for blood, and ought to put to death either the murderer or one of his kindred or at least one of his slaves". The implacable hatred of the Garos towards the Bengalis had been traced by the missionaries to the extortion and oppression of the Bengali Zaminders who had hitherto jurisdiction over areas bordering the hills. In spite of their vindictiveness, they surpassed the plainsmen in honesty and truthfulness. By sacrifices and offerings they appeased heavenly bodies and the spirits of the hills, rivers and forests. Having features of the Indo-Chinese family these "short" but sturdy mountaineers depended on their livestock for their livelihood. They raised cotton which was bartared in the *hats* or markets in the plains. Interesting details are furnished of these *hats* in document ii 74

The Mikirs and the Miris were on the other hand peace-loving and law-abiding people. The former occupied by and large the hills in and on the border of the district of Nowgong while the latter on the bank of the rivers of Lakhimpur. Rev Joseph Paul refers that the Miris were the offshoot of the Bor-Abors which occupied the hills north-east of Lakhimpur. Inter-tribal feuds forced them to leave the hills and settle in their new habitat under protection of the British government. They lived in small villages consisting of a number of elevated *chang* houses with three to five families in each. Ethnically Mongolian and possessed of excellent physique, the Miris directed their energies in cultivating soil, hewing timbers and rowing boats. Miri women-folk were no less industrious ; from seed time to harvest they labour in field, weave cloths apart from attending to domestic chores. To the Miris stealing and lying were sins, but these simple and truthful people were opium-eaters and rice-beer addicts. Some of them had already come under the influence of Vaisnavite *gossains* and to earn their goodwill the latter had permitted them to indulge in prohibited food and drinks.

The Mikirs too possessed immense capacity for hard work, yet they could not produce their requirement of foodstuff ; not unoften they lived on roots, tender shoots of the bamboo and even certain grasses. They cultivated rice, cotton and raised silkworms to make their garments. Like other animists they sought

to propitiate the demons and evil spirits who were supposed to have caused sickness and calamities. Subject to the British, they had an administrative system of their own under *Pinpo* or princes who were aided in deciding petty cases by officials known as *hubbais*. Every village had its headman who attended to the execution of the law rather than to the making of it.

X

“The stone is in motion” remarks Mrs Bronson in 1867 speaking of the impact of Christianity on the Assamese. Doubtless the thaw was breaking away. The impact of west and no less of Christianity, though slowly, replaced the blind faith on age-long customs and conventions by a spirit of enquiry and rationalism. Orthodoxy continued to be the order of the day, but its rigidity had gradually relaxed. Even in early fifties Maniram Dewan, an orthodox Hindu, deplored “by the reduction of all castes to the same level, the people are labouring under the deepest grief and mortification”.¹ Assamese pupils of the Brahmin families were seen studying with those of the low castes which was at one time considered highly objectionable. Learning English or going abroad were no longer considered social taboos. In their crusade against social evils—opium-eating², widowhood, polygamy—Assamese reformers were inspired to a great extent by the propagation of the American missionaries. The influence of the missionaries on the education of women was not small. Reluctance of the gentry to send their daughters to Christian schools compelled Mrs Barkar to depend on “Bazar girls”. Since sixties there was a growing desire among the educated Assamese that their daughters and wives should be taught. “Time has come”, remarks Stoddard, “we can reach them in their houses which we must do before we could gather them

1. Mills ; *Report on Assam*, 1854 ; Appendix K.B., also Barpujari, *Assam : In the Days of the Company*, 1980, p. 303.

2. The Baptists not only condemned the opium policy of the government but made repeated representation to abolish the sale of the drug except for medical purposes. *Third Triennial Conference*, p. 87 ; *Eighth Conference*, pp. 17-8.

to school".¹ Before long attempts had been made by the ladies of the mission to impart instructions to females of higher castes in *zenana* or private apartments as was done by the Women's Missionary Society in Calcutta.

Needless to say the American Baptists were the precursors of Assamese renaissance in language and literature *firstly* by opening the door to the west through their own writings and books published at the Mission Press, Sibsagar, and *secondly* by reinstating Assamese language in its rightful place in the schools and courts in Assam. It is doubtful whether the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal would have conceded to the demands of the Assamese in the teeth of opposition of the vested interests but for the strongest advocacy and protracted struggle carried on by the Baptists for over two decades. To the critics, Assamese Christian Literature being mostly translations were "lacking originality, artificial and even amusing for their perpetration of malapropism".² Despite earnest endeavours, it is true, the writers could not grasp the genius of the Assamese and in certain cases their writings betray foreign touches. Nonetheless the Baptists enriched Assamese literature by reintroducing words which were out of use and even coining simple and indigenous words. They brought out renaissance in Assamese literature both in style and content. The medieval outlook with emphasis on spiritual and supernatural themes were replaced by secular subjects and rational thinking and in its train came western literary forms—lyrics, sonnets, novel, short stories and biographies. The American missionaries "not only liberated the spirit of the Assamese from the bondage of the old world ideas of thought, but they also removed the confines of knowledge and made it quiet suitable for modern use".³

1. Writing in 1886 Miss Orell Keeler remarks, "Formerly we could only gain access to many of the higher castes by teaching some kind of needle-work. Now we are usually made welcome and can get a hearing, most opposition from higher castes, Brahmins and Mussalmans, though there." *Jubilee Papers*, p. 187.
2. Baruah, B. K., *Modern Assamese Literature*, p. 5.
3. Neog, D., *New Light on the History of Assamiya Literature*, pp. 360-1.

Opinions are also divided amongst scholars and anthropologists as to the impact of Christianity on the primitive tribes. Verrier Elwin remarks : "The activities of the Baptist missionaries among the Nagas have demoralised the people, destroyed tribal solidarity and forbidden the joys and feasting, the decorations and romance of communal life."¹ J. H. Hutton also deplores : "old beliefs and customs are dying, the old traditions are being forgotten, the number of Christian or quasi-Christians is steadily increasing, and the spirit of change is invading and pervading every aspect of village life."² While appreciating the educational and humanitarian activities of the mission, Haimendorf observes : "That with a little more understanding and sympathy for the Naga culture they might have brought more happiness to their folk and avoided many of the more unfortunate results of a sudden clash of cultures."³ D. R. Mankekar on the other hand believes that "they have been Christians for hardly four generations and therefore psychologically, temperamentally and environmentally they have not changed much".⁴ In a similar strain Downs argues : "Many elements in the traditional life on the surface of it seem to have been abandoned by the Christians in fact appeared in different guise under the new order."⁵

There can be no rebuttal that the missionaries forbade the Nagas not only raiding and head-hunting, but drinking wine (*madhu*) and celebrating ancient rites and ceremonies (*genna*, feasts of merit) which were part and parcel of the life of the community. Likewise Christian Garos discarded earlier practices of propitiating by sacrifices the spirits and demons in hills besides replacing traditional music for Christian hymns, folk community dance for Western dance and sacrifices for foreign medicines.

1. Elwin, Verrier, *The Aborigines*, Oxford Pamphlet on Indian Affairs ; Cited in Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, p. 120.

2. Hutton, J. H., *Angami Nagas*, 1921, pp. vii-viii.

3. Haimendorf, C. V. F., *The Naked Nagas*, 1962, pp. 56-7, "Social and Cultural Change among the Konyak Nagas", *Highlander*, i, 1973, pp. 3ff.

4. Mankekar, D. R., "Understanding The Tribals on our North-Eastern Border" ; Singh, S., *Tribal Situation in India*, 1972, p. 113.

5. Downs, F. S., *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 216.

J. P. Mills is certainly in the right when he says¹ : “By putting a stop to head-hunting the British government has profoundly changed the mode of life of all the tribes in the administered area.” This was “the very core of the Naga culture based upon the concept of fertility...The stone walls and palisades, village gates majestically decorated with human heads, feasts of merit flamboyant head-dress, elaborate textiles with patterns of symbolic of head-hunting are intimately bound up with this basic activity”.² The introduction of an all powerful alien rule, development in communication, money-economy and material benefits made the changes inevitable. Profound was also the influence of evangelisation on the life and thought of the tribesmen. The Baptists established churches, started schools and opened hospitals. They taught the warring communities the value of peace, toleration and peaceful coexistence. The process of acculturation was accelerated by the spread of the gospel, expansion of education, introduction of Roman script, translation and publication of the Bible and literary works. Christian ideas of brotherhood and Western education widened their mental horizon and pushed them, in the words of an eminent Naga scholar, “out of the thought of seclusion and isolation from which they were suffering for ages into open ideals and civilization of the people of the world”.³

“Backed and protected by the British administration”, D. R. Mankekar remarks,⁴ “these missionaries converted the tribes to Christianity in large numbers and reclaimed them to civilisation and in the process, raised yet another wall (between the hill tribes and the plainsmen) cultural and religious.” It is true, Hinduisation did not infiltrate into inaccessible hills, yet there had been frequent contacts between the peoples of the two regions. In fact for ages past the fortunes of the two were inextricably interwoven. For their forbearance and good behaviour hitherto the

1. Mills, J. P., *AO Naga Tribes of Assam*, 1925, p. 104.

2. Haldipur, R. N., “Policy Towards and Administration of the Tribes of North-East India”, Singh *op. cit.*, p. 307.

3. Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, 1974, p. 120.

4. Mankekar, D. R., *op. cit.*, p. iii ; Goswami, B. B., “The Tribes of Assam : A Few Comments, etc.” ; Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

Assam rulers granted the hill-chiefs certain rights in the plains to provide them with their requirements of foodstuff and other necessities. The hills were always open to the plainsmen while the hillmen not only frequented but many had their settlements in the plains. Assamese was the language of their communication and even amongst the tribes of diverse dialects. The intercourse between the two peoples naturally tended to a process of assimilation and in any case at border areas. Sources archival and indigenous bear testimony to the fact that the Assamese gossains or religious heads succeeded in initiating some of the Eastern Nagas and at times even in mediating in their inter-tribal feuds. In case the process continued unabated, it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, on the part of the American missionaries to make much headway in these hills. Instead of carrying on their activities with redoubled vigour at a time that was greatly needed, the religious heads frittered away their energies in domestic quarrels and thereby paved the way for the success of the missions. Backed by the Christian rulers the missionaries provided the hillmen all they needed—educational, spiritual and material. With their extraordinary power of adaptability they succeeded in winning the hearts of tribesmen, as Alemchiba AO explains, “by medical work, by missionary propaganda, by display of culture somewhat regarded as higher, by objects of trade (*and*) by administration.”¹ The growing attachment to the newcomers was followed by a corresponding indifference to their neighbour below which was accentuated in no less degree by the *Inner Line Regulations* (1873). Western education and thought roused the tribesmen from their torpor to assert their rights : political, economic and cultural. There is already “a search for a sense of identity, for a sense of belonging and for self-determination in a new social order” borne out of an apprehension, as explained by Nihar-ranjan Ray, “that being drawn into the mainstream of contemporary Indian life would mean their complete absorption by the larger and more dominant society of which by far the largest in number are Hindus”.² This search for distinct identity inevitably

1. Alemchiba, M. AO, “Problems of Readjustment to a New Situation”, Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

79. Ray Niharranjan, “Introductory Lecture” ; Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-3.

opened the breach between the peoples of the hills and the plains into an yawning gulf in recent times.

Again there has been much uproar against the missionaries that they were mainly instrumental in fomenting political unrest amongst the hillmen of North-East India.¹ "The missionaries did very good work," observes Prime Minister Nehru, "and I have all praise for them, but politically speaking, they did not particularly like the changes in India. In fact, just when a new political awareness dawned on India, there was a movement in North-Eastern India to encourage the people of the North-East India to form separate and independent States. Many foreigners (missionaries) resident in the area supported this movement."² True, the missionaries converted animist tribes into Christianity and brought them into contact with the Western thought through English education ; but there is hardly any evidence, barring perhaps a few individual cases, that the missionaries ever made any organised move to set up an independent State or instigated the tribesmen to unfurl the standard of revolt against the Indian government. In fact political unrest or separatist tendencies of some of these tribes was the endeavour on their part for the assertion of separate identity, political and cultural, following British pull out of India.³ They were inspired in no less extent by the insurrectionary movements

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1. Assam Chief Minister Bishnuram Medhi had said on December 2, 1953, "I cannot think of any demand for Independent Sovereign Naga State raised by a few handful of leaders, mostly Christians. And probably this demand was raised by interested foreign missionaries to keep them isolated from the rest of India." Alemchiba, M. AO, *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland*, p. 75.
 2. The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India ; *The Adivasis*, 1955, p. 4.
 3. "From a structural analysis", observes B. K. Roy Burman, "It is immaterial whether certain agencies like foreign missionaries... have been involved in the posture of defiance on the part of small communities concerned. Even if these agencies were not there, more or similar developments would have taken place. It is significant to note that in Burma, one of the most important ethnic group defying the authority of Central Government is the Shans who were Buddhists of the same denomination as the other Burman." "Integrated Area Approach to the Problems of the Hill Tribes of North-East India," Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-3.

beyond the borders—Burma, Malaya or Indonesia in the wake of Japanese invasions.¹

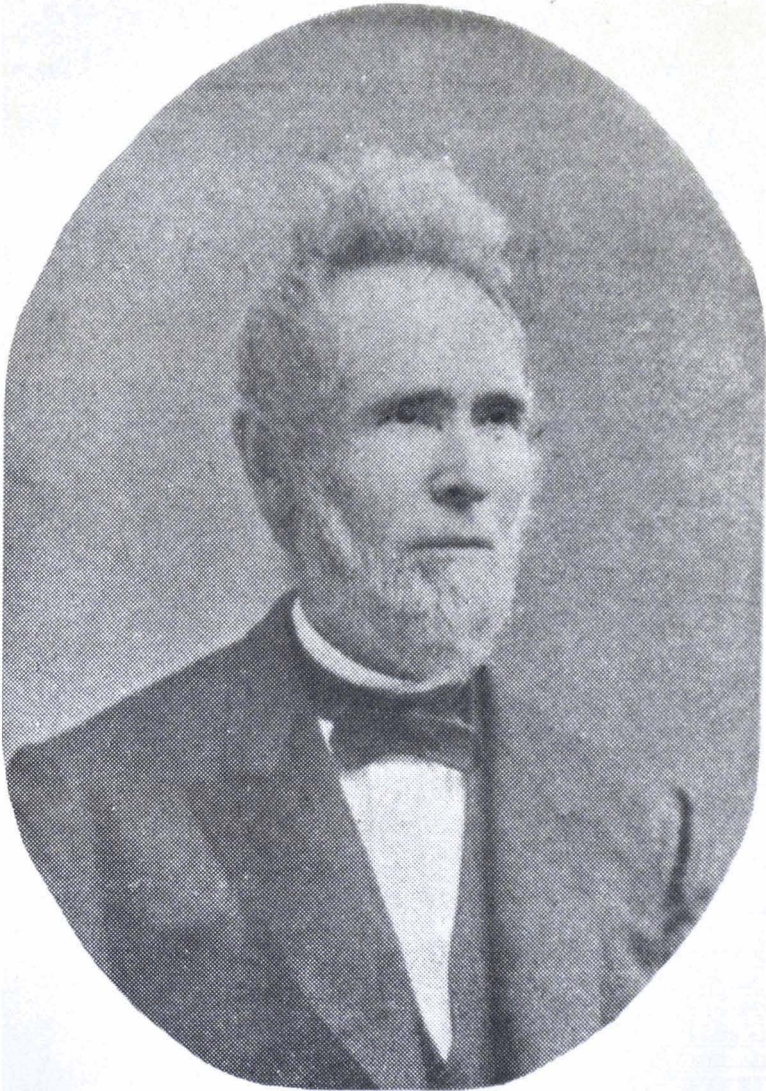
The cross followed the British flag ; the case was, however, otherwise in North-Eastern India. Here the early missionaries had been invited for reasons of their own by the local authorities. The foreign missionaries were also well aware that they could not carry on their operations without the protection and support of the established government. In spite of occasional dispute and differences, therefore, they remained steadfastly loyal to the British and later to Indian government. In their evangelisation, doubtless, at times they denounced rituals and religions of the non-Christians, but a perusal of the mission papers in original, particularly of the American Baptists, would reveal that they hardly acted in a manner as would embarrass the government.² There is a tendency even at highly responsible quarters to condemn the British or their agents whatever they did in India. An unbiased and impartial observer cannot but admit that these missionaries were the only foreigners who landed in India with no other motive than the spread of the gospel. It would be highly ungenerous—nay an act of ingratitude to start a campaign of vilification against that very agency which rendered yeoman service in regenerating the Assamese at a crucial period apart from redeeming the primitive tribes from their utter backwardness.

1. See Barpujari, *Problem of the Hill Tribes, North-East Frontier*, iii, pp. 335-6.

2. The American Consul-General was placed in an embarrassing situation in 1921 when some missionaries not only met Gandhiji in his arrival at Jorhat, but attended his public meeting at the *maidan*. "We are sitting on a magazine", remarks Rev. A. J. Tuttle, "I hope all of us do all in our power to counteract the effect of our seeming sympathy with those who are working against the government." (*ABFMS*, Tuttle, August 30, and September 10, 1921). On the other hand when the Congress accepted office in 1938, the Foreign Secretary advised the head of the missions not to adopt a hard and fast policy as would make it difficult for the Christian representatives to discharge their duties in the Assembly or in office. "The need for a Christian impact in government is so...important that we (should not) set them apart as a class distinct from their fellow citizens." (*Ibid.*, Foreign Secretary, September 10, 1941).

PART ONE

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION



Rev. NATHAN BROWN : 1807—1886
By Courtesy : D. K. Datta, Kingston, R. I.



Rev. MILES BRONSON : 1812—1883
By Courtesy : D. K. Datta, Kingston, R. I.

MISSION TO THE SHANS

We have the pleasure of announcing to our readers that the Board are on the point of realizing their long cherished hopes of introducing the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ among this numerous and benighted people. Rev. Mr. Brown, recently of the Mission at Maulmein, has already been set apart to the work, and will enter upon it with the least possible delay. It is expected, also, that one of the printers at Maulmein, with a printing press, will accompany him.

The station, at which it is proposed to commence operations, is *Sudiya*, situated in the northeastern extremity of Assam, about 400 miles north of Ava, and “at the northernmost point of territory inhabited by the great Shan family”. The attention of the Board has been specially directed to this point, in consequence of a letter addressed to Mr. Trevelyan, of the Civil Service, Calcutta, by Captain F. Jenkins, Governor General’s Agent and Commissioner in Assam, resident at Gowahatti. The letter was written in reply to one from Mr. Trevelyan, in which he had enclosed a communication from the Corresponding Secretary of the Board to Rev. Wm. H. Pearce, of the English Baptist Mission, Calcutta,—and is dated Gowahatti, 10th March, 1835.

“The ground I would particularly wish to bring to their notice, (Capt. J. says in this letter,) is the north-eastern district of Assam, occupied by two tribes of the great Shan family, the Khamtis and the Sing-phos. The dialects of these tribes differ very little from the Siamese and Burmese, and the characters in use are essentially the same; and, in consequence of the supremacy of the Burmese being established over the original provinces whence our Shans came, with the inhabitants of which they are in constant communication, the Burmese language is in a measure known to all these tribes”.

Capt. Jenkins proceeds to remark that the labors of our Missionaries in Burmah “would be, with very little difficulty made available for the district round Sudiya, and here they

(the missionaries from Burmah) would labor under the protection of our government, and not be liable to those checks which the Rangoon Mission has constantly suffered from the jealousy and barbarity of the Ava government. The Shans, too, with whom the Mission at Sudiya would be brought in contact, are a much finer and more intelligent people than the Burmese, and ten times as numerous. Their kindred races extend throughout the country whence arise all the mighty rivers from the Burhampooter to Kianguan (the river of Nankin) ; they occupy entirely the two frontier provinces of Ava—Hookoom and Moongkoom ; they occupy all the east bank of the Irrawaddy ; they stretch down the salwen to Tenasserim. Laos, and Siam, and Cochin China are their proper countries ; they compose half the population of Yunnan, a great proportion of that of Salwen, and stretch up into that district that has always baffled the Chinese, between Thibet, Tartary and Lechuen ; whilst Assam is chiefly populated by the overflowings of this great people. The Cacharese are Shans ; and the governing race of Upper Assam for many centuries,—the Ahoms—are a tribe from the highest eastern sources of the Irrawaddy, and until very lately they kept up a communication with their parent stock. Here is an ample field. It is indeed boundless ; for it extends over all the north and west of China, (for such is the extent of communication that we command from Sudiya,) and it embraces some of the most fertile and most temperate countries on the face of the earth”.

A copy of the letter from which we have made the above extracts, was forwarded to the Board, with other documents, by Mr. Pearce, under date ‘Calcutta, April 21,’ and was received prior to the departure of Mr. Malcom, in September. A duplicate of the same was transmitted to the Mission at Maulmein. Within a few days, letters have arrived from Maulmein, giving intelligence of the reception of Mr. P’s communication, and of the measures immediately consequent thereon. The following is an extract from a letter of Mr. Brown, dated Maulmein, June 9. We present it at this time on account of the interesting view it gives of the relation which the mission at Sudiya will bear upon other operations of the Board in South-Eastern Asia. Referring

to the eventual establishment of a "connected line of operations from Sudiya, so as to meet the labors of Mr. Jones and the other Siam missionaries, at the other extremity of the region occupied by the Shans," Mr. B. says, "You will easily see, by inspecting the map, that br. Jones can ascend the Siam river about two thirds of the distance to Sudiya. A large portion of the remaining distance is traversed by the northern branches of the Salwen and Erawadi (Irrawaddy). This chain being completed, the whole western border of China will be open to us. There is little doubt". Mr. B. adds, that at the present time, Sudiya is the most feasible entrance, from the interior, to the empire of China. It is, in fact, precisely such a point of approach as the Board contemplated in their late resolutions. It is situated near the head waters of the Kiangku or Nankin river, which runs directly through the centre of China. The passage over to China from Ava may hereafter be practicable, but at present it would not be allowed by the Burman government. Dr. Richardson, of this place, who has travelled extensively through Burmah and the Shan country, informs me that he endeavored to obtain permission to proceed up the Erawadi a little above Ava, but was prevented by Government. Others have made the same attempt, but have uniformly been prohibited from going higher up the river than Ava. The last year a Roman Catholic Missionary went up the Erawadi for this very purpose of penetrating into China, but was stopped at Ava and sent back. Mr. B. also speaks of a line of communication that may be formed with the Mission at Ava, "through the Katheh or Cassay country, the capital of which is Manipur, nearly in a line between Sudiya and Ava, and about 200 miles distant from each. Manipur district is said to be a very populous and fine country, and is independent of the Burmese government".

It will be gratifying to our Christian friends to know that the designation of Mr. B. to Sudiya has met his hearty concurrence, and that, in consequence of the affinity of the Shan language with the Burmese, as well as the knowledge of Burmese so extensively prevalent in that region, he will be able to use to good advantage his familiarity with the latter, and almost

immediately on his arrival at the Station, to engage in active missionary labors.— For the sake of presenting to our readers a further view of the importance of Sudiya as a missionary field, especially in the facilities it affords for extending the knowledge of Christ throughout adjacent provinces, and for the enlargement and success of the Missions already organized to evangelize Burmah, Siam and China, we subjoin a few remarks from Messrs. Trevelyan and Pearce, accompanying the above communication from Gowahatti. Mr. T. says :—

“From this point (Sudiya) an impression may be made upon Burmah, from an exactly opposite quarter from that at which it has been heretofore entered by the missionary. The communication is open with Yunnan, the westernmost province of China, and it is the intention of the Indian government to send a mission there by this route, next cold season, for the purpose of inquiry about the culture of the tea plant. On the other side, Bhutan, and Thibet, and more countries and people than we have any accurate knowledge of at present, are open to the messengers to the Gospel ; and, lastly, the Shan language, which is near akin to the Burmese and Siamese, and belongs to the Chinese family, furnishes a ready means of intercourse with perhaps a greater number of people than any other language in the world, except Chinese itself.”

The following is the language of Mr. Pearce :

“It appears evident that an effectual door is opened for the establishment of a branch of your Mission to the northeast of Assam. I must confess I shall feel truly happy if you feel inclined to enter it. Its geographical situation with relation to your Mission seems to render it particularly desirable. Sudiya, the place referred to, is rather less to the north of Ava than Rangoon is to the south. You might gradually descend from the British post, or ascend from the Burman capital, as political feelings might render most judicious, to Manipur, an interesting little state on the line between Sudiya and Ava, and thus establish a central station to support the extremities of your line of operations. The nearest missionary station already occupied, is Gowahatti in Assam, further from Sudiya to the west than Manipur is to the south, and where the A'ssamese only is spoken ; so that

there is not the least danger of collision with any other body.”*

We would here take occasion to acknowledge the truly Christian kindness with which, from the first, Messrs. Pearce and Trevelyan have interested themselves in the establishment of the proposed Mission, and their prompt and zealous co-operation in furthering the designs of the Board. We would note particularly the forecast with which, in anticipation of the *formal* action of the Board, they made direct communication of the success of their efforts both to the Board and to their missionaries at Maulmein. The natural result of this measure will be to hasten, by nearly a year, the promulgation of the Gospel among a people hitherto shut out from all knowledge of Christ and His salvation. It is also matter of grateful acknowledgement that God has raised up for the furtherance of his gracious designs in the commencement of a Mission to the Shans, so valuable an auxiliary in the gentleman first addressed by Mr. Trevelyan. Captain Jenkins is represented to be a “man of activity, intelligence and benevolent feeling, whose character and exertions and very high in the estimation of Government,” and who will probably retain the situation he now holds so long as he stays in that country. The part he has already taken in favor of the location of a Mission at Sudiya, evinces the deep interest he feels in the object, and assures us that no exertions of his will be wanting to secure its successful prosecution. We venture to give the following additional extract from his letter to Mr. Trevelyan, as indicative of his views in regard to the importance of the measure. “No attention of mine should of course be wanting to make the place comfortable to any missionaries, and I will be willing to contribute my mite to their establishment. You may mention, that I will subscribe 1,000 rupees, if a family is settled as a Mission at Sudiya, and who have had a press at work for six months I will be happy to double that sum, if I remain in charge of the Province.” (*BMM 1837, pp. 19-21.*)

* “The plan of establishing a mission in Assam was also recommended by other important considerations...It was hoped that beneath the protection afforded by the East India Company, the missionaries might join the caravans, that yearly traded to the interior of China, and thus while the jealous mandarins were excluding foreigners from the ports, they might plant christianity in the heart of the empire.” (Gammel, W., *History of the American Baptist Mission* (1850), pp. 212-3,

EARLY OPERATIONS

MISSION AT SADIYA

2. *Journal of Brown, Sadiya, March 23, 1836 (Excerpts)*: Arrived at Sudiya, after a tedious journey of four months from Calcutta. On this spot we hope to spend the remainder of our days. Since leaving America, a great portion of our time has been spent in journeying, which has of course been to little profit. Henceforth, we regard this as our permanent location, from which nothing but the most unforeseen circumstances can make it our duty to remove.

Sadiya is beautifully situated in the centre of a spacious plain, surrounded by mountains, which form a regular amphitheatre, and bound the horizon on all sides, except for a short distance at the southwest. The climate is temperate and healthy, and the soil is extremely fertile and capable of producing almost every variety of fruit. The population, however, is sparse, as is the case with all A'sám, owing to the Burmese and other wars which formerly depopulated the country.

March 24 : Moved into the house belonging to Capt. Charlton, which he has kindly allowed us to occupy during his absence. He has gone to Calcutta, and from thence is to proceed to the Cape of Good Hope, for the recovery of his health, he having been severely wounded in the late engagements with the Singphos.

March 26 : Went out to take a survey of the place. Visited three or four villages, scattered around at a distance of two or three miles from each other. The old village of Sadiya (which now contains only about thirty or forty houses,) consists mostly of A'sámese, with a few Khamti or Shyan families, among whom is the former chief of this district, an intelligent man who wishes to send his son to school. The other villages which I visited were also mostly A'sámese, and of about the same size. Went on as far as Gurmura creek, a small stream emptying into the Dikrong, a branch of the Dibong. This creek bounds the district

of Sadiya on the north, as the Kuril* does on the east. Here I found a Khamti village of perhaps twenty houses, and a monastery with six or eight priests. Found their language the same as that of the Shyans north of Ava, and their religion the same as the of the Burmans, though they appeared very ignorant, and could not even repeat the five commands of Gaudama. Oh Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon this dark corner of the earth ; and fill these vallies with thy praise.

The number of men paying taxes in the district of Sadiya this year is 1138, which would give a population of about 4000, of whom 2500 are A'sámese, and 1500 Khamtis.

April 11 : Went over to Suikhwa, on the other side of the river, in company with Mr. Bruce†, Superintendent of the Tea plantations, which are about to be conducted here on a large scale. Although it is many years since the tea plant was discovered in these regions, yet it is only within one or two years that the subject has attracted the attention of Government. Last year a deputation consisting of Dr. Wallich‡, and several other gentlemen, was sent up to examine the grounds. Many thousands of tea plants were also sent up, fresh from China, which are to be transplanted at Suikhwa. There is no doubt that in a few years the tea trade will be carried on here extensively. This will produce a great change in the country—will fill it with a dense population, and convert these now almost impenetrable jungles into the happy abodes of industry. If the means of grace are employed, may we not also hope that it will become a *garden of the Lord* ?

Visited several of the villages at Suikhwa, the population of which is composed of Asamese, Singphos, Khamtis, and Miris. The number of men paying taxes in the district is 1000, which will give a population of about 3500, somewhat less than that of Sadiya. Schools might be established in each of the villages

* River Kundil, not Kuril.

† Brother of Robert Bruce, discoverer of tea-plant in Assam, Charles Bruce was the superintendent of the government experimental tea-plantation in Upper Assam.

‡ Wallich, Dr. N., Superintendent Botanical Gardens, Calcutta,

at Suikhwa, to great advantage. There are very few, if any, who can read.

June 11 : Mrs. Cutter and Mrs. Brown opened their school last Monday, Mrs. Brown taking the boys, and Mrs. Cutter the girls. The number of boys present the first day was six, but has since increased to twenty, five of whom are learning English. We teach them from the elementary books published by the American Sunday School Union, such as the Union Primer, Nursery-Book, &c. A collection of these books was generously furnished us at Calcutta by Mr. Trevelyan. They are the best books to use in teaching scholars English, which can be obtained, inasmuch as they combine simplicity of style with religious instruction. Our stock will soon be exhausted ; but cannot a further supply be furnished us, either by the Board, or by the S.S. Society ? Nowhere, we think, could Sabbath school books be more useful, than among the native youth of India, whose eagerness to learn English is truly astonishing. How important that those few who do learn English, should imbibe the principles of the Christian religion with it. One or two hundred copies of each of the elementary works, as the Spelling Book, Primer, Nursery-Book, Scripture Lessons, Two Lambs, Simple Rhymes, &c., with a good supply of New Testaments, printed in fair type, to be used in our mission schools, might prove the means of incalculable good.

July 2 : Mr. Bruce returned from a tour into the Singpho country, whither he has been in search of more tea. He has discovered six or eight new spots where the plant is growing wild, and has engaged the Singphos to put them under immediate cultivation. Mr. Bruce speaks of Ningru, a place on the Buri Dihing river, three days' journey south from this place, as likely to become a central situation for the tea business, and as being a good location for a missionary to the Singphos. The banks of the river are very high at Ningru, thirty feet or more, which would undoubtedly render it a healthy situation.

CHRISTIAN COLONY

3. *Journal of Brown, July 20, 1836* : Capt. Jenkins has suggested that it would be a good plan for our mission to

take up a quantity of land, on such terms as Government are willing to grant waste land, viz. rent free for fifteen or twenty years, for the sake of establishing a Christian colony, somewhat on the plan of the Moravians*, or such a one as br. Mason has at Matamyu. I mention the proposal to you, in order that the Board may make such recommendation as they think proper. Such a colony, if properly established and superintended by a Christian farmer from America, would, I should think, be of great advantage in a country like this, and would be a radiating point whence a religious influence might be extensively spread. But, in order to do anything effectually, the business should not be done by missionary laborers, but by some lay brother, sent out expressly for the purpose. Such a person would not need any support from the Board after the first year or two, as the establishment would necessarily bring in considerable profits. The soil around Sadiya is inferior to none in the world, and produces all the tropical fruits, and would produce nearly if not quite all those of the temperate regions. There would be a good sale for every thing raised ; and other missionaries having such a market to go to, would not be necessitated, as now, to spend a great portion of their time in producing the necessaries of life. As it is now, we are obliged to keep our own cows, make out own butter, &c., and raise all our own vegetables.

REINFORCEMENT : THOMAS AND BRONSON

4. *Journal of Brown, May 7* : Heard of the arrival of two new missionaries at Calcutta for Sadiya, which gave us great joy. It is a bad season of the year to come up the river, on account of the heavy rains and strong currents, which make the navigation extremely difficult during the months of July and August. May our brethren be preserved from every danger ?

June 10 : Have been sick for nearly a month, with ague and fever. Of course, I have been obliged to relinquish all

* Inhabitants of Moravia, now a part of Czechoslovakia, the Moravians were protestants who sent missions to backward areas with the object of spreading the gospel with useful education,

business. All the rest of our little company have been affected more or less with fevers. This is what we must expect in becoming naturalized to a new climate.

June 19 : Have been putting up a school-house, in which Mrs. Brown will endeavor to collect the village girls. Mrs. Cutter teaches the boys' school, which now contains about forty scholars. They appear to be making rapid progress, and are very ambitious to learn. Mrs. Brown commenced the girls' school to-day, with ten scholars.

DEATH OF THOMAS

5. *Annual Report, A'S A'M, (1837)* : The reinforcement to this mission, consisting of Messrs. Thomas and Bronson and their wives, arrived at Calcutta April 11th, and at Gowahati, in A'sám, June 3, in safety. A part of the remaining voyage was also accomplished prosperously, but on the 25th of June Mr. Bronson fell dangerously sick of jungle fever. About the same time it was found impracticable to force the budgerow* up the river, against the rapid current, and Mr. Thomas was deputed to Sadiya for aid. The melancholy issue is known. Mr. Thomas had scarcely come within sight of the mission premises, when a large tree falling across his body as he sat in his boat, and bearing him under the water, he was almost instantaneously bereft of life. His remains were deposited, the following day, in the mission grounds. His afflicted widow and companions in travel, reached Sadiya July 17.

Mrs. Thomas will continue to be associated in the mission with Mr. and Mrs. Bronson, and will constitute a part of their family. The immediate object of their attention will be the acquisition of the A'sámese and Singpho languages—the A'sámese, as being the common language of the country, and the Singpho, because their labors will be directed chiefly to the benefit of the Singpho tribe. On obtaining an adequate knowledge of these languages, they propose to commence a new station at Ningru, on the river Buri Dihing, from four to six days'

* Indigenous boat over 20 feet long.

journey south-east of Sadiya, where it is designed to establish a military post, under the command of Capt. Hannay, favourably known at the Ava station, in Burmah.

Messrs. Brown and Cutter will labor primarily, as before stated, for the A'sámese, and the Shyan tribe of Khamtis. The languages of both these tribes Mr. Brown has reduced to the system of Romanizing adopted in other East Indian dialects ; and in conformity with the same, has begun the preparation of books and tracts. The following were prepared prior to July, 1837 ; a spelling-book, of 48 pp., 16mo., in English, A'sámese, and Shyan or Tai ; an A'sámese tract, of 32 pp., consisting of the Parables of Christ, following for the most part a translation by Dr. Carey, printed in 1820 ; a Shyan (?) version of Christ's Sermon on the mount, and a Catechism. Of the first two, 500 copies each have been printed, and nearly all of the third was in type July 1. Other works will be issued with all practicable despatch. A printing-office has been erected, and supplied with a competent printing apparatus, including two printing-presses, a standing press, &c., the services of a native assistant have been secured, and others can be trained to the work as may be required. In the compilation of works, the missionaries will have the use of a complete set of the American Sunday School Union publications, generously granted by that Society. (*BMM*, 1838, pp. 159-60)

RESOLUTIONS OF THE MISSION

6. *Bronson to Bolles**, Sadiya, November 1, 1837 (Excerpt) : In accordance with a Resolution passed by the brethren at this station, it becomes my duty to lay before you the doings of our little body as that have from time to time expressed in the Resolutions that have been adopted. Our chief object in doing is to give the Board a better insight into the wants of the people as with as our intimate acquaintance with our plans of operations.

28 July, 1837 : The missionary brethren having met for

* Bolles, Rev. Lucious, Corresponding Secretary, *ABFMS*, Boston,

the transaction of business the following resolutions were unanimously adopted.

That we appoint Bro Bronson commencing the study of the Singpho language with a view to the establishment of a station of that tribe as soon as practicable either at Ningroo or at some other place in the Buridihing river.

That Bro Bronson will always have access of Asamese and Asamese is the general medium of communication throughout the country. We think it desirable that he should obtain a knowledge of that language in communication with the Singphos.

That we advice Bro Bronson to remain at Sadiya until he should have acquired sufficient knowledge of the native language to commence his mission labors.

BRONSON AT JAIPUR

7. *Letter of Bronson, June 5, 1838* : On our arrival, Capt. Hannay and Mr. Bruce welcomed us, and most kindly met all our wants. We are living in Mr. Bruce's house, the half of which he has given up to us, until we can furnish ourselves with a temporary dwelling for the rains. The liberality and kindness of these esteemed gentlemen might put to the blush many who make much higher pretensions to piety and liberality.

We found that Capt. H. and his energetic companion, apprised of our intention to make this a missionary station, had been gathering children for a school. Mrs. H. had indeed taught them herself daily. We immediately invited them into our dining-room, and opened a school of twenty scholars. They are mostly boys from good families. Two are Dewanios*; several are Mussulmans ; several of the Brahmin caste. I have one assistant in the school, that had been trained for several months by Mrs. Cutter at Sadiya. He reads some English, is improving rapidly in writing, and reads both the native A'sámese and the Roman character very well. He is of great assistance to Mrs. Bronson in teaching the smaller

* *Doaneahs*, a tribe having mixed parentage of the Assamese and the Singphos.

children. As he understands the Singpho, I am hoping that, after a little more instruction, he will be useful to me in preparing Singpho books. I have also in my family a very promising Singpho lad, of 12 years of age. He entered Mrs. Cutter's school a few months ago. He can now read the Romanized A'sámese quite well, and has also commenced the English. His parents are pure Singphos, and have given the lad to me to educate. I am supporting him myself, with the hope that after he can read English readily, he will be a valuable assistant in making translations, and in teaching Singpho schools. His name is Gham. I consider it a very rare opportunity, as I have in no other instance been able to obtain a Singpho lad even for the schools. There is another lad, of eighteen, that has come from Jurhath on purpose to learn to read. He is from a very respectable family, and manifests the greatest application and diligence in his studies. He is also studying English, with a wish to become a teacher. The school has been steadily increasing, and we now number thirty-two. Capt. Hannay is generously building a school-house near my dwelling ; and I am expecting two Naga lads to join the school soon. The situation for a military and a missionary station, is most beautiful. The bank is very high and never overflowed. In this respect it is much superior to Sadiya, as almost the whole surface of that part of the country is often under water.

I am just now building a temporary house. Our time is fully occupied in the care of the school, and in the study of the languages. Although our advantages for study are superior to those ourselves settled in the midst of the people, whose language we are to acquire. Next cold season, I am contemplating, with no small interest, a tour among the Nagas.* I intend to visit their highest hills, and ascertain what their feelings are concerning the permanent location of missionaries among them. I feel a degree of confidence that my high hopes of this numerous tribe will not be disappointed, but that God is about to give his glorious gospel success among them.

* See Section XII.

June 25 : Capt. Hannay has just been promoted to the station of second in command of Upper A'sám. This opens to us still brighter prospects, and not a little encourages our hearts ; for the missionaries have ever found in this gentleman and his lady friends, and well wishers to all our enterprizes. It is in agitation to remove the head-quarters of military operations, from Bishunath to Sadiya ; in which case Capt. H. is to remain here, and this is to be enforced. But if this change is not made, Capt. H. will remove to Sadiya, and this will only be an inferior outpost. In either case, the general interests of both mission stations., Sadiya and Jaipur, will be advanced.

8. *Journal of Bronson, April 17* : Have had a long conversation with Capt. H. concerning the Singphos. He does not think them a promising people for missionary effort, at present. They are now in an irritable state. They do not look to us as superiors. They are very treacherous and revengeful. He thinks it safer stopping at this place than at Ningru, on that account.

He speaks of the Nagas. They regard us as superior to themselves, and incline to books. They almost universally speak A'sámese, so that, although their language has many dialects, by employing the A'sámese, they can at once be learning divine truth.

THE SERAMPUR MISSION

9. *Bronson to Peck*, Gowahatty, June 6, 1837* : Last sabbath we spent with the English Baptist Missionaries Reverend Messers Rae and Robinson. The Mission at this place was established in 1829 by Mr. Rae who has been here since that time. Mr. Robinson has been connected with the Mission about a year. They have no native church, no schools, no elementary books prepared, neither grammar nor dictionary of the languages.

As the Serampur establishment was about to fail entirely, Mr. Rae is to leave in a few (months) for another part of India where he is to superintendent one of the native Government

* Peck, Rev. Professor Solomon, Corresponding (later Foreign) Secretary, ABFMS, Boston.

schools so that Gowahatty will probably be abandoned by Serampur establishment.

EXTENSION OF OPERATIONS PROPOSED

10. *Letter of Brown and Cutter, May 10, 1838* : Having ascertained that the English Baptist missionaries have determined on vacating A'sám as a missionary field, in favor of their American brethren, we feel impelled to address you on the importance of commencing operations throughout this province with the least possible delay.

You are aware of the wide extent and variety of tribes who inhabit the Brahmaputra Valley, and the many advantages it possesses as a missionary field. Situated as we are, under the full toleration of the English government, in fact encouraged and supported by some of its highest functionaries, the missionary is exempt from those embarrassments and dangers, to which, from the opposition of the ruling powers, he is subject in most heathen lands.

The climate we believe to be generally healthy, except in particular situations, where exposure to the influence of extensive jungles produces a tendency to fever during the rainy months.

The population is sparse, when compared with that of Bengal, though it is probably much more dense, on the average, than that of Arracan, or the British possessions in Burmah.

We shall, at present, only point out a few of the principal situations to which we think missionaries ought to be immediately sent.

1. Another missionary to the Shyans, to reside at Silim ; or some other village in the vicinity of Sadiya.

2. A missionary to the Singphos, to be associated with br. Bronson, either at Jaipur or Ningru, on the Buri Dihing ; and perhaps another to labor among the Singphos, near Sadiya, making his principal station at Bisa, on the No Dihing, about three days' journey above this place.

3. A missionary to the Nagas, to join br. Bronson at Jaipur, until a more eligible station can be fixed upon. The Nagas are the same tribe as the Khyens of Burmah, and must be very

numerous, although we have no certain information whether they all speak one language.

4. A missionary to the Miris, or Abors inhabiting the plains of A'sám, speaking the same language as the Abors who inhabit the mountains between here and Tibet.

5. A missionary to labor among the A'sámese, in the territories belonging to the Motok Raja.

6. A missionary to the A'sámese to be stationed at Jurhath.* This place has long been the seat of the A'sám Rajas, and is considered the capital of Upper A'sám. It has a considerable population, and the country around will afford ample room for missionary labors.

7. Two missionaries to Gowahati, the capital of Lower A'sám, and the residence of the governor general's agent for the north eastern frontier, a situation now held by Capt. Jenkins, a warm friend to missions, through whose instrumentality our attention was first called to A'sám. He has ever manifested the greatest kindness to us, and has recently made a donation to the mission of five hundred rupees, in addition to previous donation of two thousand rupees, received since the establishment of the mission. It is Capt. Jenkins' wish that not less than two missionary families should be sent to Gowahati, and as it is a post of great importance, we hope the Board will appoint the two first missionarites they send, to that place. It has hitherto been occupied by the Serampore missionaries ; but we believe that very few if any conversions have taken place among the natives. Br. Robinson informs us that there are a mission chapel and bungalow now ready for the reception of the missionaries who shall come out.

There are many other large towns in lower A'sám, which we should like to mention, as Nogaung, Gualpara, &c., which will afford extensive missionary fields, but they can be supplied afterwards.

* Difference in spellings of places and tribes occur in early letters and journals of the Missions ; viz. A'S A'M, Assam ; Dibrugor, Dibrughur Golahat, Golaghat ; Gowhati, Gowahatty, Gohatty ; Gualpara, Gowałpara ; Jurhath, Jorhath ; Sibpur, Sibsagor ; Sudiya, Sadiya ; Kocharis, Cacharis, Garrows, Garos ; Noga, Nagas.

8. A missionary will be needed among the Khasias, in case Mr. Lish, of the Serampore society, leaves his station.

9. The Garos are another interesting race of mountaineers, amongst whom we hope a mission will be commenced as soon as practicable. We would say the same of the Mikirs and Lalongs, to whose languages brethren Ray and Robinson have heretofore devoted some attention.

10. We cannot forbear again bringing forward a request which we have already made to you, for the appointment of a missionary for the especial object of teaching and superintending schools in the villages around Sadiya, and in the neighborhood of Suikhwa, on the opposite side of the river. Very few indeed of the people can read, and there is no prospect that any schools will be established among them, except such as are taught by missionaries, for many years to come.

In view of the wants of the different tribes we have mentioned, we think that twelve additional missionaries is the least number that could with propriety be sent to commence operations in so wide a field. In the midst of such varied obstacles and discouragements as we have to contend with in a country like this, it is in the highest degree desirable that there should be concentration of effort, and that all missionaries in the same field should be of one denomination, and acting under the instructions of one Board. In this way only can we hope for that combined, harmonious, and systematic action of all engaged in the work, which is so necessary to success. We would, therefore, dear brethren, earnestly suggest the propriety of an immediate concentration of your efforts upon this extended field, which God in his providence has now given into your hands. We know no more inviting field in the missionary world—no field where we could with so much satisfaction labor and die in this precious cause. But the solitary efforts of the few now on the ground, are but a drop in the ocean—they are swallowed up and lost amid the widespread desolation and darkness ; and unless the field is speedily supplied with more laborers, we fear the cause will languish, while heathenism continues to spread and strengthen itself for years to come. May God in mercy look upon us, and

send us help, and bring salvation to this benighted and long neglected land.

JENKINS PRESSED FOR ADDITIONAL HANDS

11. *Annual Report 1838 : A'SA'M* : You have no doubt been sufficiently acquainted by the missionary gentlemen with the state of A'sám, to know that since 1831, Lower A'sám has been directly under the management of English officers, and that the division of the country called Upper A'sám has been under the administration of a native prince, Rajah Purandur Sing*, who paid a tribute to the British government, and who was subject to the control and interference of the British officers in political matters, and in cases of complaint of any gross mismanagement or injustice.

The administration of the Rajah, you may also have heard, has of late been considered unsatisfactory, so much so that it was consequently deemed necessary by the government to take the state of that part of the country into consideration. The result of the inquiry has been, that the Governor General has determined to resume Upper A'sám, and to place it on the same footing as Lower A'sám, under British officers.

This arrangement is now being carried into effect, and the country will be divided into two districts, the head of one of which will be Jurhath, and the other Lakimpur, on the north bank, in the vicinity of the Suban Shiri river. I trust this arrangement will be for the benefit of the people in all respects, and that I may congratulate your Board on the prospects it opens, of extending the usefulness of your mission, by the protection and assistance afforded to it by the European officers.

Feeling persuaded that the sphere of the mission may, under the circumstances just noticed, be greatly enlarged, I beg to address your Board, in the full confidence that it will be inclined to take advantage of these improved prospects, to the extent

* The last king of the Ahom dynasty who ruled in Assam for over six centuries. Elevated to the throne by the British as a feudatory, he was deposed in 1838 on account of misgovernment and failure to pay the stipulated amount of tribute to the government.

of its ability, by increasing the strength of the A'sám mission, and adding to its efficiency, I will therefore endeavor to point out such measures as seem to me most deserving the attention of your Board, for the furtherance of the enlightened views in which this mission was originally founded. And, in the first place, it will be necessary to advert to the distribution and employment of the gentlemen now composing this mission.

The Rev. N. Brown and Mr. Cutter are, as you are aware, located at Sadiya, and the Rev. M. Bronson at Jaipur, a small post about thirty-five miles south-west of Sadiya, on the Buri Dihing river. The first gentleman is devoted to the instruction of the Khamtis, and through them of their kindred tribes of the Shyan race, and also to the instruction of the A'sámese inhabitants of the neighborhood. The second gentleman's principal attention is given to the press ; and the third is making himself acquainted with the Singpho language, for the purpose of teaching the tribes who speak it. At Jaipur he has more means of associating with persons using the language than he had at Sadiya, as those around him are, with little exception, Moamariahs*,—A'sámese by extraction, formerly slaves to the Singphos, or inhabitants of the districts occupied by them, I expect a large number of this class, now, to settle round Jaipur. They avoid the Singpho country, and are not being pleased with the rule of the chief who has the administration of the Moamaria country. They will, I expect, settle west of the Buri Dihing, now it reverts to the hands of the British officers.

Mr. Bronson is likely, I think, soon to have more favourable means of communicating with the Singphos, by the gradual establishment of the supremacy of our government,—from the interference of our troops, occasioned by the constant disturbance produced by the feuds of these wild, restless tribes—and also by the increase of the manufacture and culture of tea, which will introduce, in all probability, at no distant period,

* Towards the close of the eighteenth century the Moamariahs or the Muttocks, "a socio-religious sect", set up a territory of their own bounded on the north by the river Brahmaputra, the Khamtis in the east and the river Buridihing on the west.

much employment and wealth into these remote and now rude districts ; and the consequences will be the same here as every where else, a great amelioration of the habits of the Singphos, by the civilizing effects of commercial intercourse. The tranquillity that will be the result of the altered state of things, which we have reason to expect, by the progress of the events now referred to, will enable the gentleman of Jaipur to visit with safety the Singpho colonies further up the Buri Dihing, and to reside for a portion of the year amongst them. And it is to be hoped some of the chiefs, alive to the influence obtained by education, will send their sons for instruction to Jaipur.

Schools have been established for some time at Sadiya, under the care of Mr. Cutter, and the ladies ; and I have received not only from the missionary gentlemen but also from our officers, the most pleasing accounts of the attention of the children to their kind instructors, and of their progress. Mr. and Mrs. Brown have been indefatigable in getting up elementary books for these schools, and the specimens produced from Mr. Cutter's press, under the many unfavourable circumstances which necessarily attended the first efforts of these gentlemen, in languages lately so foreign to them, have afforded me much satisfaction ; and they do the utmost credit to their judgement and industry.

But, as the various labors, which now devolve upon these gentlemen, are very heavy, and the number of laborers appears so very insufficient, I trust your Board will endeavor to add, at least, two more gentlemen to their number. Hitherto, by the blessing of Providence, the gentlemen have enjoyed uninterrupted health, or, at least, have not suffered so much from attacks of sickness, as to have been prevented from pursuing their usual occupations ; but if, in the present want of assistants, either Mr. Brown or Mr. Cutter were taken so ill as to be obliged to remove from the scene of their labors, there would be, I fear, a serious interruption of the mission. It seems desirable that there should be, at least, a third person prepared to take up the work, if either of the gentlemen suffer severely from those casualties we are every where so liable to, and particularly in a partially cultivated country. This third gentleman, in case all the members

of the mission enjoyed their health, would be disposable for making periodical visits, in the cold season, to all the surrounding villages, whether A'sámese or Khamti—an essential duty, which could now be scarcely performed, without stopping the labors of the mission at Sadiya—or must be so hastily conducted, as to leave little expectation of advantage from its performance.

As, however, your Board will perhaps consider it proper to make Sadiya the head-quarters of all your missionary efforts in this quarter, which I am inclined to recommend, the addition of a fourth gentleman to this branch of your mission, seems to me very desirable, with a view principally to his relieving the other gentleman of the schools ; as I consider this charge so important, as to call for the entire devotion of one gentleman to it. It might be a part of this gentleman's duty also, to prepare school-books, so as to relieve Mr. Brown of this office, and allow him to devote his entire attention to the means of providing religious instruction for the people.

Mr. Bronson is now alone, and to prevent the chance of the labors he has commenced upon, being occasionally suspended, a second gentleman, as an assistant to himself, seems indispensable at Jaipur. This gentleman might also engage himself in the study of the language of the Nagas, the hill tribes of the mountains immediately adjoining, and to whom a readier access can be obtained from Jaipur than from any other part of A'sám ; the Nagas of that neighborhood having been brought into constant contact with the Ásámese, by the salt wells in that part of the hills, and the long-established and extensive trade in salt, which they have thus enjoyed. In the course of this traffic, the Nagas are in the habit of constantly visiting and staying for short periods at Jaipur ; and a missionary might, with perfect safety, reside among this tribe, (the Namsanghea Nagas,) whenever he thought it desirable. From the altitude of the mountains, extending from three to five thousand feet, it is probable that a residence on these hills would be unattended with any risk of health—rather, indeed, it might prove beneficial to constitutions injured by the heats of the plains.

Jaipur was once a considerable town, and from its position, in the vicinity of the principal tea tracts and brine springs, its

commanding military position, in respect to the passes to Ava, and the advantages it possesses in the navigation of the Buri Dihing, this post promises to become again a place of some importance ; and although, from the mismanagement of the late ruler, the population immediately around is very small, I have no doubt it will quickly improve in this respect. The lands in the neighborhood are inferior to none in A'sám, in point of fertility, and cultivators will be attracted to them by the restoration of traffic.

These two are now your only existing missions ; but if more laborers could be spared, I conceive a branch might be established at Lakimpur, in lat. $27^{\circ} 14'$, long $94^{\circ} 7'$, a little west of the great river Suban Shiri, about as far from Sadiya to the west, as Jaipur is to the S. W. Lakimpur is in the midst of a fine grain country, and the district is in a comparatively flourishing state.

The great object of this mission should be the instruction of the Miris, a hill tribe, originally from the mountains between the Suban Shiri, and the Dihing—and as yet, with very few individual exceptions, not brought within the pale of Hinduism. Numbers of them are now scattered throughout A'sám, and especially in the plains along the Suban Shiri. They are a very quiet, peaceable race, and access to their mountains might be obtained, I believe, by missionaries with perfect safety. I met, last season, with the hill Miris, who followed me down to Jurhath ; and he expressed an earnest wish that some gentleman might be sent up to visit him.

Further north, are a people we call Abors : they are Miris in language ; and I believe the only difference is in the name, which is an A'sámese term, meaning foreign, not friendly. (The distant Nagas, not in intercourse with the plains, are thus also called Abor). The Miris and Abors are under different rulers, and opposed to each other in exactly the same way as happens to all the hill tribes bordering the valley, and those immediately behind them ; those nearest, always endeavoring to maintain an entire monopoly of the profits resulting from their intercourse with the plains, and preventing, with the strictest jealousy, any passage of their neighbors through their country. The Miri chief told me there was no hostility, at present, existing between

his tribes, and those north, but how far it would be practicable for missionaries to visit the Abors, I cannot say.

Beyond the Abors, is a district of Thibet, under Chinese rule, but of it we know nothing farther than the agreement of all accounts in representing it as being well inhabited by a comparatively civilized people. The jealousy of the Chinese, and of these intermediate barbarians, places a complete barrier, at present, to any direct communication with them, although the distance between these two countries, A'sám and Thibet, totally differing in their products, which might profitably to each, be exchanged between them, can only be about ninety or a hundred miles.

If a mission could be established at all, at Lakimpur, it should not, I think, consist of less than two individuals, with their families. There is a much larger population of A'sámese around, than at either Sadiya or Jaipur, and of course these also would call for the attention of the missionaries, and schools could be opened at once on an extensive scale. (*BMM, June 1839, pp. 147-8*)

INSECURITY OF THE FRONTIER

12. *Journal of Brown, Sadiya, January 8, 1838* : For about two months past, there have been constant rumors or attacks meditated upon this place by the Singphos ; but we have been disposed, hitherto, to regard them as mere rumors, exaggerated by the ears of the natives. It has been ascertained, however, that several stockades have been built, and that the Pishi Gam has commenced hostilities upon the Bisa Gam*, an ally of the English, in consequence, as it is reported, of an old feud existing between them. To-day, Lieut. Millar, the commanding officer at this station, has gone with a small body of troops, to resist any encroachments of the hostile tribes, and, also, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the Burmese are making preparations for a descent upon

* Pishi Gam and Bisa Gam ; Singpho chiefs. Friendly to the British, Bisa Gam was the *sanjati* or political officer with duties mainly in furnishing intelligence of the frontier,

A'sám, of which there have been several rumors. In consequence of the exposed situation of our houses, in case of an attack, we have concluded to put up a small building within the cantonments, for the safe keeping of our goods, and as a place of refuge, should we be obliged to flee from our houses.

March, 6 : Mr. Bruce and family left us to-day for Jaipur, the new station selected by Capt. Hannay, on the Buri Dihing. Mr. Bruce has taken a particular interest in all our missionary operations, and has ever manifested the greatest kindness towards us. We shall feel their loss very sensibly. As a parting gift, Mr. Bruce has given his house for the benefit of the mission. We shall probably be obliged to sell it, however, as it is at quite a distance from the mission compound, and we know not how long it will be before any more missionaries will arrive to occupy it. Br. Bronson has gone down in company with Mr. Bruce, to explore the country, and ascertain what access to the Shingphos may be had from that place.

The disturbances among the Singphos appear to be at an end for the present. Soon after Lieut. Millar arrived in the disaffected neighborhood, he was surprised by a night attack from the enemy, who fell upon a party of friendly Singphos sleeping outside the stockade, and killed and wounded about twenty persons. After this they attempted to surround the troops and cut off all communication from below, but Major White, who had just arrived from Bishnath, immediately proceeded to the relief of Lieut. Millar, with a considerable force, upon which the savages fled to the mountains. The major has just returned, having destroyed several of their villages and burned their paddy fields. They will probably remain quiet for the present, unless there is a war with the Burmese, in which case they would again take courage and recommence their depredations.

JURHATH RAJA DEPOSED

September 24 : Have heard the news of the Jurhath Raja being deposed by the English government, on account of his oppression of the people, and his delinquency in paying the

government revenues. The whole country is now directly under the control of English officers.

In addition to the various stations that were proposed in our joint letter of May 10, I hope the Board will send out one or two missionaries to the station which Capt. Jenkins proposes at Lakhimpur, on the Shubanshiri, which will probably be the best location that could be selected for operations among the Miris. I hope, however, it will be borne in mind, that the most pressing need of immediate laborers is here, in order to sustain the operations which have been already commenced.

BISA GĀM

October, 4 : Had a visit to-day from the Bisa Gām, a Singpho chief, whose village is one or two days' journey up the river. He appeared very favourable to the idea of our making books in the language of the Singphos. He is quite intelligent, reads and speaks both Burmese and Shyan fluently. Gave him the Burman Digest, and Shyan Catechism, also a few medicines which he asked for.

DEATH OF SADIYA KHOWA

October 22, Sunday : Heard of the sudden death of the Sadiya Khowa, the Khamti chief who formerly had rule over all this district. Went out to his house this morning, and found a great number of A'sámese and Khamtis, assembled to lament his death. He was generally very much beloved by the people, and although his office was long since taken away, yet the natives have always continued to call him the raja. His son, a bright little boy, has attended our school for several months past. He is the sole inheritor of his father's estate, and will probably be a person of much influence among his tribe.

INSURRECTION OF THE KHAMTIS

13. *Letter of Brown, Sadiya, February 8, 1839* : On the morning of the 28th of January, about three or four o'clock, this station was attacked by the Khamtis. They took the place completely by surprise, and after cutting down the sentries, at the first outset made themselves masters of the stockade

and magazine. At the same instant, four or five bands attacked the place in different directions, firing the houses and murdering indiscriminately all whom they met, men, women and children. Nearly the whole village and cantonments were soon in flames. Capt. and Mrs. Hannay, Lt. Marshall, and the apothecary, Mr. Pingault and wife, were roused from their beds by the Khamti war cry, and on coming out, found themselves surrounded by the enemy. They however all succeeded in reaching the stockade in safety. This they found already in the hands of the enemy, but, with the assistance of the sipahis, they succeeded in a few minutes in dislodging them. Having now gained possession of the magazine, which contained the ammunition, they commenced a heavy fire of musketry, and the slaughter immediately became general. At length the artillery began its tremendous roar, and after a few minutes' resistance, the enemy fled in all directions. The contest lasted about fifteen or twenty minutes. Col. White, the commanding officer, on first hearing the alarm, rushed out of his house, and was making his way to the magazine, but was met and surrounded by a party of the enemy, who overpowered and killed him on the spot. The loss of sipahis killed and wounded, was thirty-four ; but including women and children, with the A'sámese who were killed and wounded during the action, the number cannot have been less than one hundred. Thirty Khamtis were left dead on the field ; and it is supposed the number of wounded was very large. Among the killed were some of the principal Khamti chiefs, and others of distinction.*

We were living in a very exposed situation, our houses being nearly a mile from cantonments. This circumstance, in the end, proved our safety. The enemy passed through the village where we were, killing several of the inhabitants, and why they did not set fire to our houses, I am at a loss to know. It might have been from personal friendship on the part of the chiefs, with several of whom we were well acquainted ; or it might have been because they had not time on their return from the attack.

* For further details see Barpujari, *Problem of the Hill Tribes : North-East Frontier*, i. pp. 149. ff.

It is more probable, however, that they intended to reserve the houses of the missionaries for plunder afterwards.

When the yell from cantonments first awoke me, I was at a loss to know the cause, and supposed it might have been only a fire ; but as soon as we heard the report of musketry, we at once felt that we were in the midst of war. Having dressed ourselves, we deliberated whether to betake ourselves to the woods, or to a small canoe, which we had near the house. Providence ordered that we should take the latter course, and we got into the canoe, with our two little children, and a few biscuits which we snatched up in the hurry of the moment, as we did not know how long we might be obliged to remain upon the water, if we should escape from the hands of the enemy. We pushed out into the river, and remained nearly opposite the house till the firing had ceased, after which we proceeded silently down the river, as far as the cantonments ; but hearing no noise as we passed the fort, we dared not go up, as we did not know in whose possession it might be. We therefore kept off upon the river till about day-break, when the welcome sound of the bugle met our ears, and we immediately came in. The sight around us was truly horrible. The dead and dying were scattered in every direction, hundreds were left without a shelter for their heads, and scarcely a rag to protect them from the cold.

While I am writing, the trees are clouded with flocks of vultures, which have collected from all quarters to feast upon the slain. The bodies which were found the next day, were buried or thrown into the river, but many remained undiscovered, and there are doubtless many laying dead in the jungles, that no one knows of.

We now remain at cantonments, and are every day expecting another attack ; but the fort is very strong, and would be able to resist a large force. We have concluded to remain where we are, as it appears to be the safest spot we can find. In God is our only help. We feel great anxiety for our friends at Jaipur, who are also expecting an attack. May the Lord preserve them and us !

14. *Letter of Brown, March 29, 1839* : Since the attack on the 28th Jan., the country has been in a state of continual

commotion. The Khamtis, Singphos, and Mishmis combined, have been plundering and carrying off the peaceable inhabitants, while the troops of the government have been scouring the country in various directions in search of the enemy, and several sharp engagements have taken place in which the Khamtis and Singphos have met with considerable loss. In the midst of these commotions we have been obliged to fly from our home, and I have erected a small building at the cantonments, for a temporary residence, in which we have secured most of our goods, together with the printing-press, and other property belonging to the mission. Our prospects for the present are quite blasted ; many of the inhabitants have fled ; and the Khamtis, amongst whom we were particularly desirous of laboring, are entirely dispersed. Still we trust that these disturbances will be overruled for good ; and as soon as quiet is restored, we hope the inhabitants may return to their homes as before. It is difficult to say whether there is a prospect of the war being closed till after the present rains, but when the dry season commences, so that troops can march over the country without difficulty, we may expect that tranquillity will be soon restored.

15. *Extract from a letter of Bronson, Jaipur, April 10, 1839 :* The present state of the country is truly deplorable. Khamtis, Singphos, and Mishmis, are united in various parties, pilfering and plundering the poor inhabitants, as extensively as they possibly can and escape the hand of justice. Doubtless many poor natives of the country are carried off and sold into slavery. The Company are rapidly fortifying their various military posts, and sending in larger numbers of troops. Many are fully of the opinion, that this is the beginning of the long expected Burman war. If these few tribes only are connected with it, the Company will soon quiet the country again ; but if the Burmans are pledged to support it, it may be a more serious matter. In case of a Burmman war, however, there is little doubt but that the whole country will be open to the missionary of the cross.

MISSION MOVED TO JAIPUR

16. *Letter from Bronson, Jaipur, June 1 :* Before this reaches you have received from us informing you of the

attack and burning of Sadiya and the present agitated state of the country. We have now to direct the attention of the Board to the influence thereby exerted upon us and the reasons that have induced us to retire from Sadiya at present and to locate ourself and the press at Jaipur.

In the first place, the relative importance of Sadiya as a missionary station, is greatly diminished. It is now no longer the point of access to the Shyans, since the punishment for their treachery will lead to their total dispersion, or their removal to more distant stations, designated by the Hon. Company. In a political point of view also, Sadiya has become a place of minor importance. Many of the inhabitants of the vicinity are removed to Rangpur ; and it is a question whether Sadiya will ever rise to the rank and prosperity it enjoyed before the war. We felt some regret at leaving Sadiya, on account of its contiguity to the Ábors and Mishmis. But when we remembered that a long time might elapse before the Board could send them the living teacher ; that the press was immediately required to print Singpho and Noga books ; that when books in Ábor and Mishmi were ready for the press, the inconvenience of printing them at Jaipur would be no more than it is to print Singpho and Noga books at Sadiya ; when we remembered that the same labor that would be performed at Sadiya, could be quite as successfully carried on at Jaipur—we felt strong conviction, that the cause would be advanced by the removal.

In the second place, Jaipur has a fair prospect of a rapid growth, on account of its being head quarters of the tea operations. The experiment of making tea in Upper A'sám has been fairly tried, and the government have given to it their unqualified approbation. Three companies, with large capitals, are already formed, and are waiting the pleasure of government to transfer the tea operations into their own hands, to be continued on a large scale. Numbers of Chinamen are to be sent here immediately, and several hundred families, of the laboring classes, from Calcutta, to carry on the cultivation. All these circumstances are calculated to open such a communication with various parts of the world, as may be made advantageous to the spread of the gospel.

Another consideration, of some importance, is, that two great tribes of people, to whom we are desiring access, (the Khamti and Singpho,) are located a few days journey east of us, in the great Hukung valley. The event of a Burmese war will doubtless open all this country, and give us the opportunity of preaching the blessed gospel from this to Ava. With this object before us, we cannot withdraw our attention entirely from the Khamti and Singpho languages, although, just now, we have a very limited intercourse with those tribes. In establishing ourselves at this station, we have made quite an advance toward this interesting field.

By this arrangement also, a most useful connection is formed between the several branches of the mission. Jorhath, the great centre of A'sámese population, learning, and religion, is only at five days distance from us. To Rangpur, the present military head quarters, it is two days journey. All the Mattak country lies open to the missionary, from this station. Proceeding easterly to the hills, there are, within a few days distance, no less than twenty-one villages, where the Nam Sang Noga dialect is spoken, and all said to be accessible to the missionary.

We cannot close, without calling the attention of the Board to the interest our kind friend, C.A. Bruce, Esq., superintendent of tea culture, has manifested in the decision to locate the mission at this place. He has generously offered to defray the whole expense of the removal, and to assist in our establishment at this station.

17. *Journal of Brown, January 1, 1840* : We have now entered upon another year—the eighth since we left our native land. When we look back upon the time spent in this country, and consider the various difficulties and hindrances we have met with, and the little success that has attended our efforts, we are almost disheartened. During the past year our labors have been almost entirely broken up. In the early part of the year, the disturbances at Sadiya prevented us. After our arrival at Jaipur, sickness and necessary cares occupied much of our time, while the cholera drove nearly all the native population from the place ; and since the close of the rains, both Mrs. Brown and myself have been visited with frequent attacks of

ague and fever, which I fear will not leave us, unless we seek a change of air by journeying. Our little boy, who contracted a fever by exposure to the weather at Sadiya, after we were driven from our house, is completely a cripple. He has never been able to walk or stand alone since.

18. *Extract of a Letter from Brown, January 10, 1840* : As a station Jaipur bids fair to become one of the first in importance in A'sám. Although it is but two years since a commencement was made here, it has now a large population. The tea establishment promises to be far more successful than was anticipated. During the past season, the territory of the Mattak Raja, extending from Sadiya to the Buri Dihing river, has been transferred to the immediate government of the company ; and the Jurhath District having previously been taken possession of, we have an ample field, and full access to every part of Upper A'sám, without fear of being molested by any of the native rulers.

19. *Journal of Brown, January 19* : To-day we have discovered that one of our little boy's eyes is diseased, and we fear, unless some remedy is found, he will soon lose his sight.

January 20 : After much painful hesitation, we have concluded, with the advice of our missionary brethren, to take our little boy to Calcutta, in hopes that he may receive some advantage, both to his eyes and his limbs, by the prescriptions of the physicians there. Mrs. B. has decided to undertake the journey alone.

February 10 : Mrs. Brown started with her two children for Calcutta. She has a tedious journey before her, and will no doubt meet with many difficulties and trials before her return. But I would commit them all into the hands of an all-wise God, who ordains our sorrows as well as our joys.

March 28, 1840 : Yesterday we heard of the arrival of the new missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Barker, and Miss Bronson, for the Naga mission, but alas ! none for the A'sámese.

ARRIVAL OF BARKAR

20. *Journal of Barkar, November 1840 to May 1841* : Also *BMM, March 1842, pp. 64 ff. (Excerpts)* Mr. and Mrs. Barker, and Miss Bronson, who sailed from this port in the fall of 1839, arrived at

Jaipur in May 1840. Miss Bronson died as has been before communicated, on the 7th of the following December. Mr. and Mrs. Barker were originally designated to the Nagas, but were subsequently instructed to labor among the Asamese. The place of their residence was undertermined at the period of our last published accounts. It was expected, as stated in the last annual report, that it would be either at Jorhath or Rangpur, one the ancient and the other the present capital of that part of Asam. We learn, however, from Mr. Barker's journal, just received, and brought down to May 31, 1841, that the place finally selected is Sibsagor.

On the 27th of Feb. 1840, Mr. Barker left, Jaipur with Mr. Bronson, then sick of a fever, for the purpose of visiting Sibsagor, for medical advice, which they reached after a journey of five days, Mr. B. being very sick. From this sickness, however, he recovered after a few weeks, under the care of Dr. Furnell, an English physician. Mr. Barker, when his associate in missionary labor had so far recovered as to allow of his absence, visited a number of the other principal towns. This he did for the two-fold purpose of distributing the scriptures and tracts, and for making observations as to the place most suitable for a settlement.

Some of the principal places visited by Mr. Barker besides Sibsagor, were Jorhath and Debrugur. We extract from his journal the following, which are the concluding remarks respecting what he did and observed during this journey.

Jorhath is nine miles inland, on a small river, and contiguous to this thickly settled portion of the district, and in my opinion affords the best missionary station, in this respect, of any one in the district, if not in Upper Ásám. There is no European residing here now. It formerly was the headquarters of the nobility before they occupied Sibsagor. Sibsagor has 4,000 inhabitants. It presents a field next in importance. It is near the tea plantation, and will doubtless continue to increase rapidly. It is now in many respects the most promising. It has the advantage of a physician, and the principal civil and military operations of the district.

Debrugur on the Brahmaputra is a delightfully pleasant, and I think a healthful place. It commands a fine view of the snowy mountains. Should Muttack be made a missionary field, this would be the spot for the missionary to locate himself. It is only one day's journey by boat above the mouth of the Dehing, but is accessible by large boats. Jaipur from the same point is six days' journey. Muttack, from what I saw of it in going overland from the Dehing to Debrugur, and from Debrugur to Tingraimukh, and from the best information I can get, has

a sparse population. Besides it is low, and to a great extent uncleared, and consequently it would be rather hazardous for a missionary to go into it to reside, until some of the jungle is cut away.

April 14 : This evening presented the subject of locating myself at Sibsagor to the brethren, and it was approved.

Some of the reasons which have actuated me in taking this place in preference to Jorhath, are the following. The village itself is about as large as Jorhath, from the observation I have been able to make, but not so near to the main body of the people by one day. This is in part made up by the growing state of this place and vicinity, in consequence of its contiguity to the tea gardens, etc. Also in part by the facilities of travel secured by the good state of the roads. Two hours ride from this, will bring me to the Brahmaputra, by a new road on the banks of the river, on which there are several small villages. Two days ride will take me to Debrugur. The same to Jaipur, when the roads are open. Two hours to Norerath, a place above named. And one day to Jorhath. 2. The populous part of Lukimpore, a zillah on the opposite bank of the Brahmaputra, can be visited from this point better than from any other. 3. Boats can go to and from this place better than from Jorhath. 4. This place has a physician, which from our past experience is of some importance. 5. I can leave my family for the distribution of tracts in various parts, better here than I could at the other place. 6. The principal government of the district is invested in this court, which brings together the most active, learned, and intelligent part of the people, and affords an important channel of communication to the whole district. 7. The headquarters of the army being here, there is a monthly expenditure of 10 and 12,000 rupees, which gives an impulse and permanency to trade, and contributes to the permanent location of the people.

There is a hospital and jail—for these, brick edifices are in progress. A government school is to be established immediately, similar to that in Gowahati, in which English, and Bengali are to be taught.

MISSION SHIFTED TO SIBSAGOR

21. *Journal of Brown, April 14, 1841* : After mutual consultation it was resolved that a new station be commenced at Sibsagor, and that br. Barker be appointed to that field. There ought to be three or four more missionaries in the same region. The district of Jorhath, in which Sibsagor is situated, is very populous throughout, and at Jorhath especially a missionary is needed immediately. As there is no prospect of any missionaries being sent out for Lower A'sám, capt. Jenkins has applied for an Episcopal chaplain, and Episcopal missionaries will probably follow.

22. *Brown to Peck, Sibsagor, September 8, 1841* : In my last letter to you, which was written from Jaipur, I think I informed you that my health had become so poor that I had concluded to come round here to get the medical advice of Dr. Furnell. Under his prescriptions soon regained by health, and since then I have concluded, with the advice of the brethren, to remain at this place, it being a better situation for missionary labor, in every respect, than Jaipur—besides which it is found to be a very healthy location, and will always have a regular physician. We passed but very few months at Jaipur, that some one of our family was not sick. We have been disappointed in our expectations regarding Jaipur—instead of increasing in population it has rather diminished than otherwise, owing in great part to the unhealthiness of the place, which makes the natives averse to settling there, and the sparseness of the population in the immediate neighborhood, makes it a very discouraging situation for missionary labor. Since the company have taken possession of the Jorhath district, which is the most central and populous portion of A'sám, we have been anxious to fix the principal seat of the mission in this quarter—and this place having now become permanently established as the capital (instead of Jorhath, the former capital, which is one day's journey farther south) seems most of all adapted to be the centre of our efforts. Although this station is now but two years old, it is already the largest place either in Upper or Central Asam—containing probably about 5000 inhabitants—with a highly populous country around

it, having twelve or thirteen considerable villages within half a day's ride. A great portion of the population of Jorhath, especially the higher classes, have removed to this place, since its establishment as the capital of the district.

Since my removal here, br. Bronson has requested and obtained the approval of all the brethren to his removing to Nowgong, a large field between this and Gowahati. He at first contemplated going to Gowahati, but capt. Jenkins dissuaded him, and recommended him Nowgong in preference.

23. *Journal of Brown, Sibsagor, July 29, 1841* : I have decided to remain at this place. The press, we trust, will ultimately be located here, it being altogether the most central and important station in Assam Proper—that is, Assam above Gowahati. The district between Gowahati and Goalpara, though reckoned as part of Assam, has no connection with it in a missionary point of view, as the people do not speak the Assamese language.

August 31 : Received from Capt. Jenkins a donation of 500 rs. for the benefit of the mission. This sum he has given annually since the mission was established, and he has informed us of his intention to continue it so long as he remains in charge of the province.

December 25 : This morning we received a Christmas present from Dr. and Mrs. Furnell, of 100 rs. for the benefit of the mission, and soon after another of 300 rs. for the same object from Mr. Brodie, Principal Assistant to the Commissioner. Thus the Lord is raising up friends for the mission in our time of need. I hope we shall, ere long, be favored with an addition of laborers from home. Dr. Furnell has been very ill for the last three weeks, with a dangerous jungle fever, but we are happy to learn that he is now recovering, though yet too weak to sit up, or see company. His fever was contracted during a journey to the Singpho hills.

BRONSON AT NOWGONG

24. *Journal of Bronson, Nowgong, October 2, 1841* : To-day, at 3 o'clock, P.M., reached the zillah station of Nowgong. The last three days we have been tracing the serpentine Kullung, enjoying the most delightful scenery, nearly the whole course of

the river, being studded, on either side, with beautiful villages, embowered with beautiful groves of trees. In fact, it may be said to be one continued village the whole distance. The population, I am told, extends into the interior, and is very dense. Truly the work of preaching the gospel in all these villages is arduous. The harvest, how plenteous ! the laborers, how few ! Thus far, we see every inducement to establish a station here. Called on Capt. Gordon, and after a short, and agreeable interview, proceeded to make arrangements for removing to the circuit bungalow, which has been kindly offered for our present accommodation.

October 4 : Called upon the several gentlemen resident here, and obtained very satisfactory accounts relative to the denseness of the population, and the healthfulness of the district. On going over the station, I find it very beautifully laid out—streets running in all directions. There is a court-house and jail. To the court are attached many very respectable natives, both Assamese and Bengali; and as the business of the court draws in people from all parts of the district, it affords almost daily opportunities for sending out tracts into the country in every direction. As soon as my object was known, my house was thronged with people of all classes, who came for books; and I have seized upon the present opportunity to explain the Christian religion, and make known my intentions as far as possible. At present I am talking, and preaching, and distributing tracts from morning to night, to all who come to my house.

October 22 : Having numerous calls for Bengali, Hindi and Persian books, I have ordered a small supply from Calcutta. The population is a reading one, and I rejoice to find that I am much more favorably situated in this respect, than I ever was in Upper Assam. I shall now be able to avail myself of all tracts and school books in Bengali, as well as of all that may be issued from our own press.

October 24 : This being the last day of the Doorgā Poojā, the crowd that has been gathering for several days preceding is very great. It has been got up and carried forward principally by the Bengali residents attached to the court. The noise and parade for the last three days have been distressing. Taking a

few tracts, I went out and seated myself near the spot where the largest crowd was gathered, and commenced conversation with a few who approached me, upon the folly of the worship of idols. Soon I had the largest congregation I ever addressed, and spoke as long as I was able upon the sin of worshipping any except the Maker of all things. My congregation continued to increase until the last, even although it was the time of throwing the idol into the river. After giving away a few tracts, returned again to my house, where I found several servants waiting for tracts. During all my conversations with the people, thus far, I have had no particular opposition, except from several Musslemans, who were very violent; and I cannot but hope, that the people of this long neglected valley will yet be brought to receive the truth in the love of it.

November 10 : Having succeeded in purchasing a bungalow and grounds for the mission premises, I shall be able to save nearly all the present cold season for travelling over the country. The grounds are ample for present and future operations, even should they be extended. The bungalow, though small, will answer our purpose for a few yers, and I am happy to state that after the necessary improvements are made, the expense will not greatly exceed the amount obtained for my bungalow at Jaipur. As soon as I can leave my family comfortably settled on the mission premises, I shall devote my time to travelling and preaching. And I feel as much as ever the need of an associate, now that I am so far removed from all our missionary friends. I do sincerely trust that the Board will not forget, that while their missionaries are nominally taking possession of Assam, aside from this station, there is the whole of lower and central Assam lying unoccupied. And that, until quite recently, only the extreme points of Upper Assam have really been occupied. May it please the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into these parts. And may the time speedily roll onward, when the name of the adorable Saviour shall be praised by the long neglected people of Assam.

NEED FOR REINFORCEMENT

25. *Journal of Brown, September 22, 1843* : Today br. and sister Barker left us for Tezpur, where they will, probably,

be located, unless they should find a more favorable situation; and, in accordance with his wishes, we have given our approval to the measure. This movement will leave all Upper Assam, our original field, without a single *preaching* missionary, and this after the mission has been established seven years, so that br. Cutter and myself are now quite as solitary as when we first came from Burmah. The Board are aware that we are both so fully occupied in our other duties as to allow us little time for preaching, to say nothing of bad health, which often suspends our labors altogether. Whether it is expedient to enter upon missionary fields where there is no prospect of being able properly to occupy them, is a very serious question. Could we have foreseen, when we left Burmah, that this mission would not have been more efficiently sustained, we should, undoubtedly, never have left that country for Assam. But since we are here, and in a field far more inviting, in itself considered, than we could have found among the Burmans, and having already spent a good portion of our life in the work of preparation, we feel it our duty to stand by our posts so long as life is spared us, whatever may be our discouragements.

TEZPUR MISSION PROPOSED

26. *Bronson to Peck, September 1, 1844* : Several weeks ago I received a letter from Capt. G. saying that a number of Kosāri chiefs, living on the Bhutan frontier, had been into Tezpur, and expressed their wish to have schools established among them. They have a large extent of country, and are a much superior race to the Assamese, but have no written language. The Brahmins have proselyted numbers of them to the Hindu faith in various quarters, but those on the Bhutan frontier have become less tainted with the Hindu superstition. Capt. G. expressed an intention of trying to snatch them from the jaws of Hinduism by establishing schools,—teaching them our scriptures in the same, with the elements of education; and proposed to give to two teachers twenty rupees per month, as his contribution to the undertaking, if I would supply the teachers, carry on the necessary monthly correspondence with them, and visit them once in the cold season. To his benevolent wishes I felt it a pleasure and

duty to accede; especially as I was able to supply two scholars from the station school, who have a pretty good knowledge of the principles of Christianity, as teachers for the schools. Had we competent native Christian assistants, this would present an excellent field for an outstation. In the cold season thousands of the Bhutans come down to those Kosāri villages for trade, and people from every part of Bengal collect there for the same object; so that for many weeks together it is a splendid fair, and a grand field for missionary operation. People from Thibet and China have found their way to the plains of Assam through these passes; and there is not a better route for a mission to Bhutan and Thibet, than is here presented; the missionary going up in company with these traders. I do feel most desirous of seeing Tezpur occupied by an additional missionary of the Board; who would receive every assistance from the residents at the station, and from the chief magistra'e particularly.

GOWAHATI MISSION

27. *Mission papers, BMM March 1855, p. 75* : The Rev. C. Barker came to Gowahati in 1843, and labored, much of the time with feeble health, until 1849, when he left the field, and was soon after called to his reward above. The Rev. A. H. Danforth arrived in 1848, and was joined by the Rev. W. Ward in 1851. Since that time, the interests of this station have been under the supervision of these brethren. In 1845 a church was formed, which now numbers twenty-seven members. Of these, twelve are natives, four of whom were baptized during the past year. There is a new chapel, recently erected, for English and native worship, the expense of which was rs. 1411 4 5. Of this sum, 200 rupees were furnished by the mission; the remaining rs. 1211 4 5 were paid by local subscriptions. The former chapel, built many years ago, wholly by local subscriptions, we have converted into a zayat and lecture room. During the last rainy season, four services have been held on the Sabbath, two in Assamese and two in English. The average attendance of the former has been from twenty to forty, of the latter from twenty to thirty. Mrs. Danforth and Mrs. Ward have conducted the Sabbath school.

Connected with the station are two schools, one a boarding school for girls, the other a day school for boys.

THE CACHARIS, BOOTEAS AND THIBET

28. *Mission papers, BMM 1855, pp. 176-7* : Between Mungledye and the Bootan Hills, in a division called Chatgari, is the principal location of the Cacharis, a people too well known to require a minute description. Mr. Robinson, inspector of government schools, in speaking of them says, "Chatgari, a frontier district, situated between Desh Durrung and the Bootan Hills, and I suppose about thirty or forty miles from Gowahati, seems to be their principal *locale*. Here their numbers are said to amount to about 30,000 which is about half the Cachari population in the valley. Large numbers of them are scattered about in the Kamroop district. They present an interesting field for missionary labor. They are the most active and industrious part of the population in the valley, and are free from the trammels of Hindooism.* Captain Butler, in his "Sketch of Assam", writes as follows :— "The Cacharis, who reside at the foot of the hills, are the most useful and industrious as well as the most athletic men in Assam, and allowed to be the best cultivators. They irrigate their lands to a great extent, from hill streams ; and consequently raise far better crops than their neighbors." These people, resembling so much, in their freedom from religious prejudice and their apparent readiness for the reception of the gospel, the Karens of Burmah, have come from northern Cachar and the hills separating Assam from Burmah, where a large

* Barkar also writes . "They are our neighbours, and at our doors—speak the Assamese language—are not Hindoos—are the most industrious, athletic and robust people of Assam ; and are much more deserving, in estimation, of the name of the Karens of Assam, than the Nagas. The Karens are a tame, industrious, agricultural and united people. So the Cacharis ;—while the Nagas are a wild, warlike, and divided and scattered race. Perhaps there is no class of people split up into more clans and factions than the Nagas, and the highest honors sought and conferred by them, are those who have fallen upon and murdered their enemies of another clan, occupying another hill within perhaps the report of a musket. But not so the Cacharis. They are a quiet, agricultural people and scarcely possess an instrument of war or the knowledge of a war song, or a war dance. (*Barker to Peck, August 25, 1849.*)

number of them still reside. They have from time to time proved themselves formidable, successfully waging war with the old Ahoms, and in their turn holding possession of the country. But for many years they have quietly settled down, giving themselves to agricultural pursuits, and are now a most peaceful and inoffensive people. Nor have they lost their courage. The government here draw largely from them for the army, and they are found to make excellent soldiers. They also furnish the various factories in the province with their principal laborers. As a people, they are readily susceptible of religious impressions, and have almost invariably become Christians when brought directly under our tuition and influence. Several of them are now connected with the church at Gowahati.

But aside from the intrinsic interest of Durrung district, there is another consideration which to the missionary greatly enhances its importance. It is its connection with Bootan and Thibet. The Booteas occupy the hills back of Durrung, and are said to number about 80,000. A few years ago, they were a savage, marauding race, subsisting principally by plundering the plains; but since British rule has held them in check, they have commenced trading with the Assamese. And now a large trading-mart or fair is held through the cold season at Oodalguri, a place in the Cachari district about a day's march from Mungledye; where the Booteas come down, bring the numerous products of the hills, and receive those of the plains in exchange. From the very nature of the two countries, this traffic must continue to increase. The Booteas cannot do without the produce of the plains, while, on the other hand, the plains require the produce of the hills.

What, then, will be the mutual influence of this trade? 1. It will give the Booteas a knowledge of the Assamese language, and render them accessible to missionary effort through that medium. Already a large number of those who come down, understand and speak it tolerably well. 2. It will impart strength, energy and independence of character to the people of the plains, thereby starting springs of action which for centuries have been lying inert. 3. These hills will soon be thrown open to British traffic, and the missionary be suffered to traverse them with impunity. Already, we are allowed to go up two or three days journey.

4. It is said to be only sixteen days march from Mungledye to Lassa, the capital of Thibet; scarcely farther than the distance to Upper Assam. Here, then, is the key to Thibet, and from this place light must proceed to illumine that dark though most interesting country. And who is to say but the Cacharis, with whom the Booteas principally trade, are to be the very instruments to convert the Booteas; and the Booteas, in their turn, instruments for the conversion of the Tartar race ? They are connected with them in their civil and political state, while their commercial interests are most closely united with Assam. Hence, from their location, they must necessarily receive impressions from the south, and carry them to the north.

These considerations, in the mind of the missionary, greatly enhance the importance of immediately occupying this portion of Assam. We would recommend two missionaries for Mungledye, one for the Assamese, and one for the Cacharis. This recommendation was made by the mission two years ago, and every year impresses us more and more with the importance of taking immediate possession of this post.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF ASSAM

29. *BMM, May 1852, p. 140* : In accordance with a recommendation of the Assam Mission in July, the branch churches connected with the several stations appointed delegates to assemble at the time and place of the missionary meeting, for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of recognizing the three branch churches as separate and independent churches, and also of organizing them into a regular Baptist Association. The object and plan were approved at a general meeting of the mission church assembled at Sibsagor in October, and the delegates proceeded, Oct. 15, to separate the churches and then to constitute them into an associated body.

The Assam Baptist Association, composed of ministers and delegates from the three Baptist churches in Assam, convened in the mission chapel, Sibsagor, Thursday, Oct. 30, 1851. The introductory sermon in English was preached by br. Ward, of Gowahati, from 1 Tim. iv, 16 : "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine."

The Association was then called to order by br. Brown, and the names of the delegates called over. The following is a list of those present :

Gowahati—Brethren Danforth, Ward and Apinta.

Nowgong—Brethren Bronson, Stoddard, James Tripp, Lucien D. Hayden, Monroe B. Weed, Ebenezer Carrow.

Sibsagor—Brethren Brown, Whiting, Cutter, Batriam D. Peck and Nidhi L. Farwell.

Br. Brown was then elected moderator, br. O. T. Cutter clerk in English, and br. Batiram D. Peck in Assamese.

The constitution, drawn up by the committee previously appointed for that purpose, was then read in English and Assamese, and adopted, as follows :

"The delegates from the Baptist churches in Gowahati, Nowgong and Sibsagor, do form themselves into an Association under the following

1. The Association shall be called the Baptist Association of Assam.

2. The officers shall be a moderator, two clerks, for the purpose of keeping the records in Assamese and English, and a treasurer,—to be elected at the commencement of each regular meeting, and to continue in office until another appointment shall be made.

3. The Association shall be held annually at such time and place as shall be voted. Each church shall be entitled to send six delegates.

4. Each church shall send with their delegates a letter, giving an account of their condition, their joys and their sorrows.

5. The object of the Association is to promote the cause of Christ, and to counsel and assist each other.

6. This Association disclaims any right to control or influence the action of the churches in their individual capacity.

7. Any church of like faith and order may be admitted into the Association on application by letter at any regular meeting.

8. The Association shall appoint two preachers, one to preach in English, the other in Assamese, at each regular meeting, for the next meeting of the Association.

FOREIGN SECRETARY VISITED ASSAM

30. *Report of the Foreign Secretary (Excerpts)* : In accordance with the suggestion of the Committee, I left Calcutta for Assam Nov. 10, 1853. My course was by budgerow up the Hoogly and Mattabangha rivers to where the latter issues from the Puddah, or “False Ganges”; thence down the Puddah to one of its northern branches, and by that branch to an arm of the Brahmaputra, which connects with it; and thence upward again, by this arm of the Brahmaputra, to its junction with the main river, entering the latter a short distance below Serajunge. The voyage to Serajunge occupied fifteen days, and the entire ascent to Gowahati forty, including Sabbaths; or thirtyfour working days. A third of the time or less would have sufficed by steamer or land dak; but no steamer was available, and dak travel for such a distance was deemed by those most competent to

judge hazardous to health. The return from Assam was also by budgerow, *via* Barisal and the Sunderbunds, and occupied eighteen days, Sabbaths included. About four weeks were spent in voyaging in Assam, three of these to ascend from Gowahati to Sibsagor, the limit of my journey, and one in the descent to Gowahati. I returned to Calcutta, March 3; making the entire period of my visit to Assam three months and twenty-three days, but allowing for the direct purpose of the visit, at the mission stations, the very limited space of not more than four weeks.

The attention of the Mission has been restricted, hitherto, with slight exception, to the Assamese, the people of the plains. They constitute, as we have noted, the *mass* of the population,—about 1,000,000,—and as regards residence, are the most accessible at and from the mission stations. A few converts have been gathered from the Cacharis and Nagas, but they had come to the stations, or were intermingled with Assamese and spoke their language. It is not improbable that for years to come the Assamese will continue to be the leading object of missionary effort in Assam, as the Burmans were in Burmah the first twenty years, and as they are likely to become again. The causes which have secured to them this priority of regard, will continue to operate, and not without effect; although other influences may spring up, as the Karen in Burmah, to modify the results.

The encouragements to labor for the Assamese race, while they are addressed chiefly to faith and chequered with embarrassments, are nevertheless real and adequate; and they will increase as the work advances, with its increasing means and facilities. The power of the priesthood and of a deep-seated idolatry will gradually be overborne, the susceptibilities of the people will be quickened, prejudices of caste relaxed, and knowledge of divine truth spread abroad. Compared with the Bengalis *now*, the early evangelization of the Assamese, though devotees of the same faith and in some of its most revolting forms, may be regarded as the more hopeful, inasmuch as idolatry with these is less inveterate, and the priestly power more lightly held. The Mission advert to the formative, or, as it may be termed, *transition* state of the people. “The people”, they remark, “have just passed under British rule. Such were the convulsions which rent the whole

country during the Mohammedan and subsequent Burman invasion, as to leave the long established institutions of the country in a feeble and tottering state. The religion of the people, though still Hindu, has experienced such a shock as will hasten its downfall. Already *Ichabod* seems written upon the whole fabric in unmistakable characters." With respect to the influence of the priests, they bring to notice a new element of decay. "Their power has been mainly drawn from the patronage of the ancient kings. Large grants of land were made by them for the support of religion. The Brahmins still retain many of these lands, which constitute their principal source of influence. Some of these grants have been cancelled; others must in time follow,—when the priests will be the poorest class in the province. Even now the wealth of the country is rapidly passing into the hands of the traders and cultivators, and many of the Brahmins have been compelled to take the plough and the hoe to keep from starvation. This process may be slow, but the elements are at work, and the result is certain."

The most inviting portions of the Assam Mission field remain comparatively untouched;—they are the Hill tribes. The attention of the Committee is invited to the special consideration of the claims of these tribes, as set forth by the Mission. These claims have been presented before, but have not won the regard to which they are entitled. The Hill tribes are designated by the missionaries the Karens of Assam, and I think with great appropriateness. Like the Karens, they are not idolaters, but recognize the existence of one Supreme Spirit; they believe in a future state; and they have no distinctions of caste, nor a priesthood. "If a proper amount of missionary labor could be expended upon them," say the Mission with respect to the Nagas, "there is, humanly speaking, little doubt that the same glorious results would follow as have been witnessed by our brethren in Burmah." And so of the Mikirs, Cacharis, &c. "We know of no heathen people of whose speedy conversion we should have more confidence, could missionary effort be expended among them." Labors already bestowed, incidentally, have brought early returns. And there are marked facilities for communicating the gospel to these tribes. They can be easily

reached from the stations bodies of them residing near at hand. They can be addressed, also, in the earlier stages of the enterprise, through the Assamese language, which many of them understand. In my own apprehension,—and I think it is the judgment of the missionaries,—the Hill tribes are the hope of Assam. Compared with the occupants of the plains, they are moral, industrious, intelligent and energetic. It will not be strange if they gradually supplant the enervated Assamese. Large bodies have already descended to the lowlands, and become permanent residents there. Through them, also, must be the channels of Christianity and civilization into the adjoining countries of Bootan, Thibet, and Manipur, and perhaps Behar. (*BMM*, XXXV, January 1855, pp. 1 ff)

31. *Recommendations of the Foreign Secretary* : As respects the present stations;—the Committee are aware of the late reduction of the missionary force in Assam by death and other calamity. These heavy losses need to be promptly supplied. The mission, as now constituted, is not adequately manned; not even on the presumption, could it be entertained, that the missionaries will all continue at their stations, and all be strong to labor at all times. The field is too broad, and the interests and instrumentalities too numerous and varied and complex, for the force employed. But provision should be made for probable contingencies. The breaking up or virtual abandonment of a station, or of a department of labor, should not be staked on the health of a single individual. This suggestion is painfully enforced by the present state of the mission. As a whole, it is not in working condition. At the time of my visit, Mr. Bronson, Mr. Danforth and Mrs. Dauble were all suffering from illness. The health of Mr. Danforth has been restored, but Mr. Bronson's continues low and gives little promise of substantial permanent improvement. Mrs. Dauble has been able to assume her duties in the Nowgong institution, but is still subject to attacks of fever. Mr. and Mrs. Stoddard are now also invalided, and there is ground to apprehend that they will be compelled to leave the country, at least for a season. I have already spoken of the desirableness of Mr. Brown's revisiting the United States;

and the same might be said, to some extent, of other members of the mission.

The establishment of additional stations is urged by diverse considerations. One is the claim common to all the missions, the greatness of their work. A second grows out of the physical peculiarities of Assam, stretching up a valley some five hundred miles, with imperfect facilities for inter-communication. It would promote the efficiency and prosperity of the whole Assam mission, I believe, to divide it into two or more missions, were it sufficiently strong. It is a third and higher reason, that the most inviting portion of the Assam field remains to be taken up; I mean the Hill tribes, and especially the Mikirs, Nagas and Cacharis. Missionaries ought to be sent out with direct reference to the evangelization of these tribes; and with a confident expectation of gathering an early harvest. The beginning might be made, as has been suggested, in connection with labors for the Assamese, and through the medium of the Assamese tongue.

The posts which I would recommend for immediate occupancy, next to keeping good the present appointments, are :

1. The place vacated by the death of Mr. Dauble at Nowgong; with this modification, that the missionary located there be authorized to direct his attention specially to the Mikir tribe. The Mikirs reside at the foot of the Mikir Hills, about ten miles from Nowgong. They often come into Nowgong village, and use freely the Assamese language. Two or three additional considerations favor the location of another missionary at Nowgong. He would be a most seasonable succor in case of the removal of either of the laborers now there; and in any event, while occupying a highly promising position, he could be provided for at little comparative expense or inconvenience, the house designed for Mr. Dauble having been nearly completed.

2. The second point to be occupied, subject also to the condition first mentioned, would be Mongledhai, in Durrung. The location has been proposed by the mission in past communications. It stands on the right or north bank of the Brahmaputra, above Gowahati, and within a convenient distance from that city. The chief object of missionary labor from this station would be the Cacharis, an offset of a Hill tribe, many thousands of whom

reside on the plains in that vicinity, stretching away to the Bootan Hills. The station should be occupied by two missionaries.

3. The third point would be Golohat, *provided* two missionaries could be simultaneously assigned to that district. This station has also been recommended by the mission in previous communications. It lies on the military road between Nowgong and Sibsagor, and connects by a navigable stream, though at some distance, with the Brahmaputra. The only place to compete with Golohat would be Jorhat; but the latter is sufficiently near to Sibsagor, as before suggested, to be held for an outstation.

I have proposed no station for the Nagas. The Naga tribes are far more numerous than the Cacharis or the Mikirs, and equally ready to receive the gospel; but in consequence of their distant and dispersed localities they are less accessible. The prospect of their evangelization, if attempted in good earnest, would be full of promise. And it is cause for regret that the missionaries originally designated to the Nagas, Messrs. Bronson and Barker, were led subsequently to other fields. It is to be hoped the Board will be able to resume the enterprise at no very distant day. Meanwhile it would be well to encourage the mission in dispensing the gospel to Nagas as opportunity may offer, and especially by preaching to companies visiting the stations Sibsagor and Jorhat.

Other points of access to the Hill tribes, and other lines of missionary operation, particularly in the direction of Bootan and Thibet, on the north-west, and of Manipur and Burmah to the south and east, may be more correctly appreciated at a later day. (*BMM XXXV, March 1855, pp 65-70*)

THE CRISIS : RETRENCHMENT

32. *Letter from Bronson, Nowgong, November 5, 1856* : The fact is, this mission is overshadowed by the Burman and Karen missions. There, the reaper is required; in Assam, the feller of the forest and the sower. The difficulties of pioneer work are many, and of long standing, in every Hindu country; but even there, "in due time", the reaping hour will come, if we go on perseveringly in our work, without fainting. The

contrast of the present disabled state of this mission with the hopes and plans of former years, is too painful for me to reflect much upon. We are not sustained. Two of the three stations are reduced to a single man each. Important interests are staked upon the feeble health of one single man ; interesting and promising tribes at hand, scarcely visited,—but so they must remain; within four years, one half of our number removed, and more than half our strength too. Mission bungalows stand empty, school house are closed up, pupils are scattered... the Executive Committee tells us nothing of their policy towards us...the mission, dependent wholly upon the policy of the *Rooms*, unable to settle their own policies and thus unsettled state is most unfaourable to successful effort.

33. *Forty-second Annual Report, BMM 1856, July, pp 279-80 :*

The day schools in charge of the several stations were generally sustained as in the previous year, till it became necessary in consequence of the reduced ratio of remittances to enter upon the work of retrenchment. The boys' school at Sibsagor was closed as early as August, and the Jorhat school it was intended to dismiss at the close of the rains. Two day schools have been taught in connection with the Nowgong station, and one at Gowahati ; but of the present condition of these, we have not received report. The three girls' boarding schools were in operation at our latest accounts, but the mission were contemplating measures for their speedy reduction.

34. *Danforth to Peck, Gowahati, February 9, 1858 :* We have just received your circular of Nov. 11, 1857, on reduction of mission expenditures, and forwarded it to Mr. Whiting. I was afraid the financial crisis would affect your treasury, but hope it will be only for a time. It would be sad, indeed, if this reduction were to be a permanent affair. God in his providence has been shaking India from centre to circumference. We do not say that the fallow ground has been broken up, but the public mind has been disturbed and set to thinking; the pride of both the Hindu and the Mussulman has been humbled. The East India Company, or, rather, England (for I suppose the days of the Company are at an end,) has been taught that her strength here in the East depends more on fostering Christianity than in

pampering idolatry. Thus we see the signs of the times are favorably to missions. God has been preparing the way ; and He now says to the Christian world, "Come ever and help us ; enter in and possess the land." The question is, Will they come ? Or must the church be kept another forty years wandering in the wilderness, while such a tempting inheritance is spread out before them.

35. *Whiting to Peck, Sibsagor, February 20, 1858* : The subject of retrenchment can apply only to Sibsagor, and that to a partial extent. We retrenched here two or three years ago, and have increased the objects of expenditure never since. We have no day school nor native preachers. Repairs will take perhaps 200 rupees, miscellaneous perhaps 200 more. Our Girls' boarding school remains on our hands, the legacy of our predecessors;—that will require 350 rupees. Besides there remains only the press.

I talked with br. Danforth before I received your circular, about closing the press. He was not prepared for the measure. He thought, if it were intended to revive our mission and carry forward the work again, it would not be economical to close the press and scatter the workmen. We ought, at least, not to take such a step until the Executive Committee had expressed an opinion as to the probable future operations of the mission. Accordingly, paper and other materials have been procured, sufficient to last until October next; and our monthly paper will continue to be issued. I shall also have to print a small edition of new hymns, and continue the printing of an Assamese vocabulary, both of which have been under authorization some time.

36. *Bronson to Peck; Ship Radiant off St. Helena, January 26, 1858, (Excerpts)* : The desolating wave of mutiny has more or less hindered our operations for the present, and such is its reduced state that of the three stations two are left on the life and labours of one man while the third is vacant. To allow to sink any lower will be equivalent to strike it from the union's list of missions altogether. Will the churches let it die or will they make it over to the English Baptists from whom they received a portion of it ?

Shall we retire from the field ? Shall we abandon the little churches (and) see those mission houses and ground sold to government officers, those chapels converted into warehouses... Methinks (and) I hear every lover of mission answer "no". The mission is advanced too far to retire without dishonour and crime. To abandon those little flocks implies treachery and criminality. To retire now is to dishonour the cause of Christ and give the triumph to Enemy—let us rather arise and build up the wall and repair the breaches that be no more a reproach. (*Bronson Family Papers, Box 6, see Assam Mission ; Its past, present and future.*)

BROWN'S DETERMINATION

37. It was a critical time, just the moment to make an advance all along the line...owing to a falling off of funds the Board were about to reduce the number of missions, and that Assam, being remote and recent, would probably be one of the first be abandoned ! The home mail, instead of words of cheer brought discouragement. One religious paper told of the probable "suppression of schools, dismissal of native assistants, stopping of the press, translation and tract operations, the missionaries returning, and the work being at an end"...so great was the crisis that Mr. Brown made a special personal appeal to the churches at home, of which the Board ordered 10,000 copies circulation. (*In his concluding sentences he wrote*) "Should we be reduced to the extremity be recalled, or left without any regular support in a heathen land, trust our lord will not find us wanting in the day of trial. The call to RETURN is one which we could never obey, so long as life and a moderate share of health is granted to us. No, the precious converts that are gathered on, and to be gathered from amongst the people are dearer to me than life and with them by God's Grace will I remain to last." (*The Whole World Kin, p. 269-71*)

CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA

38. *Bronson to Warren, Nowgong, August 6, 1861* : By the last news from America I learn that the affairs between the

North and the South are becoming more and more complicated and that a fierce and protracted civil war is inevitable. Every other object must give way to the duty of saving the country from the rebels and traitors. I see also this most seriously affect the course of Foreign missions. Already union has a debt of \$20,000 and you will be called to look at the question of reducing the missions and of giving up for the present the less successful stations. I hope notwithstanding the pressure of the present crisis you may not be compelled to recede; but in case war should make it possible for you men and means what should be done for Assam missions...one station should be kept up and one mission family and to the station all support possible should be given instead of dividing it up of two or three parts.

PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES

DISTANCE FROM HOME

39. *Letter from Stoddard, May 24, 1847* : We reached this long desired haven on the evening of the 18th in safety and good health. The smiles and protection of our kind Heavenly Parent have been about us at every step of this long and tedious journey. We have suffered no harm, and it has not been our lot to want any necessary blessing. The comforts of the sea passage were abundant, and they were no less from Calcutta to this place. Indeed, we can hardly institute a comparison between our accommodations up this difficult river, and those of the dear brethren who have preceded us in this mission. It was expensive travelling in the steamer; but all the advice of our friends in Calcutta and Assam was in favor of this course, as so many have been destroyed by coming up that river in small boats.

We were in the ship *Cato* 138 days,—in Calcutta twenty-seven days,—on the steamer to Gowahatti seventeen,—in G. eleven,—in small boats, from G. to Nowgong, eight days,—in all from Boston 201 to Nowgong. We had very little rain coming up the river; and although we have reached our station at an unhealthy season, and when there is much sickness around us, we hope to be spared those trying scenes through which others have passed.

VOYAGE UP THE BRAHMAPUTRA

40. Occasionally Bengali merchants from Calcutta sent up goods, which they bartered with the Assamese and surrounding tribes, for their ivory obtained by killing wild elephants and the horns of buffaloes and rhinoceros found in the country. The boats sent up by the merchants were very small, only some five or six feet in width, and twenty or thirty feet in length, fitted with a kind of canopy made of split bamboos and palm leaf, which afforded protection from sun and rain. . . the height of the centre was barely sufficient for an adult to stand. These boats are manned by a *manji* or captain, with six or eight men under him, who

walked in a foot-path along the bank of the river, pulling the boat after them by means of ropes... As no hotels or market places were to be found on the way, it was necessary for the travellers ascending the river, to furnish themselves in Calcutta with provision and all other accommodation which they might require for a journey of at least four months.* We learned that the current of the Brahmaputra was in many places fearfully strong, and that the bed of the river, like our Mississippi, was full of snags and sawyers which had been torn from the banks by the strength of the current. Occasionally rumours reached us, of the dense and terrible jungles we should have to pass through, where roamed the wild elephants, buffaloes and tigers of the country; that the boats would be moored at night to sandbars or small islands of sand, formed by the changing current of the stream, which were the daily resort of these wild beasts, and that crocodiles and other monsters swarmed in many parts of the river. (*The Whole World Kin*, pp. 109-10)

LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

41. Going out soon after his arrival, in company with an English officer to visit the surrounding villages (Brown) discovered to his surprise and disappointment that the only shans within reach were a few scattered Khamti hamlets, and that the main body of the people for whom he had been preparing to labor, from whose christianisation important results had been expected, lived "beyond the mountains". Even there they were reduced in numbers...having perished in deadly feuds with the Ka-khyens or Singphos, been wasted by famine, massacre, devastation and oppressions...he commenced work for both Khamtis and Assamese. The people immediately around the missionaries were the valley Assamese; hence still another tongue must at once be learned. It was a written language, but without dictionary or grammar, and there was no interpreter. Pointing to an object, Mr and Mrs Brown would catch the name from the lips of a native, and write the sounds in Roman letters, enlarging their vocabulary of nouns day by day, and quickly picking up verbs

* See also Wilcox, "Momoir of a Survey of Assam etc." (1825-28), *Asiatic Research*, xvii, 1832, p. 464.

and modifiers with imperative momentary necessity of using them. (*The Whole World Kin*, pp 130-1)

NON-AVAILITY OF TOOLS AND PROVISIONS

42. *Journal of Brown, May 2, 1836* : Finding many of the people anxious to send their children to school, we have this day commenced building a school house. We have not been able to hire any workmen till now. To persons residing in a civilized place, it is impossible to give any idea of the difficulty we experience in getting any work done. Cannot purchase a stick of timber, or a bundle of ratans, and scarcely a tool of any description. We are obliged to send into the forests, and have the posts, etc. cut, and brought to our door by hand, no such thing being known here as the use of oxen for dragging timber. Seldom can we find a workman supplied with an axe or knife, and consequently we are obliged first to send into the woods and burn coal, and then to beat out the iron into a *da'* or large knife, a clumsy instrument used by the natives, instead of an axe. There are no carpenters here, nor can we buy a box, a board, a nail, or anything of the kind.* We have the same difficulty in obtaining provisions. We often have to send two or three days' journey to buy a few fowls. Besides, there is at present such a famine of rice here, that had we not brought a large supply from Calcutta, we should have been utterly destitute. It takes a great deal of time to attend to all these things, so that we have but little leisure for studying the language.

DIFFICULTIES OF TRAVELLING

43. *Journal of Brown, December 26, 1844* : Without considering the customs of the country, I brought with me a large

* In a similar strain, David Scott, Agent to the Governor General, remarks : "I am very much doubtful whether one should not present consult the interest of the inhabitants in Assam by instructing them in those useful arts such as carpentry, husbandry etc. which would appear to be more appropriate pursuits than literature in a country where boats continue to be made from trunks of trees, use of a saw, a wheel carriage or even a beast of burden is unknown." (*Bengal Political Consultations*, 1830; *May 7, no. 51*.)

chest (one which was sent out by friends in Shaftsbury,) containing my clothes, etc., which two coolies have thus far carried suspended on a pole between them; but this is so contrary to their custom, that I have now been obliged to let the coolies arrange the load to their own taste, which they do by fixing the empty chest to one end of a pole, and the contents to the other! Arranged in this way, a cooly takes the load upon his shoulder and walks off with the greatest ease. The difficulties of travelling in India, can scarcely be appreciated by those who live in a civilized country. All my dishes, cooking utensils, nearly all my provisions, bed, etc., I have to carry with me; also two or three loads of tracts and books; and the only tavern we find is an open shed, called a *namghor*,* where we spread our beds on the ground, hang up our moscheto curtains, and consider ourselves very comfortably lodged for the night. This mode of travelling in the cold season we find very conducive to health.

44. *Journal of Brown, April 1, 1843 ; BMM, October 1844, p. 292* : Started again on a trip for preaching and tract distribution, and came as far as Bhokota, on the Disang, having given away a good number of tracts on the road. Finding no *Námghor* here, I was hospitably received by one of the villagers into a shed adjoining his house, under which his wife had erected her loom. The loom was removed, and everything prepared for our comfort, i.e., so far as the customs of the country will permit, for a native could not furnish us with board and lodging in his own house without losing caste. I am, therefore, obliged to carry my bed (or rather blanket) and my cooking apparatus with me wherever I go. These are carried by a couple of coolies, or native bearers, who accompany me. The *námghors* generally consist of merely a roof, without sides or floor. Here I spread my blanket and mat upon the ground, and sleep in the open air, with my two or three fellow travellers beside me; first, however, fastening up my moscheto curtains as a security from insects. This mode of travelling is not unpleasant, except when a storm comes on, or

* *Namghor* or prayer house of the Vaisnavites in Assam hitherto served also the purpose of a rest camp to weary travellers irrespective of caste, creed or community.

a buffalo, as is sometimes the case, intrudes upon our slumbers at the dead of night, with the intention of appropriating our lodgings to himself.

45. *Journal of Barkar, October 17, 1840* : There is scarcely anything to be bought here. What we have of dry goods, groceries, medicines, etc., must come from Calcutta or from America. They must be sent for to Calcutta, a twelve-month before they are required. The insurance, together with the expense of transportation, increases their cost very much, besides the destructibility of the climate, and nearly every kind of vermin. One living in America can know but little of the great difference which we find between that country and this, in almost everything. We are truly in a new world. Boats coming from Calcutta with goods, managed by natives, are from six to nine months on the way. When our letters come by them, they not unfrequently present the paradox of very *old news*. These things, with many others of a similar nature, although they furnish no ground for disquietude, much less for complaint, should be thought of in estimating the value of missionary labor here. A location in some parts of A'sám would not be subject to all these inconveniences, and would allow the missionary to make more direct efforts for the saving of souls, and to spend much more time in appropriate missionary labor.

46. *Journal of Brown, September 17, 1838* : Have just received boxes from home, containing magazines and papers up to the close of 1837. With them we also received a box of clothing from Calcutta, for which we wrote above sixteen months ago ! So difficult is it to obtain even the necessaries of life, in this remote corner of the earth. Our letters and papers from America are generally a year old before they reach us.

OUTBREAK OF CHOLERA

47. *Letter of Danforth, June 20, 1851* : Soon after brn. Bronson and Whiting and Mrs. Cutter left us, the cholera broke out here and about one-tenth of the population has been swept off. It is judged that 1000 people, within a few weeks, have died in Gowahatti. In the villages around it would be difficult to give an estimate. The accounts are most fearful. The river has

been filled with dead bodies, which now and then lodging upon the sand, besides inviting crows, vultures and jackals, caused such an effluvia as almost to prevent the passage of boatmen. At Sirajgunge, a few day's travel below this, the mortality has been so great as to beggar description. One instance will suffice to give an idea of the work of death. Out of a company of 300 pilgrims only three remained to tell the tale. We have had eighteen cases on the mission premises ; but with timely and careful attention, under the blessing of God, all but four have been saved. The cholera has now nearly disappeared from the station.

48. *Annual Report, BMM July 1854, pp 305-7* : The state of the country has been such as to weigh heavily on their hearts. The last was a season of extraordinary sickness and mortality. The cholera raged in every part of the country, to such a degree as literally to decimate the population of Sibsagor district. The mortality of Nowgong district was over 9000 and of Gowahatti much greater. It was in every sense a land of death.

JUNGLE FEVER

49. *Journal Brown, October 25, 1843 : BMM, 1844, pp. 294-5* : Was called to attend the funeral of Mr. Aigeldinger, a Swede, one of the assistants of the Assam Tea Company, who died of fever contracted in the jungles. It is painful to witness the death of so many Europeans, cut down one after another in the prime of life and vigor,—and often without being aware of their danger till the grasp of death is upon them. It is said that of fifty assistants in the service of the Assam Company, fourteen or fifteen have died, as many more have been obliged to relinquish their posts from sickness, about the same number have left from other causes, and only five of the fifty are now in the service and able to attend to their duties ! This is not, however, a fair criterion by which to judge of the unhealthiness of Assam. The tea assistants are, generally, located in low situations, surrounded by dense jungles, where, during and at the close of the rains, a most deadly miasma is constantly rising from the decaying vegetation. Situations in the open and cultivated country, although low, are comparatively healthy.

KALAZAR

50. *July 8, 1892* : There is a kind of fever among the natives now, that the Doctors do not know how to treat. It is called "Kalazar" (the black disease). The patients gets fever off and on, from three months to a year or more. He gradually becomes weaker and weaker. Spleen and liver very troublesome. He looks rather bloodless and sometimes his skin gets black. Towards the last Dropsy and Diarrhoea set in. Some times dreadful sores. No medicine has yet been found to cure this black fever. Quinine does not effect it. This Black Fever began in Goalpara district and after causing a good many deaths there, it has come to Gowahati and Nowgong districts. Wonder if it will gradually go to the whole length of Assam. (*Moore, Mrs P. H. ; Twenty years in Assam or Leaves from my Journal, p. 114*)

MORTALITY

51. *Journal Brown, June 11, 1838* : Since I have been at Sadiya, I have been struck with the frequency of deaths, especially among adults and working-men. Every few days I hear of some one, who has been in my employ or with whom I have been acquainted, falling a sudden prey to the destroyer. I think this great mortality is owing chiefly to two causes—1st, the immoderate quantity of opium used by all the Asamese, and 2nd, their universal habit of sleeping on the ground, which must be highly pernicious, especially during the rains. Account for it as we may, the fact is unquestionable, that an alarmingly large portion of the population die every year. Everything seems to remind us, that what we do for this people must be done quickly.

HOSTILITY OF BORDER TRIBES

52. Mr. Scott took no soldiers to protect him (in Naga Hills)—his Bible and violin were his weapons of defence. With his violin in hand and prayer for these savage men, he assayed to enter the fastness of their hills. He must pass a narrow defile. When he reached this place he found twelve savage warrior chiefs ranged on either side of the narrow defile. They raised their spears as Mr. Scott approached as if to pierce him

with them all. Just at this moment the violin poured forth its sweet strains, and the voice of the singer rang out in the words "Am I a soldier of the Cross?" Those men were entranced with the music and one by one they dropped their spears and eagerly asked that the music go on. Thus the whole defile was traversed and Mr. Scott had made his entrance into this land by a violin. They said "You may come and stay among us as long as you wish if you will bring that violin with you". *Scott, A. K., An Autobiography, pp. 38-9)*

53. *Ward Mrs S. R. : Glimpse of Assam, p. 207 :* (They) lived some years without Government protection among a rude race of savages, learning an unwritten language, isolated from all European society. At intervals they can hear from the outside world by hiring a Naga to go to nearest Post Office. Often they had been in imminent danger from the blood-thirsty habits of the people—different villages making raids on each other, and cutting the head and hand of their victims they carry them off to their village.

CONSERVATISM OF THE PEOPLE

54. *Grant, Rev. R. D. 'Report of the Committee on Missions in Assam', BMM, 1891, p. 203 :* The labor on this field has not been crowned with that large degree of success which has characterized some other missions. This we attribute in part to two causes :—

First, the conservative character of the people. Their history proves them to have been always exceedingly timid of innovation. When the Mohammedan faith swept like a flood over Southern Asia, it never gained a strong foothold here. Today only about one in ten of the population follows the false prophet. Even Hinduism seems never to have been able to complete its conquest. Many of the natives still cling to the old primitive forms of religion, including spirit worship and the offering of propitiations to their gods.

This extreme conservatism has been one of the chief hindrances to the progress of missions. It has often been next to impossible to get the gospel before them. They would run like terrified children at the approach of a Christian teacher. Mr. Burdette writes that during the past year, as he was preaching in one of

the market-places, the people at first gathered about him in large numbers, when some one in the assembly shouted out : "These men will make you all Christians." In a moment the people fled as for their lives.

This spirit has followed the converts into the churches. In reading the reports from Assam, we are surprised and pained at the large number who fall away from the Christian faith. In these cases it would seem that the old influences were too strong for them, and under the mighty spell of the traditions of the past they turn back to the paths of their fathers.

INADEQUATE ASSISTANCE FROM HOME

(*Ibid*) Another cause of discouragement has been the small missionary force at work on the field. The labor has been too great for the few hands to which it has been committed. Pitiful are the appeals that come, year after year, for reinforcements. The missionaries themselves see, as we cannot, that the peculiarities of their work demand the enthusiasm and the prestige which come from large numbers—at least, larger numbers than have as yet been sent to Assam. The demand of the hour is for more laborers. In this we know that we voice the opinion of those best acquainted with the field. Strategic points must be captured and held. Larger forces must move into the interior, commanding the attention of the people and awakening them from their lethargy. Their conservatism is not only indifference; it is inanity. The sleep of ages is upon them. They need to hear the trumpet blast of the advancing hosts of the Lord. If we could place men enough there to command the attention of the people and to arouse them to a sense of their needs, their possibilities and their opportunities, such a harvest would follow as would surprise and gladden the hearts of the Christian world.

THE BAPTISTS AND THE MUTINY

ORIGIN, NATURE AND EXTENT

55. *Bronson to Peck, Nowgong June 4, 1857* : We in Assam are little out from the carnage, but the Sipahis (who) hold public treasury and guard every officer are sympathisers more or less (of) their comrades. The security hitherto had been that the Hindoos and the Mussulmans had been mixed up (and) they would not plot together. But it is curious that the ground of dissatisfaction is common. They say that the English will break their caste so as to make them go everywhere and fight their battles. So they have been given cartridges made of cows' fat and for Mussalman Sipahis cartridges in which hog's fat is used. So the moment they bite off the end for location, their caste is gone. This gives it a religious aspect. Many of the natives sympathise and for the time there was only the few European soldiers in Fort William...and in Calcutta thousand insurgents to make the Governor-General a prisoner...it is fearful to think...that powerful vengeance being meted out...about Delhi. The native on hearing it say that there is a prophecy in their *shastras* that the English to be driven out (this) year, God is in all this. This prophecy will move on amid stories and carnage, but it is not improbable that the English power may find more difficult to dispose this difficulty than many wars that they had carried on.

56. *Danforth to Peck, June 24, 1857* : You will see from the papers that we are now having stirring times here in India. Nearly the whole Bengal army is in a state of mutiny. Delhi is in their hands, and a large number of officers, as well as women and children, have been butchered by them. Not a single native soldier can be trusted. The citizens of Calcutta have formed themselves into a company to help protect the capital. Marines have been sent to Dacca, and all the steamers are employed in conveying troops up the country. In fact we are on a volcano, and do not know what an hour may bring forth. Assam is thus far quiet, but we have not a European soldier in the province. In Gowahati alone we have 600 native troops, who, no doubt, sympathize

strongly with the mutineers. We have fortunately good officers, and do not anticipate any outbreak at present. Still, all feel anxious, and guns and bullets are ready in every house. The Mussulman population are very impertinent, and tell the native Christians that the Company's reign is at an end, the sahibs will be cut up, and Islamism once and forever established. There are some twenty-five Europeans here, and in case of an outbreak we shall collect together and defend ourselves as best we may. Still, as I said above, I think we are safe for the present, unless things get worse in Bengal. If they do, Assam will go unless we get European troops, which is not likely at present.

July 10 : The rebellion continues to rage. Some 47000 native troops are now in mutiny, and no confidence is to be placed in the rest. The natives are getting very insolent, and probably will be so until it is certain that Delhi has been retaken. It is now plain that no European's life would be safe in India for a single moment, but for the presence of European troops. Yesterday a Mussulman told one of my assistants, on hearing him preach, that if it were not for the Company he would have his head off and in the great river before night. Hundreds of defenceless women and children have fallen victims to the most cruel butchery.

But Government is evidently getting the better of the mutineers,—who have proved themselves the greatest cowards when they have come face to face with the European troops. One hundred of the latter have often dispersed one thousand of the former.

I do not now anticipate any trouble in Assam, though two weeks ago nearly every man had his gun loaded and his plans laid in case of an attack, which was thought very likely to happen. But thirty Europeans against six hundred sepoy, in a surprise, I fear would not have stood a very good chance ; especially as the former would have had a large number of women and children to protect. But a merciful Providence has thus far defended us, and why should we distrust him for the future ?

57. Bronson to Peck, Gowahati, September 30, 1857 : A general feeling of insecurity is spread all over the country. All feel that it is emphatically true now, that we know not what 'a day or an hour may bring forth'.

It would be utterly impossible for me to tell you the horrors of this mutiny, or the 'refinement of cruelty' practised upon all, even unoffending and helpless women and children, that fell into the hands of the merciless savages. And what is most painful, the Government have put forth their utmost strength, but have not been able to stay the mutiny.

The mutiny extends through the entire native Bengal army, and has burst forth everywhere. Vast sums of money from public treasuries have been plundered, and very many British officers with their wives and children butchered. No massacre I ever read of, on any page of history, exceeds what has been witnessed in this country within the last four months. And what the end will be, God only knows. My strong feeling is, that God has permitted it for a wise purpose. Though so horrible now, the end will be to put down caste, and prepare the way for the cause of truth to move onward with less difficulty.

We are spending a few days with br. and sr. Danforth. They are also in indifferent health, particularly Mrs. Danforth. I am trying to get to Calcutta ; but many tell me the rivers are unsafe, unless several go in company. I have some hope that I shall be able to go as far as Dacca at least, on a steamer, soon ; from which place we shall venture in a native boat through the Sunderbunds, unless the mutineers from the Ganges block up the passage. Calcutta, too, is filled with panics. Our only trust is in God.

If we are spared to reach Calcutta, I shall lose no time in taking passage directly home; where I hope I shall be allowed to remain quiet until we find health and strength restored. In the mean time, I earnestly plead for help to be sent at once to Nowgong. I have a hope that the native disciples there will hold out until help arrives.

Ps. I find br. Danforth in a soldier's garb, drilling morning and evening, resolved to defend his family and the mission property to the last, if called to do so. All the residents unit in a volunteer corps.

CONSPIRACY AT JURHATH

58. *Whiting to Peck, Sibsagor, August 20, 1857* : You have already heard of the rebellion in India. For sometime we

do not fear its influence in this (part of the country), but within a few days the magistrate has got a plan, now brewing among the sepoys to rise at the coming *Durga Puja* and place the young prince* at Jurhath on his grandfather's throne. Captain Holroyd has given us in confidence some of the details, and will endeavour to let us know, if possible, any further progress of the proposed revolt. We feel compelled to hold ourselves ready for flight at a moments warnings. We have no European troops in the province and hence without (minimum) protection...I think I should seek safety among the miri in the North Bank. I think they would not prove treacherous. I hope our fears may not be realised nor our work interrupted.

Captain Holroyd warns us to flee immediately. We are also in excitement. Captain Holroyd has given us his boat...we must leave the mission property and all in the hands of the Natives.

59. *Whiting to Peck, Sibsagor, August 24, 1857* : I wrote on Friday, a few lines mentioning the expected rise of our Natives troops...He (Holroyd) has placed a nice comfortable boat at our disposal and we propose to leave the station today taking with us four of the largest school girls. I leave 100 Rupees with Captain Holroyd to give our Christian brothers in case they are required to flee. I do not much expect the mutineers will trouble the native Christians. At other places their object has been to exterminate foreigners. What butchery of men, women and children have taken place... If worse comes to worst we shall go up (further) into the hills of the North Bank, and of course no communication can be had for sometime. In Dibrugor the English have fortified the hospital and arsenal, and if conspiracy does not break out at once they hope to get English troops in a month. The native soldiers may see the preparations made to meet them and give up their foul preparations. I have no doubt half of the Assamese would be delighted to see the English driven out of the province.

60. *Danforth to Peck, Gowahati, August 28, 1857* : I wrote to you two weeks ago (that) all Bengal was in a blaze and that nobody can tell when the conflagration would reach Assam. Since that time matters have been growing worse. The sepoys

* Kandarpeswar Singha.

of Assam being tempered with. They have already received large bribes from the ex-rajah and a plot has (been made) to murder all the Europeans. Captain Holroyd has sent the Whitings away from the station. They have gone (North Bank) where I think they will be safe. Bro. Bronson thinks of leaving...for Calcutta and America. We at Gowahati are alive, but we cannot say safe the stroke may come any moment...you see we are living on the very crater of a smoking vulcano.

61. *Bronson to Peck, Gowahati, September 30, 1857* : I sit down to pen a few lines under circumstances of great sadness. Our healths had failed us, and after long and patient waiting for fellow helpers we had been driven to the painful task of leaving our little band at Nowgong for a season, to recruit. Just about this time, or soon after, we began to see unmistakable signs of an unsettled state of things in the country. In the very midst of our preparations for leaving, letters came into our hands, warning us to be on the alert, as a plot had been discovered in Assam to murder all the Europeans, on a certain day not far distant, and replace the Assamese king on the throne.* The native soldiers, of course, were to act a principal part in doing this and they were in receipt of letters from mutinous officers in and about Delhi and other parts of Hindostan.

VOLUNTEER CORPS AT GOWAHATI

62. *Danforth to Peck, Gowahati, September 15, 1857* : I wrote to you two weeks ago that we are on a vulcano. We are thankful to report that all safe as yet, several plots been discovered and we have found it necessary to form a volunteer corps of the residents of Gowahati about 25 in number for our protection... Cols., Capts., magistrates, chaplains, clerks, missionaries; in fact every resident has shouldered the musket and are drilled daily. Do you see I have turned to soldier...we shall be able to weather the storm, but how long this state of things will continue. It is impossible to see, but I fear two or three months longer...The

* For details see Barpujari, *Assam in the Days of the Company* (2nd ed., 1981), pp. 185 ff.

British Government in India had been shaken to its very foundation, but I think it will recover.

ARREST OF THE RAJAH

63. *Whiting to Peck, Sisi Mukh, September 21, 1857* : I wrote you last month that we had been advised by the magistrate, Capt. Holroyd, to absent ourselves for a few weeks from Sibsagor; and that, in accordance with his advice, we intended to take a tour to the North Bank. We have now been absent four weeks, and have coursed up and down the smaller channels of the Brahmaputra. The change has been very beneficial to us both, and we have thus been able to get through the greater part of the hottest month in the year without feeling the heat oppressive. We purpose to return to the station the last of next week, unless we hear unfavorable news. Since we left, we have heard every few days from Sibsagor. Every thing goes on as usual at the station. The natives there have been in considerable excitement, though they could hardly tell the reason why. Some said the Nagas were coming; some, the Sipahis were about to take the country; some that *guru*, or white soldiers, were at hand; of the latter they seem to have had most awful ideas. The last night of the Mohurrum, the excitement was at its height. Capt. Holroyd had Sipahi guards posted in various parts of the station, and the natives buried most of their brass dishes and other property, and prepared little bundles of rice for a flight into the jungle.

On the 10th or 11th Capt. Holroyd, in connection with an officer from Dibrugor and a few Sipahis, passed down the river to Jorhat-ghat, entered that city by night, seized the young rajah, and sent him off as a state prisoner, for treasonable correspondence, etc., to Gowahati. He arrested at the same time three Bengalis and an Assamese brahmin, whom he took into Sibsagor, where they are now prisoners. We hope this has broken the head of the conspiracy in Assam, and that all will now quiet down.

ARRIVAL OF SAILORS

64. *Whiting to Peck, Sibsagor, October 6, 1857* : We were absent about six weeks. During this time the whole country has

been in a high state of excitement, but the crisis has passed we hope. The young rajah has been sent to Calcutta. Several conspirators have been seized and a steamer with 100 Europeans has passed up to Dibrugor. We have just barely escaped on insurrection. The sipahis at Golaghat at one time actually assembled to march to Jorhath, but the Subadar was not quite sure of cooperation from above. He proposed to wait two days more for information. In the meantime another Subadar was sent down to relieve the one at Golaghat. The troops were sent off on duty to various places from that station, and thus their plans all broken up.

65. *Whiting to Peck, Sibsagor, November 23, 1857* : You will be happy to learn that we still are quiet and hope that worst of the calamity has passed. Thirty sailors, of whom several are Armenians, are posted at this station. They gave us a comparative security so far as human security are concerned.

66. *Danforth to Peck, Gowahati, February 8, 1858* : Another hundred sailors have gone to Upper Assam, and the work of retribution has commenced. Several will be blown away from guns; several hanged; others transported or imprisoned. The investigations, I am told, develop some foul plots. The day was fixed to murder every European, and everything ready. In fact, they were only waiting for the bugle to sound, to commence the work of death ; when a slight circumstance occurred to lead them to decide on waiting a few days for further information, and Assam was saved. We have, no doubt, been most signally preserved.

67. *Whiting to Peck, Sibsagor, February 20, 1858* : The province is now quiet. About 200 sailors are in the valley; of whom sixty are at Jorhat, forty at Sibsagor, and the remainder at Dibrugor. Several sipahis have been transported for life, others dismissed of the service. Several Assamese have also been transported for life; and Moni Ram,* the chief instigator, who was at Calcutta, has been brought up and is now being tried at Jorhat. It is said he will be executed.

* In collaboration with the mutinous sepoys of Upper Assam, Maniram Dewan made an abortive attempt to overthrow the British government in Assam,

HOLROYD'S JUSTICE

68. *Gurney, Mrs A. K., Sibsagor Field, Jubilee Papers, pp. 24-5*: ...in 1857, there were but few missionaries in the field. The Danforths were at Gowahati Mr. and Mrs. Whiting at Sibsagor when the great mutiny commenced in April. The Whitings kept to their station till August when a plot was discovered at Sibsagor brewing among the sepoys to rise at the puja, kill all the Europeans, and place the young prince at Jorhat on his grandfather's throne. The Commissioner advised Mr. and Mrs. Whiting to go on the river and for several weeks they were on the river and placed a comfortable boat at their disposal. Meantime Captain Holroyd surprised the plot, sent the royal family away, telling some of the leaders who asked for a trial, 'We'll hang you first and try you afterwards' which he accordingly did !

SCARCITY AND RISE IN PRICES

69. *Letter of Whiting, April 6, 1858* : The present year is a year of almost famine*. The poorer natives must suffer very much. Rice, ordinarily at two pice a seer† is now two annas a seer, or twelve times higher than usual ; a man's wages are five pice a day ; he usually eats a seer or a seer and a half of rice per day. That is, his rice, at present prices, would cost him twelve pice ; or one day's ordinary food would cost him two and a half days' labor. I shall be obliged to lend our Christian people money to enable them to get along until harvest when they will be able to refund gradually.

70. *Whiting to Warren‡, October 6, 1858* : I cannot, however, let this (mail) go without drawing your attention to the

* This was occasioned by a draught in the previous year. "In our part of Assam," Whiting reported in September 1857, "the small amount of rain and a disease in the feet of the cattle have prevented many people from planting as usual." In Nowgong, too, there was so much scarcity of grain that the price of rice shot up to Rs. 10 per maund, and the local authorities had to threaten the cultivators to seize their grains unless they release their surplus in the market (see Barua Gunaviram, *Anandaram Dhekial Phukanor Jivan Charitra*, p. 195).

† Seer, not zur as recorded in *BMM*.

‡ Warren, Rev. J. G., Foreign Secretary, ABFMS, Boston,

subject which has become of great importance to my missionary life to be neglected. During the first four or five years of my mission life the allowances was very fair and had the prices of everything remained as then I shall not be subjected to the disagreeable position of asking for an increased allowance. But while your appropriations have remained the same everything eatables had doubled, service have trebled and quadrupled price. The last year specially owing to famine and to the stationing of 200 sailors in Upper Assam the prices of food have gone up to a fearful height. Fowls formerly 12 to 15 would be had for a rupee and it is difficult to get to that price...sugar, oil, milk and rice though not in such proportions are still at enormous price and the prospect for the following year more gloomy.

71. *July 18, 1860* : With reference to the salaries of your mission in Assam I must say that they are inadequate and that not less 150 rupees per month will be required to cover the ordinary expenses.

Assam is fast filling up with tea-planters. Hence all kinds of food stuff grown in Assam has risen prices more so perhaps proportionately than elsewhere. Assam has no surplus food such as Europeans require. We have also a permanent battalion of European Artillery in Upper Assam to draw on the province for food.

A missionary and his family require 75 rupees a month for food...nearly 30 rupees a month for servants. Services of 25 rupees a month left to cover our expenses for clothing (and) ...most of the balance goes for necessaries of a miscellaneous character...I know not how your new rules with about travelling worked out, but you will have to make up rules that travelling in Assam henceforth will be expensive not less than 3 rupees daily as coolies, elephants, horses are all wanted in tea-cultivation.

We hope to hear next month from the annual meeting.

72. *Bronson to Warren, July 4, 1864* : I do not know whether any one else has mentioned to you how frightfully dear everything has become in Assam. House repairs, maintenance for the same, cooly hire, servants, eatables, clothing everything is becoming very expensive. A rupee now goes about half as

they formerly. Cooly labor was formerly 4 or 5 pice a day, now lowest is ten pice and continuing rising, servants' wages are ditto...we feel the effect of the war in America here. Even the price of cloths has gone up one half. The cause of this change in Assam, is traceable to the immense tea cultivation that are being carried on all around us. large companies are formed with large capital. The tea planters are flush with money—eager to employ everyman, every servant, ready to buy up every article of food, for themselves and their laborers at any price. Added to this the Government is constructing roads, telegraphs and carrying other public works. Men must be had at any price*.

Expenses became so great that the Government had increased the salaries of their officers all round lately. Previous to this numbers more were thrown up their appointments as not worth having. The country is fast filling up with Europeans and wealthy natives and prices are not likely to fall but on the contrary go on increasing. It is with difficulty that we get the necessary help for missionary travelling for the preaching...I hope that the committee will bear this in mind when making their appropriations for the coming year.

73. *August 31, 1865* : ...our staple rice, it is now three times its former price at least, fowls four times, *ghee* from two to three times, bread such as it is three...so on, servants demand nearly twice their former wages and are inclined as much less work, clothing is as dear as in Calcutta...the influx of European tea planters who are flush with money and pay exorbitant prices for labor and bazaar articles is one cause of this rise. Money too is depreciated in value. Political economist can tell why? Officers...who (receive) 1000 a month complain of the difficulties of living.

* Since 1830's the cost of labour was on the increase. A labourer could be had in 1824-5 at a rupee a month ; in 1839 at Rs. 2-8, and in 1858-9 it rose to Rs. 4-8. "Instances are not infrequent of men earning from 6 to 10 rupees per month and families of four individuals over 20 rupees." *Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal*, xxxvii., p. 71.

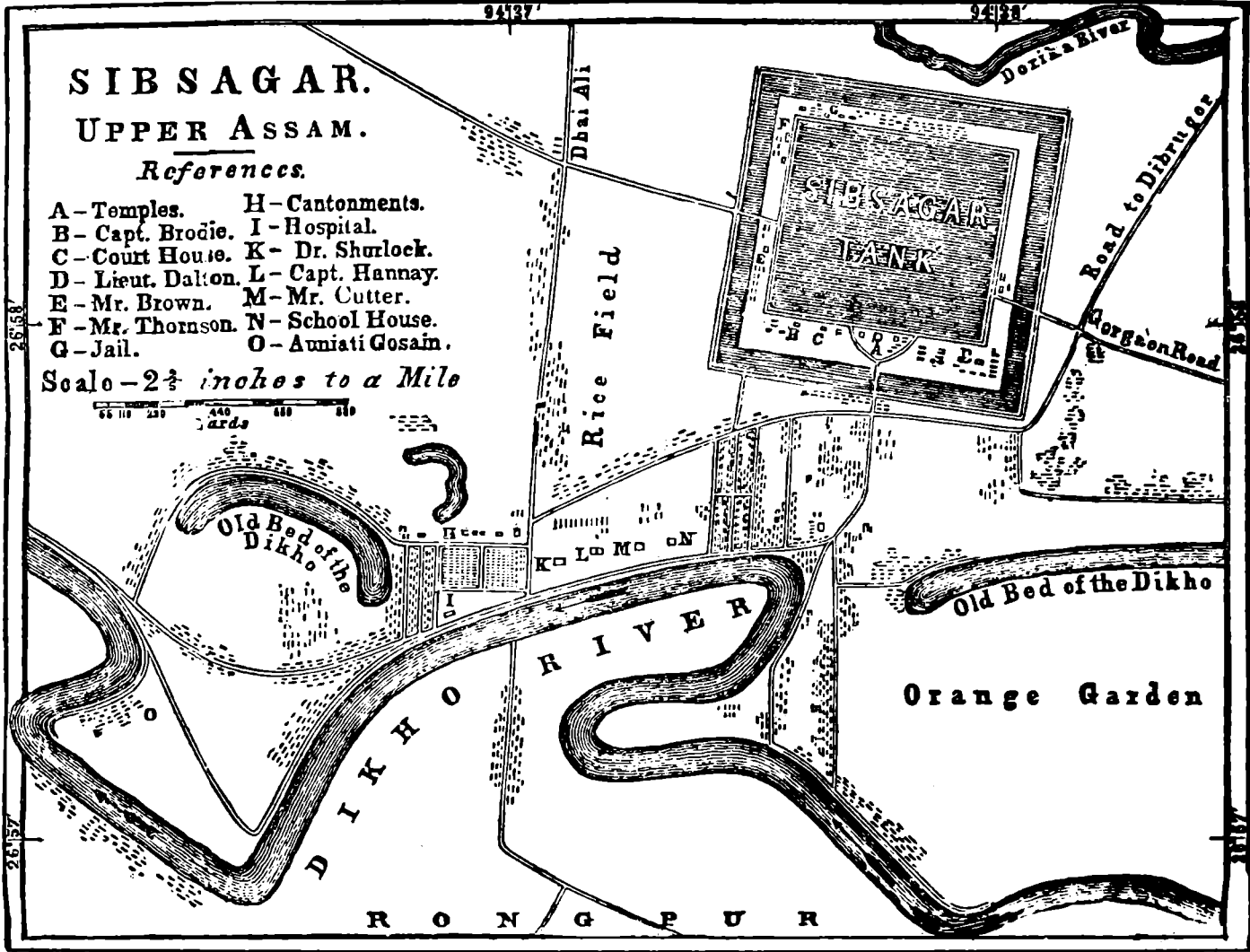
URBAN DEVELOPMENT

SIBSAGOR-GORGAUNG

74. *Journal of Brown, Sibsagar July 6, 1841* : On 23rd last month on the advice of my missionary brethren I left Jaipur for the purpose of placing myself under the care of Dr. Furnell as the state of my health appear to require immediately attention...since I arrived here I have received kindest attention of Dr. Furnell. I have concluded to...go down as far as Jorhath for the purpose of examining the country and distributing a few tracts ; it being the opinion of the Doctor, that the short trip by water will be attended with no injury to my health.

This (Sibsagar) is the most important and populous district in Assam and has been the centre both of political and religious influence since the establishment of the Ahom kings at *Gorgaung*, above three centuries ago, Gorgaung lies a few miles above this on the same side of the river (*Dikho*) and has recently been granted by the Government to the Assam Tea Company, as their principal depot this side of Jaipur. From AD 1695 to 1794 the Assam Rajahs fixed their residence during the cold season at *Rangpur*, about two miles from this place, on the opposite side of the river, where the old palace and many other ruins still remain. The situation of Rangpur being low, the rajahs still continued to spend the rains at Gorgaung, where a magnificent palace is yet in existence. After the East India Company became connected with affairs of Assam, Jorhath was selected as the residence of the rajahs, and has so continued until the time of the late rajah Purandar Singh. On the deposition of the latter, two years ago, the government selected this place their headquarters, since which time population has been steadily increasing, till it is now the largest village this side of Gowahati.

Sibsagar stands upon the *Dikho* river, which empties into the Brahmaputra, one or two days, sail from its mouth. The mission bungalow here is situated on the high bank of a large tank, called Sib-Sagor (Shiva's Ocean). It is a beautiful sheet of water, about half a mile from the river, and covers about



(Mission to Assam, Annual Report, BMM, July 1844, p. 210)

120 acres*. It was dug AD 1733 and has three temples on its bank, the largest of which is dedicated to Shiva. On its top is a golden ball perforated by bullets in several places. This is said to have been done by the Burmese, many of whom it is reported, were struck dead immediately after. Peculiar sanctity is attached to the tank, and the floods of wild geese that frequent it during the cold season are never allowed to be molested,—natives, indeed, believe it impossible to kill them while upon the tank. Stories are related of innumerable...individuals, English, Bengalis and Burmans, who have died in the most miserable manner in consequence of violating the sanctity of the tank, or the temples.

July 8 : Left Sibsagor yesterday and passed the mouth of the Dikho river this morning found the station three feet under water ; the natives being driven from their huts were all collected with their cows, goats, etc., upon a high bund road, the only spot above water for the floods to abate. The water, however, still continues to rise.

JORHATH—GOURISAGOR

July 9 : After leaving the Brahmaputra we entered a small river called Kakila ; after ascending which for a few miles, we took a direct course over the fields, the whole country now inundated. The great number of birds crowded upon the small spots of jungles that appear above the water gives the

* This noble reservoir is said to have been constructed about the year 1722 by the Raja Seeb Singh, and completed in a single dry season, in order to avoid washing of the rains upon the work. He is said to have employed a million men in the excavation, stationing them in ranks, through which, the baskets of earth could be rapidly passed from hand to hand. The soil thus removed forms the broad embankment, around the reservoir on which is a road, flanked by temples and residence. The embankment is surrounded by a moat called the outer tank. The entire work is a quadrangle, varying but little from a square, the inner tank being nearly two miles on circuit, 114 acres in surface, and from twenty to forty feet deep.

On the southern bank are the grand old temple, three pyramidal structures of solid brick, dedicated respectively to Siva, Visnu and Durga. They are contemporaneous with the tank. The central, largest temple is that of Siva, and contains the *Salagram* or sacred black stone. and object of peculiar reverence. (*The Whole World Kin*, pp. 219-20)

country a very lively appearance...Native boats are out in every direction pursuing the deer through the tall grass which a foot or two above the water.

Passed the Bhogdoi the artificial outlet of Disoi or Jorhath river. This is a very small stream and navigable only during the rains. Passed several villages and ...reached *Jorhath* at about 10 o'clock, went up and distributed about 100 tracts and books. There has been a considerable falling off in the population of this place since Sibsagor was made the chief station of the district. The roads are almost impassable being cut up with water courses and left to be overgrown with jungles. The deposed rajah still remains here, but without any of his former display.

July 10 : Concluded to return to Sibsagor by a direct route across the country as the water is so high as to admit of a boat going in almost any direction. After passing out several rice meadows we entered the Teok, a small stream...found great difficulties in procuring a spot...sufficiently large for the boatmen to cook their rice upon. Saw but few villages and these all inundated.

July 12 : Came up the Jhanzi river and reached Naobaisha a little before night. There is an extensive range of villages on both sides of Jhanzi and countryside with cultivation.

July 13 : Left Jhanzi and crossed the country to Namdang, a branch of Dikho. About noon passed the *Gauri-Sagor*, one of the largest tank in Assam, dug, AD 1724 by the Assam Raja Siba Singh. This was the scene of an action between the Company's troops and the Burmese in 1825 in which the latter were defeated, and shortly after expelled from the country. The Assamese have universally the greatest dread of the Burmese name from the remembrance of the atrocities committed by them during their short rule. They are strongly attached to their present rulers—regarding the Company as their deliverers.

Reached the stone bridge, just above the junction of Namdang with the Dikho about 3 o'clock. Found here large village of Domes or fishermen and spoke for about an hour to an interesting congregation.

July 14 : Reached Sibsagor had found our friends enjoying their usual health,

DIBRUGOR—NAZIRA

July 19 : Prepared to start for *Dibrugor* having a desire to visit that station before retiring to Jaipur. Stopped at several villages on way down the Dikho, reached Dibrugor on 27th and distributed here 100 tracts and books. Enjoyed the hospitality of Captain Vetch, the Political Agent, from whom we have always received the kindest attention. The station is beautifully situated near the mouth of the Dibru river and though quite new already contained a handsome population*. It is an excellent location for a missionary to labour among the Mattaks and had it been a European station at the time of our leaving Sadiya we should no doubt have selected it in preference to Jaipur. At that time, however, under the authority of the Mattak Raja and the Jorhath District being in an unsettled state Jaipur was, on (all) accounts, considered the most eligible station...It has not, however, proved to be a healthy location, and from this and other causes the explanations which were entertained of its rapid prosperity have been disappointed.

July 29 : Left Dibrugor and passed down the Brahmaputra as far as the mouth of Dihing where I learnt that Mrs Brown passed down a few days before on her way to Sibsagor having had a sever attack of fever. Accordingly changed my course and came into Sibsagor which I reached on Friday the 30th. I have received three letters from the brethren at Jaipur from which and the advice of Bro Barkar I have decided to remain at this place. The press we trust will ultimately be located here, being the most central important station in Assam proper i.e., Assam above Gowahati. The district between Gowahati and Gowlpara, though reckoned as part of Assam, has no connection with it in a missionary point of view as the people do not speak in Assamese language.

* Referring to the cosmopolitan character of the town Whiting writes : "I was struck with the variety of people I met at Dibrugor. I dare say as many dialects are spoken in that station as were heard at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Jewish harvest festival). In the regiment are Bengalis, Nepalese, Manipuries—in the bazaar, Keigas (*keyas*), Kamti, Nora, Abor, Mishmi, Miri, Naga, Cosari and others. Each of the tribes has a language of its own, while the Assamese is the common medium of trade."

December 13 : Went up to Gorgaung with Bro Cutter. Visited the palace which is an interesting edifice of antiquity, and is in a good state of preservation. Portions of several other brick edifices remain, arched gateway at the entrance of the town which is surrounded by a high wall and must have once been a strongly fortified place.

Directly on the other side of the river is the new station of *Nazira* occupied by the Tea Company. It is a very flourishing village and containing a large bazar.

December 23 : I have counted the houses of Sibsagor and found them to be 1635, and thus at the average of five persons gives a population of above 8000.

AUNIATI-DAKINPAT

75. *Journal of Brown, Sibsagor, March 29, 1850* : We stopped on our way (to Sibsagor) to visit the island village—particularly monastic establishments on the Majuli. The two of the monasteries are the seats of the chief Gokhains or Bishops in Assam, the *Auniati* and *Dakinpat* ; at each of the places are found establishments of some four or five hundred and together with a large (number) of inferior disciples and dependents, who with their families reside near the monasteries. At the Dakinpat idol house we saw some of the most costly and finely wrought images we have ever seen in India mostly...overlaid with gold and silver...the Dakinpat Gokhain is rather intelligent, as are also one or two of his chief priests. They defended their idolatry with zeal and ingenuity. Only a few books were disposed of in Majuli, the people being afraid to take them on account of the priests.

RANGPUR-KALOGAUNG

76. *Journal of Barkar, January 10, 1842* : Crossed the Dikho river, opposite my house, and passed the site of old *Rangpur*. Here are two large temples, and a large two story brick building formerly used by the Assamese kings for the purpose of witnessing the sports of wild beasts. There are also the remains of an old palace and several other old buildings, which have stood many years ; on which, the temples in particular, are emblems of Hindu idolatry carved out of stone in bas-relief, fresh and fair, and set in great profusion in the walls

of the buildings. Among them are the unsightly forms of the nine incarnations, represented as performing the various feats for which they have been celebrated ; also figures of elephants, horses, hogs, wild beasts, etc.

The tank at this place is about two miles in circumference. Passing a narrow belt of jungle and a rice field, I came to *Kalogaung*, on a small stream called the Namdang. There are two temples on a small tank at this place. Both tank and temples are a facsimile of those above named. Here read the scriptures to some of the people, and returned home in the evening.

TEZPUR-GOWAHATI-HAJU

77. *Tour of observation by Cutter, Jaipur, February 22, 1842* : Having made arrangements for the security of the mission property during my absence, I left Jaipur on the 30th of Nov. Mrs. C. accompanied me to Sibsagor for the purpose of obtaining medical advice. We made the journey by water to Sibsagor (about fifty miles below Jaipur, in a direct line), and reached the station on the 8th of December, and we were cordially received by our dear friends there.

On the 20th Dec. I left Sibsagor and proceeded by water to *Tezpur* about 100 miles from Sibsagor by the river. Major Jenkins had kindly given me a letter of introduction to the officer in charge at Tezpur, from whom, as well as from the other gentlemen of the station, I received the most polite attention, and every assistance I required.

Tezpur is a fine high station, on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and is thought to be the most healthy in Assam for Europeans. The officers in charge of the Darrang district reside here, and it is also the station of the 2d in command of one of the Assam Local Corps. The most dense portion of the population is not, however, in this neighbourhood, but about fifty miles below, accessible from a branch of the Brahmaputra, to which place there is also said to be a good carriage road. That portion of the district is also called Darrang, although it is but one of five divisions of the whole district of that name. It was formerly the headquarters of the officers in charge of the district, when in 1835 they removed to Tezpur. There is, however, still a sub-assistant to the Commissioner at the old station, but

it is considered unhealthy for Europeans in the rainy season. The population of the whole district is estimated by Mr. Strong (who was then the only civil officer at Tezpur) at upwards of 200000, mostly Assamese and Kacharis or Kosaris. Within a short distance around the station, there were supposed to be 600 houses or 3000 inhabitants.

Mr. Strong having kindly furnished me with an elephant, I left on the 27th for *Nowgong*, twenty miles south of Tezpur, and reached the station just after dark. I was cordially welcomed by br. and sister Bronson, who have recently removed from Jaipur to this place.

The country for about ten or twelve miles before reaching *Nowgong*, I found well cultivated and populous. As far as the eye could stretch an immense plain presented itself to view, studded in every direction with villages, whose inhabitants were the cultivators of the soil.

After remaining one day at *Nowgong*, br. Bronson and myself left in a canoe for *Gowahati*, which is about 70 miles (by the river) below or west of *Nowgong*. The banks on both sides of the river *Kallang* for about 30 miles below *Nowgong*, we found covered with a dense population, surpassing any thing I have met with in any other part of Assam. About 20 miles below the station we passed a place where a large number of people were assembling for a fair which is held there weekly. Rice and other necessaries, cloths, hoes, axes, *dahs** and a variety of useful articles were exposed for sale. Assamese, Lalung, Mikirs and Garos, amounting to between 2000 and 3000, were here collected together purchasing their weekly supplies for themselves and families. It was a most animating scene. We gave away a number of tracts, which were received with eagerness, and we hope will be productive of good. This would make an excellent preaching station for the missionary located at *Nowgong*, it being only about fifteen miles by land, and there is a good road leading to this place.

The river *Kallang* empties itself into the *Brahmaputra*, eight or ten miles above *Gowahati*, which station we reached

* A sharp-edged cutting instrument.

on the 1st of January, and were cordially received by br. and sister Robinson.

I should have mentioned before, that Assam is at present divided into six districts, viz., Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibpur, Lakhimpur and Matak or Sadiya.

The following extracts are from br. Robinson's recent work on Assam :

'The chief town in Kamrup is Gowahati, or as it is called in the ancient books of the Hindus, Pragjoitshpur. It is the residence of the Commissioner and of the civil authorities in charge of the district. It is situated on the left bank of the Brahmaputra, at the eastern extremity of the division, and occupies a plain of $2\frac{1}{2}$ square miles in extent. This plain is bounded on the interior by a chain of pretty hills, stretching from N.E. to S.W., in form of a semi-circle, with its two promontories resting upon the river, while the river itself, taking a bend concentric with the hills, cuts it out in the form of a crescent, and extends the whole length of the space between its horns.'

'During the splendor of the Assam dynasty, Gowahati was one of the largest cities in the kingdom. It occupied within its fortifications a vast extent of country on both banks of the great stream ; the hills on either side forming a spacious amphitheatre, equally well fortified by nature and by art. It was the capital of all Lower Assam, and the residence of the Viceroy or Bor Phukam. The entrances into the city were by guarded passes on either bank of the river. The ruins of the gateways of some of these passes are still to be seen, and the remains of the extensive fortifications may to this day be traced for miles in the mounds and ditches that now serve only to mark the ancient citadel. Besides these relics, but a small portion of its former grandeur now remains. Its brick, its mortar, and earthen ware, constitute in some places a large proportion of the soil. Numerous carved stones and beautifully finished slabs, the remains of once noble temples, are constantly found beneath the surface of the ground ; its numerous and spacious tanks, the works of tens of thousands, the pride of its princes, and the wonder of the present day, are now choked up with weeds, and jungle, or

altogether effaced by a false, though luxuriant soil, that floats on the stagnant waters concealed beneath.'

'In the centre of the river opposite the station stands a little rocky island, called *Umananda*. According to the Hindu legends this island was formed by the god Sib of the dust with which he had marked his forehead. It presents a very picturesque object, clothed as it is with trees, and crowned with temples.'

'One of the most remarkable temples in Assam, is the shrine *Kamakhya*, the goddess of love, situated on the summit of a hill, about two miles to the west of Gowahati. This fane is one of great celebrity, and is frequented by a vast number of pilgrims from all parts of India. It owes its celebrity neither to its structure nor its situation ; but to the image itself. Yet the site is not uninteresting, nor is it devoid of beauty. To the south it is shut in by a cluster of hills, and to the north flows the sacred Brahmaputra, which bathes the extreme points of the hill. Within these bounds is the sanctuary of the goddess ; but her sway is not confined to these precincts. The whole of the province of Kamrup, as its name implies, was in ancient times a sort of *Idalion* grove, a privileged region for mirth, and dance, and revelry, and all manner of licentiousness.'

'Some of the formulas used at the festival in honor of this goddess, relate to things which can never become the subject of description. Here the most abominable rights are practised, and the most licentious scenes exhibited, which it is hardly possible to suppose the human mind, even when sunk to the very lowest depths of depravity, could be capable of devising.'

'During the daily ceremonies of worship performed before the image, spectators are very few, and these feel no interest whatever in the mummery going forward. Were it not for those who come to pay a visit of ceremony to the image, and to present their offerings, the temple would be as little crowded on festival, as on common days ; but as soon as the well known sound of the drum is heard, calling the people to the midnight orgies, the dance and the song, whole multitudes assemble, and the crowd becomes dense. The women employed to dance and sing on these occasions, are those consecrated to the temple, of whom it is reputed there are no less than five hundred. Their presence,

together with their filthy songs, and more obscene dances, form the chief attractions. A song is scarcely tolerated which does not contain the most marked allusions to unchastity ; while those which are so abominable, that no person could repeat them out of the temple, receive in general the loudest plaudits. All this is done in the very face of the idol, nor does the thought, "Thou God seest me," ever produce the slightest pause in these midnight revels. But we decline blotting these pages with any further allusion to such unutterable abominations.'

'Another temple of no less consequence than the one we have just noticed, is that situated at *Haju*, a village in Kamrup, about six miles from the northern bank of the Brahmaputra. The great object of veneration is an image called "Mahamuni," in a temple on the summit of a hill about 300 feet high. Thousands of votaries of every rank and condition are here annually congregated together, and towards this shrine a tide of costly offerings from every point of the compass is constantly setting in. It is visited not only by pilgrims of the Brahminical faith, who proceed to it from all parts of India, but Buddhists likewise contend that it was the presence of their great prophet and legislator, which conferred its holy fragrance and mysterious virtue on the spot. But whatever was the original cause of its sanctity, no orthodox Hindo now doubts the efficacy of its atmosphere in removing sin. The pious Buddhist, too, imbued with the same faith, leaves his home in the distant regions of China and Thibet, and crossing the pathless tracts of the snowy Himalayas, burdened with the load of his offences, hastens to make obeisance at the shrine of his country's deity, and departs in joy and gladness, lightened of his load.

'Towards the close of the year 1835, a school was established at Gowahati, under the patronage of the General Committee of Public Education. The gradual, yet continued increase of its numbers, shows that the institution has achieved one great stride towards its right position in the country. The natives begin to appreciate the advantages to be derived from it ; they are willing to give it a trial, and it is presumed, will quickly draw the desired conclusion for themselves. We therefore confidently anticipate that this institution in the course of a few

years will become an important provincial college, and be the means of disseminating knowledge in the neighboring districts. In connection with the Gowahati seminary, there are at present three branch schools, supported by local funds. Besides these institutions there are in Kamrup no less than twenty vernacular schools supported by government, and placed under the management, of the collector. In the districts of Darrang and Nowgong there are a few schools placed on a similar footing.'

The seminary at Gowahati is under the superintendence of br. Robinson, who has, I believe, the supervision of the other schools in the district. He has recently established one on the hill near the temple of Kamakhya, alluded to above, and br. Bronson distributed tracts to all the scholars, which I hope may be attentively read, not only by the scholars, but by the priests and others at the temple.

There are more Europeans at Gowahati than at any other station in Assam, and a beautiful brick edifice for public worship is in course of erection, and a chaplain of the Episcopal church is expected out from England to officiate there.

The native population here is very extensive, and nearly all understand Assamese ; and the comers and goers are also very numerous. It is a station which ought to be occupied by our Board, and I hope some one will soon be on his way to be located here.

NOWGONG—BISHANATH

We had worship morning and evening on the Sabbath, and br. Bronson and Nidhi went out to preach to the Assamese, and distribute books. Being not quite well I was unable to go out on that day.

On the 4th of January we left Gowahati to return to Nowgong by land, elephants having very kindly been sent down for us by Capt. Gordon. We made the journey in three days and a half. Our route for the first day lay through two ranges of hills, occupied here and there by Lalungs and Mikis, and in many places extensively cultivated. There is a very good road leading from Gowahati to Nowgong, and it is much nearer than the river route. We passed through some beautiful portions of

country, thickly populated, with rice fields on each side of the road for miles in extent. The natives appeared to have every comfort around them ; and nothing but pure christianity appeared wanting to make them the happiest of people. Many of the villages through which we passed had schools, which are partly supported by government. We received every possible attention from the heads of villages, through which we passed, and where we put up for the night ; and we were listened to with attention, and tracts were received with eagerness by all who could read. For about twelve miles before reaching Nowgong, we passed through one continued rice field, with an unbroken line of houses on each side. We could also see one, and in many places two similar rows on the same side of the river, beyond those through which we passed.

Nowgong is situated in a large plain on the banks of the Kallang, and is accessible for small boats throughout the year. The ground here is high, and the station has been very tastefully laid out by Capt. Bigge, the principal officer now in charge of the district. From him, and from Capt. Gordon and lady br. and sister Bronson have received many favors, and the kindest attentions. Capt. and Mrs. Gordon have had for the last year a school of about forty scholars, in their own compound, and have now made it over to the mission, to be superintended by sister Bronson, while the expense of the assistant teacher, who is to be a well-educated native from Calcutta, will be defrayed by Capt. Gordon. Both Capt. and Mrs G. are interested in the spiritual as well as temporal condition of the people, and lend their influence to promote the cause of the Redeemer in the district where they reside.

The bulk of the population would certainly be accessible within a circuit of 25 miles from the station, and would be found principally on the banks of the principal rivers—the Kallang, Dhonhiri and Manohee. The greatest portion are Assamese by birth, custom, and manners, and nearly the whole understand, and generally adopt that language. The remaining portion consists of Mikirs, Kacharis, Nagas, Lalongs, Kukis, Rábbás, a few Kosias, Khamtis or Shyans, Sikhs, Bengalis, and the ancient Ahoms. The first two are the most numerous after the

Assamese, and with the Nagas possess distinct languages of their own. The Mikirs inhabit the range of hills running through the centre of the district ; the Kacharis, the mountains to the south of the Jamaná ; and the Lalongs, that portion of the district which adjoins Kamrup, called Dantipur, or Jyntia, and also parts of the Raha Mehal [division]. Assamese of the Hindu persuasion greatly predominate, and I should imagine that the Mussulmans hardly reach the general average of other parts of India, viz., 10 per cent. There is a tribe called Morias, which appear to belong more nearly to the latter class ; they are, however, considered distinct, and are not numerous. Many classes of the inhabitants appear only of late years to have been converted to Hinduism by the agents of the gosains who go about for that purpose, and also for collecting sums of money (the amount of which brings them in a considerable revenue), from their deluded votaries. The Dums, a portion of the Ahoms, Lalongs, Mikirs, and Kacharis, are their latest proselytes.

There are several populous parts of the district which have scarcely been visited by Europeans, and are little known ; such as Maiyeng, between the Kallang and Brahmaputra, and bounded on the west by the Kamrup district ; some Mozás* in the Chupari Mehal, and several in Kachar.

Capt. Rigge was absent on a tour to Munipore, to which place a road is now, or is about to be opened by government, and on that account, and for other reasons, Capt. Gordon predicts, that in the course of a few years Nowgong will become the most important station in Assam. In the vicinity of Nowgong there is certainly a dense population now, and I think br. Bronson has quite as interesting a field as any in Assam. Upon examining Capt. Gordon's letter, it will be seen that he has made the lowest possible estimate of the number of inhabitants, and I should judge from it that 250,000 souls might be found resident in the district.

Having been again kindly furnished with elephants by Capt. Gordon, we left on the 10th for *Bishanoth*, which is between 30 and 40 miles above Nowgong, and 20 miles above Tezpur,

* Fiscal divisions

on the Brahmaputra. Our road lay through that portion of the Nowgong district called *Koliabor*, which is thickly populated by an industrious and thriving people. We also found the banks of the Kallang very thickly populated for a long distance above Nowgong.

Bishanoth is a fine healthy location, and until the Khamti insurrection at Sadiya in 1839, it was the headquarters of the Assam Light Infantry, and of the political agent for Upper Assam. There are now two officers and a small force here, but the population is small. We were politely received by Capt. Smith, commanding at the station, who showed us every attention. Here Mr. Bronson and myself separated, he returned to Nowgong, and I proceeded to Jorhath by water, which I reached on the 19th of January, five days after leaving Bishanoth.

Jorhath is situated about nine miles inland from the Brahmaputra, and has a population of about 1200 houses. It is the residence of his highness Rájá Purundar Singh, who, till within the last two or three years, ruled over a large portion of Upper Assam. The population here is almost entirely pure Assamese, of whom a great number can read. There is a small guard and a police station here, and it is expected a European officer will eventually be added.

From Jorhath I went to *Tita Bor*, 12 miles, *Kacharihath* 24 miles, and *Golahath* 30 miles south-west of Jorhath. The latter place is situated on the Dhonhiri river, and a large fair is occasionally held here, similar to the one noticed below Nowgong. The Nagas residing in the neighboring hills come down in large numbers for trade. There were nearly 100 boats at the ghát belonging to petty traders.

There is a good population scattered along between Jorhath and Golahath, and a missionary might very profitably spend ten or twelve days occasionally in preaching from village to village between the two places.

There are many very fine bund roads running through Sibsagor district, in every direction, and it is probable government will, sooner or later, open and repair the most important of them, as they are now covered with an impenetrable jungle. They were constructed when Assam was in its glory, by some of its

enterprising rulers. Three or four lead to Jaipur, one or two to Motok, and one or two to Gowahati. If these roads were repaired, the whole district would be accessible by land throughout the year, which would be found studded with villages and cultivation in every direction.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

78. *Journal of Bronson, BMM June 1864, p. 165* : During this tour I have seen much to show that Assam is fast rising in importance. Three steamers lay in the river before Gowahati*. Tea lands are being taken up in every direction. The pretty hills along the river side, near Gowahati, are now covered with tea plants. Tea speculators are making independent fortunes in a very short time. A large trunk-road is being constructed by the government through the whole valley of the Brahmaputra, from Bengal to Sadiya. The telegraph wire, to connect Gowahati with Bengal and Calcutta, has already reached Gowahati. There is a change coming over this province. It is destined to be an important country. Now is the time to follow up with the gospel.

79. *Stoddard to Warren, May 28, 1867 (Excerpts)* : Gowahati is indeed a place of universal beauty, and picturesque in the highest degree. I cannot now name a place on the wonderful Hudson that can surpass it in natural scenery.

The mighty Brahmaputra is rather narrow just opposite the city, being probably not more than three-fourths of a mile wide. It is thus confined by bluffs and peaks on either bank ; these, for the most part, are rocky and adorned with Hindu temples.

The mission premises, or compound, about six acres, lie on the banks of this large river, with a Macadamized public road between. Lining this road, on the riverside, are large trees, both ornamental, and also a protection against the encroachments of the annual floods.† These grounds, for beauty and

* The problem of transport was considerably eased since 1861 when the *Indian General Steam Navigation Company* introduced their regular services for carriage of both passengers and goods along the Brahmaputra.

† See also Orunodoi, June 1853, pp. 90-2.

locality, are the choicest in the entire city. Had they not been secured at an early day, our mission could not have got possession of them. They front on the main street forty rods ; about eight hundred feet back the grounds are on a level with the strand ; then they rise at once ten or fifteen feet, forming the beautiful plateau or table upon which stand the two mission bungalows and schoolhouse. The neat little chapel, built by br. Danforth, stands near the street in the centre of the grounds on the level below.

These four buildings are of brick, with thatched roofs, and in good condition. The chapel has a plank floor, the other buildings, only earth or brick floors.

Great changes have taken place since I entered Assam nineteen years ago with my dear friend Danforth. He and br. Barker have ceased from their labors and gone up higher. Their works do follow them, and many we meet here speak their praises.

The telegraph has been completed to this place, and we are within speaking distance of Boston. A railroad from Calcutta has been finished and cars running 110 miles towards Assam, shortening the distance, in time, one-half to Gowahati. A railroad has been surveyed through this valley, passing through Gowalpara, Gowahati, Nowgong, and so on to Dibrughur, Upper Assam. Now four steamers a month, instead of one a few years ago.

The tea speculation has ruined many financially ; but tea grows here admirably ; the cultivation is going on. The whole interest will soon rally, for there is money in tea, and the traffic from this valley will become very great.

80. *September 17, 1867* : When the Union Pacific Railroad is finished, the whole trip to Europe, Madras, Burmah, Assam, Bangkok and China, will occupy but little more time than did a visit to Jerusalem a few years ago. Shall we not then also see pastors taking this for their holiday tour, thus bringing our missions into nearer sympathy with the churches at home ?

We realize that the distance from our native land has greatly lessened in the last twenty years. Years ago we received our overland mail but once a month, seldom bringing our letters before they were three or four months old. Yesterday we

received one in five days less than two months from the time it was mailed, west of the Mississippi. Formerly our newspapers, after accumulating for months at the Rooms in Boston, were boxed up and duly forwarded by some merchant-ship, via Cape of Good Hope, so that they were sometimes received before the latest numbers were a year old.

Now we receive our papers by each bimonthly mail, two months from the press. But any items of great political importance are transmitted by telegraph, and reach us through the Calcutta dailies, in a much shorter time. A line of telegraph has been for some time in operation between this and Calcutta, so that we might send you a message all the way by the wires, if we could pay for it.

81. *Jubilee Papers, p. 10* : There are two railways* with 108 miles of line in the province. They are simply for the purpose of connecting inlying parts with the Brahmaputra which is the great artery of the valley...when the Missionaries first came to Assam, they were three months coming up the river from Calcutta in native boats. Now (1886) two lines of steamers run weekly from Calcutta carrying freight and passengers, etc., a line of mail service steamer connecting at Dhubri with railways from Calcutta enables one to reach upper end of the valley in six days.

CONTINENTAL HIGHWAY

82. *Clark to Duncan, † Amguri, Assam, August 17, 1896* : The construction of the Bengal-Assam Railway through the Assam Valley has so far progressed that its completion in two or three years may be assumed. It runs between the Brahmaputra river and the hills to the south and passes through the tea-garden tracts. It would be very convenient for visiting the Kols and Bengalis who are on the tea-gardens or in villages nearby... another fact that it may be assumed about this railway is that it will cross the southern hills or mountains of Assam probably at the north-east corner of the valley and connect with the

* Jorhat Provincial Railway (JPR) and Dibru-Sadiya Railway (DSR).

† Duncan, Rev. Warren Samuel, Foreign Secretary, ABFMS, Boston.

Burman railway system* (and)...that the Government of India has sanctioned the extension of a Burman railway into the borders of China. British capital will probably soon push this on to steam navigation on the great Yangtse river of China—when there will be a great Asiatic continental highway from Bombay or Karachi across India through Assam and Burma and across China to Shanghai...unless England is crippled in some way this great highway pretty sure to be an accomplished fact not many years hence.

AMENITIES ON THE INCREASE

83. *Comfort to Warren, March 17, 1969* : I spent the night at Pulasbari, finding very good quarters in a bungalow erected by the government for the accommodation of travellers. They keep a bedstead, a table, and two chairs in it all the time. A cook-house is also erected, so that if travellers have the necessary articles, including a servant for the preparation, they may have meals as if at home. Kandura spent the night in the boat, rather to his discomfort. I took dinner in the evening with Mr. Ryan, an overseer on the road, with whom I had previously been acquainted in Gowahati. He is building a house for himself and said his accommodations are always at my service, whenever I chose to visit the place.

In the morning, I started for home, proposing to stop at Dhoppotallak on the way. A market is held there twice a week. Bhubon was with me, he having joined me at Pulasbari. Kandura came by boat. Found there a mouzadar or tax gatherer. Meantime the wind began to blow heavily, and the place being on the river bank, the air was full of flying sand. The people soon scattered to their homes. We took refuge in a building the mouzadar had recently erected for a school. He wished to show his hospitality, and so proposed tea, brought some plantains, a melon, sugar, etc., and as I had brought some bread, we made a very good meal. His china teapot, plate, knife and fork, were evidence of the change in some of the Hindu social customs.

* Cf. Reid, R.E., *History of the Frontier Areas Borderin on Assam from 1883-1941*, p. 271.

THE BAPTISTS AND THE ENGLISH

OFFICIAL PATRONAGE

84. *Gammell, W., History of American Baptist Missions, (1850), p. 221* : Major Jenkins—for this is now his rank—has not only fulfilled his early promises to the mission but has also presented to it a large printing press and has annually contributed five hundred rupees for its support. Others have rendered aid scarcely less valuable and important by contributions of money, by attention to the comfort of the missionaries and by the erection of commodious dwellings and other buildings for their accommodation. It may indeed be questioned whether in any other part of our missions so liberal contributions had been made and so uniform and generous interest has been manifested by the English residents of the country.

85. *Brown to Executive Committee, Sibsagor, April 29, 1850 (Excerpt)* : I conceive an erroneous impression exist, (as to) the favour and patronage offered us by the English officers in Assam. Of the principal officers in Assam (there may be about 20 civil and military officers of the First Class) there is not one who Dissents or Dissenters with the slightest cordiality or approbation much less Baptists...there are very few of them who believe in communion in our sense of the term, very few who have any higher idea of missions than as a means of civilization, and still further many of these also stand foremost in the ranks of civilization and improvement are themselves persons of open and known immorality. It is not that I wish to proclaim the errors and faults of those who have patronised us—I would gladly be silent, but it is important that the Committee should know facts....

It is, however, plain that the English officers, Major Jenkins in particular, have been disappointed in us ; that we were invited into this point by Major Jenkins under an erroneous impression as to the character of our mission labors, and that these labors

do not meet his approbation. It is sufficient proof of this, that since the first two or three years that he has withheld his yearly appropriation of 500 rupees which he promised should be given permanently as long as he remained in the province. There can be no possible cause for this withdrawal except dissatisfaction with our course or that dissatisfaction is, easily accounted for. Major Jenkins' wish was to get missions, who, on the plan of the Moravians, would take up lands, carry on farming operations and improve the province by civilization and elevating the character of the people. This was his idea, for this he gave his money, and he expected that his recommendations in regard to carry on operations would be attended. That his application was made to Baptists was accidental. The Serampore Mission (was) extensively connected with secular concerns. It had two missionaries at Gowahati when the mission failed. To supply their place Major Jenkins applied to Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Pearce. The English mission could not take the field. So Bro Pearce applied to Mr. Judson. On our arrival at Calcutta, Major Jenkins wrote to us proposing that we should get a paper-making machine and be prepared to make that business among the Shyans at Sadiya. We made enquiries and examined the paper works at Serampore Mission and found that the business would be impracticable for us. Major Jenkins appeared satisfied. In two or three years Major Jenkins kept up a constant correspondence with me ; scarcely even a month passed that I did not receive several letters from him—and various schemes and plans—for agri-dyeing, calico-printing and the introduction of all kinds of mechanical arts...—proposals by him, were so immense, as to consume a great deal of time in their examination and the necessary correspondence. Some of them are partially adopted to meet his wishes, his letters were promptly and cordially answered and complied with as far as they could be without committing the mission to a decidedly secular course ; at last he become weary, finding that his recommendations were not carried out, he gradually relinquished his correspondence and finally withdraw his annual donation without assigning any reasons, and no reason that I am aware, can be given except the

obvious one, that he had been disappointed in his expectations in regard to us*.

86. *Bronson to Peck, Ship Radiant, January 26, 1858* : You are already apprised that the proposal of a distinguished gentleman (in) the British service in Assam to extend the blessings of knowledge and Christianity to the numerous tribes of the Shans...by the agency of the missionaries of this Board was received with the liveliest satisfaction.... But alas ! those glowing statements were but an overwrought picture. The information sent to the Rooms was highly exaggerated. The total change in the policy of the East India Govt. referred to, is imaginary. Here and there 'few and far between' may indeed be found pious British Officers, who in their private capacity have aided Missions and felt true Christian sympathy for the degraded and barbarous tribes around. But the Govt. *as such* is unaltered in its spirit of abnegation of God and Christianity to this day. Whatever changes the Govt. has conceded in favour of Christianity since the days of Buchanan and Carey have wrenched from them by the hardest (*sic*). For mere political ends, where missionaries serve as an entering wedge among barbarous tribes as Civilizers and Educators and as Informers, missionaries may receive countenance, but for no higher motive. (*Bronson Family Papers, Box 6, see Assam Mission : Its past, present and future*).

INCREASE IN TAXATION

87. *BMM, Forty-eighth Annual Report, July 1862, pp. 271-72* : There is a growing spirit of discontent among the people in consequence of the greatly increased taxation. They openly murmur, and all sorts of evil stories are in circulation in the villages, calculated to increase this discontent. Now

* In fact, Major Jenkins, the Commissioner of Assam, was more of an administrator than an evangelist. In inviting the Baptists into Assam, he had two objectives in view : (i) to tame the wild tribes of the frontier and (ii) to improve the moral and material welfare of the people under his care. The mission failed in initial stage to redeem the primitive tribes from their utter backwardness nor could they render any aid, as Brown states, in his multifarious schemes. No wonder, therefore, he ceased to be an ardent supporter of the missionaries as in earlier years.

it is said that government is sending up soldiers and means for forcibly breaking caste ; then we hear that the idols are to be ordered in and demolished, and Christianity forcibly spread. One day it is reported that all government fines go to the missionaries ; another - day some one will ask, 'Is it true that the government have offered one thousand rupees for every convert to Christianity ?'

'Latterly the report is that the Sikhs are about to rise in mutiny. I will not add. Suffice it to say, that the whole native community is restless and uneasy. A very respectable Mohammedan, who knows much of the Christian religion, and who had heard of the state of the Mohammedan power in Turkey, said that many of his people declared that the Christian religion was about to prevail. O, that this upheaving of the dark mind of heathenism may prove to be but the precursor of that last great battle that shall usher in the universal reign of the Prince of Peace !'

This spirit of uneasiness resulted at length in an outbreak near Nowgong ; which, though soon quelled, resulted in the violent death of Mr. Singer, an English civilian, and for a time imperilled all foreign residents. Subsequently, this state of things was referred to as follows :—

'In most respects the prospects of success, immediate success, were never so dark in this mission. The outbreak at Nowgong*, in which Mr. Singer perished, and which imperilled all our lives, is but an indication of the slumbering volcano on which we are standing. That rising is for the present put down ; but the spirit of discontent and insubordination is rife among all classes, and extends to the tributary tribes in the mountains. Its heterogeneous inhabitants seem of the most combustible character. For our defence we have one regiment of native sepoys. The hostility of all classes is excited against government by the imposition of the income and license tax, and other innovations.

88. *Bronson to Warren, October 25, 1861* : The afternoon that they murdered Mr Singer the rebel force came on to within four miles of the station. We had only forty sepoys. Twenty of them were despatched to meet and disperse them. We with

* For further study see Barpujari (ed.) *Political History of Assam*, pp-88ff.

our helpless wives and children took up positions in the treasury, a solid brick bungalow, resolved with our twenty sepoy's to make the best stand we could. The sepoy's who were sent to meet them were nearer being surrounded out ; they took their protection by the river bank and given the rebel volley after volley in a most spirited manner which was a severe lesson. The rebels had been told that their God's would turn powder and bullets to water (and) that not a bullet would pierce them. But when their men began to fall and rock in agony, they were evidently taken aback. The bravery of the little band of sepoy's saved us from attack ; one of the persons lost was an Assamese who had often been all my home. There is no doubt that many of the Assamese themselves have had a hand in this matter. . I do not anticipate another rise of the people. ...I hear this morning that the body of the poor Mr Singer was floated down the river and was taken by a native Daroga at Jaggi (and) sent down to Gowahati for burial.

SPIRITUOUS DRUGS INTRODUCED

89. *Journal of Brown, May 23, 1836* : Had the satisfaction to learn that Mr. Bruce has abandoned the sale of ardent spirits. He has been induced to take this step in consequence of reading the Seventh Report of the Am. Temp. Society, a masterly document, and one which ought to be in the hands of every officer in India. It has often been the practice hitherto to secure the good will of the native chieftains, by making them large presents of ardent spirits, thus encouraging a habit which produces the same ruinous effects on these poor people, that it does upon the American Indians.

90. *Report of Comfort, BMM, 1863, p. 247* : Strong drink and its use is the bane of the native Christian church, and is a curse in this land as it is in all lands. And it is sad to think that none are so responsible for its introduction into this country as those who bear the Christian name*. The use of it among

* This vice was on the increase at Gauhati, wrote a contemporary, mainly because of the influx of the Bengalis, and he was afraid, that it would spread before long to other areas. Although the use of ricebear was hitherto common amongst the backward border tribes, wine-drinking was unknown to the Assamese in the plains (*Orunodoi, June 1846, pp. 45-6 ; July 1853, p. 105 July 1854, pp. 103-4*).

the English officials, high and low, is universal, so far as I know. Total abstinence is rather looked upon as a confession of weakness. All the Eurasian community is addicted to its use, many of them even to dissipation. Then, moreover, the government have rather encouraged the consumption by licensing its sale and making that license a source of revenue. Many of the higher classes of natives who have abandoned the Hindu faith virtually if not ostensibly, take to drink, and as a general thing with natives the use of liquor is dissipation and ruin. General as is its use among the English, there are many who keep themselves under a wholesome restraint. But such is not consonant with the native character. You can therefore see the influences by which we are surrounded. They all tend in one direction, and we cannot wonder that native converts sometimes fall. We try to prevent it, both by teaching and example : but the demon of strong drink comes and takes its victims among those whom missionaries have sought to rescue from the dangers and degradation of heathenism ; and that fact is very saddening to us in our labors.

ABKARI OPIUM

91. *Letter from Whiting, April 6, 1858* : The government, as it maintains, in order to destroy the cultivation of the plant in Assam, and so gradually to discourage its use, introduced its own drug, and it is now sold from our Government treasuries. The result is, as might be expected, a perfectly alarming demand for the article. This act of government has done more than any thing else to spread the use of opium, and put far off the day of fat things. It is almost hopeless, that a confirmed opium-eater will ever leave off the use of the article*.

JUSTICE AND POLICE

92. *Journal of Ward, January (undated 1855)—BMM 1855, pp. 458-59*: On account of some disturbances among the Bhutias

* This had actually happened as will be seen from the increase in the sale of opium in 1858-9 as given in *Selection from Records, Government of Bengal*, xxxvii, p. 42.

or Hill Tribes of the northern frontier, several companies of sepoy and a few European officers had been stationed nearby and the Cacharis were required to furnish and forward supplies for the troops, also to make roads, etc., and frequently through the cupidity of the native officials, they failed to realise the value of a part of the supplies or to obtain wages. Few people were to be found and those few thought of little else but of hardships and wrongs, especially from the extortions and oppression of the native police, who went from village to village to demand supplies for the sepoys.

These gentry (native police) not only get their living out of the people, but extort money ; and, being clothed with the badge of authority, they enforce whatever claims they choose to enforce, and these ignorant people have no power to resist them. It would be difficult for a stranger to understand how corrupt and oppressive the native officials may almost universally be, and yet, for the most part, with impunity. As to obtaining justice, that is a luxury quite beyond the reach of these poor people ; and they generally prefer to suffer patiently rather than carry cases into court, especially against their superiors, who have the advantage of them in wealth and influence, and can bring against them an array of false witnesses, and bribe the court people, so that there is little chance of justice being obtained even before a European magistrate.* They have, moreover, to wait frequently a month or two away from home before a case can come on ; and even if successful, they have made themselves the marks of certain revenge, which will be practised in a thousand petty ways, like the drops of water that fall one by one upon the head of a subject of slow torture. The truth is, the native officials have things pretty much their own way, in spite of the vigilance of the best European officers ; especially at a distance from the sudder stations and the residences of Europeans. The evil is inherent in the state of native society, and the most perfect system of government cannot remedy it. Nothing but the

* Cf., Dhekial Phukan, Anandaram, "Observations on the Administration of the Province of Assam" ; Mills, A.J.M., *Report of Assam*, (1854). *Appendix. J.*

general elevation of the moral and religious sentiment of the masses can effect any permanent change.

93. *Letter from Danforth, Gowahati January, 20, 1851* : I spent a week or two in camp with Capt. E. T. Dalton, the magistrate of this district. He spends the dry seasons in the villages, holding his courts in different places to try cases and settle any disputes which may arise among the natives. His encampment is always surrounded with crowds of people, presenting a favorable opportunity to preach and distribute books. During these few days I was frequently in court. The natives are quite fond of litigation, and when once commenced it has an intoxicating influence which they seldom get rid of. The most trivial things are brought into court, family quarrels and the like. A man beats his wife, or a wife leaves her husband, or a girl has been betrothed for whom some cows, goats or rupees have been given, and the parents refuse to give her up ; the court is their first resort. By far the greater number of disputes are about the boundaries of their lands and complaints against native tax gatherers.

BENGALI LANGUAGE ENFORCED

94. *Mrs. F. H. Bronson, 'Assam after Fourteen years' Absence', BMM, December 1872, p. 494* : The province has suffered great injustice at the hands of its British rulers. With the impression that the Assamese language is but a corruption of the Bengali, the government has forced the people to present their petitions in a foreign tongue, and the children to acquire their little store of knowledge through the medium of a strange language, the Bengali. The oppressed peasant is thus at the mercy of the Court Interpreter, in a country where bribery and lying are the rule, not the exception, and the child, anxious of a little knowledge of the world, the sun, moon and stars, must first expend months in acquiring a medium through which he may receive this knowledge. The two languages, being derived from the Sanscrit, have the same alphabet, and of course, many words in common, especially religious and scientific terms ; but the terminations of nouns and verbs, in their forms and cases, are altogether different, and the *common* words are different.

DEATH OF A PATRON

95. *Letter from Bronson, Nowgong, September 3, 1866* : Death, ever lurking around us, has removed an old friend of the mission from us, Gen. Francis Jenkins, for many years the Commissioner of Assam. It was mainly through him that your missionaries were first invited to Assam. And his purse and encouragement have always been freely given. He was a universal friend of the natives, and will be generally regretted. He had resided some thirty-six years in Assam, and enjoyed comfortable health to the last. But a severe attack of fever carried him off in three days. I never shall forget the cordial welcome he gave our departed brother, the sainted Thomas, and myself when we first arrived ; nor the challenge he gave us when he said, speaking of our long and dangerous passage in native boats up to Sadiya, in the height of the rains, 'You have a dangerous and difficult journey before you : but nothing more than we are constantly undertaking, who fight under another banner than you do.'

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

MISSION SCHOOLS : SADIYA AND JAIPUR

96. *Annual Report, A'sám, 1837 (Excerpt)* : Since the middle of August, 1836, Mrs. Cutter, assisted occasionally by Mr. Cutter, has had charge of a school at Sadiyá, the average daily attendance from 30 to 40. Studies—reading in English, A'sámese and Tai, writing and arithmetic ; with such instruction in geography as the destitution of suitable books allowed. The 1st, 2d, and 3d classes repeat, also, from memory, daily lessons from the parables of Christ, in A'sámese, and have read the Gospel of Matthew in English several times. The school is opened by prayer, and diligent endeavors are made to imbue the minds of the scholars with the truths of Christianity. Among the pupils is a chief of one of the principal villages ; also, sons of other chiefs, one of whom has probably more influence over the Khamtis and Singphos, (and perhaps Abors and Mishmis), than all the other chiefs united. The proficiency of the scholars has been highly gratifying. Other schools, it was expected, would be established shortly, in some of the adjoining villages.

Messrs. Brown and Cutter have submitted to the Board, at the suggestion of the commissioner, Capt. Jenkins, a proposition to connect a farming establishment with the mission, “for the double purpose of relieving the missionaries from embarrassments in providing the common necessaries of life, by which they are now much impeded in their appropriate work ; and also of improving the temporal condition of the natives, by teaching them the useful arts, and introducing the culture of foreign plants.” Such an establishment, in the charge of competent persons, would, in a short time, support itself, and, in various ways, doubtless, prove a valuable auxiliary to the mission. The Board would be gratified to see it carried into successful operation. It might not consist with the principles of their organization, to make it a component part of the mission, or to assume the responsibility of its maintenance ; but whatever

facilities it might be in their power to render, they will cheerfully afford, whenever two or more pious and intelligent families, of suitable qualifications, shall be found ready to undertake the enterprise. (*BMM 1838, p. 160*)

97. *Annual Report, A'sa'm, 1838* : Mr. Cutter's school for boys, the past year, has usually numbered 50, several of whom have learned to read the English Testament with considerable fluency. About 50 have learned to read since the school was opened. Three village schools have also been established by Mr. Cutter, in the vicinity of Sadiyá, and one of about 40 scholars is under the charge of Mrs. Brønson, at Jaipur. A prominent object of the schools is to train up native school-teachers. Great attention is paid to the religious instruction of the pupils, and their general proficiency has been highly gratifying. The missionaries earnestly request that an individual may be sent out, who shall be specially charged with the care of the school department. The number and character of the schools will have a powerful influence on the usefulness of the mission at large, as a very small portion of the population are able to read. At the same time, there is great encouragement to labor in this field, from the general desire and unusual aptitude of the natives to learn. It is understood that the gentleman whose liberal support to the mission we have had so repeated occasion to acknowledge, has appropriated 500 rupees towards the support of a superintendent of schools, whenever one shall be sent out by the Board. (*BMM 1839, p. 145*)

SIBSAGOR SCHOOLS

98. *Report of the American Baptist Mission to Assam, 1845* : The people around Sibsagor being mostly cultivators of the soil, and requiring the services of their children during the greater portion of the year, it has been found difficult to keep the schools in successful operation more than five or six months. This has proved very detrimental to their prosperity and efficiency, and we contemplate endeavoring to keep up three or four throughout the coming year, even should the attendance be small.

Liberal contributions for the support of these schools have been kindly made by residents in Assam. They have been

opened about the first of November, but have not usually been brought into full operation till the month of January, when the crops are gathered in, and the children are comparatively at leisure. During the cold season of 1844-45, there were in this vicinity fourteen schools connected with the mission ; with an average attendance of 381 for the month of January, 1845.

After completing the alphabet and spelling lessons, the scholars commence the catechism, and are promised that when they can read it with facility, they shall receive a copy of the First Reading Book or First Arithmetic, as a reward. These, containing pictorial illustrations, are an inducement to the boys to be diligent in their studies. Afterwards the History of Joseph, the Gospels, and other portions of scripture, are placed in their hands. Few objections have been made to the study of our religious books ; but should a few of the scholars openly profess Christianity, the Brahmans would undoubtedly endeavor to create a prejudice in the minds of the people, and induce them to withdraw their children from the schools. But such an interruption would, we believe, be only temporary. The people are already beginning to find the burdens imposed upon them by the priesthood, too heavy patiently to be borne. We have been anxious to avoid the employment of Brahmans as teachers, knowing that they would embrace every opportunity to neutralize the effect of our religious books. (*BMM, August 1846, p. 251*)

THE NOWGONG MISSION SCHOOL

99. *Letter of Bronson, November 12, 1843* : This schools under the patronage of the American Baptist Board of Foreign Mission was established more than a year ago. From its commencement its number and influence have been generally increasing...A convenient school house has been erected...with an accommodation for 100 scholars. Two Christian youngmen who have enjoyed the excellent instruction of the Intally Native Christian Institution, Calcutta, for 12 years are employed in the school under whom the scholars have made a very satisfactory progress. The vernacular is chiefly taught in the schools—a few of the advanced only are into the English classes. A public

examination is held at the close of the year and prizes are distributed to those who have excelled. The following books have been read during the past year. By the Bengali classes are, the *Barnamala*, *Gyanruday*, *Arithmetic*, *Monoranjan Itihas*, *Nitikatha*, *History of Bengal* and chapters of *Matthew's Gospel*. The classes in English have read, *Worcester's Primer*, *Worcesters Second Reading Book*, *Arithmetic* (The simple rules) and part of *Genesis*. There is also a large class in Assamese and another in Hindee who have read the first ten chapters in the scriptures in Hindee. From this it will be seen that the study of the scriptures form a part of the daily duties of this school.

ORPHAN INSTITUTION

100. Nowgong being a central position, and favorable in many respects, has been selected for the establishment of our Orphan Boarding School. The object of the Institution is to gather orphan and destitute children from every part of Assam, and train them up under a careful Christian influence ; all who manifest a good degree of ability, to receive an education that will qualify them to become competent teachers and catechists ; and those who manifest less ability, to be taught, in connection with an elementary and Christian education, such trades and employments as will enable them to earn their own bread, and become useful members of society. This Institution has now been in operation two years. The number of orphans supported is twenty. Three of these are Eurasian children, partly supported from other sources. A temporary building, thirty feet by fifty, has been erected, in which the native orphans remain under the constant care of a Christian teacher. An additional building, forty feet by fifty, has been made over to the establishment, designed for a boarding hall and for the use of a matron, who is now on her way to join us. A valuable and convenient addition has been made to the mission premises, with special reference to the enlargement of the establishment, and the location of an additional missionary family. A small plot of land near the mission premises has been secured for horticultural purposes. We have not, however, been able to give as much attention to this part of the plan as we desire, nor as we hope to do when

we have assistance, and the children are older, and able to labor more effectively. Received at so early an age, they have no prejudices of caste, and manifest a growing disgust at the foolish superstitions of their heathen neighbors. It is our earnest prayer, that they may receive the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, without which the great end of all our labors will not have been attained.

The Institution, thus far, has been mostly sustained by the benevolence of Christian friends in this country. The native assistant in charge of the orphan and day schools, and also the native assistant at Gowahati, are principally supported by the kind liberality of Capt. J. T. Gordon. We have also been generously aided by several individuals in England and America, some of whom have pledged the permanent support of an orphan. The day school taught on the mission premises is in an encouraging state. The average attendance, including the orphans, is fifty. Great difficulty is experienced in retaining the same scholars, after they can read and write, but this will gradually diminish as the value of education is perceived, and the number who can read and write increases. The school is opened with prayer, and the scriptures are in use in every class.

For want of funds we have been obliged to dismiss a flourishing school of forty scholars, and have, at present, only one village school in operation. In the cold season it numbered forty, and in the cultivating season only twenty scholars. Nowgong is thickly studded with villages, most favorably situated for schools, and we have frequent requests from the people themselves for their establishment. Had we the means, we might increase them to almost any extent; and under an efficient superintendence, multitudes of children, who will otherwise grow up in ignorance, might be instructed and enlightened in the principles of divine truth. (*Report of American Baptist Mission to Assam, op. cit., pp. 253*)

GAUHATI SCHOOLS

Five boys' schools are in operation, and, except one, have been continued throughout the year. The expenses have been

mostly defrayed by the benevolence of friends in Gowahati and Tezpur.

Two of the schools are at Gowahati ; one is at Sialkhusi, on the opposite side of the river, and contains about sixty Brahman children ; one at Herapara, and the other at Palasbari, where the Gosain appears favorable,—has assisted in erecting a school house, and expressed a willingness that the scholars should read our scriptures.

A public examination of the schools, in presence of the Commissioner and several other gentlemen, was held at the government school house in October last, when about 160 boys were present. The result, considering the short period they had been under instruction, was highly favorable, and presents from the Commissioner were distributed among the scholars for their encouragement.

DEMAND FOR SCHOOLS ON THE INCREASE

101. *Tour observations by Cutter, February 22, 1842* : Around Jorhath in particular, we were beset in almost every street, and at every corner, by twenty voices at a time, “*We want a school—will you establish among us a school ?*” A missionary school-master, who could devote himself *exclusively* to the superintendence of schools in this district, would accomplish a vast amount of good. Let his head quarters be fixed in some healthy location, Jorhath or Sibsagor, a cheap school-house erected in the centre of every considerable cluster of villages, and he could then ride on a pony to one or two to-day—one or two to-morrow, and so on, having a native teacher in each school. He would then become familiar with the people, and gradually win their affections, and prepare them for the reception of the gospel. The missionary teacher should also know something of medicine, and having a supply with him, could greatly diminish the misery of those who linger along in sickness, which a suitable dose of medicine given in time, would have removed, but which it is generally impossible for them to obtain. The missionary’s wife would be no less useful than her husband. A school teacher would be equally needed in the district of Darrang and Motok.

102. *Danforth to Bright, June 20, 1851* : Owing in part, doubtless, to the few government schools established in the district, in part to the motives held out for official preferment, and in part to the Christian books distributed among them, the desire of learning to read is undoubtedly increasing among the villagers. The mass of the people are unable to read ; still they are not without some appreciation of its importance. I have been again solicited to establish schools, with the promise of from sixty to one hundred boys. Two or three deputations to solicit schools have come from the villages since my return. One came while Mr. Whiting was here, and had twenty or thirty interesting lads. I have refrained from responding to these calls as yet, partly for want of suitable books, partly for the want of Christian teachers, and partly out of fear lest the want of funds should compel us to break them up prematurely. That a great influence might be exerted upon the people in this way I have no doubt, and am not certain that our mission might not be rendered more efficient in this way than in any other. It is what the Hindoos most fear. The success of mission schools has given them more alarm than every thing else put together.

FEMALES TAUGHT TO READ

103. *Letter of Mrs. Brown, BMM, 1851, p. 133* : The female members of the church, and my little school of women and girls, have occupied much of my time and attention during the past season. Two of the women—one a member of the church (last baptized)—finished “The First Reading Book” to-day—a great day for Assam ! I do not think the Herculean task of two married women having learned to read, has ever before been accomplished in this province. The women are so stupid after having grown up in their ignorance, that they are fully impressed with the belief that they cannot learn ; besides, the ridicule to which they are subjected makes it very difficult to induce them to continue. Our old brahmin pundit often comes along by my little school room, and laughs at the idea of my spending my time teaching *women* to read. I have had a few very promising little girls given to me by their parents and

guardians, whom I hope to keep in a good degree separate from heathen influences.

GIRL'S BOARDING SCHOOLS : SIBSAGOR

102. *Assam : Annual Meeting of the Assam Mission, 1850 :* In Assam not one in a hundred of the common people can read the books issued from our press. And the whole influence of the priests and the Hindoo religion is to keep the people in ignorance. The most effective way of defeating the purposes of the brahmins is, not to attack them personally, but to enlighten the masses. But how can we enlighten these without first teaching them to read? Until we have gained this point everything must depend on the oral instructions of the teachers. Our press, a mighty agent in other lands, is here comparatively silent. We must therefore establish village schools, to impart to the common people a plain vernacular education.

The experience of all missions favors the plan of educating both sexes, that the one may not have an unhappy influence on the other. In this country,—owing to the prejudices of the higher classes, the corrupt state of native society, and the long-standing degradation of the female sex,—the difficulties of promoting their education are very great. But the time has arrived when we must meet these difficulties vigorously. Our boarding schools must be made as efficient as possible. And in addition to these, it seems very desirable that a day school should be established at each station, in which children or adults of the female sex might gain instruction.

In these schools the committee is of opinion that a plain vernacular education only should be attempted, uniting with it all kinds of useful work, especially such as spinning, weaving, cutting and making articles of clothing usually worn in this country,—thus qualifying them to be meet companions of our native brethren.

Another object for which boarding schools are well adapted is, the training of girls *for teachers*. The committee recommended, on this account, that particular pains be taken to bring under our influence those who promise much usefulness,

The Sibsagor Girls' Boarding School, under the care of Mrs. Brown, now numbers nine girls. It commenced in January, 1850, by the reception of Akisuri, then about three years old. She was brought to the door with an elder sister by her father, a mussulman, who stated that the mother had been killed by a tiger, and that he, a poor feeble man, was now left to beg his bread with these two children clinging to his neck. Prostrating himself on the ground, he begged that the youngest might be taken off his hands and brought up in our family.

The second, Budhi, a girl about twelve years old, was received the April following. She had been betrothed to Joseph, formerly a scholar in the Nowgong school and a member of the church, but now excluded and leading a disreputable life.

The third, Jagori, a young woman fourteen or fifteen years of age, came to us in June, and has received above a year's instruction. She was an orphan and had been kept as a slave by one of the native chiefs. She ran away in the night and cast herself on our protection ; and was soon after married to Modhu, our native gardener. She has never been numbered among the boarders, having been supported by her husband.

Budhburi, a little girl three or four years old, was given to us in July by her mother, a poor woman of the mussulman caste living in the bazaar. After living with us a few months it was found that she had a serious disease of the spine, and at her mother's request she was again restored to her. The child has since died.

The fifth, Pabhoi, who came also in July, was obtained from the majuli. Her mother, who resided at the station with a married daughter, seeing the advantages the girls were gaining by living with us, applied to have us send for Pabhoi and take her into the school. She is of the Doom caste about ten or eleven years old.

In August came Koromsani, an interesting little girl of the mussulman caste, about six years old. Her mother brought her to us, and stated that the father had died in prison at Dibrugar, leaving her without any means of support. She said she was going to her friends at Gowahati, and left the child without showing any feelings of regret or natural affection. Some months

afterwards the father, who was still living and had completed his term of imprisonment at Dibrugor, came and demanded the child. The thought of parting with her produced a great excitement in the school, as her sweet and amiable disposition had won the hearts of all. The father threatened a law suit and we feared that the child must be given up to him, but a kind Providence ordered otherwise, and he was persuaded, after some considerable difficulty, to allow her to remain.

Hupahi, a girl of eleven or twelve years, of the Doom caste, who had for some time previous been living in the family of one of our native assistants, was made over to the school by her mother in September.

The eighth, Kunti, was received in December, having been previously betrothed to Ramsing, one of our church members who is employed in the printing office. She was taken with the understanding that she was to remain only six months or a year, until the time of her marriage. She has proved a very teachable and interesting girl. As soon as she was able to comprehend the story of the Saviour's death to redeem lost sinners, her heart seemed touched with a sense of her own sin and unworthiness. She was for some weeks bowed down with fear and trembling under the weight of her sin. At length, being dangerously ill, she seemed to make a full surrender of herself to Christ. She said she was willing to live or die as should be the will of the Lord ; and she felt a confidence that if she died she would be with Christ and the holy angels. She called her schoolmates and acquaintances around her, and exhorted them all, in the most earnest manner, to seek for the pardon of their sins. She manifested great anxiety for her heathen mother, who was at that time too feeble to come and see her child. She also dictated a most pathetic and urgent letter to her, exhorting her to renounce idolatry and seek for an interest in the religion of Jesus Christ. Her vows in sickness were not forgotten in health, and in June she was baptized, together with Jagori and Budhi, who had previously given evidence of conversion. Her whole deportment since her baptism has been highly satisfactory, and her growth in grace and Christian experience very remarkable. Her mother, the widow of a learned brahmin, has renounced caste, and

appears at times much softened when receiving religious instruction.

During the present year Jessie Meution, an interesting little girl about seven years old, the daughter of a Eurasian writer in the service of government who died some years since, has been made over to the school by her mother. She was received in May, 1851.

In the following July we obtained Parboti, a very promising girl about eight years old. Her mother was the daughter of a learned brahmin at Jorhat, one of the most distinguished pundits in the country. Having been left in her youth and beauty a widow with this only child, she took another husband contrary to the laws of Hindooism, which allow no second marriages. By this act she incensed her father and other relatives, and was driven from their doors, an outcast. She came to Sibsagor with her husband, still having high aspirations for her daughter; and seeing the elevated position of the native Christian women here, was induced to give up her child to be educated in the school.

Since the reception of Parboti, the daughter of an old servant, who has now become an inveterate opium eater, has been made over to the school. She is now about ten years old.

Thus it will be seen that at the close of the first year, 1850, the school had gradually increased to the number of eight, and that since the commencement of 1851 three others have been received. Dropping the names of Jagori, and Budhburi, the little girl taken back by her mother and since deceased, we have at the present time *nine* boarders.

The school has been carried on exclusively by Mrs. Brown, unaided except by some little assistance rendered by the native pundit, when not employed in other work. The older girls have been employed as monitors to teach the younger ones, the lessons being heard by the superintendent except when prevented by family duties or poor health. Her main object, however, has been to devote her efforts to the moral and religious instruction of the pupils.

Although the instruction has not been very regular or systematic, yet it is believed that every scholar, except the very youngest, who has been in the school for the period of a year,

will be found able to read, write and sew. Six of the girls are boarded in the Christian families of Numoli and Jagori, who live in the compound. Here they have an opportunity to assist in cooking and other family employments, coming to the bungalow for instruction at 10 A.M., and remaining till 4 or 5 P.M. They also assemble at the bungalow for family prayers at 8 in the morning. The school has been considered as strictly a *family school*, and has hitherto been conducted entirely on that plan. The two oldest girls, together with the youngest, board and lodge at the bungalow. The common price which has been paid for those boarding out of the house is 1 r. 4 as. per month, but during the present scarcity of rice the price has been raised to 1 r. 8 as. per month. (*BMM, May 1852 pp. 132-4*)

GOWAHATI BOARDING SCHOOL

Soon after Mrs. Barker's arrival and settlement in Gowahati, she was impressed with the importance of endeavoring to do something to instruct and elevate the neglected bazaar girls. With great difficulty she succeeded in gathering around her about a dozen of these wicked, dirty, idle girls, and commenced a day school. Among these were some destitute and friendless orphans, whose affections she won by her kindness, and whom she persuaded to remain and find a home with her. Thus a nucleus was formed around which other homeless girls were gathered, partly by the active exertions of Mr. Barker, and partly by the aid of the ladies of Gowahati and other stations, who occasionally sent a destitute girl to this asylum. At the end of a year she had a boarding school of seven pupils, to the superintendence and religious instruction of whom she devoted her time and strength with the most unwearied fidelity. As the result of her labors, she had the happiness of seeing three of the girls received into the bosom of the church.

The school continued to prosper under Mrs. Barker's care until it numbered nine pupils. When she was called to leave her chosen field of labor in November, 1849, it came into the hands of its present superintendent.

During the two years that have elapsed since that time, it has been increased by the addition of four orphan girls, making

the present number thirteen. The pupils have generally enjoyed good health. The cholera, however, made its appearance in the school in May last, and the assistant, Miss Sakes, and four of the girls were attacked by this fearful disease. For some time they were at the point of death, but through the mercy of God all recovered.

The studies of the school have been in the vernacular. We have used as text-books the Primer, First Reading Book, First and Second Arithmetic, Orunodoi, Young Assam, &c., including all now published in the Assamese language. The regular hours of study are from 10 o'clock to 1, after which the girls devote about two hours to sewing. They are all able to do plain sewing very neatly, and some of the elder ones excel in fancy work, which is allowed partly as a recreation and partly for the profit the sale of it brings to the funds of the school. Spinning and weaving are now taught. The girls are frequently supplied with work by the ladies and gentlemen of the station, to whom we are much indebted for the interest they have manifested in the school. The avails of the girls' labor in this department have assisted in defraying the expenses of their food and clothing. Their time out of school hours is devoted to cooking, attending to their clothing, cleaning their rooms, and recreation. (*Ibid pp. 135-6*)

NOWGONG ORPHAN INSTITUTION : REORGANISATION PROPOSED

105. *Report of the Foreign Secretary* : ...several modifications were suggested in the plan of the institution, which the mission did not approve ; and at a later period I presented a compromise plan, to which as being preferable to further agitation and delay, with certain modifications, the mission gave their unanimous assent. This plan, they were encouraged to believe, though short of what the Committee might have preferred, would obtain their concurrence in view of the circumstances of its adoption ; and as finally agreed upon, was as follows ;—subject to the revision of the Committee.

1. "That the Nowgong Orphan Institution be remodelled, with a view to its becoming, as soon as practicable, a Central Normal School for the preparatory training of native teachers and school preachers ;—it being understood that this is not to

interfere with the establishment of a theological institution, when the interests of the mission shall so require.

2. "That the institution be divided for the present into two departments, primary and normal ; and that the term of study in either department shall not exceed three years.

3. "That the number of its pupils, including such as may be designated to the normal department, be limited to forty ; that none be admitted under ten years of age ; that, in all future admissions into the primary department, pupils of promise be selected from such as are either already pious or have manifested their preference for the Christian religion, by the abandonment of caste, and may be regarded as inquirers ; and that none be admitted into the normal department except members of churches in good standing, and giving evidence, also, of talents and character requisite to usefulness as a preacher or school teacher.

4. "That instruction be given in the vernacular language ; that no English be taught after the 1st of October next, nor Bengali ; and that Bengali text-books be used for only so long time as shall be indispensable for the preparation and printing of suitable Assamese books, a period not exceeding, as is supposed, three years.

5. "That the superintendent travel and preach in the cold season, when practicable, and at other times so far as the claims of the institution shall permit ; and that, to this end, the teaching be entrusted, as may consist with the interests of the school, to female assistant missionaries and native helpers ; the normal department having, also, an annual vacation of three months for the same purpose.

6. "That the girls' department, now belonging to the institution, be separated from it, and be regarded as a station school on the same footing as the girls' schools at Sibsagor and Gowahati."

The above outline was presented and adopted, with the understanding that the institution will retain the mixed character thus given to it, only until the supposed impediments to a more radical change shall be removed by the increasing number of youth converted to the Christian faith ; when the school is to

become exclusively a normal school, and such additional modifications shall be made in its plan as shall then appear to be suitable. (*BMM, February 1855, pp. 33-4*)

MISSION SCHOOLS : OBJECTIVES

106. *Extract from the Report of the Foreign Secretary, BMM, February 1855, p. 85* : The schools, such as exist in Assam, or are proposed by the mission, are auxiliary to the work of evangelization, and *therefore* a legitimate work of the mission, —that they are, properly speaking, a class of assistants ; and next, that in consideration of the ignorance and destitution of the Assamese, schools in Assam are an auxiliary of special importance*.

The ways in which schools are said to be auxiliary, are, changing the order of presentation,—1. They teach the people to read, and thereby enable them to profit by the printed Word and religious tracts. “Not one in a hundred of the Assamese is able to read.” 2. They help to impart correct moral and religious ideas, and to facilitate also the right apprehension of religious terms used by the preacher. 3. They expose false science inwrought with idolatry, and so help to their common overthrow. And, 4. They give opportunity for the direct inculcation of the gospel, or, in other words, for preaching to the pupils and others associated with them. In these specifications reference is had mainly, it is presumed, to primary schools. Two additional channels or modes of usefulness are mentioned, but they belong to more advanced institutions ;—first, that

* In explanation, it was stated : “The Assamese are a people both without a Christian literature and without schools. Not one in a hundred is able to read. Nor have they scarcely any disposition to consider the simplest truths, when clearly presented before them. Their Christian literature consists of the New Testament, a few tracts and primary school book, and our monthly paper ; while the government schools are wholly given to teaching Bengali. In view of all this, will any one say we do not require schools ; or that, though good in themselves, schools are not an important auxiliary in the work proposed to be done here by the missionary ? We believe that a part of our appropriate work can be done much better and more economically by schools than by ourselves ; and that, by employing this agency, we shall be able to accomplish a greater amount of the more advanced portion of the varied work before us.

they help to raise up a body of native authors, who may give to their countrymen a vernacular Christian literature ; and next, that they are necessary to the proper training of a native Christian ministry.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

...the language or languages to be used or taught in the school. They have been English, Assamese and Bengali ; the latter from the want, it was said, of Assamese textbooks, and of an Assamese Christian literature ;—the government schools, moreover, leading in that direction. Provision is made for the discontinuance of Bengali at the expiration, at the latest, of three years, and earlier if practicable,—on the substitution of Assamese text-books. Some Assamese *reading* books are already in use, and other text-books, it may be expected, will be forthcoming. The speediest way to secure such text-books, and thus to do away the need of Bengali, is to use what Assamese are at command. It may be questioned, indeed, whether Bengali books should be tolerated, although a full supply of Assamese could not be had for the moment. At the extreme, *oral* instruction might be given, which would be a basis of written preparations ;—while the tendency of using Bengali text-books is to perpetuate the evil. Teaching of English is to cease October 1. For this innovation the Committee will desire no explanation. The time was deferred to October, so as to await the action of the Committee and the Board on a similar change in Burmah, and partly to allow ample time for preparation. In thus excluding English from a public institution open to natives indiscriminately, whether pious or otherwise, it was not intended to indicate that instruction in English may not be advisedly given, in some cases and in other connections, to select individuals. (*Ibid.*, p. 35)

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCHOOLS

107. *Letter from Brown, December 8, 1853* : We are of opinion that English should not be relinquished. We think however that it should be taught to such a body or can obtain through mastery of its languages ; a practical knowledge of

English is of no value whatever in a missionary points of view. To the theological students in this country, the study of English holds a corresponding, but higher relation than that of Greek or Latin in the institutions of our native land. As a means of mental discipline it is equal to any of the classical language while as the vehicle of religious knowledge it becomes an instrument of incalculable importance...we must bend our energies to prepare our native converts for this period. We must raise them from their present state of pupilage as fast as our means will offer. To leave them, before they have leaders of their own, to whom the treasures of English are fully open, able to draw from our standard authors the weapons to serve them in any emergency, would in our opinion be unwise...Besides those engaged in ministry, the advantages of having a good thorough English scholars, for the purpose of translating our most important books into the native tongues will be at once manifest...the disadvantages under which missionary labors in translating into a foreign tongue are great ; and without a native to examine every sentence, he cannot be sure that his translation is idiomatic. Add to this the utter impossibility that our mission societies should ever be able to furnish the men and means that would be required for preparation of a vernacular Christian literature such as the wants of a newly converted people demand.

LANGUAGES IN PREACHING

108. *Assam : Mission Papers* : We regard it as a fundamental rule, that all classes must hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. We see no reason to make the Assamese an exception. But from the circumstances, that the Assamese and Bengali characters are nearly identical, that a large proportion of the religious terms and words in both languages have a common Sanscrit origin, that the Assamese and Bengalis are able after a little time to converse together, and that our teachers and assistants can after a little time readily avail themselves of the many valuable books already translated into the Bengali, we are of opinion that, in imparting knowledge to them, we cannot wholly dispense with the use of the many valuable works

translated into the Bengali, until their places are supplied by similar books in the Assamese.

In addressing the masses, the preacher should confine himself to the vernacular.

In regard to the Hill tribes, the fundamental principle is the same. The gospel must be preached to them in their own tongue. At the same time we believe, that in most instances, after two or three elementary books containing the fundamental truths of Christianity are prepared, the effort should be to send a native agency instructed through the medium of the Assamese language, to communicate in their own language the great truths of the gospel. In the meantime, operations might be commenced among them by preaching in Assamese to such of those tribes as are in our immediate vicinity, and who, from their constant intercourse with the Assamese, have acquired a knowledge of their language.

The multiplication of languages should be guarded against ; and it would be unwise to translate works into the less important dialects. But should it be found that any one great tribe, such as the Nagas, Kookies, or Cacharis, give special promise of receiving the gospel, the indication would be, that preaching and translating in that language should receive more special attention of the mission, and it would justify the location of a missionary among them. On this subject, however, the finger of Providence and the future developments of the wants of the Hill tribes must direct us. (*BMM, February 1855, p. 46*)

FEMALE EDUCATION : GROWING DEMAND

109. *Stoddard to Warren, Nowgong, September 17, 1867* : Among the changes we perceive to have taken place in Assam, is a desire among females for education, and a willingness on the part of their lords to trust them with knowledge. Not that this sentiment is by any means universal. A few of the educated men express a wish that their daughters and wives should learn. And the time has now come that we can reach them in their houses, which we must first do before we can gather them in schools. We in our own country can scarcely conceive of the monotonous seclusion in which females of the

higher classes spend their time,—seldom leaving their own houses, and when they do, travelling in such a way that no one but their own household shall behold their faces. Now where are the Christian women to enter into this teaching? It can be done alone by women, and Christian women only are likely to make the sacrifices required.

Several of the wealthy, influential native gentlemen have called on Mrs. Stoddard, and expressed a strong desire that their wives and daughters be taught to read and write. But superstition and custom are still so rank in these parts, that high caste ladies cannot come from their homes to seek an education.

These Baboos have consulted among themselves and selected three convenient points in the city where females may come together for instruction. And they promise at least five pupils at each point and solicit the aid of Mrs. S. But our proposed departure for Gowalpara will prevent doing much, though a beginning in this work has been made, and fifteen pupils, all females of the higher castes, and some wives of Baboos, is indeed a good beginning.

A wide field of usefulness opens just in this direction for pious female teachers. That a great change is coming over the Hindus of Assam in this respect, no one can doubt. Christians must take advantage of the times, if they would help these females, and thus the nation, to escape from a long and sore bondage of ignorance.

110. *Bronson, Mrs. F. H.*, “*Assam After Fourteen years’ Absence*” : The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, after diligent inquiry, is prepared to give to the people of Assam the privilege of using their mother tongue in the courts and schools. We look for rapid progress in education from this hour. Even with the disadvantage of a foreign language, I am surprised to see the number of educated young men in Assam, and the desire for knowledge among the common people.

But even greater and more radical than this is the advance of the Hindu mind on the subject of the education of women. This strikes at the foundation of Hindu society, entirely overturning ancient custom, and establishing an order of things as far removed as possible from the old life.

In Calcutta, I found the lady-missionaries of the Woman's Union Missionary Society, visiting and teaching regularly between 700 and 800 women and girls, in their zenanas, or private apartments. I received this statement from Miss Brittan, the Superintendent of the Calcutta Mission. "How did you obtain access to all these homes?" I inquired. "The Baboos" (native gentlemen) "send to me a request for a teacher for their household," she replied, "and I only send one on condition that they shall read the Christian Scriptures."

Many of these native gentlemen, it is true, have forsaken the modern idolatry of Hinduism, and adopted the ancient form of worship under the name of Brahminism; but they are no more friendly to the Christian Scriptures than are the worshippers of Ram and Krishnu; and the fact that they will even admit the obnoxious religion for the sake of the secular education that comes with it, and that too, to the women of the nation, for centuries kept in utter ignorance, indicates a change of opinion that is marvellous.

The eagerness of the women to learn, is no less wonderful than the willingness of their lords to allow them to learn. It is to me a striking proof of the indestructibility of the human mind, that these Hindu women, shut up in dark apartments for centuries, with nothing ever brought before their minds to excite a query;—not a fact concerning the outer world ever permitted to reach their ears, not a glance into the world beyond the narrow court-yard into which their curtains open;—that under such circumstances, and with the words of their sacred books sounding in their ears, (they must not speak the sacred language with their lip), that "women have no souls,"—they should have retained any resemblance to the human mind, is truly not the least of the wonderful things revealed in the progress of Indian life.

In Assam, the work is far behind what we see in Calcutta; but we are making a beginning. Native gentlemen are coming to us, requesting that their wives may be taught reading and sewing, and other useful employments. The great drawback to our accomplishing much, is the slavery to old customs, which prevents the women from meeting in one place for instruction.

It is a slow process to go from house to house, teaching here one, and there two ; but we must submit to it for a season. We expect very soon to see this last vestige of the old tyranny over women, swept away, and the zenana become a thing of the past. (*BMM, December 1872, p. 494*).

ENGLISH EDUCATION

111. *Stoddard to Warren, Nowgong, September 17, 1867* : I visited the Gowahati Collegiate Institute a short time since, and found about 250 young men, natives, divided or graded into eight classes, each with separate teachers, studying English.

These teachers are mostly educated Bengalis. They teach in this school, Bengali, two years, Sanscrit, three, and English the eight years. In English, they study the rudiments, Arithmetic, Grammar, Algebra, History, and read and translate various works in English.

The desire among the natives for an English education is quite surprising. Some look at this state of things with alarm. Missionaries of thirty years and more in India, speak most confidently of another mutiny here not many years hence, compared with which the former will fall into the shade. And they look upon these English schools, so largely encouraged and patronized by the Government, as filling the country with weapons with which to make the coming outbreak or uprising more direful than any yet on record.

I cannot say that I have at present much sympathy with these views ; and yet it is impossible to say what will grow out of the present changes going on in the intellectual and moral world of degraded India. It seems to me when matters get to the worst, a change must result in some good. But one thing is evident, the church has a work and a responsibility not easily estimated in bringing the saving light of the gospel to the rescue of these restless, anxious millions.

PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE

ROMAN SCRIPT ADOPTED

112. *Brown to Bolles, April 7, 1836* : Have been employing an Ahom pundit for a few days past, for the purpose of ascertaining what was the original Ahom language. It proves to be identical with the *Tai*, or language of the Khamti's and Shyáns, and slightly varying from the Siamese. Their written character, however, was different from either the Siamese or modern Shyán, and their religion was not Boodhism, but appears to have consisted chiefly in the worship of nats and sylvan deities. The Ahoms once ruled over A'sám ; but as a race they are now nearly extinct, and their language is subverted by the present A'sámese, a sort of barbarous Bengáli. Even the Ahom pundit had only become acquainted with his original language by means of the ancient books, which he had studied as a dead language in the schools of the priests.

Received to-day, through the kindness of Mr. Trevelyan, a copy of an Essay written by the Hon. John Pickering, on the uniform application of the English letters to the Indian languages of America—a plan no less advantageous to missionary operations here than among the western Indians. In Sadiyá I have not been able to find more than six or eight native A'sámese who can read their own language in any character whatever, and but two who are able to write it. We are therefore obliged to give them an alphabet of some sort, and the only question is whether it shall be the expensive and difficult Bengali character, or the English. We have been induced to choose the latter, and more especially since, from present appearances, it seems nearly certain that the Bengáli character will, in a few years, be abandoned throughout India, and the English substituted in its place. In printing the A'sámese, we shall follow Mr. Pickering's plan in every essential particular, and shall use the letters to express the same invariable sounds, whether in A'sámese, Khamti, Abor or Singpho, so that a scholar who has learned to read one, can read the whole.

We are glad to learn that the Board approve of the application of the Roman characters to the Shyán language. In regard to any objections being offered to it by the natives, I do not think there is reason to apprehend any thing of the kind. The Shyáns are a scattered and subdued race ; and having no central spot from which their laws and customs are regulated, as the Burmans have, they do not entertain those strong prejudices against all innovations which the Burmans manifest. The characters at present used by the Shyáns, are entirely different from those used by their ancestors, the Ahoms, etc. They now use a sort of mongrel alphabet, chiefly borrowed from that of their Burman conquerors, but differing greatly in different sections of the country. We have not yet made any proposition to the Board for getting a fount of native Shyán characters cut, partly because the characters are so various in form that we could not yet tell what would in every case be the form most extensively known, and partly because there is no immediate opportunity for distributing Shyán tracts to any extent, there being at present no ready access to the main body of the Shyáns between here and Ava. When there shall be free access to the interior, we shall need tracts in the native character in addition to those in the Roman ; otherwise a wide opportunity for distributing tracts will be lost before the great body of the people can become acquainted with the Roman character.

In regard to the disposition of the natives of all races towards the Roman character, so far as we have had any experience, it is most favorable. We have never had a single scholar make the least objection to the English letters, nor have we ever received a request from any one to be instructed in the native character. On the contrary, most of the natives of the higher classes have, from some cause or other, become greatly prepossessed in favor of learning the English language ; and they generally look upon the acquisition of the English letters as a stepping-stone to the language itself. Some time ago I gave a copy of the Roman alphabet to one of the Khamti chiefs, and was surprised to learn, a few days afterwards, that he had written a note to one of the English residents, here, in *Romanized Asa'mese*. We have as yet had but three or four scholars from the

Khamtis or Shyans, as they mostly live at considerable distance from us.

REMOVAL OF PRESS TO GOWAHATI OPPOSED

113. *Journal of Brown, October 10, 1838* : Yesterday we received a letter overland from the Board, authorizing the brethren composing the mission to remove the press to Gowahati, in case it should be deemed advisable. This is a measure which I should very much deprecate. The removal of the press from Assam Proper, should it be carried into execution, would naturally be followed by the conversion of our Assamese Mission into a Bengali one,—inasmuch as the Bengali language has already obtained the ascendancy in Lower Assam, and, being the only one encouraged or cultivated by the government, is sure to prevail. It is, indeed, desirable, that Lower Assam should be occupied as a missionary field ; but this can best be done by new missionaries, who should at once apply themselves to the acquisition of Bengali. I cannot think it is our duty to relinquish the Assamese as a distinct mission, while there is at our doors so large a population speaking one uniform, copious, and beautiful language, and as yet unsupplied with laborers at all adequate to the occupation of this wide field. The district of Jorhat, which, compared with the State of Connecticut, is only about one third less, whether we regard its population or its extent, has only *two* missionaries, br. Barker and myself ; in the no less populous, though somewhat smaller district of Nowgong, br. Bronson is entirely alone ; the opposite district of Durrung, with the beautiful station of Tezpur, is unoccupied ; while above us, the Lakimpur district and the extensive territory of Mattak are equally destitute. Under these circumstances, and with such a want of means, it seems to be the dictate of prudence to *retrench* rather than *add* to the number of our missions.

ABOLITION OF ASSAMESE LANGUAGE

October 29 : From the last papers we learn that government have resolved on the establishment of twenty-one schools in A'sám, in which the Bengáli language only is to be taught. This makes it pretty certain that the A'sámese, as a distinct language,

will, in the course of a few generations, become extinct, and Bengáli supply its place. This project has been for some time in contemplation, and now that government have set about the work thus vigorously, there can be little doubt that they will ultimately succeed in effecting the change. This renders it a serious question with us, how far we ought to cultivate the Asamese, or teach it in our schools. I hope the Board will take the subject into consideration, and give us their advice in regard to the proper course to be pursued. That in preaching we must make use of the vulgar tongue, as at present spoken, for at least several generations, is quite clear ; a Bengáli preacher would be perfectly unintelligible to the common people. Still the two dialects are so similar, that a person who understands one, could in a very short time learn the other ; and I have no doubt that children, in the ordinary course of reading, for two years, would gain a very correct knowledge of Bengáli. I suppose about two-thirds of the words in common use among the A'sámese are the same as in the Bengáli, with some variations in the pronunciation. The difference in the grammatical structure of the two languages presents the greatest difficulty ; as it requires a much longer time to change the grammatical forms of a language, than it does to change single words.

ASSAMESE AND DHEKERI LANGUAGE

114. *Mission to A'ssa'm, Annual Report (1843)* : There are six districts in Assam : Kamrup, or Lower Assam, population 300,000 ; Darrang, population more than 200,000 ; Nowgong, 250,000 population ; Sibpur, more than 200,000 ; Mottok, or Sadiya,—and Lakhimpur, which is on the north side or right bank of the Brahmaputra. Whole population of Assam, 1,500,000.

The station which has most come into competition with Sibsagar is Gowahatti, at the eastern extremity of Kamrup district, of which it is the capital. This is the capital indeed of all Assam, at the present time, being the residence of the Commissioner of the Province, and having a population of from 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. The principal objections to Gowahatti were the *comparative* sparseness of the Assamese population in

its neighborhood, and, especially, the fact, according to our best means of judging, that the Assamese spoken in that vicinity is a corruption of the pure Assamese, bearing nearly as close resemblance to the Bengali as to the Ahom ; and that, such as it is, it is spoken principally by the lower classes, and is likely soon to be supplanted by the Bengali altogether.

It should be noted, that the territory of Assam, according to its present designation, embraces Assam Proper and Lower Assam, and that the former alone was the country or original home of the Ahom race ; (Asom or Assam being the Bengali pronunciation of Ahom) ; of which they held possession since about A.D. 1228. Lower Assam, or Kamrup, was an independent and ancient kingdom, of an entirely different origin ; and Darrang was also one of its provinces. The power of the Kamrup kings began to decline in A.D. 1682, the province of Darrang was wrested from them by the Ahom kings about 1732 ; but it was not till 1790 that Kamrup, as a separate kingdom, ceased to exist. The Ahom kings succeeded at length in reducing it to their dominion ; this was only for a short time ; yet being found annexed, at the time it became known to the English, Kamrup has also been included under the general name of Assam.

Corresponding with this diversity of origin, is the diversity of dialects spoken in the two divisions of Assam. According to the best information at command, although there is some discrepancy in the testimony, there is a material difference between the dialect of Assam Proper, and that of Lower Assam, although both dialects are *called* Assamese. The natives often speak indeed, in common parlance, of Assamese and *Dhekeri* and Bengali as being the same language, (*Dhekeri* is the generic name of the inhabitants of Lower Assam), being all derived from the Sanscrit ; and not like Hindusthani and Burmese, which come from different sources. And yet, says Mr. Brown, "the difference is so great, that a missionary speaking only Assamese would not be understood by the people of Lower Assam." The remark needs some qualification, as applied to Gowahatti. The native dialect, or *Dhekeri*, so far as it has not been supplanted by the Bengali, approximates more closely to the Assamese

Proper *there*, than in any other part of Lower Assam. This is owing to the fact that Gowahatti was conquered by the Ahom kings in 1662 or 1682, and a viceroy and other Ahom officers placed there ; whose descendants of course, with others who removed from Assam Proper, continued to speak their own language, mingled more or less with the dialect of the native *Dhekeris*, until Bengali gained the ascendancy over both ; but the rest of Lower Assam, as already mentioned, was not subjected to the Ahom sway till a century afterwards. Even this advantage, however, appears to be rapidly wasting away. "Gowahatti being mostly populated from the influx below, i.e., from Kamrup and Bengal, the original inhabitants form but a small minority. Of course, their language must in a short time die away before the Bengali, which has already gained a complete ascendancy throughout the rest of Kamrup," and is recognized by the European residents and the native officers as the established language of the province. Indeed, "as a language," says Mr. Brown, "the day is over with the *Dhekeri*—it has made its obeisance to the Bengali, and has retired." (*BMM, July 1844, pp. 212-3*)

115. *Brown to Peck, Sibsagar, August 22, 1850* : Bro Danforth has been for sometime making investigation in the *Dhekeri* language. I have written to him my views on the subject and requested him to forward them to you. He had found so great a discrepancy between Assamese and *Dhekeri* that he is beginning to talk of designing a separate language for Kamrup. This would inevitably produce split in the mission and is what I have always been afraid would be the result of establishing a mission at Gowahati. I hope, however, this idea would be given up. Mr. Danforth says in his letter to me :

"I am inclined to think that the difference is so great between these two dialects that to preach the Gospel to the *Dhekeri* in the Assamese tongue will be fraught with constant embarrassment and perplexity. In my opinion to be a successful preacher, you must talk a language that can be comprehended by them without mental effort. I must therefore differ with you say that you think that this people can be reached through the Assamese language. I hope you will not consider me obstinate in this as I do it with reluctance...the people of

Gowahati talk *Dhekeri* or rather are *Dhekeris*...There is but one alternative : We must either adopt *Dhekeri* tongue or give up the mission. There are good many objections to adopt a new language. I will therefore (suggest) you...for abandoning this station.

“My investigation on this subject from the first trying and disheartening. The conclusions at which I have arrived have been most painful. They are the greatest trial I have ever met within my missionary work, but there is no use in believing that black is white because we desire to have it so. I would have this question otherwise, but...facts are facts and he is a fool who denies it.”

The resolution sent round by Bro Danforth was not for abandoning Gowahati, unconditionally, but that we recommend to the Executive Committee “to abandon this field until such times as they be able to establish a separate mission here”. I should hardly think, that Bro had any intention of really abandoning Gowahati,...rather to have a separate mission established here; all the brethren, however, negatived this resolution, and himself now satisfied with the result. So I hope there will be no further agitation of the subject at present.

ASSAMESE *VERSUS* BENGALI

116. *Brown to Peck, Sibsagor, October 24, 1854* : Mr. Robinson has written to the Government against the instruction of the natives in Asamese. Bro Bronson has requested me to answer the papers, but I had referred it back to him to make the proper reply giving him permission to forward my note with his own if he chooses. I enclose for your information Mr. Robinson’s papers and an extract from what have written on the subject to Bro Bronson.

Mr. Robinson complains of the missionaries for the calling Asamese, “the vernacular dialect of the people”. If this is not vernacular what is ? Is Bengali the vernacular ? Does Mr. Robinson mean to say that a language which cannot be understood by the people is their *Vernacular tongue* ? Words seems to have lost their meaning. Our ideas will soon become as confused as the dialects of Bengal.

Mr. Robinson says, that the way in which we speak makes difference greater than really is—deceiving the eyes while the words remain the same—to prove which he writes a column of words in Bengali—everyone of which varies from the Asamese in pronunciation as much as it does in orthography ! The second column which he has given to exhibit our orthography contains only two words written as we write them and one of these is not in Assamese character.

Mr. Robinson asserts that there is a great variety of pronunciation in the modes of pronunciation among the Asamese...I challenge any person to point out an equal extent of territory in any part of the world where there is a greater uniformity of pronunciation than in the Asamese, excluding of course the Dhekeri of Kamrup—also the Kacharis and other hill tribes, to whom the language is not Vernacular and also cannot therefore be expected to speak it in its purity. The spoken Asamese is in fact peculiar for its stability and uniformity. While Bengali has been changing, as Mr. Robinson informs us, the language of Asam remains the same that has been for centuries. It never came from Bengal, it has much greater affinities with other branches of Sanskrit than with Bengali. It is a more easy flowing, agreeable language and not less copious, and is fully entitled, notwithstanding the statement of Mr. Robinson to the contrary, to be considered as the Vernacular language of the people. (ABFMS)

117. *Brown to Bronson, Sibsagor, October 5, 1854 (Excerpts) :* I am much obliged for the copy of Mr. Robinson's letter. It is too full of misrepresentations to pass unnoticed—though I see in it no definite and tangible statement of facts, or any arguments that require refutation. It appears to contain mere assertions which he never would have made had he himself been familiar with the language of the country. Mr. Robinson fears that we have formed our conclusion that Asamese is a distinct language from comparing it with the refined Bengali of the books. It is not at all necessary to go to books to show that the two languages are distinct ; it is quite sufficient to put a couple of Bengalis and Asamese together and see whether they understand each other. An amusing article representing

such a scene was recently sent me by one of the Asamese lads in Cal. for the *Orunodoi*. But Mr. Robinson says that even the Bengalis who come from different districts cannot understand each other except through the medium of the written language. By this he conveys the idea that the fact of a people's not understanding each other is no proof that they use a different language. Others will probably consider it a proof that they do. People that speak the same language can generally understand each other, and those who speak different languages cannot. I can readily imagine that there are many places in Bengal where the people are not able to speak Bengali. But those who do speak it ought to understand each other. If to be mutually unintelligible is consistent with speaking the same language, it will be difficult to refute Mr. Robinson's theory that the Asamese is identical with the Bengali.

It is very easy to caricature a language that one knows but little of, to call it "slovenly", "crude" and "vulgar"—make extracts from the ludicrous letters in *Punch* to illustrate our spelling, and assert that Missionaries who have written and spoken the language 20 years, "descend to the same level" instead of elevating the people for whom they labor—but we must take the people as we find them and labor amongst them in the languages they use if we hope to do them any present good. (*ABFMS also Selections, pp. 226-7*)

118. *Some remarks in defence of the use of Bengali in the Government School in Asam*, By William Robinson, Esq., Inspector of Government Schools, Asam.

A few words will suffice to explain on what grounds I would defend the use of Bengali in the Government Schools in this Province.

The languages spoken in Asam, I believe to be essentially the same as the Bengali.

That there are a few discrepancies, I admit ; but they are not of sufficient importance to affect the general truth of the proposition. And if this can be maintained, it will, I trust need no argument to show, that it will be better for the interests of the people, that we avail ourselves of the books that have been prepared, and may yet be published for the thirty millions

of Bengal, in preference to creating a distinct literature, for a comparatively small section of the people, merely for the sake of perpetuating what at best is but a dialectal difference.

I have said there are a few discrepancies between the Asamese and the Bengali. These are essentially in the Grammar, and not in the vocabulary.

When making a comparison between the Asamese and the Bengali, it should be borne in mind, that during the last half century, the latter has been in a transition state. The progress of education, leading to the revival of classical literature, has exercised no inconsiderable influence in refining and polishing it, and developing the resources in a manner which harmonises with its peculiar genius and analogies.

In many cases an acquaintance with the classical Sanscrit has led writers into an affectation of pedantry, and the introduction of terms which to their morbid taste, appeared more energetic and brilliant than those which the Vernacular stock supplied. Indeed, to so great an extent have their Sanscrit interpolations been admitted that the so-called Bengali compositions are perfectly unintelligible to one unacquainted with Sanscrit. At the same time there can be no doubt that the Bengali has greatly benefitted by this connection. The language was extremely clumsy and uncouth. It needed a *literature* to render it compact, energetic and harmonious. When this began to be formed, those who had imbibed from the Sanscrit its graces of diction and style, introduced them into their Native language. They reduced its elements to greater uniformity—greatly diminished its uncouthness and its deformities, and brought the language to its present state of refinement.

But we are not to suppose for a moment that the changes which have brought about so beneficial an effect in the Bengali language, have been simultaneous and proceeded *pari passu* through every part of the country in which it is spoken. We might be sure, if we reasoned only *a priori*, that they *would not*, and we know from abundant evidence that they *have not*. The more remote parts of Bengal, those which were least likely to be influenced by the innovations introduced at the seats of learning in and about Nuddea and by the Directors of the periodic

Press in the metropolis, retain to this day, not only a large number of vocables, but several idoms and grammatical forms, which are unintelligible except in those parts where they have been prescriptively used.

Dr. Buchanan in his Topography of the District of Dinajpore, has the following remarks, which I quote in order to show that I am not singular in my opinion. "The Prakrit or polite language of Bengal", he states, "may be considered as a dead language. All persons of a liberal education are acquainted with it, and among them it is the usual means of correspondence, and the language of ordinary composition. But among the common people, probably *one in the thousand may understand it*".

Let it not, however, be supposed that the colloquial dialect, the Upobháshá as it is termed, is identically the same in all parts of Bengal. There are differences more or less great in almost every zillah, glottological differences as well as differences in grammatical form, so that Bengalis coming from distantly situated zillahs are unable to understand each other except through the medium of the written language or the language of the books.

Now it is, I fear, usual with those who maintain that the Asamese is a language distinct from the Bengali, to draw their conclusions from a comparison of the colloquial language of Asam with the refined and elegant Bengali they find in books. This is far from being a correct mode of procedure, and necessarily leads to incorrect results. I have not just now the means of appending a comparative statement of words and phrases in Asamese and any other dialect spoken in Bengal. But could the comparison be made, I have little doubt, that in most instances, even the grammatical forms—in which by the way the only differences exist,—will be found to assimilate.

The vocables common in Asam are essentially the same as those in use by the Bengalis, save in a very few exceptions, derived from other sources, but the number of these is so small they may be considered as almost of vanishing quantity, insufficient to alter the ratio of the elements of the national language.

The close affinity between the two languages has, however, been generally disguised by *differences of form*; not merely

by those which are the consequence of the natural development and progress of the Bengali, but by interchanges of letters in the Asamese, the slovenly modes of pronunciation, and the very capricious varieties of spelling displayed by the people of Asam.

To this I must add, that Mr. Brown's system of spelling has tended to a still greater degree to widen the difference. It professes, I believe, to be a phonetic system ; but where there is such a variety in the modes of pronunciation it is to be inferred that Mr. Brown has adopted that most common to his part of the country, and this has been set up as the standard. The system is best but an arbitrary one, and the sooner it is relinquished for the conventional system of the Bengali, the sooner will the differences between the two languages vanish away.

But suppose the concessions were made that there are no more differences between the colloquial dialect of Asam and the language of the Bengali books, than there are between the latter and the dialects usually spoken in Bengal, it may yet be asked, whether, if we intend to popularize instruction, it would not be preferable to supply the people with books in the *colloquial dialect*, regardless whether that dialect be more or less closely connected with the more polished style in use in Bengali compositions ? To this, I reply that the elementary school books should certainly be written in the simplest style possible, so as to suit the mental capacities of the children for whom they are intended. They ought not in the early stages of their career, to be bored with a phraseology they are unaccustomed to. It is far more important they should acquire new ideas than that they should be engaged in the acquisition of new words. Hence in the books we now see prepared for children in the English language, the style is simple and the phraseology such as children are accustomed to use. To introduce into our schools such works as Dr. Yale's translation of Solomon's Proverbs, his "Vernacular Class Book Reader", etc., is just as preposterous as it would be to exchange the little story books common in our nurseries for Macaulay's History of England, or works written in the ponderous style of Johnson.

But, I would ask, are these simple elementary books prepared for children written in the various provincialisms which are the ordinary colloquial dialect of the common people in England ? Are the rules of orthography common to the language disregarded in them ? Then why should we not pare away all crudities from the Provincial Asamese, and furnish our schools with books freed from all vulgarisms of expression and have the words spelt according to the prescriptive Rules of Orthography, and thus prepare our pupils for reading with ease the books written in the more elaborately polished style now common to works written in Bengali.

If we choose to spell,

কিছু	some	কিসু
অগায়ী	unjust	অগাই
বুড়া	old	বুর্হা
ইন্দুর	a rat	অন্দুর
ক্ষমা	pardon	খেমা
খুঁজ	wish	খোজো

we may deceive the eyes, but the difference is only in form, the words remain the same.

Here is a specimen of the dialect spoken by the Lancashire peasants, taken from “Th’okeawnt uth Eggsheebeeshun”.

“Theyrme sum uth granddish karpits has avur an clapt mee een on, An ondur heawfoke cud foinde ethur harts fur to cet their shune on um.”

Is there not some difference between this language and that used by Johnson ? The orthography appears different, the grammatical forms are different, the vocables themselves as here given it would be impossible to find in any dictionary of the English language.

Because the illiterate choose thus to murder the Queen’s English, is it necessary that those who seek to elevate them by the means of education should descend to the same level ? Call this a distinct language, the Vernacular dialect of the people, having more points of difference from, than of resemblance to the language usually known as the English and proceed to prepare school-books in it ?

And is not this just what the advocates of Asamese wish us to do ?

To sum up then, I believe the language spoken in Asam to be essentially the same as the Bengali.

The vocables are the same, disguised only by differences of form.

In the grammatical inflections the differences are greater when compared with the present polished language of the books, but these deflections in grammatical structure may all be found in the colloquial dialects of Bengal. (*Selections*, pp. 221-5)

119. *Bronson to Halliday**, November 13, 1854 : Knowing that you feel a deep interest in the promotion of Vernacular Education in every portion of the Province over which you have the honor to preside, and understanding that the subject is now particularly occupying your attention and the attention of Government, with a view to extending the blessings of science more generally among the people, I feel no hesitation in laying before you in behalf of myself and associates—American Missionaries in Assam—the following remarks and accompanying documents.

It is now nearly twenty years since the establishment of the American Mission in Assam. During this period we have by every means in our power endeavored to make ourselves acquainted with the people, and by daily familiar intercourse acquire their language, so as to be able to communicate to them in the most direct manner the blessings of science and Christianity. We have also established two printing presses, and issued the whole New Testament, portions of the Old Testament, a number of Elementary Books for schools, and a monthly paper, all in the Vernacular. But in the prosecution of our efforts, and especially in the preparation of useful works in the Vernacular, one sore discouragement attends us. *I refer to the substitution of Bengali for Assamese* in all the schools and educational efforts of Government so that instead of being able to bring our own presses and books and schools to active concert with the efforts of Government we find ourselves far less favorably situated

* Halliday, Federick James, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

than we had hoped, for effecting immediate and permanent good for this long neglected people.

Your Honor will naturally inquire why we also have not adopted the Bangali, also and thus acted in concert with the views of Government ? Our answer is at hand. We do not deem it possible to root out the mother tongue, and substitute the Bangali, which is not the Vernacular but a foreign dialect. We have had ample proofs of this in the course of the past twenty years. We have tried well educated Bangali Teachers, but their instructions were not intelligible to the common people, and they were obliged to learn and use the Assamese language. We have for the same reason found the circulation of Bangali books among the Assamese useless Bangali is not the Vernacular of Assam. The common people do not understand that language written or spoken. We find people in almost every village who on being offered a book reply "We cannot read your books", but on being told that they are not Bangali but Assamese receive and read them readily. I may also refer to the fact that in all the Government schools in Assam Bangali is studied the same as Latin and Greek are studied in England...Bangali books are put into the hands of the pupils, but they give all their definitions, and the teachers all their explanations and instructions in the Vernacular—the Assamese. This is this case with every school in the Province though teachers and scholars are specially interdicted by the Inspector. On the play-ground, in the family circle at home, on their religious assemblies where their Shasters are explained, the first word the new-born child hears from his mother, the first word he learns to lisp, the rude song of the boatman as he plies the oar or spreads his sail, the joyous songs of the reaper as he shouts the "hervest home", always and everywhere the language used in Assamese, not Bangali ; and in our humble opinion, the only way to render any plan of education popular in this Province is to give it to them in their own mother tongue.

Hoping that those entrusted with the educational interests of this Province would come to regard the subject in the same light as ourselves. We have hitherto quietly pursued our course without discussion. But during the recent visit of Judge A. M.

Mills* on deputation to this Province, we were called upon to state in writing our views on this subject. This was done, and copies of works already published by us in the Vernacular were presented for his inspection. Before leaving Assam, in view of what he saw and heard himself, Judge Mills expressed his decided opinion that Assamese should be encouraged in the Government schools, and this opinion we are given to understand he has strongly urged in his report to Government.

We have been waiting with intense anxiety the result of this report. But on the return of Mr. Robinson, Inspector of Government Schools in Assam from Calcutta, we could not learn that anything definite had been done towards securing to the Assamese the boon of a purely Vernacular education. We have learned, however, that the question of the use and disuse of the Assamese language was on the part of yourself and Mr. Secretary Beadon a subject of distinct inquiry and reference to Mr. Robinson and that he standing as the representative of the educational interests of all Assam gave his voice against educating the people in their own tongue ! Believing as we do that on the decision of this very question hangs the success of the proposed educational scheme—and the elevation or otherwise of this people—we cannot do less than to lay before you *our united and entire dissent* from this opinion. We believe that its effect will be to throw back the Assamese another half century. We believe that the Government schools will continue to languish and be unpopular, until after years of fruitless experiment the Government will see it best to hold out the helping hand through the medium of their own Vernacular.

We have invited Mr. Robinson to state fully his reasons for using the Bengali language in schools for the Assamese. I beg to call your careful attention to his "*remarks in defence of the use of the Bengali in the Government Schools in Assam*" as also to the replies of my associates to the same to whom I

* To enquire into the administrative affairs, A.J.M. Mills, Judge *Sadar Dewani Adawlat*, paid a visit to Assam in June 1853. The report which he submitted to the Government, commonly known as the *Mill's Report on Assam* (1854), forms an invaluable source material on East-India Company's administration in Assam.

submitted it. Copies of all of which I enclose. These documents will I trust present more fully before you the comparative claims of the two languages.

Should Your Honour hesitate in acceding to the Assamese their own language as a medium of education, fearing lest it should not prove sufficiently copious ; or that the necessary elementary books cannot be supplied, allow me to state that up to the time of the death of Commissioner Scott, until the substitution of the Persian in the courts and perhaps later, all the business of the courts was transacted in the Assamese language, as the public records will show*. If the language in that early stage was found sufficiently copious for this purpose, then with a common source of enrichment, the Sanscrit, and an increasing number of educated natives ready to improve it, why should it not be adequate for all the purposes of the school and court now ? This is the opinion of many of the best informed Assamese on the subject, who on seeing their own language banished from the school and the court, and Bangalis introduced into the offices of Government that naturally belong to them, become discouraged and lose all stimulus to self-improvement.

As for elementary books in the Vernacular they can be readily increased, and gradually every work needed for carrying out an efficient and extended system of purely Vernacular education in Assam, may be provided. I beg also to bring to your notice the fact, that the Assamese language is the common medium of intercourse with the Mountain Tribes that surround this valley. The Bhutias, the Mishmis, the Miris, the Abors, the Khamptis, the Singphos, the Nagas—and various other Tribes compose a vast population, all of whom if they are ever reached at all, must be reached from this valley—and through the medium of the Assamese language. From their constant intercourse with the Assamese some among them can speak the Assamese very well. Everywhere among them such interpreters may be found for a medium of communication. It is not probable that the languages of all these tribes can ever be reduced to system, and books and translation prepared for them to any great extent :

* *cf infra*, pp. 144-5. Jenkins to Grey, paras, 3-7.

but through the Assamese language as a *common medium*, much can be accomplished for them even at the present time.

The importance of this subject is my only excuse for the length and freedom of these remarks. On the decision Your Honor may take as to the encouragement, or continued suppression of the Assamese language, hang almost entirely the questions of the more speedy amelioration of all these barbarous tribes in our Frontier, the success or otherwise of Vernacular education in this Province, and the consequent elevation of the masses around us. I beg to express the hope in behalf of myself and colleagues that Your Honor will not now retard the elevation of the people by suppressing their mother tongue, but that you will open to them at once the true—the natural means of their elevation—the means of learning the Sciences—and of reading *in their own tongue*, the wonderful works of God. *Ibid.* pp. 217-20.

120. *Danforth to Bronson, October 30, 1854* : I have seen Mr. Robinson's paper containing his reasons for introducing the Bengali language into the schools of Asam. I am surprised that he should give no facts to sustain his views on a question where in theories without facts are worth but little. It will certainly require something more than mere assertions to make out that Bengali is the Vernacular of Asam. *Language is the expression of ideas*. Words that convey no ideas are not a language. If language conveys ideas to one people and not to another it is a language to the one and not to the other. The Asamese understand Asamese, hence *that* is a language to them. If they do not understand Bengali (and I shall presently give facts to show that they do not), then Bengali is not a language to them, for it does not convey ideas—of course I am speaking of the people in an uneducated state. The question is a mere matter of fact—and depends upon whether the Asamese understand the written or spoken language of Bengal or not. If they do not, the Bengali can in no proper sense be called the Vernacular of Asam. Long lists of similar words prove nothing. In the English, one of the most distinctive languages of Europe, about one half of the Vocabulary is of foreign origin, and the greater part of this either directly or indirectly from the Latin ; but what would be a list of 10,000 or even 40,000 words do in establishing

the identity of the two languages ? The Asamese and Bengali derive the greater portion of their Vocabularies from a common stock, the Sanscrit, hence there must be a great similarity in the words. A Bengali scholar would of course be able to decipher much of the Asamese. An English scholar might even decipher many passages in the Latin New Testament ; but the latter circumstance would not make Latin English ; nor would the former make Bengali Asamese. I will mention a few things which I believe to be facts bearing on this subject.

1. All the Asamese who can read, understand our books at once but they do not understand the Bengali books.
2. The Asamese do not understand the spoken language of the Bengalis any better than they do the books. Of course I do not now speak of the Sudder stations where there are numerous Bengali traders.
3. The teachers of Government schools say our books are understood at once by the common people in the Mofussil, but the Bengali books are not understood until after two or three years' study.
4. Bengali is studied in the schools as a foreign language, something like Latin and French are in England, by learning the meaning of words from a dictionary and translating.
5. The boys out of school never think or talk in the Bengali among themselves, but always in the Asamese.
6. The peculiar sounds of some of the letters, as well as the affixes and terminations of the Asamese render the fact of its being the same language as the Bengali very questionable, if not absolutely impossible.
7. All the Missionaries, some of the Government officers, Anondoram Phokon, and the learned Natives generally declare that the Asamese is a very different language from the Bengali.
8. Those who *ought* to be the best judges of the Asamese believe that the language so far from being crude and slovenly, is much more smooth, elegant and soft than the Bengali.

I believe that so long as the Courts and the Schools are in Bengali, there will be the greatest impediment to the education and improvement of the Asamese. If the Missionaries should adopt Bengali, as the means of communicating religious truth, everyone would doubt them. Is it not just as necessary to have a clear medium to communicate scientific as religious truth ? So long as justice is administered and the Schools taught in an unknown tongue what help is there for the people ? Their dearest rights are alienated. If in 200 years, some change could be effected in the language it will help principally among the favored few who are instructed and on them alone will the blessings of education fall. The great mass of the people will remain in all their former ignorance and degradation ; deprived even of the advantages of those new ideas and household words, which the Court and School in a country where the Vernacular is used are ever carrying to the home of the poorest peasants. If the language of Asam is ever to be changed, it is a singularly unfortunate to do it now. We might as well administer strong alternatives to a man in the last stages of consumption. What we want for this people, is something to stimulate them to think and act and inquire for themselves. We want ideas rather than words. While we are administering the debilitating draught of a new language, the patient may be past recovery. Nothing as it seems to me would tend more to start the pulsations of life throughout this entire Province than to have the Court and Schools in the Vernacular. These are two powerful sources of influence that could not fail to tell upon the whole country if they only had a *carrying* medium. As it is, education is emphatically a foreign plant. The greater interest—the elevation of the people is sacrificed to the less—through introduction of a new language, and I have but little hope for the people, until the policy of the Government is changed (*Ibid.*, pp. 228-30).

121. *Bronson to the Editor, "Friend of India", Nowgong, May 25, 1855 (Excerpts)* : You are aware that the Assamese, like all other people, have a mother tongue ; and you will not have forgotten that the venerable Dr. Carey, who put forth the first efforts to benefit the Assamese, found it necessary to employ that medium, as his translations of the Assamese Scriptures and

other works abundantly slow. At a later period also, when the Serampore Mission appointed Messrs. Robinson and Rae to Assam, their opinion as to the necessity of using the Assamese language is evident from their having revised and printed St. Luke's Gospel and other works in Assamese.

The Assamese themselves have just as strong an attachment to their mother tongue as any other people.

The few educated native among them are often called upon by their countrymen to unite their efforts in preparing useful books in their own language. When we see a highly respectable well educated native, like Anondoram Phokon*, a student of the Hindu College, and now Sub-Assistant Commissioner of Nowgong return to his country and devote himself with a most commendable zeal to the preparation of useful books in his own tongue, as the surest and most natural way of conveying knowledge to the multitudes of his ignorant countrymen—do we not readily perceive what medium of communication will be popular among them? In further illustration of this, let me refer you to the shasters most popular among the Assamese—the *Kirton*, the *Gita*, the *Rotnowoli*, and such-like books, all productions of the late reformer, Shri Hungkor Purah†. What is the secret of these books being so popular as to be found in almost every house, and on every tongue? Simply this, that Shri Hungkor struck for the masses. He came down to the level of the people, and translated from the Sanscrit these portions of the Hindu sacred books, and presented them to the people in their own familiar dialect. Relieved of a foreign tongue, and from difficult and abstruse terms, the people could now chant the praises of

* In his memorandum to Mills, *Observations on the Administrations of the Province of Assam*, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan (not simply Phookan) convincingly pleaded for the restoration of the Assamese language in the courts and schools in Assam. Robinson's arguments were forcefully refuted by a "Native", who was no other than Dhekial Phukan, in a booklet *A few Remarks on the Assamese Language and On Vernacular Education* published by the Baptist Mission Press, Sibsagor, 1855. This "Valuable work" was inadvertently printed in the 42nd Annual Report of the Assam Mission (1956) as *Assamese Language and Vernacular Education* in Assam.

† He is no other than Shri Sankardeva, the greatest Vaisnavite Saint and reformer in Assam.

their gods in the familiar language of childhood. They took among them like wild-fire, and are to this day increasingly popular. Let me ask, are not such facts as these worthy of consideration in deciding so important a question as the best medium of education? The Mission with which I am connected view it in this light, having, found by a familiar intercourse of nearly twenty years with the people, that the employment of educated Bengali assistants and the use of Bengali books are nearly useless. The Assamese do not really understand them.

Allow me now to inquire whether the scheme of vernacular education about to be promulgated will meet such a case? Or, will the Government attempt to carry out one identical plan everywhere—resolve to discountenance the Assamese, and substitute a foreign dialect—the Bengali, in its place? If so, Mr. Editor, the great scheme of vernacular education will be no boon to Assam. Save the few who are more or less connected with the Courts, the mass of the people will still remain uninterested and unblest, and Government schools will continue to languish. The two languages in their inflections, modes, affixes, prefixes, spelling, and above all in pronunciation are so different, that Bengali is to an Assamese what Latin and French are to an English school boy. Does not universal experience show that in order to popularize education among any people, it must be given to them in their own medium of thought and conversation?

Judge Mills, during his tour of inspection in Assam, was so fully convinced that the general use of Bengali in the courts and schools of Assam was an error, that in his Report to Government, he recommended that Assamese books be introduced into their schools, and that the Assamese language be the general medium of education—allowing at the same time the more advanced classes to finish their course with the Bengali if they wished. Will this recommendation of Judge Mills be adopted in the forthcoming scheme? Many are waiting with no small solicitude for the result. Should the Government say that the people of Assam shall have a vernacular education, as well as the people of Burmah, Bengal, and other provinces, and that the above recommendation shall be adopted—in that case we should see the dawn of a glorious day for Assam—and none

would be found more ready to aid the Government in every way in their power than those to whom you have appealed. But they would, on the contrary, regard every attempt to discountenance or to suppress the mother tongue, as positively fatal to the ultimate success of the proposed educational scheme—and as putting far back the day of the elevation of this people. (*BMM, November 1855, pp. 462-4*).

122. *Jenkins to Grey**, *Gowahatty, December 7, 1854* (*Excerpt*) : With reference to a correspondence, submitted to His Honor by the American Missionaries in Assam, advocating the introduction of Assamese into all the Vernacular Schools of this Province and impeaching the views on this subject, held by the Inspector of Government Schools, I have the honor to forward, for the consideration of the Honorable the Lieutenant-Governor, a statement by Mr. Robinson, vindicating the use of Bengali.

2nd—Mr. Robinson, in my opinion, ably refutes the assertions of the Missionaries, but *as I was the person principally concerned in adopting the Bengali, as the language to be used in the Schools*, I would beg to submit a brief account of the grounds on which I founded my opinion of the expediency of making that the language of Vernacular instruction in Assam, and in doing this, I trust I shall be able to correct some inaccuracies of the Missionaries, calculated to mislead his Honor's judgment.

3rd—When I assumed charge of this Office, I found all the *Omlah*† with two or three exceptions, of individuals holding inferior situations Bengalis, from Sylhet, Mymensing, and Dacca, some of these had been under Mr. Scott, but the principal officers who were mostly from Sylhet, had been introduced by Mr. Robertson. I think there was not a single appointment made by me for some years afterwards.

The business of the Courts was almost entirely conducted in Bengali, the exceptions were a few papers in Persian, which was the language best known to Mr. Robertson, for his use and that of the Sudder Court.

* Grey, Sir William, Secretary Government of Bengal, Fort William.

† Or *amlah*, a subordinate officer.

4th—The Courts of the then two existing Zillahs, Goalparah and Kamroop, (Lower Assam), were also filled with Bengalis, who had mostly accompanied Mr. Scott from Rungpore ; the Police Officers, as also the Native Judges in Gowalparah, were mostly Mahomedans of Burdwan or the North-West Provinces, whilst all the Chief Revenue Officers and all the Treasurers were Bengalis of Rungpore and Mymensing, or Brahmins of Santipore, connected with the Gossains of the Kamikha Temple at Gowhatty.

5th—The Native Civil Courts only of Lower Assam were held by Assamese (*Punchaets**), and the business of those Courts was conducted in the Vernacular jargon current in the District, but in the *Aoockkate Courts*† the language used Bengali, and the proceedings of the lower Courts could scarcely be read and were very imperfectly understood by the Bengali officers of the higher Courts.

6th—When Mr. Scott was at Gowalparah, and the conquest of Assam became probable, he had taken into his offices for instruction in Bengali and the Regulations and modes of procedure in our Courts, many sons of the first families of Assam, then refugees at Gowalparah, who subsequently where dispersed throughout the Courts of Assam, and all nearly afterwards became distinguished officers and held high appointments and chiefly in the Courts of Upper Assam.

7th—On the division of Lower Assam into three Zillahs, as the local Courts were then subordinate to the Sudder Courts, the Bengalis who had been introduced by Mr. Scott and Mr. Robertson, were necessarily appointed to the chief situations in each Zillah ; and all the business of the Courts was carried on in their language, as a matter of the course, and without any specific orders having been given to that effect.

* Three in number : the first under a *Rajkhowa* tried civil cases to the extent of Rs. 150 ; the second under a *Barphukan* decided civil cases to the extent of Rs. 1000 and hear appeals from lower courts while in the third another *Barphukan* decided criminal cases of minor importance.

† Or the *Bar Panchayat* or a court for the trial of heinous offenders. The jurisdiction of the *Sadar Dewani* and *Nizamut Adawlats* were then not extended to Assam.

8th—Shortly after the *Punchaets* were broken upon, and Moonsiffs were appointed, who were all Assamese, mostly members of the late Courts ; and thenceforth the business of their Courts was also conducted in Bengali ; and I do not recollect that there was a single proposition made to retain Assamese, or that any difficulty was alleged as to the introduction of Bengali as the language of the Courts ; but if Assamese had been strictly, retained, it must necessarily have happened that, either appeals to the Sudder Courts would have been useless, or we should have been obliged to have translated all proceedings submitted to those Courts into Bengali, for their use.

9th—Perceiving, however, that the want of an accurate knowledge of Bengali and our rules and forms on the part of the Assamese, was likely to throw an undue proposition of the appointments in the Courts, into the hands of foreigners, I prevailed on the Government of allow of several Assamese lads being appointed as apprentices to each Court in the Province, to learn the business of the Courts and to perfect themselves in the Bengali language, and this measure, in my opinion, has been attended with the most beneficial results*, for though only as yet a few only have attained high office owing to the influence of the Bengalis who were already at the head of the offices, and whose relations have always poured in great numbers, yet the means has diffused a very general knowledge of the rules and regulations, and the acquisition of Bengali has been made an object of earnest desire to a very large portion of the youth of the better classes of the inhabitants.

10th—To show more forcibly the manner or degree in which the Assamese were prepared for the adoption of the Bengali language, besides refering to its fundamental affinity with the Assamese, which has been sufficiently explained by Mr. Robinson, I will add a few words to exhibit the former connection of Assam with Bengal and Hindoostan, to prove that the Assamese were not so ignorant of the languages of their neighbours as the Missionaries would have Government to understand they were.

* Evidently, he was mainly responsible for the introduction of Bengali into the courts and government schools in Assam.

Putting out of the question the original sources of the bulk of the population, which I believe to be of Hindoo extraction, it will be sufficient to mention, that long before the Ahom Rajahs were converted to Hindooism or Brahminism, the temples were established throughout Lower Assam, having large establishments of priests who read and taught the Hindoo sacred books in Sanscrit ; and immediately after their conversion, the Rajahs brought in Kanouge and Santipore Brahmins, for whom they instituted immense establishments, and invested with so much rank and power, that gradually the greater part of the authority of Government fell into their hands.

Before the power of the Ahom Rajahs began to wane, they had founded six or seven hundred temples (*dewalis*) in all which Sib was worshipped and the *shastras* of the Bengali Brahmins were taught ; and there existed at the same time about the same number of *shastras* (*Satras*), many of them of very ancient origin, in which the Vedas were taught. The influence of all these numerous institutions, at all of which Sanscrit was taught and Bengali spoken, could not but have been very great upon the people, and made them more or less acquainted with the Bengali language.

11th—But previously to the Ahom kings becoming Hindoos, the armies of Aurungzebe had conquered all Lower Assam and penetrated as far as Ghoorgaon ; and though the Moguls were driven back from Upper Assam, a number of Mahomedans and other Hindoostanees became established in this country from that period.

The Moguls held Kamroop, however, for many generations and introduced into it their fiscal system which existed down to our time. The seat of Government of the Moguls, for these Eastern Districts, was at Rangamatty, in Rungpore (Gowalparah), and to that place all the authorities of Kamroop, and all persons having complaints to make, must have been constantly going backwards ; but detachments from the forces of the Moguls were maintained on the frontiers of Lower Assam ; and there continued to be kept a strong garrison at Gowhatty when the Emperors and Nawabs of Bengal had lost nearly all Kamroop.

Besides this, before the invasion of the Moguls, the Kookes of Cooch Behar had overrun all North Kamroop and Durrung, where they remain to this day ; and if they did not bring with them a pure Bengali dialect they, no doubt, spoke each a dialect as was then current in Rungpore, Dinajpur, and Purneah, great portions of which Districts they had conquered. Whilst thus the Moguls remained in connected with Assam, and it was a connection of 150 or 200 years' duration, there can be little doubt that the dialects of Bengal and Hindoostan prevailed largely over all Lower Assam.

12th—Towards the end of the last century, when Assam was broken up by civil wars, the Assam Rajahs called in a number of Hindoostanees whom they enlisted into their Armies, principally Seikhs (Sikhs) and Hindoostanee Fakirs ; and when Captain Welsh came up here in 1792, there were several thousands of these mercenaries scattered about the country, many of whose families have been since permanently established in Assam, some of the Seikhs remaining a distinct people to this day.

Shortly after our troops were withdrawn, the Assamese called in the Burmahs, and this was followed by the emigration of the principal families of Assamese, especially the Brahmins and high caste families, into our District of Rungpore, and with them a very large body of the ryots, the better classes all returned with our troops to Assam, bringing back with a perfect colloquial knowledge of Bengali and Hindoostanee. Amongst these refugees were the Rajahs Poorunder Sing and Chunder Kant Sing, with their chiefs, both of whom had visited Calcutta ; and in my acquaintance with both, I never heard any other languages spoken then Hindoostanee and Bengali.

13th—The next stage in this history was our occupation of the country and all the troops and followers employed, and who in the course of our operations were spread over the whole country, were Hindoostanees and Bengalis ; and it is impossible to imagine, that, with so scanty a population as the Assamese, this mass of foreigners had not produced a very considerable change in the knowledge of their tongues by the Assamese, when all the principal families had been for many years, residing in Bengal with their slaves and families.

But there was a still further connection with the people of our Western Provinces. By the intercourse of trade the Assamese themselves never sought foreign countries with their products, but sold readily to such traders as visited them. All the trade of the country had been in the hands of the Seikhs, but they were now superseded by the Kayahs, from the most Western Districts of India, Jesselmier, Bikaner, and Ajmere, who brought up the most costly staple, and imported salt and cloths, English and Hindoostanee, and by Bengalis, who purchased the oil, grains and imported smaller articles of a miscellaneous nature. All these held intercourse with the Assamese through the medium of their own languages and certainly with little difficulty.

14th—In 1837, Lieutenant-Colonel Matthie, then Collector of Kamroop, proposed establishing some village Schools throughout the Zillah, principally with a view to rearing up a class of qualified village and Pergunnah Officers. Throughout Kamroop there were at the time many Schools for the higher classes, but the instruction was chiefly in Sanscrit ; there were, however, no Schools anywhere available to the lower classes. There were no Schools in any part of Assam, except two or three Missionary Schools, where children were taught in Assamese, the first attempt to teach them in the current provincial dialect were made by the American Missionaries.*

Colonel Matthie's plan was to employ the Pundits of the existing temple, or Sanskrit Schools, in his village Schools which they were readily prevailed on to superintend ; and they were all sufficiently good Bengali Schools to take upon themselves the duty of elementary instruction in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, all that it was expected of them to teach.

It was not proposed to teach Assamese, and if it had been, there were then no available elementary Assamese books whilst Bengali were readily procurable, and that, as the language of the Courts, was what all were desirous of learning.

15th—Subsequently Colonel Matthie's measure was extended to the other Divisions with some little modifications, but it was found necessary, generally, to get rid of the Pundits, as they very

* The first elementary books printed by the Missionaries were in the Roman character.

commonly resisted teaching the lower classes of Hindoos and Mahomedan children, and devoted their time, when not checked, by teaching Brahmin boys or the children of the superior classes, Sanscrit. Some time after the Schools were further organized by being placed under the superintendence of an Inspector.

16th—From the foregoing account it will be seen that instruction in Bengali necessarily grew up under the circumstances of our connection with the Province, and that the Assamese were prepared for its adoption by a very considerable previous acquaintance with Bengali and Hindee, that of the Division Gowalparah was wholly Bengali, and Lower Assam was scarcely less so. In Kamroop reside several thousand of Brahmins who originally emigrated from Sylhet, and who are now the domestic Goooroos of most of Rungpore, Kooch Behar and Dinagepore. In Durrung all the leading families were of Kooch Behar origin or of Bengali ; and in Nowgong, scattered amongst Assamese families of rank, many of whom had been refugees in Bengali, resided in large population of Mahomedans of Hindoostan or Bengali extraction but in all these four Divisions, there were numerous tribes of Hill races, Garrows, Kookees, Kacharis, Mikirs, and Lalungs, who had their own distinct languages, whom it has never been proposed to instruct through the medium of their own languages ; for to attempt to preserve them, and to creat a separate literature for each, would immediately have appeared ridiculous. In Upper Assam the connection with Bengal had been of course less, but it so happened that all the gentry nearly had been exiles in Bengal, and had there acquired a very competent knowledge of the language of that Province.

17th—Whilst the adoption, therefore, of Bengali as the medium of instruction to the Assamese seemed expedient, under every circumstance of policy, for the gradual amalgamation of the people of Assam with our subjects in Bengal, with whom alone they are in direct communication and immediate neighbourhood, and the administration of the affairs of this newly acquired Province in unison with the Government of the old Province, we have only to reflect on what would have been the result of a contrary procedure to show that the attempt to convey instruction through the medium of the Assamese dialect would have been most ruinous to the people, if not impossible. (*Selections, pp. 234 ff*)

ASSAMESE—CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

TRANSLATION OF THE GOSPEL

123. *Journal of Brown, Sadiya, May 1, 1837* : Have been employed for most of the last month in preparing a translation of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, which we intend to publish as a tract. We find that Dr. Carey's translation,* although a great help to us, requires many alterations in order to be understood by the people around us. Dr. Carey never having resided in A'sám, and being obliged to depend entirely upon a native interpreter, it would be surprising if the translation did not contain errors. The greatest fault is the introduction of many Bengáli' and Sanscrit words, totally unknown to the common people, and understood only by a few learned pandits. We make it our rule, however, to vary from Dr. Carey's translation only where it is absolutely necessary in order to make it intelligible to the natives. Still, the alterations required are so numerous as to make it almost a new translation, as you will judge from the fact, that in the Sermon on the Mount alone, we have been obliged to make no less than two hundred and thirty alterations.

Have been engaged in making out a catechism in A'sámese, which I have nearly completed. I intend to translate it into the Khamti' immediately, if I can procure a teacher to assist me. Hitherto we have been able to do but little in the language of the Khamtis ; our first efforts being more particularly required among the A'sámese ; but we hope to devote more attention to the Khamti's, during the coming year. Our field of operations, however, among the Khamti's and other Shyáns, will be very limited, until we can gain access to the region beyond the Pátko'i mountains. It is but a small portion of the Shyáns that reside this side of the mountains.

124. *January 1, 1838* : Commenced translating the Gospel of Matthew into A'sámese. Have already revised some parts

* He got the Bible translated into Assamese with the aid of Atma Ram Sarmah, an Assamese pundit, and printed at the Serampur Press in 1813, and the whole Bible in 1833.

of it, as the Sermon on the Mount, from Dr. Carey's translation. Finding that this translation is much more defective than I had supposed, I have concluded to make a new translation, and, after rendering it as perfect as I can, with the assistance of my teacher, compare it verse by verse with Dr. Carey's, and make further corrections. By this means I shall avoid many minor errors which would have escaped unnoticed in a mere revision.

During the present year, I hope to complete the translation of the four Gospels into A'sámese, and portions of the same into Khamti, together with a translation of the Catechism in Khamti. In the mean time I shall endeavor to be making additions to the dictionary, which I have begun in Khamti, and I also intend to commence one in the A'sámese. Although we engaged in this mission with an especial view to the Khamtis and other Shyáns, yet finding ourselves surrounded by A'sámese, among whom the call for immediate labor was more pressing, and it being very difficult to procure a good Khamti teacher, I have hitherto devoted my attention mainly to the A'sámese.

125. *Annual Report, A'sám, 1838 (BMM 1839, p. 145.)* : On the first of Jan. 1838, Mr. Brown entered on the translation of Matthew into A'sámese, expecting to complete the four gospels by the close of the year. Portions of the same would be simultaneously prepared in Khamti'. A Khamti' Catechism was completed in February, and Worcester's Primer, in A'sámese, by Mrs. Brown, in April. The wood cuts in the latter were prepared, with few exceptions, by a Khamti' youth, and are executed with remarkable precision and delicacy. Several minor translations have been added, and others, of greater importance, particularly a Khamti' Dictionary by Mr. Brown, are in progress.

The following is a complete list of works *printed*, from the commencement of the mission, down to June 20, 1838 :

	pp.	cops.
A Spelling-Book in English, A'sámese and Tai	48	500
The Alphabet and Spelling Lessons	16	100
The Parables of Christ	32	500
Sermon on the Mount	16	500
Catechism in A'sámese	16	500

	pp.	cops.
The Alphabet	1	150
Catechism in Tai	18	500
A Hymn in A'sámese	1	100
Worcester's Primer in A'sámese	56	1000
History of the Flood	14	500
History of the Creation	12	500

THE NEW TESTAMENT

126. Mr Brown began the translation of the New Testament into Assamese, January 1st, 1838 ; but the years immediately following, were so filled with commotions, distress, and removals as to afford but scant opportunities for settled work. To secure even an intelligent pundit in the remoter stations was difficult. . . . He translated most of the New Testament during the years 1841-7, at Sibsagar. Native visitors used to find him standing at high broad shelf, extending along his study work, quill in hand, and before him a much-corrected manuscript in Assamese characters. Dictionaries and Greek texts lay open upon the shelf at either hand. Bibles in several languages within reach, and a heap of printer's proof pushed on one side. This shelf was Mr. Brown's study-table ; here in rainy season when uninterrupted he often worked eight or ten hours a day. . . . On the floor sat the pundit looking over the work done, and ready to answer questions.

His diary notes show that Acts was the second book finished in April, John in October, 1842 ; Mark, Romans, Corinthians and Galatians in '43 and '44, and remaining epistles in '45 and '46. Sometimes the study-table was the top of a chest in a canoe on the river. Hebrews and the epistles of James and Peter were thus translated in the three last months of '46 while returning from Calcutta. Luke and Revelations, completing the Testament, were finished in 1847. He afterwards made those revisions of the whole in '48, '49, '50, and one of his last of his labors in Assam was the fourth revision, completed during the summer of 1854.

In December 1854, Mr Brown completed the "Harmony" or "The Life and Gospel of Christ" in Assamese : Before leaving Assam he had translated a considerable part of Bunyan's Pilgrim's

Progress, and left it in the hands of Nidhi Levi, to assist Mr. Danforth in completing it. It was illustrated by a native engraver, and published in 1856. He also translated a few portions of Psalms, and prepared considerable other matter for the press, revising necessary books for the schools, making catechisms, tracts and hymn-books and a pamphlet of tunes*. (*The Whole World Kin*, pp. 412-3).

TRACTS

127. *Letter from Bronson, September 1, 1844* : Since my last communication, two tracts which I had translated into Assamese, have been issued from the press. One is called "The Holy Incarnation", being a comparison between the ten principal incarnations of the Hindus, and Christ. Its main object is, to set forth in a strong light that while the Hindus hope in them for salvation and fancy they derive merit by merely repeating their names, according to their own shasters they did nothing toward man's salvation while their conduct was unspeakably vile. Christ, on the other hand, became incarnate for the express purpose of saving sinners, and his conduct was worthy of God. I consider it one of the best Bangali tracts, and its distribution has already done great good in this quarter. The other tract is entitled, "The Rewards of Intemperance", and exposes the evils of using opium, and intoxicating liquors, and drugs of all kinds. †

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

128. In 1850-51 Mrs Brown had found time to prepare for the Assamese children a series of twelve brief illustrated narratives, chiefly translations from English and Bengali with some additional original matter of her own. Among them were, "Old Soul",

* Another notable work of Nathan Brown was his *Grammatical Notices of the Assamese Language* (1848). This grew out of the materials he collected as oral use of the Assamese with the people and reading of their books : but these extended beyond his anticipation to 80 pages. *A Grammer of the Assamese Language by William Robinson* was printed at the Serampur Press in 1839.

† Of the other Tracts translated and published, mentions may be made of the *True Refuge*, *The Deluge*, the *Creation and Fall*, *Letter to Mahomedans*, *Way of Salvation*, *Pandit and Preacher*, *Error Refuted and Wanderings of a Pilgrim*.

“African Prince”, “The Warrior Chief Converted”, “The Orphan Girl”, “The Eagle’s Nest, or A Mother,s Love” and a “Momoir of Hube”, the little Naga boy*. She was fully repaid for the labor bestowed on these little story-books when they came from the Press and a copy was presented to each of her delightful pupils. They were so daintily and small, type so clear, after a child’s own heart ; they were the first story books ever made *on purpose* for young Assam—and moreover they were true stories ! When the news spread, the house was thronged with eager faces of heathen children from the neighbourhood, crowding in to beg of the Mamsahib that they too, might have one of the beautiful little books (*The Whole World Kin, p. 386*).

THE ORUNODOI

129. In January, 1846, Mr Brown prepared the first number of the Orunodoi (Dawn of Day), a “Monthly magazine, devoted to religion, science and general intelligence”, which he edited in the Assamese language, during most of the remaining years at Sibsagar. It was copiously illustrated by native engravers, whose work was pronounced in Calcutta superior to anything that had been produced there by Bengali workmen. The reading natives liked this wide-awake magazine ; the Brahmans found it interesting, and obtained some new ideas in an attractive form, besides information on topics of general interest. Such headings appears as Turko-Russian Hostilities ; The War in China ; Revolution in Spain... Telegraph from Calcutta to Bombay ; Louis Phillippe ; Gen. Winfield Scott. Illustrated articles on Astronomy, Geography and natural history conveyed useful and needed instruction, while temperance, varacity, self-reliance, family government and other appropriate themes received attention. Through its columns christian hymns translation of Psalms... “Pilgrims Progress...” “A Brief history of the Apostles”, “Parable of the Sower” and “Account of our Saviour” found their way into heathen homes, where christian scriptures in their usual form, could not have been admitted (*Ibid., p. 419*).

* Besides *The Beautiful Garment, Account of Ramgoti, Account of Rebi, The Pious Villager, Account of Rajan and Early Piety.*

PROBLEM OF EDITORSHIP

130. *Letter Brown to Danforth, July 4, 1850* : The *Orunodoi* has been considered by the mission as one of the most powerful instrumentalities for gaining access to the mind of the Assamese, and nothing we have ever done has created such an interest among them...as did the *Orunodoi* for the first two or three years. No other instrument that we could use would exert half of the influence in enlightening the native mind and undermining their *shaster* as a paper of this kind...we found it to succeed beyond our expectation.

You are probably aware that the *Orunodoi* was established by a vote of the whole mission after full discussion and deliberation. I was chosen editor, but having there so large an amount of work in hand and being in rather poor health I offered my excuse and requested that some other Brother might be appointed. The Brothers then chosen, Cutter, but he also declined. I finally agreed to try it and commenced the editorship in 1846 in which I continued till about the commencement of the third year when for the sake of avoiding all collision in management of it, I thought it to be best to divide the paper and accordingly offered to Brother Cutter the miscellaneous department of News. In this way we went on until I found that this was such a want of original and interesting matter...together with so much irregularity in the time of getting it out that I felt it was useless for me to attempt keeping up my post while the largest portion of the paper and what should be the most important was neglected. I therefore proposed to take the editorship of the whole as at first, but this Brother Cutter declined. I had then no course left but to allow him the control of the whole and make it over into his hands...the paper received its first shock by delaying the January and February numbers till March. The delay of another three months has, I fear, give it the death blow. If the subscribers merely all fallen off for want of interest in the paper, it will be long before they can be induced to subscribe again. The officers who have composed the most profitable portion of the subscription (*sic*), as it will have so little confidence in our making another attempt, that we can expect no help from them.

Under these circumstances what shall be done ? Shall we start it again to struggle against all the difficulties we now forsee or shall we quietly allow our favourite *Orunodoi* perish ? Speak out your mind Brother—are we prepared to take any decided action on this subject at present or are we not ?

131. *Copy of Br. Danforth's reply ; Gowahati, July 21, 1850* : It strikes me you are appointed Editor of that paper by this mission...In reality you are still the editor and Bro Cutter Assistant Editor and both are responsible for the character of the paper and will be until you resign. It seems that Bro Cutter was added to the editorship at your request. If then your circumstances are now so changed that you could edit it alone...I see no other way therefore for you. At all events I shall hold you responsible for the paper until you resign to the same body that appointed you.

ITS IMPORTANCE

We require a medium through which the talents of our converts may be called out and find developments. They cannot write books, but they can write articles which will be the alternative and beneficial to the native public.

There is an increasing demand for such a paper—an interest in education is now being everywhere started, schools are established and hundreds of the young are beginning to read. But what is there for them to read ? They may be taught Bengali, but they will be instructed in reading it only...as our American would be reading Greek and Latin. They must have a literature of their own. Unlike many idolotrous natives assamese has at present no written book to read the public mind except it be a few translations from the Sanskrit in manuscript which the mass will never read. But a demand will not create them unless the missions come forward and supply that demand. Shall we do it or shall we do it to be done by the enemies of Christianity ?

We can reach a portion of the more influential part of the people in no other way. They have too great contempt for our scriptures and religious books to read them until we can dissipate their prejudices and engender a sense of enlightenment. They will receive and read the paper and by this medicine a curiosity will be existed to know...our religion.

The Roman Catholics are going to make this a strong post. They are looking out a site for schools, churches etc. Their ideas are larger. They will undoubtedly have a pass and every facility for pushing on their mission. Shall we (publish) no paper and thereby giving them of the most dangerous weapons with which to fight us ? or shall we not ? The press has been in most successful instrumentality ever brought to bear upon 'man of sin'.

We have now the ground and it has been maintained through the most trying days of our missions, and now just as we are to be reinforced shall we lay down our armour ? I say no ! breathern no ! we cannot give up *Orunodoi*.

THE FRIEND OF INDIA ON ORUNODOI

132. *Newspaper in Assamese ; BMM, September 1846 ; p. 290* : We have recently been favoured with the copy of a newspaper, published in the Assamese language, at the press of Sibsagar. Its object is to kindle and foster a spirit of inquiry among the lethargic people of Assam ; and to break up that unimpressibleness of character, which is so great an obstacle to their national improvement. We hope it will be useful to the full extent of the wishes formed by its public-spirited projectors. It is most gratifying to witness the issue of a newspaper, beautifully printed, and adorned with wood cuts calculated to arouse the curiosity of the people, from a press in so remote and uncivilized a portion of the British territories in the East. Whenever the missionary plants his tent, his first business is to set up that instrument to which the nations of Europe are so greatly indebted for whatever superiority they enjoy over the ancient world ; and hence even when we are not able, as in the case of the present mission, to notice a large accession of converts, we are still certain that the elements of improvement are quietly and vigorously at work.

133. *Whiting to Peck, Sibsagor, April 6, 1858* : Our paper is now in its thirteenth year, and is regarded by "Young Assam" at least as one of the institutions of the province. It would be the regret of every European, as well as of many natives, to see the *Orunodoi*, or, as its name imports, "The Day Spring", sink back into the darkness of the night. I need not add that

it would be a heavy blow, in addition to the many already received, to the feelings and enjoyment of the (at present) only missionary in the field. The circulation of the paper is about 400—that is, regular subscribers.

For the last and the present year, a brief sermon or exhortation, a chapter of church history, a chapter of the Life of Mohammed, a chapter of the History of Bengal, a chapter of the Life of Luther, a geographical article, a chapter of Isaiah, together with the news of the month, contributions on various topics, as the marriage of widows, duties of wives, duties of parents, from Christian and other contributors, make up each monthly number of sixteen quarto pages. Two or three small cuts are also inserted. In this way it will be seen at once a considerable amount of reading matter in an attractive form is being accumulated. The *Orunodoi* itself already makes twelve volumes*.

ASSAMESE-ENGLISH DICTIONARY

134. *Bronson to Warren, Sibsagor, April 19, 1865* : On the 23rd of last month, Mrs. Bronson and myself parted with our dear associates at Nowgong, and reached this place on the afternoon of the 4th inst. We were happy to find br. and sr. Ward in good health, and the mission interests of the station generally as prosperous as could be expected after the long-continued absence of fellow-laborers.

We have come up here to expedite the work of revising and carrying an Assamese and English dictionary through the press. Materials for such a work have long been gathering, and it is greatly needed by the missionaries and all others in the country. Up to this time, 1,623 rupees have been pledged, and considerable paid in to aid in the work. Government has assisted to some extent, and I hope the whole expense will be met here, and that

* The *Orunodoi* was in circulation, with occasional breaks, until 1880 ; and edited in succession after Brown by Danforth, Whiting, Bronson, Mrs. Ward, Clark and Gurney. The demand for it “with the advance in education” writes Mrs. Ward (1867), “among the natives seems on the whole on the increase. Whatever prejudice some may have against its religious character, still they have no substitute for it, for they have the utmost confidence in its statements being reliable”. (*Fifty-fifth Annual Report, Assam Mission, BMM July 1868, pp. 261-2* ; also Gillespie, G., “*Orunodoi*”, *Journal of the University of Gauhati*, 1975-6, pp. 125-39).

the work will be an essential aid in acquiring the language to missionaries who come after us, as well as to the multitude of Assamese youth, who are eagerly acquiring knowledge through the medium of the English language. Every help we can give them is hastening the day when caste and heathen superstitions will become despicable in their eyes.

Since entering upon this work, I have been astonished at the large number of words in the language. Had such an aid been within my reach years ago, I feel that I should have been able to present the blessed truths of the gospel far more forcibly to the people. I daily pray for strength to complete the task I have undertaken, and that it may be for the glory of God and the good of souls, without which I would never have wished to engage in it.

May 2 : It has pleased our Heavenly Father to give me and my companion better health this year, so that we have kept about mission duties and assisted our loved associates in their sufferings. We were loth to leave them and our own field even for a time, but it seemed duty to all, and so we came. —I am doing my utmost to expedite the work in hand. I have a good Assamese pundit, sent me by Capt. Sconce, from the court, for revision of my manuscript, with whom I sit from six to nine before breakfast. From eleven to five o'clock I am at the press bungalow, preparing manuscript with the assistance of other pundits. The work is difficult. No dictionary ever having been printed, and the words often being used with vague meanings, I have to lead the way. But if health and strength is given to get it through the press, I trust it will be labor and expense well bestowed.

135. *Letter from Mrs Bronson, Sibsagor, August 8, 1865* : We are pressing on day and night with the Dictionary work, but the progress is necessarily slow. The roots of this language lie deep in the Sanscrit and the old Ahom dialect, and must be dug out by patient labor from amid rubbish and confusion almost like that of Babel, being pronounced all sorts of ways, as well as being written differently.

This is the best place in Assam for our work ; the language is spoken here in greater purity than elsewhere, on account of its being the headquarters of the royal family of Assam, and of the old nobility.

The Assamese is a beautiful language, and far more copious than we had dreamed of. We feel as if we were only now learning its capabilities as a vehicle of thought. We seem to have renewed health and strength given us for this work, and we feel that we cannot be thankful enough for the blessing.

136. It is the first dictionary of the language ever published, and has necessarily been a difficult task. In the fourteen thousand words here collected will be found in many in daily use by the people, that no Bengali scholar will understand. Many of these words have been written as they dropped from the lips of the people : while I have thus endeavoured to give the spoken language I have also inserted the more common Sanskrit words that are used in the *puthis*, and therefore known to the people. These words are also in school books and scripture translation. English definitions have been simplified and varies as much as space will allow for the sake of those learning English. As this is the first work of this kind, left more or less imperfect. No word, however, has been allowed to pass without careful examination, and when doubts have existed, the oldest and the informed of the people have been consulted. (*Bronson, Miles ; A Dictionary : Assamese and English, vide Preface*)

HISTORY OF ASSAM

137. *Journal of Brown, January 21, 1842* : I have been engaged for a week or two in preparing for the press a native History of Assam, compiled by a learned pundit*, the expense

* By Kasinath Tamuli Phukan and published by the Mission Press, Sibsagar, in 1844. In fact in collection, preservation and publication of manuscripts (*Puthis*) and chronicles (*Buranjis*) the American Baptists were the pioneers in the field. As many as eight chapters (III, IV, V-X) of the old manuscript of the *Kamrupar Buranji* published by the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam at Gauhati (1930), had been collected by Brown during his stay at Sibsagar. *The Orunodoi* published *Chutia Buranji* (1850) and in twenty-two instalments (1850 to 1852) *Purani Asom Buranji* which was procured and got translated from an original Ahom manuscript by Brown. This forms a part of the *Deodhai Asom Buranji* (paras 1-136) published by the department mentioned above. For further details see Gillespie, G., "Missionaries and Manuscripts", *Indian Church History Review*, xiii, December, 1979.

of which will be borne by the magistrate, Capt. Brodie, who publishes it. It will be a very useful book for schools.

MUGHAL CANONS DISCOVERED

138. *Journal of Brown, February 25, 1840* : Did not leave Mákum till this morning, as Capt. Vetch has been engaged in getting out some brass cannon, that have lately been discovered here. They were secreted in a thick wood, about a mile from the river. These guns were brought in, it is supposed, during the Mohammedan invasion of India. This is the most eastern point which the Moslem army reached ; sickness breaking out, and the inhabitants of the hills pouring down upon them in all directions, they were obliged to retreat, leaving their artillery behind them. The guns are twenty in number, some of them highly ornamented, and so large as to be drawn with great difficulty by an elephant. Ten more are said to be secreted near Ningru. The Persian inscriptions upon them show them to be about 200 years old.

VIOLATION OF TOMBS

139. “A good deal of fear was manifested on account of its (*Orunodoi*) religious character ; but a much larger number of subscribers have come forward than we expected. I send you a translation of one of the articles contained in the first number, written by a native pundit, which you will perceive notices a most horrid custom of the Ahom kings, which we have often heard of, but have hitherto been scarcely able to credit. On the death of each king, a number of *human beings*, sometimes as many as ten or twenty, were *buried alive* in the same tomb, and there left in a state of horror and distress too revolting to be contemplated, until either hunger and thirst, or want of fresh air, put a period to their sufferings. I do not recollect to have ever heard of a more shocking custom in any part of the world.

“In the tombs were also buried all the gold and silver vessels, jewels, etc., which were worn by the king when alive, as he was supposed to require the same comforts in a future state that he had enjoyed in this. These tombs are very capacious, the more ancient ones being constructed of timber, the modern ones of brick. During the last year, the Assamese have been digging

open these graves, for the sake of the treasures. So many have suddenly become rich by this means, that for about six months the people have been in a state of high excitement, digging the graves at night, and now scarcely a single mound of any considerable size is to be found in any of the villages that has not been dug open.

“I have given you a translation of the article entire, and if you wish to publish any account of it, you can abridge it as you may think best. As it has now been published more than a month, and no objection has been made to any part of it, you may rely on its being correct.”

“From ancient times, whenever any of the Ahom kings died, it was the custom for his successor to bury in the tomb of the deceased king, the vessels in which he ate and drank, together with all the articles of furniture and clothing which were used by him. The servants and attendants of the king, and sometimes his elephant and horses, were also buried with him. The manner of burying was this. The room in which the body was deposited, was overhung with seven awnings, fringed on all sides with golden ornaments. The head and foot of the royal couch was overlaid with gold, also the four posts to which the curtains were attached. On the couch was spread a silver coverlet ; the pillow was adorned with gold and precious stones, and here they placed the king, dressed in his robes and ornaments. By his side was laid the royal sword, the sheath ornamented with diamonds set in gold. On the floor, near his head, were placed four or five baskets ; in one of which, made of silver, was placed a golden vessel containing his lime-box, ornamented with diamonds, and his gold tobacco-box, his gold handled knife, and a silver areca-nut. Another of these baskets held his golden drinking cup, in another were his jewels, in others, gold and silver vessels. Also boxes containing silver. At the foot was placed his *hookah*, with a pipe and silver extinguisher, the snake ornamented with gold and silver. A servant stood fanning him with a gold handled *chowrie**. In other parts of the tomb were placed various articles, servants, etc. Since the kings embraced the Hindu religion, the practice

* Tail of a Tibetan yak.

of burying men and animals alive, has been discontinued ; although it is stated that four skulls have been found in Rudro Singh's tomb, and ten or twelve in Promot Singh's.

“Formerly overseers were appointed to watch these tombs, who prevented their being dug open and plundered. Beside which, it was supposed that departed spirits, demons, Ahom *dainis**, and the kings themselves haunted the place, so that no one dared to molest the sepulchres. One only, that of the Gorgonya Bura Raja, had been dug open by the Muttocks, previously to the year 1766, A.D. 1844. In that year the tomb of Lokhmi Singh, at Soraideo, was first opened by stealth and plundered by the son of Horukuria Bora. The people seeing this, and finding that no departed spirits or demons haunted the tombs, lost all their previous fears, and combining in parties of thirty or forty, proceeded to dig open the others. Finally, the late Raja Purondor Singh, finding himself unable to preserve the remaining tombs from violation, has commenced opening them, with the intention, it is said, of conveying the bones of his ancestors to the Ganges.

List of the Tombs opened

“1. Lokhmi Singh's. This was a brick tomb, and was found to contain much treasure; those who dug it open were apprehended and imprisoned.

“2. The Deka Gorgonya Raja. This tomb was built in 1474 (A.D. 1552), and contained six rooms. Many gold and silver vessels are said to have been found in it ; also a great quantity of bones.

“3. Promot Singh's, built in 1673 (A.D. 1751).

“4. Sib Singh's, built in 1666 (A.D. 1744).

“5. His queen, Bor Roja. In this tomb were found a golden braid of hair, with a great variety of diamonds and jewels.

“6. Gourinath Singh's. A small tomb.

“7. Komoleswor Singh's.

“8. Rajeswor Singh's. This and Lokhmi Singh's are said to have been the richest of all.

* Sorcerers.

“9. Rudro Singh’s. A brick tomb, containing a large amount of treasure and several boxes of gold and silver.

“10. Khora Raja’s.

“11. One of the Dihingia Raja’s, name unknown. While digging this, the earth caved in and buried four men. Two were rescued by their companions, the other two died before they were got out. Afterwards, while the servants of the late Raja were digging, the earth caved in again and buried a Duonia. He was, however, extricated by the other workmen.

“12. Godadhor Raja’s. This being a very large tomb, those who had been digging it by stealth were unable to penetrate it. The late Raja has been employing a hundred men for about two months, and has just succeeded in getting it open. It is about one hundred feet high*.

“13. Protap Singh’s, in the tea garden. Opened by the Raja.

“Besides these, many sepulchres at Soraideo, where the princes, princesses and nobles were buried, have been opened and plundered. Also in Gorgaon, Sibsagar, Saring and Janji, they have been opening the sepulchres, and in some instances quarrels have arisen, in which several persons have been nearly killed. In opening the tomb of Orjun Bura Gohain, at Sibsagar, a man who entered was unable to find his way out, and perished in the tomb.

“Those who are not satisfied with their own property, but covet and plunder that of others, whether buried in graves or elsewhere, will reap no benefit from such gains, but will only incur guilt.”

* The tomb of king Godadhor at Saraideo, as nearly as we could calculate without instruments, was ninety feet high and so natural in its appearance that a stranger would scarcely have suspected it to be anything more than ordinary hill...These artificial mounds frequently rise to the height of one hundred feet and the small room in which the corpse is deposited is filled with the king’s regalia, his golden dishes and other utensils, and often two or three slaves who were buried alive with their master to attend upon his wants in another world. Thirteen of these royal tombs were dug upon during my (Brown) residence in Assam, and I was told in the flowery language of the country, that when king Godadhor’s tomb was opened “the backs of three elephants were broken with the weight of treasures it contained,” meaning simply that three elephants were well loaded upon. (*The Whole World Kin*, pp. 225-6)

“It was the custom in Egypt, in ancient times, to build brick tombs of this kind for their kings. Some of these tombs are upwards of three thousand years old, and are still in a good state of preservation.” (*Miscellany : Newspaper in Assamese, BMM, September 1846, pp. 290-2*)

STATEMENT OF PRINTING : AMERICAN BAPTIST
MISSION PRESS, SIBSAGOR, JANUARY 1, 1846 TO
SEPTEMBER 30, 1851

141. (*Thirty-eighth Annual Report of the Mission to Assam, BMM, July, 1852 : Excerpt*)

Year	Title of Work	Language
1846	Report of Assam Mission	English
1846	Sheet Alimanac	Assamese
1846	Ephesians	Assamese
1846	Second Catechism	Assamese
1846	Discovery of America	Assamese
1846	Ephesians, Phillippians Colossians and Thessalonians	Assamese
1846	Fables	Assamese
1846	Treatment of Cholera	English
1846	Worcester's Primer	English
1846	Scripture Lessons	English
1847	Hymns : Second Part	Assamese
1847	Henry and his Bearer	Assamese
1847	Revelation	Assamese
1847	Letter to Mohammedans	Assamese
1847	Two Sermons and Appendix ..	Assamese
1847	Pastoral Letters	Assamese
1847	Second Catechism	Assamese
1847	Tunes	Assamese
1847	Rep. Orph. Inst. and other Schools	English
1847	Luke	Assamese
1847	Circular : Orphan Institution	English
1847	Multiplication Table	Assamese
1848	History of Joseph	Assamese

Year	Title of Work	Language
1848	Mother and Daughter	Assamese
1848	Grammatical Notices	English and Assamese
1848	1 Corinthians to end of Galatians	Assamese
1848	1 Timothy to Jude	Assamese
1848	Religious Address (large type)	Assamese
1848	First Catechism (large type) . .	Assamese
1848	Circular (Gowahati Female School)	English
1848	Four Gospels and Acts	Assamese
1848	Luke	Assamese
1849	Acts	Assamese
1849	New Testament	Assamese
1849	Sermon on the Mount	Assamese
1849	Alphabet and Spelling	Assamese
1849	Comparative Vocabulary	English
1849	Phrases	Assamese and Dhekeri
1849	First Catechism	Assamese
1849	New Testament	Assamese
1850	Obituary Notice of Rev. C. Barker	Assamese
1850	Hymn Book	Assamese
1850	Lines for Music for Hymn Book	Assamese
1850	Primer	Assamese

JUVENILE TRACTS

1850	Beautiful Garment	Assamese
1850	African Prince	Assamese
1850	Old Saul	Assamese
1850	Warrior Chief	Assamese
1850	Memoir of Hube	Assamese
1850	Account of Ramgoti	Assamese
1850	Account of Rebi	Assamese
1850	The Pious Villager	Assamese
1851	Account of Rajon	Assamese
1851	Early Piety	Assamese

Year	Title of Work	Language
1851	The Orphan Girl	Assamese
1851	The Eagle's Nest	Assamese
1851	Table : Languages	Assamese
1851	Vocables	English and Assamese
1851	Second Catechism	Assamese
1851	Pundit and Preacher	Assamese
1851	Way of Salvation	Assamese
1851	Error Refuted	Assamese
1851	Geography of Asia	Assamese

Of Works which have been printed for the Government Schools and for individuals mentioned below were printed as extra for the use of the Mission :

Observation on the Garos	English
Mr. Elliot's Report on the Garos	English
Mr. Sisson's Report on the Garos	English
Instructions of Court of Directors	English
Relations with Angami Nagas	English
Garo Primer	Garo
Garo Reader	Garo
Easy Reading Lessons	Bengali
Bengali Primer	Bengali
Land Surveying	Bengali
Vocabulary and Phrases	Bengali and Khamti
Scripture Catechism	English
Vocabulary and Phrases	English, Miri and Abor

Of the books printed and published after 1851, mention may be made of an *Assamese Grammar* written by a native (1859). *Golden Balance* or Bronson's conversation on Hinduism and Christianity (1863), *Indian Penal Code* in Assamese (1863), Mrs. S. R. Ward's *Vocabulary* (1864), *Assamese-English Dictionary* (1867) and the *Old Testament* in Assamese (1903).

PART TWO

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

ASSAM AND THE ASSAMESE

Like so great a portion of India, the ancient history of our new Province of Assam is buried in marvellous legend and prolix tradition. But that the country, ages ago, had a powerful voice in the affairs of the Indian continent is beyond all doubt. In truth, after careful sifting of the myths that hide realities, we find the importance of Assam established even prior to the great war of the *Mahabharata*. Pragjoitishpore—the modern Gowhatty—is spoken of by Ptolemy as *Asonomaro*, the “destroyed throne” ; and Turnour, in his preface to the *Mahawanso*, mentions it as one of the chief cities in India at this period, noted as the seats of government of the different branches of the Mugudh family. It is more than probable that the Pragjoitishpore, or “city of former renown”, of the Hindoo annals, and the Kusawatee of the Pali and Thibetan records, refer to the same place. It received its name from the *Kusa* grass, so common in the neighborhood ; Oriental antiquarians believing the present Gowhatty to be simply a corruption of the olden appellation.

The fair green valley of Assam—the “Unrivalled”—is about five hundred miles long and sixty wide. From east to west flows the sacred Brahmapootra, whose rise and fall are stated at from twenty-five to thirty feet, whose bed is three miles broad, containing in the driest season five fathoms of water at a distance of six hundred miles from the sea. The blue hills of Bhootan bound the valley on the north, and over their crest the snowy peaks of the Himalaya are sometimes revealed in the rays of the rising sun. The eastern end is closed by ranges separating Assam from China, peopled by Abors, Kamtees, Singphoos, and other wild tribes, verging southwards into Burmah territory. The natives are small and unwarlike. They want little here below, their fertile soil and moist climate supplying their few needs in return for little toil. Their homes are of the poorest description,—

a square hut, containing two rooms, with reed walls and grass roof. The women have no head-dress ; but their hair, raven black and of great abundance, is worn in a large chignon fastened together with silver pins. Earrings, or rather solid discs of gold and silver, and heavy bracelets, are also "fashionable". The precious metals for these ornaments are obtained from the rich deposits in the hills bounding Burmah on the north ; the manufacture being monopolized by the chiefs, who are always the jewellers of their villages. In religion the Assamese affect Hindooism ; yet they are lax in the observance of its rites, and the few ceremonies they perform are often very different from those practised by the orthodox Hindoos of India. Although traces of caste exist, the distinctions are not so broad as in this country. Marriage has not that sanctity which renders the bond permanent. A man has only to distribute a handful of salt among his relatives, in their presence tear a betel leaf in two, and declare himself divorced, and then the parties are at liberty to form other connections, the man providing for the children. A widow can never re-marry ; but she may, without absolute disgrace, live with any one, and her children will be legitimate, inheriting equally with those born in wedlock. It will thus be seen that the morals of the people are extremely low ; and this fact, coupled with an inordinate use of opium, constitutes one of the greatest drawbacks to industry and progress. Mr. T. T. Cooper, who observed the country and its inhabitants, says it is pitiful to contrast the active industry of the former population, as seen in the gigantic ruins to be met with almost everywhere, with the listless apathy of their descendants, who spend the greater portion of their time under the influence of opium, caring for nothing else, after satisfying the cravings of hunger. The baneful drug is prepared in a rather novel manner. Dissolving it in water, the solution is absorbed in long strips of cloth, about two inches wide. These, when thoroughly saturated, are dried in the sun and consumed like a quid, or soaked in water which is drunk as a potion. Opium has been, and to a lesser extent still is, the curse of Assam ; and not till the evil is removed will its people lose the sloth and idleness which are now their peculiar characteristics.

Tavernier* held that the Assamese “were the people that formerly invented guns and powder, which spread itself from Assam to Pegu, and from Pegu to China, from whence the invention has been attributed to the Chinese. Certain it is that Mirgimola brought from thence several pieces of cannon, which were all iron guns, and store of excellent powder, both made in that country”. The same traveller tells us that the “kingdom is one of the best countries in all Asia ; for it produces all things necessary for human subsistence, without any need of foreign supply. There are in it mines of gold, silver, steel, iron, and great store of silk”. How different now ! Tavernier speaks of the greatest delicacy in food being the flesh of dogs, particularly black puppies. He describes the manufacture of salt ; stating that the people collected great heaps “of that green stuff that swims at the tops of standing waters, which the ducks and frogs eat. This they dry and burn, the ashes whereof become very good salt. The other way most in use is to take the leaves of Adam’s fig-tree” ; but “the ashes thereof make a salt so tart that it is impossible to eat it” without much preparation. He further tells us that “all the natives live at their ease, and every one has his house by himself, and in the middle of his ground a fountain, encompassed with trees ; and most commonly every one an elephant to carry their wives ; for they have four wives, and when they marry they say to one, ‘I take thee to serve me in such a thing’ ; to the other, ‘I appoint thee to do such a business’ ; so that every one of the wives knows what she has to do in the house.” The melodies and songs of the people consist principally of Sanscrit words ; and the airs are excellently adapted to while away the tediousness of long boating journeys, “the voices keeping tune and the oars keeping time”. These few lines are a specimen :—

Brahm first I hail, incarnate Sonatan,
 The all-avatar-causing Narayan,
 Sprung from thy navel, Brahma saw the day ;
 Thou countless figures dost assume for aye.

* The French traveller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, “Prince of Ramblers” came to India in 1640. His *Travels in India* (trans. V. Ball, London, 1899) forms an invaluable source material for socio-economic history of India in the later half of the seventeenth century.

And so on for thousands of verses, the chorus of “Bam-bol”, “Hurry-bol”, and “Ek-hey,” coming in frequently.

The neighborhood about Tezporé—the “Field of Blood”—is strewn with huge granite stones, the *disjecta membra* of ancient temples. These, with the ruins of old Gowhatty, silently record the magnificence of bygone days. The ruined gateways and outworks, which connected the hills encircling the city, serve still to mark the extent of the ancient citadel, forming an amphitheatre twenty miles in circumference. The place was encompassed by a moat a hundred feet wide, backed by parapets of earth thrown up at different heights in a continued line along the outer face of the hills. Behind the walls so built was an even platform of considerable breadth, designed for the accommodation of defenders. But the earthworks particularly deserving of attention are the high embankments that connected the hills together. These, still measuring from twenty-five to forty feet in height, have a breadth of a hundred and fifty feet at the base and of thirty at the summit. There were ten entrances to the city. The gateways, protected by curtains, appear to have been originally built of stone, but massive brickwork was substituted in after times. “At what period, or under whose Government, these surprising works were executed, it is impossible to determine; but their magnitude evinces a high degree of civilization, an immense population”, and a strong ruler. (*BMM, August 1874, pp. 293-5*)

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

2. There, in the very heart of Asia, lies a country which in many respects reminds us of the great West of the New World, with its undeveloped resources, with its limitless opportunities. If the Assamese had the spirit and the enterprise of the Americans, they would in two generations have the garden spot of the world. With their vast forests, with a soil exceedingly rich and well adapted to all kinds of agricultural purposes, with coal, iron, gold, silver, precious stones, with cheap means of transportation afforded by their rivers, untold wealth and power are within the grasp of the inhabitants of this country. The people are good natured and indolent, with no conception of their peculiar

opportunities, and no ambition to seize them even if they knew of them. Raising enough to satisfy their wants with little labor, they live and die, never entering into the heritage which lies about them.* (*Grant, R. D., "Report of the Committee on the Missions in Assam", BMM, 1891, p. 205*)

3. *Danforth to Bright*†, *June 20, 1851* : Yet on the whole the people seem quiet and well disposed towards each other. Parents have a particular fondness for their children, and seldom part with them except to liquidate a debt or to procure money to carry on a lawsuit. Their daughters are a source of profit. When they give them in marriage they realize from five to one hundred rupees a piece. Their lands are productive, and during seedtime and harvest the cultivators are very busy. At other times they have little or nothing to do. They often appear very hospitable, and though poor, generally wish to show their good will by some trifling present, as a plantain, an orange, or a few eggs. The gift is generally laid before the visitor, or handed to some person attending him. Sometimes the article given is so trifling as to excite a smile. At one place where I called, the man brought a fish about, as large as my little finger, and offered it to a native Christian who was with me. It was refused. He then offered a pice (about three-fourths of a cent), and begged I would take it. He was poor, he said, but I had honoured him by coming to his house, and he wished to give something as a token of his regard. He seemed greatly surprised when I told him of the fulness and freeness of the gospel, which was heightened by contrast with the extortion of the priests, into whose all-grasping hands he had so often thrown his mite.

AGRICULTURE : NATURAL RESOURCES

4. *Danforth to Peck, March 26, 1850* : The first of February I made a trip through a part of Camroop and Durrung districts in company with Rev. W. Robinson, Inspector of Government Schools in Assam. This is a delightful country, and far surpassed my expectation in its population, its rich and cultivated

* *Cf. Orunodol*, October 1846, p. 78.

† *Bright*, Rev. Edward, Corresponding Secretary, ABFMS.

fields, and in the readiness with which the people listen to the truth. It is like one immense plantation spotted by villages, and divided by rivers which in the dry season are small and generally muddy, but in the rains overflow their banks and inundate almost the whole country. In the richness and fertility of its soil it would be equalled only by our western prairies.

Rice is the principal article cultivated, with some sugarcane and a very few patches of poppies ; but these were very small, and I am happy to say that these people are not opium-eaters as in many parts of Assam. They are hardy, simple-hearted and honest. They know nothing about the Christian religion, and very little about any. But few of them can read, and those who can are very ignorant. Yet they are not priest-ridden as in the villages on the large rivers. They have quite a number of schools, some of them established by government and some by themselves. Many of these I visited, and gave them religious books. They received them with eagerness, and in many instances they will be used as text books. I regard these schools as so many channels through which we may let in the pure stream of salvation to water this moral heath.

5. *Journal of Brown, March 31, 1840* : Went up with Messrs. Bruce and Masters, superintendents of the tea cultivation, to examine several beds of coal which are found in the hills near Jaipur. Saw several very fine beds, which will prove of great service in navigating the steamers which the tea company are intending to put upon the Brahmaputra. A'sám, from present appearances, is likely to prove the richest country in India. Besides tea, iron and coal in immense quantities, the country abounds in the *sum*, mulberry and other trees, which feed three or four species of silkworm,—caoutchouc trees,—several of the most important wood oils,—earth oil springs, and what is perhaps most important of all, salt springs, which are already worked by the Nágas to considerable extent, and under European superintendence, would prove of great value.

DRESS AND JEWELLERIES

6. Mrs. Brown describes Assamese women's *mekala* or skirt, as made of two breadths of cotton or native raw silk, swed

together and hemmed top and bottom. "It is not gathered into a band, but bound straight around the waist, with a deep fold in front." When at work in the house or in rice fields, this is her only garment. In full dress she wears also the *ria*, a strip of cloth two or three yards long, bound closely about the chest and shoulders, and the *shador* a broad scarf about the same length as the *ria*, worn over the head, one end hanging down in front nearly to the feet, the other thrown gracefully over the left shoulder. She is fond of ornaments—wears a profusion of beads, rings, bracelets, anklets and ear ornaments. The high caste women wear jewellery of gold, silver, amber and precious stones, while the poor dumunies are satisfied with imitations in brass, gilt and glass. "They have a usually luxuriant growth of hair, which they dress with cocoanut oil, comb straight back from the forehead and twist into a large knot behind, often adding it with fragrant flowers." The National costume admit of no change of style ; it is the same from generation to generation.

The full dress of men consits also of three garments—the *suriya*, a stripe of cotton cloth, "three or four yards long, one end girdled closely around the body, the other in folds in front reaching nearly to the feet" ; "the *shador* or scarf, which by the men is thrown loosely over the shoulders, crossed in front, and the ends thrown back over each shoulder", and the *pagori* or turban, a stripe of two or three yards long twisted and bound around the head. Both men and women go barefoot, except that wooden sandals are sometimes used out of doors. "The men pluck their beards, and shave their heads, except a long tuft some six inches in diameter left about the crown, and this they twist into a small knot." (*The Whole World Kin*, p. 335-7)

7. It varies according to the rank or caste of the man. A coolie wears a "Dhuti" (long strip of cloth) which serves as pantaloons. A well-to-do man wears the "Dhuti" and a loose shirt or coat. A Babu (Native gentlemen) often wears a coat and pantaloons, like a sahib. Some Natives wear shoes, and carry umbrellas. Servants wear in addition a "pugri" (a sort of turban) made of white cloth twisted or rolled together. (*Moore, Mrs. P. H., Twenty Years in Assam or Leaves from my Journal, 1901, p. 67*)

CUSTOMS AND USAGES

8. Assamese etiquette requires the guest entering the house of a superior, to call out "Lord, O lord, we have come", then to make a *salam* by touching the fingers of the right hand and bowing the head half way to the ground. After visitors are seated on the floor, betel-nut is served to them as a mark of hospitality. On leaving, the *salam* is repeated, and when outside, the retiring visitor calls out "*Iswor, O Iswor ahirbad dia*". God, oh God, Give Thy blessing !

The morning greeting to a friend is "*Bhat kala na ? Have you eaten your rice ?* Women kiss by joining the ends of the fingers of the right hand, kissing them, and waving and throwing the kiss. No family names are known. Even given name is seldom used. She is addressed by her husband as *peio* or *honai* ...A wife considers it so irreverent to speak the name of her husband that it is almost impossible to persuade her to tell what it is. She speaks of him as *Teu*, the honorific pronoun for "he". Whatever his affection for her, she fills a servile place. In lower castes, she performs field and other outdoor labour, waits upon her husband when he eats and afterwards partakes what he has left. (*The Whole World Kin*, pp. 356-7)

HINDU WOMEN : WIDOWHOOD

9. *Miles Bronson—Sermons (undated)* : Hindu is never seen to treat his wife with familiarity or fondness...The supreme duty of a wife is to obey her husband...the husband is God to the wife... therefore he should be the chief object of worship ; after her husband's death, he is to be the object that she must worship. His will and authority are permanent to any law human or divine. If he ordered her to lie, steal or commit adultery she must obey. This blind and unlimited obedience inculcated in their sacred books circulated throughout the veins and sinews of society.

Again the daughters have no choice in the matter of choosing their husband. Marriages are contracted by the father. Two neighbours meet some day (;) one has a little son and the other a daughter four or five years of age. One of the fathers says "come let us contract a marriage between our children and so perpetuate our friendship. What must I pay for your daughter ?"

The same is agreed upon, the contract is written and signed and witnessed. A sort of betrothal is made. But they seldom see each other until age of 12 or 13 when according to Hindu custom the son may claim his wife. She is married and taken to her husband's *zenana* often much against the wishes. She knows little of him and he of her. The husband buys his wife as he does a beast of burden and regards her in the pretty much the same light. If the wife be of high birth she is little else than her husband's prisoner. . . . If she is a person of low caste she at once becomes the wife and drudge. She carries burdens, labours in fields, brings waters, gathers cowdung, kneads into cakes and dries it in the sun for fuel.

But how shall I give you any correct idea of the wretched state of Hindu widowhood. The sastras forbid their ever marrying a second time. On the death of a husband their ornaments are stripped off and their heads shaved. They become the drudge and servant of the family where they dwell. How cheerless is life to such ! (*Bronson Family Papers, Box No. 1, Reel 1*)

HINDU WEDDINGS

10. *February 28, 1901* : This is the time of the year for native weddings. I followed a Hindu wedding procession this morning. The bridegroom rode on an elephant. The bride was carried in a small covered palanquin. I saw her carried into the yard of her new home, but she kept head covered with her cloth. As they entered the yard the women sang about the bride and her mother-in-law.

Last evening the bridegroom went for his bride, the feasting had been going on for several days. I was told the "Bamoon" (a high caste man) read "Mantras" or Sanskrit Slokas (couplet and verses) to the happy couple, and also burned in the fire some "Gheu" (clarified butter made from buffaloe's milk), rice, flowers, etc., to purify them, and asked if there was any objection.

Among the low castes, the giving and receiving of presents, and a feast, is all there is of it, and constitutes marriage. The company sang their native songs and the boys used their musical

instruments, fifes, clashing cymbals, drums, etc. They are very noisy over a Hindu wedding. After a night of merry-making the bridegroom takes the bride, accompanied by a procession of friends, to his home. We always know when such a procession is passing our bungalow because of the noise.

I saw another procession, but it was the betrothal only, and the little bride-to-be was left with her mother for the present and was not in the procession. (*Moore, Mrs. P. H.; Further Leaves from Assam, Nowgong, 1907, p. 37*)

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL LIFE

11. Mrs. Brown endeavoured to correct the custom of child marriage retaining her own pupils not previously betrothed, to age of fourteen or fifteen—as great a general innovation as could be first brought about. The girls were trained in household labor, and taught how to make home pleasant.

Attempts were made to inculcate “principles of forbearance, kindness and self denial”. (She) considered the details of neatness, order and economy an important part of Christian education. The girls dressed becomingly in native style, nor did they find themselves led into any violent and painful change from their national customs and manners. They were still allowed to sit on floor at their books or work or meals. They still ate deftly with their fingers, made their accustomed *salams*, and otherwise comforted themselves in the same manner as other well-bred Assamese were taught to do...Mending and making their own clothing, learning cross-stich and embroidering...were other employments. (*The Whole World Kin, pp. 383-4*)

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

12. Assam is said religiously to have passed from primitive Hinduism, through Buddhism, Adi-Buddhism again to Saivism to Vaishnavism. As a class they (Assamese) are idolaters, though we shall probably see no idols in our walk, these are generally kept in temples, and places of worship...their excessive sanctity requires that most of the time they may be veiled from the vulgar gaze...we may see here and there shrines by the roadside, small low pyramids of masonry with a hollow in one side, from which

a dirty little lamp sends forth a feeble light. But the devotees here, are not native Assamese. They are, immigrants of the merchant-class worshippers of Ganesh.

They are priest-ridden, they call their priest God and are much more afraid to disregard their word than to disobey the law of God. To disobey the priest is to become outcaste which means more to the average Hindu than all the torments of hell.

Hindu castes are numerous, some high some low. To whichever he belongs his chief concern is to so observe its rules as to keep within its pale. Outward observance is all that is required for this. Hence it came to pass that Hinduism, whose central thought is supposed to be undistracted meditation of the deity, has degraded into a round of formalities which now bind the people like fetters of brass. Until Government introduced secular education the priestly class had a monopoly of learning. Since the days of Manu (700 BC) it has been regarded as a great offence for one of the low caste to so much as hear the words of their sacred scriptures. Thus the twine sisters, ignorance and superstition have held almost undisputed sway—mutually rivalling each other in completing the degradation of the mass of the people. (*Jubilee Papers, pp. 14-5*)

OPIUM AND CASTE

13. *Journal of Brown, May 23, 1836* : The greatest curse of this country, is opium. A large portion of the inhabitants are completely besotted by it. It carries off immense numbers to an untimely grave.* The disease which attacks opium-eaters is commonly dysentery, and is almost sure to be fatal, no medicine being of any avail.

14. *Report of the Foreign Secretary* : The most discouraging feature relative to the Christianization of the Assamese and their civilization...as it presents to me, is the prevalence among them of the use of opium. The poppy has been extensively cultivated in Assam for generations. Patches of it are to be seen almost everywhere in the

* On December 24, 1845, the Association of the Enlightened (*Giyanar Sabha*), Sibsagar, discussed and condemned universal use of opium and propagated its evils through the pages of *Orunodoi, January 1846, pp. 6-8*.

horticultural districts, and its use is more general than its culture. Assamese kings of former days endeavoured to extirpate it, or at least to discourage its production, by excessive taxation, but without, noticeable results. The East India Company with the like ostensible design, as claimed by some, are rendering the home culture unprofitable by the introduction of their own opium at lower cost, intending it is said, to suppress the traffic at some uncertain day, but ministering meanwhile to the gratification and growth of the appetite. I know of nothing in the history of Assam more withering in its influences and more disheartening. If we would retain hope for that province, the opium plague must be stayed. It enfeebles alike body and mind, and prepares the way for that fearful scourge, the cholera, whose victims in Assam the last year were numbered by tens of thousands. (*BMM 1855, p. 4*)

15. *Bronson to Peck, September 1, 1844* : The universal practice of using opium is another most discouraging circumstance. Its effects are so deadly, stupifying every power and faculty, and rendering its victims little less than dozing brutes. It destroys all ambition or desire to excel in any thing, and is the most prolific source of crime in this country. Multitudes of persons I daily see going almost naked, and without any single comfort of life, who, if they get a pice or two, will immediately expend it in the noxious drug.

But what shall I say of *caste* ; that legion of evils combined,—that stronghold of the devil,—which so boldly defies all our efforts,—all our powers of persuasion,—and all our acts of kindness and love. The poorest beggar will receive charity only as it is conformed to the doctrine of caste. The dying man refuses our medicine lest he lose his caste ;—and let go what will, nothing is so dear as caste. This very doctrine shuts the missionary but of the houses of the people, where he often would otherwise find them ready to listen to the story of Calvary.

16. *Whiting to Peck, April 6, 1858* : Caste and opium are the curses of Assam, I know of nothing which seems so to envelope this province in darkness as the abovementioned caste and opium. And of the two I think opium by far the most to be deplored. An opium-eater now is not an exception but one who does not eat it is the exception.

IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION

17. *Journal of Brown, October 3, 1838* : An eclipse of the moon this evening. Such an event is generally looked upon by the natives as ominous of some calamity. They have no idea of the manner in which it is produced. They suppose a demon, called *Rahu*, is eating the moon, and in order to frighten him away, they all fall to screaming and beating their tom-toms. The mode of calculating eclipses is not unknown to the brahmins of India, though this knowledge is confined to very few.

18. *Report of the American Baptist Mission to Assam, for 1845* : The Assamese, Brahmans as well as others, think it impossible to measure the distance of an inaccessible object. By a slight knowledge of the principles of geometry, the scholar learns that this can be accurately ascertained, and is prepared to credit the calculations made by astronomers, of the distances of the heavenly bodies.* He learns also that the earth is, by actual measurement, less than 8000 miles in diameter, instead of 4000000000, as stated in the shasters ; that there is, consequently, no room under the earth for the eight elephants, which are said to support it, each of whose heads is 8000 miles in thickness ; that the whole surface of the earth has been examined without finding the Rum Ocean, the Sugar Ocean, the Milk Ocean, the Butter Ocean, and the seven intervening continents, etc. ; that there is no central Mount Meru, 80000 miles in diameter, and no place for it to stand upon ; that the moon is not 1600000 miles distant ; that the eclipses of the sun and moon are caused by the intervention of the moon and earth, instead of a demon, who attempts to devour them ; that Ceylon is not a lump of solid gold,—one of the summits of Meru that fell into the sea, but is like any other island ; that its former king, Bibhikhon, died long ago, and that Ceylon is governed by the English ; whereas the shasters say that Bibhikhon should live to the end of the world, and that his country should never be

* Knowledge of western science and technology were brought home to the Assamese by the American Baptists in a series of articles in the *Orunodoi*. It was explained therein with diagrams the size, shape and area of the earth, the planets and stars, eclipses of the sun and the moon, microscope, barometer, thermometer, steam engine, steam boat, etc.

conquered. They learn that the Brahmaputra, Dihing and Irawadi, are not branches of one and the same stream ; that the Ganges rises in the Himalaya mountains, instead of flowing from heaven down the side of Meru, *beyond* the Himalayas ; that the milky way is discovered by the telescope to be composed of small stars, instead of being a branch of the Ganges ; that the rainbow is caused by the sun's rays falling on the drops of water, whereas the shasters say it is Indra's bow, and made of gold. They learn that the lightning and thunder are connected as the flash of a cannon and the report of it, while, according to the shasters, the thunder only proceeds from the clouds, while the lightning is caused by the darts of Indra, shot against the demons that attempt to drink the rain, which strike fire as they fall upon the rocky mountains that sustain the heavens. From the errors of the shasters on these, and many other similar points, the people will readily see that they are only the work of man. These remarks are sufficient to illustrate the important bearing of education and science upon the overthrow of the heathen superstitions around us. (*BMM, August 1846, p. 256*)

19. *Journal of Brown, October 22, 1838* : Many of the natives say the Sadiyá Kho'wá died of sorcery (*daini kha'le*), the way in which they generally account for any sudden and violent disease, which resists the power of medicine. Some of them attribute the death of my daughter to the same cause. They imagine there are two kinds of sorcerers, *daini* and *bhutia*, the former found only among the Khamti's, the latter among the Ahoms, or A'sámese. The former are cannibals, feeding on the flesh of living persons, and are regarded as far the most terrible. A person who is a *daini* (Khamti', *pishu*) is able to assume any form he pleases, though he sometimes attacks his victim in his own proper person. He cuts open the body and takes away such portions of the flesh as are suitable to be eaten, then fills up the vacancy with dirt, grass, or other materials, healing the wounds so as not to show the slightest scar, and leaving the person upon whom this operation has been performed, perfectly unconscious of the change that has taken place. The *daini* is invisible to the object of his attack, whom he renders insensible by the force of his enchantments ; but if a third person be looking on from a distance,

he discovers all that is going on, by which means the *daini* is often detected and brought to punishment. If the heart, or any of the vital parts, be removed, the person dies instantly ; if otherwise, he is taken with a lingering sickness, and remains in this state till the *daini* turns over the pot in which he had boiled the flesh ; the moment that is done, his victim expires.

The *daini* is not able to attack all persons indiscriminately ; it is only those whose allotted time of life has expired, or, in native phrase, "whose destiny has run out". The *daini* understands when this is the case, by a smoke which he discerns rising from the top of the person's head.

This kind of sorcery is supposed to be communicated by parents to their children, but not to persons of another family. If the mother be a *daini*, she teaches the art to only one of her children ; if the father, he teaches them all excepting perhaps one of their number. The *dainis* are all distinguished as being particularly beautiful. They are said to possess a kind of precious stone, which prevents their sleeping, and induces a disposition to be constantly roving during the hours of night.

The natives imagine that the *dainis* have increased to an alarming extent about Sadiyá, since the country came into the hands of the Company, as there are now no laws for the execution of those who are detected. In the Bor Khamti' country, the laws against them are very rigid. Any person accused of being a *daini*, is subjected to an ordeal similar to that which has been used elsewhere for the trial of witches. He is bound and thrown into the water, with a large quantity of weights attached to him ; all which, if he be a real *daini*, will not avail to sink him beneath the surface. In case a person's guilt is proved by witnesses, no ordeal is considered necessary, and he is executed immediately. It is said that great numbers have been put to death in the Khamti' country, under accusations of this nature.

The *bhutias* correspond more nearly to the witches of western nations, and like them have communication with familiar spirits, who perform for them whatever services they require. The familiar spirit, or demon, which they call *bhut*, is fed and supported by the sorcerer, whose body he makes his ordinary place of repose, entering in an invisible state, and remaining until summoned to

execute some errand of malevolence, which takes place whenever the sorcerer has a quarrel. The demon then enters the body of his victim, generally through the medium of some article of food, where he begins gnawing upon the vitals, causing immediate sickness, and ultimate death, unless dispossessed by a *muntra*, (charm), or propitiated by an offering. As soon as a native is seriously ill, he almost invariably imagines himself attacked by an evil spirit, and immediately sets about dispossessing him, by reading over his *muntras*, or by making a feast and offering a pig, duck, or fowl, with rice, milk, eggs, etc., which he exposes on the highway, in the direction in which the *bhut* is supposed to have come.* If the demon is appeased, the person recovers ; otherwise his sickness continues, and the ceremony is repeated.

These superstitious notions make the life of the natives one of continual fear and torment, and render them excessively timorous. So universal is the lack of courage, that I have never found an individual amongst them who was willing to sleep alone at night, or to go any distance after dark without company, lest haply he should meet with a *bhut*, or a *daini*.

EX-ROYAL FAMILY

20. *Journal of Brown, January 21, 1842* : This afternoon I had the privilege of bearing witness for Christ before the old raja and his attendants, and also his son—with each of whom I had an interview of about half an hour. The raja seemed at first to smile at the idea of the foreign padres coming to change his religion, and that of the country. He at length, however, appeared more interested, and made many minute inquiries respecting our doctrines, and regarding the two disciples who have embraced Christianity.

The son, whom I called upon first, is a very interesting young man of twenty-five or thirty. He was very inquisitive respecting our theories of geography and astronomy, and urged me very hard to come and set up a school at Jo'rhat. He is very anxious

* Cf. "Superstitious Fear of the Assamese in times of Cholera", *Orunodoi*, May 1847, pp. 36-7.

to learn English as well as the sciences. May the Lord give him light, and grace to forsake the religion of his fathers.

The raja and his son are the last remnant of the Ahom race of kings, who entered Assam about A.D. 1228. They are supposed to be lineal descendants of Indra, the king of heaven, and the raja is always addressed by the title of *Swarga Deo* (Lord of Heaven)

21. *Journal of Whiting, January 12, 1853* : Arrived at Jorhat about noon. This day being the commencement of a festival, crowds filled the street, all eager to see the new sahib, and particularly the *mem-sahib*. Hundreds of men, women and children ran after us, shouting at the top of their voices "A mem ! a mem ! quick ! she is going !"

Having obtained permission to occupy the Company's house at Jorhat, we find ourselves nearly as comfortable as in our own house. The daroga, or head of the police, called soon after our arrival to make the inquiries usual with all natives, and to gratify an unbounded curiosity. Had Assamese worship in the evening with the men.

January 13 : Remained as quiet as possible, though quiet is an unknown enjoyment in this land. Many natives have called to see us and we have distributed some books.

Word came that the son of the late king was coming to call on us. Soon after we heard the noise of many voices, and the people said the king's boy was coming. The door opened, and in the arms of a sepoy appeared a bright looking boy about six years old. He was seated opposite me in a chair. He wore a short pair of green silk trousers, a flannel waistcoat, a silk jacket and a yellow silk velvet hood. His elder brother, thirteen years of age, being the representative of the royal family, considered it beneath his dignity to call, but intimated through the servants that he would like to have me visit him. The one that came was evidently a spoilt boy. Our interview had one agreeable feature,—it was short.

January 14 : Daroga called again this morning, and had a little conversation respecting our religion, but his chief object was to show me the certificates of approbation he had received from government officers and to draw forth a little flattery. He seems

to be exceedingly vain and fond of praise. I expressed a desire to learn about the Hindoo religion. He appeared surprised when I told him I had a copy of a shaster called the *Kirton*, and that it was lying on the floor. He said it was his custom to keep that book very choicely, and always to bathe his body before reading it.

Mrs. Whiting called to-day on the widow of the late king's son. I was not invited, as her ladyship is not accustomed to see a man's face. Mrs. Whiting was received in royal state. The queen—as she is called by the natives—having arrayed herself in a magnificent dress embroidered with gold, was surrounded by a retinue of kneeling women, prepared to utter what she had previously dictated to them. Mrs. Whiting, on her entrance, was anointed on the eyebrows and lips with a very fragrant oil, and led by the hand to a chair. The princess surveyed every article of her dress and had a thousand and one questions to ask. She hoped the *mem-sahib* would always be her friend. She was the first white lady she had ever seen. She thought the *mem* must be very sad,—far, far away from her home and friends.

While Mrs. Whiting was gone to the—"queen's", I took a walk through the bazaar and was hooted at as a *padre sahib*. I was somewhat provoked, but soothed my feelings by thinking of the ignorance and foolishness of the people. The sound of words was a trifle, compared with what the Saviour endured. It seems to me I could bear these reproaches more easily if I had the language fluently. I think I never felt before the keenness of being reproached for the name of Christ by an ignorant people.

January 15 : At native worship this morning, made my first attempt to pray in Assamese. Called on the king's son. Waited at the entrance gate for the young man to dress and to prepare a place for my reception. When I entered he was seated in a chair over which was thrown a richly embroidered cloth. A sword rested between his knees, and a pipe was clenched firmly in his hand. He smoked continually, seldom spoke. The conversation was carried on by the attendants who crouched around him. The whole aspect of the scene reminded me of the mock shows got up by boys at home. I could not help feeling sad, as I contemplated the fallen condition of the family. They

are proud and arrogant, too haughty to take part in the government as subjects of the Company. One after another, sinking under the influence of sensuality and vice, departs to that world where the greatness of kings is of very little importance. The father of the present "king", as this boy is called, died a few months ago, it is said, from the effects of excessive drinking. At the burning of the body an incredible amount of money was distributed to the brahmins, who gathered together from all quarters.

A descendant from another branch of the royal family called this evening. We conversed very freely on the Christian religion. Some time had passed, when a servant came to inform him that the "queen" had a dance all ready, and called him. Soon after he took leave, one of the "queen's" sepoy's came running in, and saying, "The queen does not want the Sahib to come to-night, he may come some other time." It appears that the man who had just left me told the princess that "the sahib was all ready to come and see the dance", which seemed to have thrown them into considerable confusion. We sent back word that it was not our custom to see such exhibitions.

January 19, 1853 : Mrs. Whiting sent a bound volume of the New Testament to the princess. May the good seed take root, even in this noble though unpropitious soil, and thus in Assam Isaiah's words be verified, "Kings shall become thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Some of the brahmins said to the princess, "True, this is a good looking book, but it is all about the mem-sahib's religion. It would have been well if the mem had sent you a geography or a book of pictures." Her money supports so many brahmins, she is watched very jealously, and every obstacle will be put in her way should she wish to make any inquiries about our religion.

THE SATRAS : AUNIATI-KOMOLABARI

22. *Extract from the Journal of Brown, May 1, 1842* : Went out with br. Barker to converse with the people. Called on the Auniati gosain, the chief religious teacher in these parts, who has lately arrived with a large retinue at Sibsagor. His residence is on the Majuli, or great island in the Brahmaputra. His attendants endeavored to prevent our going to his

house, saying they would go first and inquire whether we could be admitted to see him. We, however, proceeded to the door, and then sent in a message requesting an interview with the gosain, but he excused himself on the plea that he was busy with his disciples, that he had no chairs to seat us in, etc. We then offered to stand, or sit on the ground, but as he made further excuses and seemed altogether averse to seeing us, we gave it up and came away without an interview. His reluctance to admitting us, probably, arose from a fear that we should engage in some discussion with him, which might have a tendency to unsettle the faith of those who were around him. He must have added large sums to his treasury since he has been here, as he collects a fee from all who acknowledge him as their spiritual guide. He is said to be avaricious. Whenever he moves, it is in great state, with drums and trumpets sounding, and a numerous retinue attending him. About two-thirds of the people in this region recognize his authority ; the rest are mostly under the Dokhinpat. The influence of the gosains over their followers is almost unbounded, and it is considered the height of impiety to disobey their commands. (*BMM, July 1843, pp. 1 ff.*)

23. *Journal of Barkar, November 21, 1842* : Called on the Gosain at Kommola-Bari, and was told by some of his disciples he was in the garden. I asked if I could see him, and was answered that I could if I took off my shoes. It was announced that he was coming, so I was allowed to put on my shoes and converse with him, and afterwards to go into the compound and see his tank, trees, fruit, etc. On returning to the house, I gave away a number of scriptures and tracts. None were rejected but the True Refuge, which directly aims at the overthrow of their religion. The Gosain manifested the most interest in the new school book. None of the books were received from my hand by him ; for, in such cases, a priest would be polluted. If I threw them on the ground, he could take them, or if they passed through the hands of one of his disciples. My guide told me he eats but once a day,—that food he cooks himself. He is not allowed to enter into the marriage state, nor can any of his disciples who reside with him. Of these there are two or three hundred. Not a female is allowed to come near the sacred spot.

The *hattra** was formed by a range of continuous houses on three sides of a square, the principal buildings occupying the centre. Tall Tamul (betel-nut) trees, thickly set, were in the rear of their houses, covered with what is quite indispensable to almost every Assamese, the pan leaf. The appearance of the place is good, compared with the country around. All the disciples were anxious to obtain books, which I was happy to see. Their eyes are not so blind that they cannot be opened ; and if they read the books, they will know at least that their little sphere is not all the world. Before sundown came into the vicinity of Auniata Gosain's place. Immediately left my boat and went to one of the inferior *hattra*, and commenced reading and talking to the first man I saw. Directly seventy-five or a hundred men, women, and children, came round, and I felt thankful for the honor of the visit and conversation. (*BMM, July 1843, pp. 158-9*)

November 22 : Went to meet the people, but had but few to hear me. The enemy had evidently been there and sown tares. They had, doubtless, been warned not to listen to what I had to say. We should have more hearers, and more interesting ones, if they were left to themselves. Among the Do'ms, however, I had a hearing, and then went to the principal *hattra*, where I saw a number of disciples of the great Gosain ; I tried to get admitted to their idols, but did not succeed. Could I have seen them, I should have seen the most celebrated of the senseless tribe. Saw the place where they were enshrined ; and one of the disciples, more benevolently inclined than the rest, wished the drapery of one to be removed that I might see him, but his counsel was not followed. Took occasion to introduce the subject of my errand, and made known to them the way to be saved by Christ. They listened to what I had to say,—some smiling, some with an air of curiosity, and others with apparent concern ; but they declined taking any books, affirming it would be sin to touch or read them. One of them, alluding to what had been said of going where Christ, and God, and saints are, remarked, "This is God's

* Similar to the monasteries of Europe, the *Satras* (not *Hattra*) were religious and charitable institutions presided over by a spiritual head, the *Satradhikar*, to whom were attached a number of disciples known as *bhokots*.

place, where we are." I answered by saying, God is in all places, beholding the evil and the good ; but heaven is the place of his throne. I might and should have said (had I spoken what was in my heart), that their place, instead of being that of God, was satan's seat.

Some oranges, sugarcanes, plantains and flowers, were sent me from the principal in attendance ; the Auniata being absent.

The Gosain, whom I visited the preceding day, sent a more liberal present of cocoa-nuts, rice, oil, pan leaf, etc., which pleased the boatmen very much ; for they had been complaining bitterly of the barrenness of the country where we had been. Had a good opportunity of conversing with some potters of the kolita caste. Where the people are unprejudiced, the interviews, I trust, were not altogether in vain ; if their countenances were a correct index of their feelings.

24. In February 1850, Mr. and Mrs. Brown and Nidhi Levi went by boat to Tezpur and then visited again to the satras of Majuli.

Stopping the boat nearly opposite the Auniati Gosain's village, the travellers crossed a mile or two of sand bank on foot, and were carried in boatmen's arms across two small streams, reaching then a road, densely shaded with large mango, jack and plantain trees. A mile more brought them to a spacious, rather dilapidated *namghor* or worship house surrounded by a covered brick platform. On ascending the steps and walking around the platform, they were joined by several Brahmans from within, who obligingly allowed them to look in at the doors and windows, but could not permit them to defile the sacred apartments by stepping over the threshold. One of the rooms was a theatre. On the stage were the usual adjuncts of an Assamese playhouse, consisting of grotesque gigantic masks, some of which represent deities, and hollow images of an elephant, horse, lion and other beasts, to be entered and manipulated by the actors. Among the musical instruments were huge drums and cymbals. Other apartments contained images, one idol peculiarly sacred, was a darkened room, into which it was a matter of considerable doubt whether the foreigners could be permitted to look at all. At length, however, a narrow crack was made in the door, through which the form

of the sacred object, veiled with a red cloth, was deemed visible by the light of a taper which was kept burning night and day. It stood upon a throne of carved wood, dubbed with gaudy paints and which rested upon a mound of earth ; and beside it was a brass vessel with a ladle, containing milky fluid. Within the shrine a taper was kept burning night and day. Mrs. Brown describes two large semi-human figures in another room seated on a pedestal as having outspread wings, and beaks, as of birds.

The news of the arrival of the foreign visitors having spread over the village, a crowd of many women and children surrounded the verandah, particularly anxious to see the "Beebee Sahib" or white lady, the first specimen of that curiosity ever brought to the island. One courteous old Brahman with a silver headed cane ordered chairs, but the establishment afforded only one, whose dust and cobwebs showed its infrequent use. Mr. Brown and Nidhi now commenced conversation on the Christian religion, but met with no encouragement. Even a copy of the gospel was refused. The interview was soon interrupted by an invitation to visit Auniati's representative—he himself being absent on a visit to Gauhati. On his verandah, a few rods distant, the sacred personage was seated upon one of the royal mats, dressed in pure white, and surrounded by numerous *kawolias* or monks. He received his visitors with a slight *salam*, and ordered sweetmeats and flowers for them. While the missionary entered into religious conversation with the high priest, Nidhi became engaged in an animated discussion with the attendant monks. On their way back to the boat, they saw many devotees lying on the damp ground, where they had sunk exhausted under heavy loads of rice and other offerings brought from their houses to the shrines. Under a shade was the Auniati's sacred boat, ninety feet long, kept guarded from profane touch. Rows of tired pilgrims lay sleeping along either side of this sacred object.

DOKHINPAT

Next day the missionary boat stopped at the ghaut leading to the monastery of the Dokhinpat Gosain, who was believed to be a divine being, and approached by his worshippers only with prostrations. Finding the august person busy with baggage and

accounts, having just landed from a trip to Sibsagar. Mr. and Mrs. Brown after a brief visit during which they were treated with great civility, proceeded to the monastic establishment. Here the old priests, prostrate on the ground chanting prayers, were too devout to take any notice of the white foreigners, but a swarm of young Brahmans gathered about them, and took them to a shrine containing some remarkable images, which Mrs. Brown, being allowed to examine from a respectable distance, thus describes :

The images were of the full size of men, and superior in quality to any we had ever seen in India. They were made finely wrought brazen metal, some overlaid with gold, some with silver, and arranged in rows, standing enshrined in separate recesses of woodframe work. Placed before them were various offerings of flowers and food. On enquiry I was told that the food offered to the gods to-day, is removed and eaten by the Brahmans and priests to-morrow, and the flowers adorn hair ; the perfumes of the offerings serving for the food of the gods. In one corner of the room, I saw a platform surrounded with curtains, which I was told was the place where they put their gods to sleep at night. (*The Whole World Kin*, pp. 365 ff)

MOAMORA AND OTHER SATRAS

25. *Journal of Brown, April 3, 1843* : Left Bhokota and proceeded towards the south, passing through several populous villages. At the Bura gohain's village I was treated very politely by the gohain, who took books and told all his people to take them. A little after noon, I reached the Moamora gosain's place. Found the gosain alone, his chief disciples being absent. It was some time before I succeeded in obtaining an interview, but at length he came and stood in the door of an inner room, so as to allow me a view of his sacred person. He conversed a few minutes, accepted the books I offered him, and ordered his attendant to give me some plantains and a bottle of milk. He is a venerable looking old gentleman, and must be, I should think, about eighty years of age. The young man who was in attendance was somewhat displeased that I did not address his master by the title of "God", as is their

custom. According to the native theory, the deity would seem to be infinitely subdivided,—first, Vishnu, Ram, Khrishno, and the ancient heroes partake most largely of the divinity,—after them the gosains and brahmins, each of whom carries the deity with him,—the sun, the moon, the planets, the earth and its rivers, are all gods, and in fine the whole creation, animate and inanimate, is pervaded with a portion of the divine essence,—in other words, oriental *transcendentalism* is the religion with which we have to contend. (*BMM, October 1844, pp. 292-3*)

April 4 : Left Hatimuria, where I spent the night, and crossed over to the south side of the Dikho. Came first to Panisukia, where the people refused to take books, saying there were none in their village who could read. Commenced conversation with two or three, others came to listen, and I soon had one of the most attentive congregations I have ever spoken to. On leaving them, a large number begged for books, and, on examination, I found they could read well. Came on to *Thukubulia hostro*, where I found a gosain, who manifested a spirit of opposition, refused to take any books, and told me half a dozen lies in as many minutes. According to the Assamese shásters there is no greater sin than lying, yet even their religious guides do not scruple to utter the most unblushing falsehoods, and exhibit not the least shame or uneasiness when their lies are exposed. I have remarked that the gosains, or spiritual rulers of the people, are all bitterly opposed to us, while the gohains and other civil rulers almost universally receive us cordially.

BRAHMASARI SATRA

26. *Journal of Bronson, Nowgong, February 10, 1843* : This is a renowned place of Hindu worship, and several hundred years ago was endowed by Gouri Hing,* an Assamese raja, with some 200 bhokots (attendants) and 220 poorahs of land. This land and the attendants were given by the raja for religious purposes. Some two or three priests are at the head of the establishment, who derive from it a considerable revenue, and great power and influence. In fact, some of

* Gaurinath Singha, Ahom King (1780-95).

these priests live like petty kings and princes, and abusing the favor shown them by government, in still granting them the lands rent free, they harass and oppress the ryots and disciples without mercy. It is a notorious fact, that in this district two-thirds of all the cases in the court have their origin, directly or indirectly, in the conduct of these intriguing, discontented priests.* Four years since, the head priest (*maha'jon*) died, leaving a little son, four years old, the sole heir of his whole estate. Desirous of getting hold of this property, another *maha'jon*† has created two parties among the people of the establishment, and excited the greatest disorder. (*BMM, August 1844, pp. 241-5*)

February, 11 : Visited a cluster of villages lying in another direction. Came first to Teliá Gaun, where I found only a few that could read. Gave away a few books, and went on to Puta Kháti No'i, where I found an old priest and hotro, and a number of bhokots, who listened for an hour to our story and received books with eagerness. From thence proceeded to Sai Duár, where we found a *maha'jon* and several brahmins, who attempted to ridicule at first, but on hearing the story of Christ's incarnation and our account of the unsatisfactory nature of the hope of salvation by the Hindu shásters, became very attentive, and asked for books. A great number gathered around us during our conversation, to whom we distributed about forty books. After a few moments' conversation, no one attempted to reply to us. Returned to my tent, and in the evening had a visit from the *behoya*‡ in charge of this part of the district, who, with his attendants, made many inquiries about the Christian religion.

February 12 : Called on several leading priests at their hotros, situated near us. These hotros remind one of the Jewish synagogues, being large buildings erected for the worship of the Hindu

* In his Journal of Upper Assam, Jenkins also reported that the *Gosains* of Auniati, Dokhinpat, Garamur and Dihing continued to be "most respected", but the minor *Gosains* had undermined their positions by undue exactions, indulging in worldly habits and particularly by their mutual rivalries and litigations. (*FPP, 1838, April No. 121, para 118*)

† A religious instructor.

‡ An official.

gods. Generally, they are daily visited by the disciples, who come to worship the priest in charge, called a *maha'jon* or *mohant*. The *maha'jon* receives daily contributions of all that the country produces, and thus he and his whole company of attendants are supported in idleness, by those who earn a scanty livelihood by the sweat of the brow. The lazy, proud and insolent bearing of these priests towards their disciples, and, indeed, towards all who differ from them, is often unendurable. It is by sheer cunning and intrigue that they manage to hold so great an influence in the country. Of late, in conversing with several of their disciples, I have seen they feel that the burdens imposed by the priests, are greater than they can long endure ; and it appears to me that the discord and strife now existing between the priests, prognosticate their speedy downfall.

One of these *maha'jons*, on ascertaining that I was arguing against Hinduism, abruptly arose and removed his seat some distance lest he should be defiled. Another, on being inquired for, sent word that he was engaged in devotion and in reading the shasters, and, therefore, could not appear. I, however, quietly took my seat, and began to talk to the bhokots around, and particularly with an intelligent young brahmin, on the hopelessness of obtaining salvation by Hinduism. As I expected, the pious *maha'jon*, unable silently to hear Hinduism exposed, left his profound devotions and defended his poor, crazy superstructure, with no ordinary zeal and ability. Another refused to take or even look into our books, telling his disciples if they did, it was sin. And in another village one poor man has been sadly beaten for reading them, beaten, too, by several priests. These circumstances show that we must expect opposition, as light increases.

BORDUAR THAN : NORUA'-HO'LO'GU'RI

February 15 : Set out in company with Capt. Gordon, for *Borduâr Thán*, which we reached about 10 o'clock. In the afternoon visited this place of superstition. There is a great attempt at show, and an increasing effort to obtain for it a celebrity, as a holy place, like that of Benares and other places ; which has been encouraged by people being sent from the courts to

swear, at this place. Even several magistrates have been known to lend their influence in supporting the popular superstition, by requiring their witnesses to swear at this temple, that they speak the truth.

There are five or six very large buildings, raised about three feet from the ground, and built in the best style of the natives of this country, ornamented by various figures and carvings of Hindu gods and goddesses. The story of the brahmin at the head of the establishment, is, that Krishnu was incarnated in the form of a man called *Sonko** ; that he gave directions that the place should be sacred to his worship,—and, leaving the impression of his foot on a stone, commanded that it should be preserved sacred and worshipped. To worship this sacred stone, therefore, multitudes come from all parts of the country, and, having brought their presents for the priests and bowed before the door of the house that is said to contain the stone, they leave again apparently well assured that they are in the road to eternal happiness. They also relate certain wonderful things done by Sonko, as, that the people were in want of water, and Sonko having petitioned for the same, Gunga descending rested on a tree, which immediately sank, and a tank appeared in its place. This tank is near the place, and is called Gunga—and is considered holy. Multitudes resort to it for the purpose of bathing, and believe it has the same saving effect as bathing in the Ganges. The present brahmins attached to the place assert, that this incarnation is predicted in the *Shri Modbha'gowot*, as it is written here.

They say that Norua, or, as it is more generally now called, Borduár Thán, was given by Lokhi Hing† Raja to Ram Deu, the father of Bhodro Deu Mahánt, who is now a very old man, living at Rámpur. He is said to be 112 years of age. The proof brought forward of this gift, is a copper plate, *or pholi*, dated 18th *Ma'gh*, 1693, A.S. which, by some, is considered a forgery.

* Shri Sankardeva.

† Correctly Raja Laksmi Singha (1769-80).

In 1721, A. S., owing to a disputed succession, Raja Komol Eswor Sing* divided Borduár into two *na'mghors*. One division is called Noruá, the other is called Ho'lo'gu'ri.

These idolatrous shrines are endowed as follows :—

The Norua division obtained, by a decree of the deputy special commissioner, dated 9th of July, 1841, four thousand seven hundred and nine poorahs of land. It has also one hundred and seventeen families of bhokots.

The *mahant* acknowledges that he has two thousand disciples, but, doubtless, he has twice that number.

The Ho'lo'gu'ri division, besides a large amount of land, has one hundred and one bhokots, granted by Raja Komol Eswor Sing.

The *mahant* acknowledges about eight hundred disciples only, but, doubtless, they equal in number those of the Noruá division.

The bhokots seem to think that they are bound to the establishment for life, with their wives and children ; and, in fact, they are just in the capacity of slaves and bondsmen. They appear to be of all castes, and follow the occupations suited to their caste, whenever their brahminical lords require their services. Much of the time they are idle ; and this is one of the evils of endowing these places, that it encourages a great body of people in idleness. This is strikingly exhibited at Bor Duár, for almost the whole of the thousands of poorahs of land, with which it is endowed, is a waste jungle. And although there are scores of children, and many brahmins qualified to teach, there is no school in the vicinity.

Among the bhokots I observed a number called by the people *Kewolias*, or *Uda'him* ; these never marry, but forego all the enjoyments of conjugal life, for religious purposes. They never enter into business, nor receive money, except as they beg it for their necessary living from day to day. They only repeat the shásters, and sing in the *na'mghors*, etc. They are looked upon by the people as very holy. Many with whom I conversed, appeared to be living so to perform penance ; and reminded me

* Kamaleswar Singha (1795-1811).

of the monastic life. Some of these have been pilgrims to Juggernaut, to the Ganges, and other holy places, and have returned here to die.

Originally there appears to have been but one sacred stone, and one house for its worship ; but now there are no less than three several houses said to contain sacred stones. Whether they broke the original stone into three pieces, and distributed it among these places of worship, or where they got *three* stones with impressions of Sonko's foot, I could not get them to explain. There is nothing, however, too marvellous for these brahmins to palm off upon the people for truth. Neither is it any objection in their minds, that the place is not mentioned in any of the chief sacred writings of the Hindus, nor that it is unacknowledged as holy by any well-informed expounder of the shásters.

During some thirty or forty years past, a most angry quarrel has existed between the leading brahmins of the place, about the division of the establishment. The Ho'lo'gu'ri party claim sole right to a certain do'ul, or shrine, nearby, which is considered particularly holy, and, of course, being visited by great numbers of people, is the source of great profit. The ground of their claim is, that the shrine is located on the land that falls to their division. On the other hand, the Noruá party claims sole right to the sacred tank, or gunga, because it falls in their division of land. This occasions great discord among the bhokots and disciples of both sides, for they wish to enjoy the saving advantages of worshipping at both shrine and gunga, which is objected to by the brahmins. On this and other accounts, therefore, these restless and ambitious priests, not content with enjoying the liberal grants of land made by government, nor with the great income received by yearly levies on their disciples in all quarters, they have, for a great number of years, been wrangling about the division of the grants. On certain festival occasions, immense crowds resort to this place, and the priests array themselves with their bhokots to oppose each other. The consequences are serious, and it has been found necessary that a police from this station should be stationed on those days, as a precautionary measure, and the brahmins severely threatened in case any riot should occur. Notwithstanding all this, the poor benighted Assamese bow

down to these brahmins, and worship them in the most reverential manner.

February 16 : Visited Rampur, a branch of the Noruá division, about seven miles distant. The style of the buildings, tanks, etc., is the same as before described. Here the old man, Bhodro Deu, resides, of whom I spoke in my entry of a former date. On hearing of my arrival, he desired to see me. He has evidently attained a great age (said to be 112 years). His sons endeavor to make out that he is a standing miracle in support of their cause ; saying that he has eaten nothing for the last twenty years, and drinks only the water of gunga and a little buffalo's milk daily. On seeing me, he immediately commenced saying, that "Krishnu was here incarnated, and had commanded him to establish his worship, and that I must favor his sons in carrying out these commands." I then entered into a long conversation with the people about the impossibility of obtaining salvation by Hinduism. They argued very zealously for a time, but soon referred us to the older brahmins at Noruá, who would be able to answer all my objections against Hinduism. I then offered our books, but the priests declined taking them, and so did all the bhokots. On leaving the village, however, a great many followed and asked for books, to whom we gave liberally. These, no doubt, will get into the hands of the brahmins, who refused to accept from our hands.

KEWOLIA BHOKOTS

27. *Extracts from the Journal of Bronson, February 18, 1843* : Arose early and visited the *doulo*, the small shrine spoken of on the 15th. It is on a small eminence, beautified with trees and walks, on the summit of which stand two small *na'mghors*, belonging to the two parties above described. There are also two large *ha'tis*, or houses where the bhokots reside. In the houses we saw large images of Krishnu. We presently found several persons, attendants on the idols, when the following conversation took place.

Who are you ?

"We are Noruá bhokots, who attend on the *doulo*. We are of the superior order of bhokots called *Kewolia*."

What does *Kewolia* mean ?

“It means that we only attend on the service of the temple, read the shásters, take no animal life, and abstain from sexual intercourse and from labor. We are Bairágis,* we have bathed in the Ganges, visited Juggernaut, and returned to this place.”

And do you think that these works will procure salvation ? If it is necessary that you do not marry, to obtain salvation, then it is necessary for me, and for all. If it is right for you not to marry, it would be right for me, and for all. If God designed that we should pursue this course, why did he make man male and female, and why did he establish matrimony ? Dear old men, you greatly err ; for as there is no sin in lawful marriage, so there is no merit in abstaining from it.

“True, true ; but will not bathing in the Ganges and visiting Juggernaut, be meritorious ?”

No, the waters of the Ganges cannot reach the stains of sin in your heart, it can only give you a clean body. And when you visited Juggernaut, why did you not throw yourselves under the wheels of the moving car, and secure immediate bliss, instead of coming back all this journey to endure such abstinences, and finally obtain only what you would then have so readily gained ?

“O, how could we kill ourselves !”

But why do you believe that Krishna was here incarnated, since it is not mentioned in any of the chief shásters ? If Krishna really predicted that he would be incarnated in the Ko’li Ju’g,† in the form of a man called *Sonko*, why do not the many learned brahmins at Benáres and Calcutta know it ? The Komaikhyo, at Gowahatti, is acknowledged by the pundits as a holy place, but Bor Duár Thán never. That stone which you worship, under the idea of its having the impression of Sonko’s foot, is not different from any other stone. There is no evidence whatever that it is not all a deception, the work of cunning brahmins. I have talked with your gu’ru’s, and they can give no evidence, and until you can show me to the contrary, I shall continue to think that it is only a device got up by the brahmins to enrich themselves.

* Ascetics.

† *Koli Jog* is equivalent to the iron age which the Hindoos believe the present to be.

The *bhokots* appeared to feel the force of what I said, and inquired how they could become acquainted with the religion of Christ, about which I had spoken as furnishing the only way of salvation. I gave them several tracts and portions of scripture, and begged them to call at my bungalow, at Nowgong, for further instruction, which they promised to do. Had an interesting season at evening worship. Peter came in from Nowgong to spend the Sabbath with us. (*BMM, September 1844, pp. 265-6*)

February 19 : In the afternoon we entered into the Ho'lo'gu'ri division and argued with the brahmins and bhokots there. They defended their shâsters and creed with great zeal, and often their reasoning was worthy of a better cause. The incessant muttering of their *sloks* threatened to preclude us, for a time, from bringing the discussion down to the comprehension of the numerous bystanders. At length, being required to explain them all, they left their *sloks* and entered quite candidly into the discussion.

These priests remind me of the Savior's description of the Pharisees, who were careful to wash the outside of the cup and platter, but within were full of all uncleanness. Some of them are so precise that they wash all the wood they use in cooking their rice, and all the money they receive, that they may not be polluted. On this same account they will not touch our books, nor sit with our shadow falling upon them. I was quite amused by an instance that passed before me to-day. The chief brahmin, with whom we were arguing, called for a piece of paper to write a *slok* for us. The paper, in its progress, had touched a neat little boy in our company, as it was being handed to the brahmin. "*probhu, probhu,*" cried out one of the bhokots, "you must go and bathe, you are unclean, for the paper has touched that boy". This same priest held a string of beads in his hands, which he kept counting from morning till night, repeating the names of the gods as he counted. Seeing him very intent on this ceremony, I said to him, Supposing one of your bhokots, wishing to ask a favor of you, should preface his petition by O guru, O good guru, O great guru, O excellent guru, O guru, guru, etc., repeating your name uselessly thousands of times ; would you not think him a fool, and altogether undeserving of your notice ? And were he to address you but once, in a proper manner, would you

not be much more likely to listen to his petition ? Just so it is with God. When we take his holy name, we must do it most reverently, and never in the vain and inconsiderate manner you are doing it ; for in conversation, in business, and while your mind is on every thing else, you pretend to be taking the name of God. To this, numbers of the people simultaneously assented, saying God must be worshipped with reverence and according to reason.

HOBAB

28. *Journal of Brown, January 25, 1842* : Yesterday arrived at the Janji. Spent to-day in visiting the native villages with Montan, while br. Cutter went up to Gabharu Porbot, a new station occupied by the Tea Company. Found many people on both sides of the river, who listened with attention. Met at one place a large collection of people who were engaged in a religious festival. They were mixing up bread, or rather dough, which was distributed unbaked, with plantains, etc., among the people. An old brahmin sat in the midst who had been reading the shásters. Such a congregation is called a *hobah*, consisting of all the people of a village who eat and worship together, i.e., of those who are in fellowship as members of a caste. Told them of the great *hobah*, when God shall gather all nations for judgment. (*BMM, December 1842, pp. 326-7*)

DOLJATRA

29. *Letter from Comfort, Gowahati, March 17, 1869* : On the 27th of February I made a short trip to Pulorbari (Palasbari), a large village, fourteen miles below us on the river. A market is held there on Saturday and Tuesday of each week. Such gatherings are good opportunities for meeting the people, and I told Kandura to make arrangements for our going. He procured a "dugout", about forty or more feet long, in which he put a few things for our trip, as also tracts. We started at about eight o'clock. When within a few miles of the place, we could hear the voices of villagers from the opposite side of the river, who were going in the boats to the market.

The boats were loaded with articles for barter, were manned by from eight to fifteen men, rowing in perfect time, the strokes

of the oars corresponding with the accents in expressions repeated from the Hindu Shastras, or containing an allusion to their god.

We found many hundreds of people at the market, and everything for sale which the surrounding country produces. It happened also to be the time when one of the great Hindu festivals, the *Domjatra* (*Doljatra*), was being held. We passed one *namghor* on our way from the boat. We saw another in the business part of the village, and this was the centre of attraction for a large crowd of people. The *namghor* is a large building, roofed, but not enclosed, in which the native musicians employed for the occasion, beat upon their rude drums and clang their cymbals, making to foreign ears anything but agreeable music. Here also the dancers go through their fantastic movements. Rugs are spread upon the ground, on which the chiefs of the occasion may sit. I do not know all the ceremonies performed here during the festival, which lasts five or six days. On the present occasion the owner, who is an officer under the government, and is engaged in superintending the construction of some part of the highway between here and Gowalpara, had secured the services of a mountebank, who was a great attraction to the people, by his various gymnastic performances. The idol was in a little house at one end of the *namghor*, elevated upon the "doul". This latter is of earth, square, though not of uniform size. It looks like sections of square pyramids of graduated sizes, placed one upon another, until a height of about five feet is attained. On the top of this "doul" is the house of the idol, profusely and gaudily decorated. Here also the various articles brought as offerings to the idols are placed. During this festival, a red powder, called here "fakua", is thrown by the people upon each other, and you will sometimes see those whose clothes look as though saturated with blood. The festival closes by the owner of the idol forming a procession and marching about, visiting the other "douls". The idols are carried at this time, protected from the heat of the sun by an umbrella, and refreshed by the breeze from a fan vigorously applied by an attendant. These things seem very ridiculous to us, but not so to these deluded people. (*BMM*, September 1869, pp. 353-4)

BRAHMINS AND PRIESTS

30. *Journal of Brown, October 30, 1841* : Visitors occasionally call, mostly of the higher ranks. They usually come to dispute, and often manifest a surprising bitterness towards the gospel. If books are offered, they reject them with scorn, declaring that they should be polluted by the touch. In such cases argument is of little avail, and I generally content myself with a plain statement of the truth, and leave them to receive or reject it on their own responsibility. Some of the Brahmins, however, are very respectful, and appear reasonable in discussion. (*BMM, September 1842, p. 242*)

31. *Letter from Bronson, September 1, 1844* : The district of Nowgong is, I am fully satisfied, more under the dominion of the Hindu priesthood than any other section of Assam. I find, of late, that they are exceedingly numerous, and bitterly opposed to all our efforts. The government also have done much to uphold them in power, by decreeing to them immense tracts of rent-free lands,—on the ground, I believe, that the Assam rajahs formerly made these grants for religious purposes. This one act of government has turned out to be the main prop of Hinduism. The people infer that the government favor the priests above all others in the country, because they are worthy. The priests themselves well know how to turn this matter to the extension of their own avaricious aims and self-aggrandizement. From these people arise our greatest obstacles. They have here and there gone so far as to gather the books I had distributed among their disciples, and destroy them. Sometimes they have threatened to impose a fine upon all who should go to hear our addresses ; and every means is employed to prejudice the minds of the people against us. Again, we have to contend with a very ignorant and unreflecting race of people. It is not here, as in many places where your missionaries are laboring, that the people generally are a reading people. They are entirely the reverse ; and one sentiment the brahmins are always teaching, is, that the common classes should not aspire to become educated, but content themselves with a toilsome life, and look of *them* for all necessary knowledge in matters of science and religion. Hence, when we approach the common people

and urge them to attend to religion, they often reply, "On this matter what do we know. Go talk to our priests. They understand these matters, and teach us that when we have paid our yearly tax to them, and worshipped the idols, they will attend to all other things necessary for our salvation." (*BMM, June 1845, pp. 121-2*)

32. *Letter of Bronson, April 10, 1843* : It seems to be a time of trial with us. We preach, and go from place to place, endeavoring to persuade the people to leave their idols and turn to Christ. The people are ready to hear,—they even applaud,—but none are ready to sever the last link that connects them with their long-cherished superstitions. Many of them, who have heard much of the Christian religion, appear to me like the careless, gospel-hardened sinners, I have often seen in congregations at home ; ever ready to acknowledge the whole system of revealed truth, but destitute of any feeling on the subject. O that the power of God might be displayed in this dark valley.

We have distributed a larger number of books of late than ever before in the same length of time, and have received many visits from people who manifested an interesting state of mind on the subject of religion. In some instances the brahmins have stoutly opposed, and threatened to fine all of their disciples who should receive our books or listen to our addresses,—and in one village, a poor Hindoo was most unmercifully beaten for receiving and reading our scriptures. Our school also has been opposed, but our numbers have not materially diminished ; and the result of our examinations has been to gather a considerable number of new scholars into the school. The people and scholars understand the difference between schools having well qualified teachers, and those where only a little instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, is all that is given.

33. *November 12* : It is now nearly seven years since I left beloved friends and native country, and came as a missionary of the Board to this province. During this period I have been laboring with my fellow missionaries, devoting myself to public and private preaching,—the distribution of tracts and portions of scripture,—the preparation of books, and the establishment of schools on Christian principles. In this way, through the efforts

of us all, I trust that considerable light has been shed, and that many understand the first principles of the Christian religion. But we now seem to be at a stand, met by strong opposing influences. The priests have bound their disciples so strongly in the fetters of caste, that in very many cases where the perusal of our scriptures have opened the eyes of some to see the truth of our holy religion, they have been deterred from embracing it ; knowing that these priests would subject them to the loss of all intercourse with their dearest friends, and render them, in the fullest sense of the word, "*outcasts*". This is one of our strongest obstacles to success in Assam.

Thus I have briefly glanced at some of the obstacles we meet in Assam. I sometimes fear that the Board, and our supporters, will begin to be discouraged that no more has been accomplished during the eight years we have been laboring. For myself, I feel that it calls for humiliation and prayer on my own part ; but I hope that the Board will remember our difficulties, and give us a little additional help to bear us on against them. We have need of much faith and patience in our work. If ever Christianity is introduced into this country, it must be through the rising generation being enlightened. It is as hard for the grown up Assamese to alter his customs, as it is for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots.

Another obstacle is the strong attachment of the people to the customs and opinions of their ancestors. The present race of Assamese seem to have set their faces like flint against all innovation, while their ignorance and indolent habits unite to oppose our efforts for their good. The establishment of common schools has not had all the beneficial effects desirable, owing to our inability to get the children wholly under our influence, or to keep them in attendance at the school sufficiently long to store their minds with truth. The parents are always anxious to procure situations for them as soon as they can possibly earn a little, or else, fearful of the consequences of our instructions, are ever cautioning them, or removing them altogether. Thus the same scholar can seldom be kept under our influence more than two or three years ; he is then sent out again into the heathen world before he has acquired sufficient light and firmness to

maintain his ground on the side of truth. Thus our efforts again and again prove abortive.

Under these circumstances, and with a view to meet the above named obstacles, and as a most natural way, under the blessing of God, of introducing Christianity, my mind has been led to the establishment of the proposed orphan institution, where I may collect all the friendless and destitute, but promising orphan children I can obtain from every part of Assam, into one large boarding-school, where they may constantly be kept under the influence of Christianity for ten or twelve years. In general, I propose to confine myself to children between the ages of three and eight years. When they enter, caste is broken ; for they live and eat in common. Morning and evening they attend Christian worship, and a systematic course of catechising ; which, with the religious turn given to their studies, cannot fail, under the blessing of God, to preserve their minds from the errors of their countrymen. I propose receiving boys and girls, and thereby introduce the education of the female sex, which is wholly neglected in this country.

INFLUENCE OF PRIESTHOOD : GRADUAL DECLINE

34. *Danforth to Bright, Gowahati, June 20, 1851* : It is difficult to ascertain precisely to what extent the people are under the influence of the priests. To judge by their way of talking, they seem to have no confidence in them. They say the priests are blind, and hence cannot enlighten others ; they are on the road to hell, and of course cannot give salvation to others. Still, every man has his *gooroo*, or spiritual teacher, to whom he entrusts the care of his soul. If you ask them why they do this, they tell you they have their land to till, their crops to gather, their families to support, and they have no time to attend to the duties of religion. Thus, like a great many in America, they serve God by proxy, without any special concern whether they are the gainers or not.

Their *gooroo* seldom lives in the same village with them, but often two or three days' travel distant ; and all the interest he takes in the people is satisfied by coming or sending, once or twice a year, to collect their offerings. These

gooroos are generally very rich and have great influence. When one comes into a village the people appear very different from what they do at other times. You see them prostrating themselves before him in the most servile manner, that shows a superstitious fear. At such times new disciples are made, and the young introduced into the brotherhood with as much ceremony as a Roman Catholic priest would use at the font. The common priests have much less influence, and are generally about as ignorant as the common people.

The Hindoos are divided into two great classes, the *Sivas* and the *Vaishnuvas*. The former worship Siva as the supreme deity, have temples and make sacrifices. The latter hold Vishnu as supreme, and have niether temple nor sacrifice. They are divided into classes or communities differeing from each other in some minor particulars. These divisions are called *hostras*. Each *hostra* has its priest or head man, who reads the shasters or sacred books, and superintends the *pujas*. The *bhokots*, or monks, do the servile work of religious ceremonies, till the land, etc. Sometimes they are allowed to marry. There are between three and four hundred of these *hostras* in this district. Some of them seem to be flourishing and influential, but by far the greatest number bear all the marks of speedy dissolution. Those that have lands ceded to them may continue a long time, but many of those which have no endowment are without a single *bhokot*, and their buildings are in the last stages of decay. They say that their palmy days are gone ; on one cares for them, no one will contribute to repair their dilapidated houses. Were it not for the public lands ceded to the preisthood, of which there are 16000 acres in this district, of which one half the revenue goes to the support of religion, I do not see how even the form of Hindooism could be maintained for any great length of time. As it is, to superstitious reverence for their religion is added a strong worldly policy.

35. *Journal of Bronson, Kullung River, June 28, 1852 ;* Visited three *hotros* (heathen places of worship), and had discussions and preaching all day. At one of these establishments we found a new and beautiful temple, to which are attached a considerable number of monks, who are pledged to celibacy, and

bhokots or disciples, who marry and engage in secular affairs. These subsist on the offerings of the people and the yearly payments of their disciples. They tax every man to the value of fifty cents a year and manage to get much more out of them.* Collectors go annually, to distant villages often, where disciples live, and if any one refuses to pay he is at once denounced and made to suffer as an outcast. Several said to me a year to two since, "It is robbery and oppression, but what relief have we?" You will see, therefore, why it is that I feel rejoiced to find that full two thirds of the priesthood are in trouble. They were formerly upheld and honored by the Assamese kings, but now they are placed on a footing with other subjects. Their incomes and their influence are decreasing, their places of worship tumbling down, their slaves all liberated, dissensions are springing up among them. If they oppress, they are liable to be brought up and punished in the magistrate's court, and they know not what to do. I verily believe that God will ere long remove this great impediment to the spread of the gospel out of the way, and therefore do I rejoice. May God help us to do something to hasten their downfall!

RISE OF NEW SECTS : *RATIKHOWAS*

36. *Journal of Danforth, November 24, 1852* : We went next into Durrang, stopping at Basgora, a village on the Bor Nodi. The people here are the least bigoted of any I have seen in Assam. They would sit and listen to the truth for hours, with a patience seldom to be met with in these parts. We went from village to village during the day, and preached at our tent evenings. Several times, at ten o'clock, we had to ask the people to go home,

* In a similar strain John Butler, PA. Nowgong, writes : "Although the priests are interdicted from collecting more than the Government rate of the *Khiraj* land, there is little doubt but that twice that amount is collected. . . but this is not all. They demand from the Ryutts on a variety of pleas *Bagee khurcha* or *Hath Khurch* money, to defray present necessities ; *Burgonee*, a general tax ; *Maganee*, or free gift of *dhan* (paddy), surso (mustard) oil and rice ; *Morecha*, or fees on marriage ; and *Sulamee* or presents on appointing their servants to conduct the fiscal duties of the *shustro* land." *Butler, Travels in Assam* (1854), pp. 240-1.

so as to be prepared to come and hear the next night. The people are potters, and many were away seelling their pottery. They are among that class who worship only one God. They hold occasional feasts as a religious rite, at which all the brotherhood are admitted. They feast in the night with closed doors, allowing none to be present but the disciples. All rules of caste are laid aside, and Brahmins, Sudras, Kacharis, etc., eat together. Forbidden food can here be eaten, and they drink a kind of spirit made from rice. On other occasions they are as rigid in the observance of caste as other Hindoos. I have not as yet been able to ascertain the origin of this feast. Before we left, many expressed their conviction of the truth of the doctrines we preached, and said they meant to follow them. Since our return to Gowahati a large company have called upon us.

SHRI CHAITANYA

37. *Journal of Bronson, BMM June 1864, pp. 164-5* : We were just about sitting down to a social meal, prepared by our native Christians, when two very ordinary looking men approached ; the leader struck up a tune from a rude flute, made of bamboo. "This", said Bhubon, "is my friend, Boga Bhagoti, the *gooroo*. He always gives notice of his coming by the use of the flute. He has hundreds of disciples, and has most candidly talked with me about the claims of the Christian religion, and is carefully reading our books. He will be pleased at seeing us all eat together. He sat down on a mat placed for him until we had eaten, evidently much interested by what he saw."

He proved to be a Siri Soitongo *bhokot*—a new sect, that is rapidly gaining ground in this vicinity and in several parts of Assam. This sect began with twelve persons, sent out as apostles to travel, and preach, and make disciples. They believe in one God, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. They ridicule idol worship, evil spirits, or the gods of the mountains, hills and valleys. They reject charms and incantations. They refuse to worship Hindu priests, and at heart reject caste. They meet at night to worship, eat and drink, what the rules of caste strictly forbid, and are evidently working to throw off caste openly. When any one wishes to be made a disciple, the *gooroo*

first orders him to light a lamp. He then proceeds to instruct the candidate thus. God is a spirit, He is light, like this lamp. Worship no more idols, or evil spirits, or trees, or anything.—Worship God only. Call every body brother. Know no distinction of caste. Pouring a cup of water on his head, he pronounces him a disciple, and adds, “Go, teach others. Be humble, forbearing. If any one reviles you, revile him not in return. Injure not him who injures you.”

This *gooroo* is a man of keen intellect. Although he has rejected so many errors, he has his peculiar ideas about eating no flesh but fish, and that his *bhokots* or disciples worship God when they worship each other. He says there is but little difference between his belief and Christianity ; yet I suspect it will be harder for this man to believe on Christ and be saved, than it will be for many a gross idolater. He urges Bhubon to become a brother *gooroo*, and Bhubon in return urges him to become a brother Christian. Such a man, truly converted, would be like Paul among his countrymen.

BRAHMISM

38. Mr. Scott, in his report, refers at some length to the school for young men, and the peculiar forms of temptation which just now assail this class of persons. This statement is full of matter for reflection.

In our school are several young men who are just now ‘halting between two opinions’. If the truth shall prevail in their hearts as it does already in their convictions, they will be valuable acquisitions to the cause of their Redeemer. But here again a new and dangerous foe to Christianity is springing out of the darkness of heathenism. You can hardly imagine my surprise, when not long since a very intelligent young Hindu put into my hand a tract, ‘Rev. Theodore Parker’s Defence of Unitarianism and General Views of Christ and Scripture Inspiration’. I know this young man to be a member of the ‘Brahmo Somaj’, a new deistical sect in India. As he handed me this tract he remarked, ‘Here you will learn our creed ; and, being from your own country and of your religion, the author’s words will be read with the least possible prejudice. Our religion is

Christianity without Christ ; Hinduism without Krishnu ; Mohammedanism without Mohammed ; one God without a second, equal or vicegerent ; a Spirit, infinite in every perfect attribute, and therefore His worship is purely spiritual, all outward forms being optional with the worshipper.' Temperance, chastity, brotherly love, fidelity in word and deed, and a supreme regard for Deity and His law as revealed by intuition, form the cardinal points of their creed, which is composed of selections from the Bible, Koran, and Shaster ; each alike being regarded as only the production of very wise and good men, who sometimes wrote wisely, but often unwisely. The practical *morality* found in this sect is far above that of either Hindu or Mussulman, as in religious rites and observances it falls below them. In breaking away from caste and the multitude of heathen superstitions, it is a long step towards Christianity ; but in fact falls *far, very far*, short of it. This sect is spreading rapidly over India. There is now a young and flourishing society here in Nowgong, composed chiefly of the more intelligent class of Hindu young men. As a natural consequence, strong influences are brought to bear on that class of youth, both in Government and mission schools. It forms a very inviting half-way house of entertainment for those who, seeing the absurdity of heathenism, have started out in search of 'the way, and the truth, and the life'. Just escaped from the foolish and oppressive ceremonies of Hinduism, their galled necks recoil from entering under another yoke ; for they have never felt how 'easy' the 'yoke' and how 'light the burden' of Christ. Seeing by the wayside this new citadel, surrounded by green pastures and shady lawns, over it floating the banner inscribed in bold tracings, 'One God without a second or equal', while here and there on the stones of the walls are seen the names of 'Christ', 'Paul,' 'Theodore Parker,' 'Ram Mohun Roy', 'Krishnu,' 'Mohammed',—all being held as great teachers, Mr. Parker from Christianity and Ram Mohun Roy from Hinduism being the two great modern saviors, meeting on common ground, not destroying any but harmonizing all religions, bringing out of them all, as from a crucible, *one pure* religion which is destined to be *universal*. The members of this society, so far as I have become acquainted with them, are

intelligent, apparently thoroughly sincere ; certainly they are thoroughly earnest in spreading their doctrines with a zeal worthy of a better cause." (*Fifty-fifth Annual Report, Nowgong, BMM July 1869, pp. 249-50*).

THE STONE IS IN MOTION

39. *Letters from Mrs. Bronson, Sibsagor, August 8, 1865* : We never felt more encouragement in our work than now. All the indications are, that the leaven is silently working, and we believe it will work "until the whole is leavened". There are here two very interesting inquirers just now, who are representatives, we believe, of a large class who are constantly increasing. We have two pundits who assist us in our Dictionary work, who may be called representative men of the two great classes among the educated Assamese. One is an old brahmin, deeply read in Sanscrit, and with the sacred books of the Hindu religion almost on his tongue,—an example, by the by, for Christians in his knowledge of sacred lore. This man is to all appearance a staunch Hindu,—passes for such among his countrymen, although he has probably no thought of ever renouncing Hinduism ; yet in private conversation he freely confesses that he does not believe much that is written in their sacred books, and that he believes in and worships only one God. He seems to be like one of old (2 Kings 5 : 18) anxious to bow in the house of his god for appearance' sake, while in his heart he worships the only living and true God.

The other is a representative of young Assam. He is bound hand and foot by the chains of custom and caste, like the old man, but he seems to have a conviction that there is truth in the new religion, and that he must seek for it. He asked me the other day for a Bible, saying, "I have long wished for one, and now I think it will be a good time to read it, as I can ask you to explain any part I do not understand." At the same time he begged me to keep the fact of his having a Bible in his possession a secret ; "for", said he, "I could not keep it, if it was known." He says truths that he has read in a tract that was given him, have "bitten his heart".

The stone is in motion, scarcely perceptible now, but “it will come, it will not linger” ; and the motion will be constantly accelerated, until dark Assam will be given to God. So do not delay to send help. God still works by means. (*BMM, June 1866, p. 5*)

40. *Letter from Mrs. Bronson, Nowgong, January 16, 1866* : I have just received a letter from a brahmin pundit. He is a brahmin of high caste, of the blood royal of Assam, and is well educated in the literature of the country. He has a smattering of English, and has a great desire for knowledge. He served us as pundit for several months, and I was deeply interested in him and often had opportunities for conversation. At last, with much hesitation, he asked me for a Holy Bible, begging that it might be a small copy, as he should be obliged to conceal from his friends the fact of his having the forbidden book in his possession. I gave him a pocket Bible, which I am glad to find is not neglected.

I think the young man is sincere in his desire for light ; and it is a striking one of *the* striking signs of the times, that “young Assam” is awaking and girding himself for the pursuit of knowledge. The greater number as yet are eager for secular knowledge ; but we meet with one now and then who seems, like this young man, really hungering after the true light. Our doors are often thronged with young men begging us to instruct them in the English language*, which, of course, we cannot do. (*BMM, June 1866, pp. 164-5, excerpts*)

HINDOOS IN ASSAM

41. *Gurney, A. K.* : The Assamese are apparently unimpressible ; preaching and talking seem to have no effect upon them.

* Mainly because English was the passport for higher employment under the government which were then a monopoly of the non-Assamese. After his visit to Dibrugarh, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal also remarked ; there is a very strong desire on the part of all the better classes of the community to give their children in English education and that wherever there was schools for teaching that language the attendance is good. . . *sudder* station where there is no school of the kind people were clamouring for the establishment of one. As *Letter issued to Government, Vol. 30, Commissioner of Assam, 11 June (1862).*

Some listen attentively and respectfully to the words of the preacher, others refuse to hear ; some are full of argument, others say scarcely anything ; some ridicule ; many profess to be ignorant. A few weeks ago, I was talking with a Hindoo whom I met on the highway ; I asked him what means there were for salvation. He answered, "How can I say ?" He was very reticent, and tried to hide himself behind his ignorance ; he was ignorant indeed, but knew well enough the need of salvation.

The ways in which the Hindoos answer the preacher are various ; the most frequent is to assent to all the preacher says,—to say, "Yes, yes, all that is true," "Your honor speaks the truth." One said to me, "Christianity is true : why shouldn't it be ?" If I ask, "Why do you not accept Christianity, then ?" they will reply, "Christianity is good for you, *sahib*, but not for me." To say "Yes, yes," to all one says, is with them a favorite expedient to get rid of one.

No one will admit that he really worships idols. They do not worship the stone, but the god in the stone. The idol represents the deity or god worshipped, and the gods which the idols represent are portions of Deity who has taken shape in them ; for example, Krishna is God, who has assumed a certain shape or form, or, as they say, "has come out of the universal spirit." It is not the stone itself, they say, which gives salvation to those who worship it, but the divinity that dwells within it. One man said to our preacher, "God : where is he ? show him to me." He had not, or pretended not to have, an idea of what deity is. Deity, in our sense of the term, is unknown to Hindooism. Hindoos do not regard God as a personal, intelligent being, but as a universal substance, of which all things animate and inanimate, spiritual and material, form part. Gods and men have come forth from this universal substance or spirit, and return to it again. "Deity is suffused through all space : it is inside of every thing, and outside of every thing. It includes every thing, and is itself included by none. God exists in everything, not as a distinct being, but as a part of the universal essence. From God everything has proceeded and will proceed, and to him everything will return. A man lights a lamp from another

lamp, and from the second lamp lights a third. All those lamps owe the origin of their light to the first lamp, and the same substance is communicated to each one of them. So all things have emanated from and are of the same substance as God."

This is the explanation of deity from the Hindoos' point of view, as given me by a Brahmin, the press pundit. It is pure pantheism, and agrees with the view of some people in a more civilized land. Of course it is only the learned Hindoos who think thus. The common people know only Krishna, Shiva, or Debi, with their attributes. They will say sometimes, "How can I worship the unseen God? I do not see God, how can I worship him? Indeed, it seems like a matter of belief with them, that the formless God, as they term him, cannot be worshipped. He must assume form to be worshipped.

In controversy with Hindoos on Christianity, they will sometimes, after admitting what one says, object that they cannot embrace Christianity on account of their parents or relatives.

In most cases this is merely an excuse made to get rid of the missionary; but some may be sincere. I am persuaded that there are some Hindoos at least who would become Christians were it not for relatives and caste. Those especially who have received an English education have come to look upon Hindooism as effete, and have lost reverence for it.

A while ago I had a conversation with one Bho'gmon, a press-workman, who seemed to be sincere. I asked him why he was travelling in the Hindoo path? he replied, because his forefathers did: they travelled in it, and he could. I tried to show him that this was not the true reason: he was not very communicative. The next day I heard that he told one of our native Christians, "I understood well everything the *sahib* said. I know Christianity is true; but I didn't dare tell the *sahib* so, for I was afraid he would ask me why I didn't embrace it. I could not have answered that question; so I kept still."

Very many Hindoos, I am persuaded, regard Christianity as true, but are as far as ever from embracing it. They regard Hindooism as equally true, and are disposed to cling to it.

In fact, they have an accommodating theory that *all* religions are true. "It is as you think it," they often say: "Christianity

is true, so is Hindooism, so is Mohammedanism. I regard Hindooism as true, you regard Christianity as true : Hindooism is true for me, Christianity for you." "For the European," they say, "Christianity is good ; for the Hindoo, Hindooism ; for the Mussulman, Mohammedanism." With many this may be, and is, a mere subterfuge ; but there is no objection to regarding it as the real belief of many. In these cases I always endeavor to show them that there can be but one true religion, as there is but one God ; and if these religions oppose each other, as they do, they cannot all be true. They will sometimes admit this reasoning, but still bring up their accommodating theory. (*BMM, July 1877, pp. 269-70*)

THE MUSSULMANS, DEMON WORSHIPPERS AND IMMIGRANTS

42. The Mussulmans of Assam have not escaped the influence of their environment. They belong to the same ethnical stock as the Hindus, being the large part descendants of the converts to Islam, made at the time of various Mogul invasions of Assam. Hence,...greater part of the Muhammadans are found in the districts bordering on Bengal, where those invaders were most successful. Many of them hold the doctrines of Islam very loosely, or are very ignorant of what they are*. Still they present a solid front against polytheism and Idolatory, but the vices so characteristic of the Prophet, find a fertile soil and attain luxuriant growth in the Mussulmans of Assam. (*Jubilee Papers, p. 15*)

43. (Hill people) are demon worshippers but each has its own demons, and its own ceremonies, preserved in pristine purity, or largely modified by its environment...(These are) of earth or air or wood or mountain whom he fears will cause the failure of all his crops, and make his flocks and herds sterile and his wife barren if he does not offer sacrifices. Remember

* Shihabuddin Talish, who had accompanied Nawab Mirjumla (1962-3), found already among the Assamese Muslims nothing of Islam except the name ; "Their hearts are inclined far more towards mixing with the Assamese than towards association with the Muslims." Sarkar, J.N., trans. *Fathiya-I-Ibria, I Bors* (1915).

too that the ranks of the Hindus are largely swelled by number of these hill tribe people, who having given up keeping swine and drinking strong home-made rice liquor, to which they are greatly addicted, and paid a small annual fee to the priest, are admitted to the lower castes in the Brahminical system.

The hill people generally are anxious for the present life, saying what shall we eat and what shall we drink and wherewithal shall we be clothed (though very little clothing suffices) and life to come claims very little of their thought. That Kachari, for instance...denies that there is either resurrection or angel or spirit. His motto is, let us eat, drink and be merry for tommorrow we die...(Ibid).

THE IMMIGRANTS

44. The most prosperous work in Upper Assam has been among the immigrant population living in tea gardens, or in villages after having served out a term of agreement. For our work, only the tea gardens in the Brahmaputra Valley come into consideration. The number of tea gardens is largest in the Sibsagor and Lakhimpur districts. In the Sibsagor district we find 174 tea gardens, in Lakhimpur 141, in Nowgong 83, in Darrang 55, in Kamrup 24, in Goalpara 3,—total for the Brahmaputra Valley 480. In the Sibsagor district we have the following number of tea gardens in the different subdivisions :—Sibsagor subdivision 62, Jorhat 67, Golaghat 45.

According to the census of 1890, 24% of all the inhabitants in the Sibsagor district were immigrants ; in Lakhimpur 41% were foreigners. According to Government reports but 10% of all imported laborers return to their own country. This means that in the near future the immigrants will by far outnumber the Assamese, perhaps gradually assimilate them entirely.

Not all the immigrants are accessible to the Gospel. Those who have been Hindus in their own country are almost as difficult to evangelize as are Hindus generally. We have here a large number of Hindus from Western Bengal, Bchar, the N.W.P., the Central Provinces and Central India. They are not so hard as the Assamese, but still work among them requires a great deal of patience. But we have a large community of immigrants who

were never converted to Hinduism in their own country,—aborigines from Western Bengal, Chota Nagpur and Central India. We have in Assam 190,774 immigrants from Chota Nagpur and 18,294 from the Santal Pergunnas. They are the best object for Mission work, not only because they are not Hindus, but because they have been largely influenced by Christianity in their own country, where Christianity has become quite a power, counting about 100,000 nominal Christians. The largest number of converts, we have got from a class of people belonging to different tribes generally called Kols. To give a correct number of the Kol living in Assam is very difficult if not impossible. Many of them have given Hindi as their mother-tongue in the last census. According to the report of the last census 295,801 gave Hindi as their mother-tongue. I have no doubt there are many thousands of Mundas, Uraons and others among this number. They thought to raise themselves in the social scale by calling Hindi their mother-tongue, instead of their own dialects, very much as some European immigrants in America would call themselves Americans after being there for only a short time and while not even knowing the English language. A proof that many Mundas acted in this way, or may be supposed to have done so, is that 46,244 gave as their caste, in the last census Mundas,—whereas only 30,261 gave Munda as their mother-tongue. There were 16,000 Mundas who seem to have denied their mother-tongue. According to the census, we have in Assam 46,244 Mundas, 17,736 Uraons, 2700 Kols (I suppose Lowkas from Chaibassa), 20,032 Bhumij, 23,220 Santals, 32,149 Bauris, 32,186 Bhuiyas, 6389 Bhar, 3368 Korwas and a few other classes. All are aborigines from Chota Nagpur, not professing Hinduism.

This gives a total of 187,436 of such people. To this figure should be added about 4,000 Gonds from Central India. At present we have, most likely, more than 200,000 immigrants who are not Hindus.

This is a large field, ripe for the harvest. In the few years we have systematically worked among these people the fruits of our labor have been great, we have now in Sibsagor 652 members. Only 59 of them can be called Assamese. Nearly 600 are converted immigrants. In North Lakhimpur we have about 300

members of that class, in Golaghat 100, in Dibrugarh about 100, and in Nowgong at least 100,—I suppose in all 1200, collected in a few years.

Compare with this our very meager success among the Assamese, after more than 60 years, and we shall see where our duty lies.

We have, I believe, only a few over 100 Assamese members after more than 60 years of faithful labors on the part of a good number of foreign missionaries appointed to that work. The comparison shows where God wants us to use our strength and our means. (*Petrick, Rev. C. E., Tea Garden Coolies, see Report on the Fifth Triennial Conference, 1899, Assam Mission, BMM, pp. 67-9*).

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

45. *Letter from Brown, April 29, 1850* : Capt. Brodie, the magistrate at this place (Sibsagor), considers the whole population as less than a million. Robinson, in his *Descriptive History*, computed it from various sources at 8,00,000. I have long been convinced, however, that this was too low. He gave 90,000 for Nowgong ; this was the estimate of former officers ; but Capt. Butler estimates it at more than three times that sum. An officer with whom I was recently conversing, and who was formerly surveyor of this district, reckoning from the revenue on the rice lands, estimates the whole province at between three and four millions. The grounds of his estimate, I believe, are more correct than those of any other that has been made. The revenue of the province is 8,00,000 rupees. Nearly the whole of this comes from the rice lands ; which are taxed on an average rate of one rupee per poorah. A poorah is a little more than an acre ; and from various inquiries of the natives I find that a poorah is reckoned to support about *three* persons, or two adults and two children. Rice is almost the only species of food used by the inhabitants ; and the quantity grown is very nearly the same as that consumed, there being no exports or imports of this article worth mentioning. There is a large quantity of land belonging to the priests and temples ; this may be set off against the gardens, opium tracts, and a few other inconsiderable

sources of revenue. We may therefore put down the rice land at 8,00,000 poorahs. This, at four persons per poorah, would give 3,200,000 as the population of the plains.

It is impossible to make an estimate of the hill tribes. These pay no revenue, and but a small part of their country has been visited by Europeans. It is supposed they are less in number than the Assamese ; two millions would probably be a high estimate. On the whole, I see no reason for supposing that this province contains over five millions in all.

The population of eastern countries is generally exaggerated. (*BMM, December 1850, pp. 386-7*).

46. *Tour of Observations by Cutler, Jaipur, February 22, 1842* : Capt. Gordon kindly furnished me with an estimate of the population of the Nowgong district, with some remarks and explanations, and as it is a valuable document, I will copy it entire. I have not yet received the written estimates of the population of the other districts, but am daily expecting them from the officer in charge.

Nowgong, Jan. 4th, 1842

My dear sir—In reply to your note received a few days ago, I have much pleasure in conveying to you the result of my inquiries into the subject of which it treats. I regret, however, that neither time nor opportunity enable me to give more correct answers to your queries. To obtain a more correct estimate of the amount of population in this district, would be the work of many months, and I fear the attempt would prove very unpopular. By the last returns there were 3560 houses. This includes the total number assessed within the boundaries of the district. Besides these there are many houses occupied by Dum's fishermen or boat-men, petty traders, morokhias, or persons who hire themselves out for service, slaves, bondmen, and houses concealed for the purpose of defrauding the revenue, etc., not included in the above number ; and these, if ascertained, would consequently increase the amount. About 1500 may, however, be deducted for what are called Pám b́aris, being the temporary residences of those who cultivate lands in Mozás or portions of the district distant from their homes. This would leave upwards of 42,000 houses, which in my opinion is the lowest estimate,

and allowing five individuals to each house, we should have a population of 210,000 souls. In this calculation I have not included the Bhokots, hishy or disciples, who cultivate the extensive lands scattered throughout the district, held rent free, by the gosains or priests. Amongst the Mikirs or Miris, several families live in one house, which, I think, warrants my taking the average at so high a rate as five.

The number of pottas (leases for land) distributed when a new settlement is made throughout the district, is 50,027 ; and allowing one to every four individuals, this would give a population of 200,108 ; and I do not consider this rate a high one, when the number of individuals enumerated above, who do not receive pottas, are taken into account.

47. *Letter of Danforth, August 28, 1849 :*

1. "What is the population of Assam ?"

The population of the whole valley may, I think, be estimated at 1,500,000. This of course excludes the people of the adjoining hill tribes, who keep up a free communication with the plains and often come down in large number for the purpose of traffic.

2. "What is the population of this district (Kamroop) ; including that portion of Durrung lying within thirty miles of Gowahatti ?"

The population of Kamroop at the lowest computation, I should think to be about 500,000 ; at least, I should be within bounds in estimating it at one-third of the entire population of the province. Desh Durrang, or that portion of the Durrang district alluded to in the question, contains about 160,000 inhabitants. The population within the reach of a missionary residing at Gowahatti, may be fairly estimated at near seven hundred thousand.

3. "How does this district compare with Central and Upper Assam,—in the number and density of its population,—in its means for travelling,—in the influence of the natives upon the whole country,—in cultivation and political importance ?"

It would be necessary to enter into many minutiae, and to have more information at command than I possess at present, to enter into these particulars. It may suffice, however, to state that the population of the six districts in Assam may be thus

estimated.

<i>District</i>	<i>Population</i>
Kamroop	500,000
Gowalpara	250,000
Durrung	250,000
Nowgong	250,000
Lakimpur	100,000
Sibsagor	150,000
	<hr/>
Total	1,500,000

In connection with the Sibsagor district, we have about 200,000 dependent Nagas, inhabiting the mountains which form the southern boundary of the district. The Assamese population in the plains is scattered over an area of 5440 square miles ; and during the rainy season, it is impracticable to get at the mass of the population, as they do not, generally speaking, occupy the banks of the streams.

Nowgong has an area of 3870 square miles, of which 1710 constitute the hilly country known as the Mikir hills, and occupied by a population amounting probably to about 30,000 souls. These speak a language distinct from the Assamese. The mass of the people here are approachable either in the rains by means of boats, or in the dry weather by land ; the roads that traverse the district are generally very good.

The total area of the Durrung district may be estimated at 1911 square miles ; but the largest part of the population is to be found in that division of the district called Desh Durrung, where within thirty miles of Gowahatti we have a population of a hundred and sixty thousand souls. The means of getting to these people is chiefly by land travelling, though during the rains many large villages are approachable by boats.

Kamroop has an area of about 2520 square miles, of which, probably not so much as 1000 are under cultivation. The population is but little scattered, and in some parts it is very dense. Means of travelling both by land and water are better here than in any other district.

4. "Do the population of this district speak the Assamese language ?"

Yes ; the mass of the people speak no other idiom than that common throughout the province. There may probably be found a few slight differences in pronunciation ; but the people in Kamroop speak Assamese as much as those in Sibsagor or Lakimpur do.

5. "What is the population of Gowahatti ?"

I believe the census taken last year showed a population of near 9,000, but this seems to me below the actual number of inhabitants in Gowahatti.

6. "How large a portion of the people speak the Assamese language ?"

All the people in Gowahatti speak Assamese, except the few traders, and people employed in the government courts who come from Bengal, and of course speak Bengali ; but they do not form a tenth part of the population of Gowahatti. (*BMM, February 1850, pp. 34-6*)

SPARSENESS IN FIFTIES

48. *Report of the Foreign Secretary* : With respect to Assam as a whole, my estimate of its claims to missionary labor, I mean of its intrinsic claims, has been, I do not say confirmed merely, but raised by personal inspection. On my first arrival in the country, and subsequently while ascending the Brahmaputra, even above Gowahatti, the general aspect of the valley was less inviting, that is as to its populousness, than I had been led to anticipate. The peculiarities of the river, that great river Brahmaputra, while they impart to the valley its riches and much of its beauty, give to it not the less a cast of desolateness and solitude. Scarcely a hamlet or a house is to be seen throughout the length of Assam along its banks. Capricious in its annual changes of direction, and resistless in its overflow, it compels the cultivator of the river lands to plan this grounds and his homestead at a wary distance from its main channels. The line of proximity of the river settlements ranges from five to ten miles.

Even as one advances into the interior, the denseness of the population is, generally, far from imposing, certainly at the first view. Compared with Lower India, and even with Burmah,

its towns are villages, and its villages hamlets. The population do not seem, indeed, to be congregated in masses, but like other agricultural people are spread abroad over the country at large. At the same time, there are vast tracts, especially in Central and Upper Assam, of uninhabited and waste lands. And the sparseness of the population contrasts painfully with the capabilities of the soil, and with the evidences, everywhere to be seen, of its once having sustained a far more numerous people. (*BMM, March 1855, pp. 4-5*).

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

49. It is sometimes stated that the valley of Assam itself contains not more than 1,500,000 inhabitants, and this is used as an apology for doing so little for this mission. Were this true, a million and a half of people handed over by providence, especially, we had almost said exclusively, to the American Baptists, certainly involves no slight responsibility. But this view of the case gives anything but a correct impression. It is true that a comparatively small portion of the valley is inhabited ; but unless we take into consideration the reasons why it is not, we fall into a fatal error in our estimate of the importance of this as a missionary field. This valley was undoubtedly once densely populated. We find evidences of this in the remains of stone temples and bridges, as well as in the bricks, pottery, hewn stones, and old tanks and bunds, found in the wildest parts of the province. It is not improbable that the valley once supported a population of more than 10,000,000. And why may it not again ? There is no richer or more easily cultivated land on the face of the globe, than we find here. And when we look at the causes of depopulation, we have the strongest confidence and hope that Assam will again swarm with its 10,000,000 of people.

Formerly there was no protection from the incursions of the hill tribes. They came down in hordes from every point, plundered the country, burnt the villages, and murdered or carried off the people by thousands. Added to this, were the internal wars, carried on almost incessantly for more than a thousand years. Here we have a sufficient cause for all the desolation we

see. But these causes of desolation no longer exist. Internal peace has been permanently established. The hill tribes are successfully held in check. And the province invites immigration from every quarter. While the Bengalis are coming in on the one side, many from the hills on the other are actually settling in the plains, and others are entering into a vigorous traffic with the valley. In fact, the communication between all these hill tribes is becoming every year more important. The races must eventually amalgamate. The question is no longer whether the Assam mission has any work to do for these formerly savage tribes. They are actually coming to us, and we cannot refuse their plea. God is opening the door wide, north, south, east and west, and is calling on the mission, in loud and solemn tones, to enlarge our borders and strengthen our stakes. It is not for one or two millions we labor ; we have millions for our inheritance. (*Ibid, Mission Papers, p. 79*)

STEADY INCREASE

50. *Mason, M. C., The People of Assam* : The chief commissionership or province of Assam is politically divided into eleven districts, but naturally divided into three sections. Following this natural division, I notice briefly, first, the *Southern Valley* of Assam, embracing the district of Sylhet and one-third of Cachar, with an area of 6,725 square miles ; second, the *Northern, or Brahmaputra Valley*, or, as it is more often called, the Assam Valley, embracing the six districts, Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagor, and Lakimpur, with an area of 20,943 square miles ; and third, the range of mountainous hills separating the two valleys, and extending eastward somewhat beyond British control.

The two valleys might be regarded as the plains of Assam constituting one division, and the hills the second division. On the plains the government is sufficiently established and systemized to obtain a trustworthy census ; and the tables I give are collected from the "Statistical Account of Assam, by W. W. Hunter, B.A., LL.D., C.I.E., Director-General of Statistics to the Government of India," which is probably as accurate a representation as can be had. Nevertheless the census was taken over nine years ago ; since which changes have occurred, notably

the increase of population in the upper districts, by the importation of tea-plantation laborers from Central India.*

The area of the province is 46,055 square miles, about the size of the State of Pennsylvania. As seen from the tables, the area of the plains alone is 27,668 square miles, a little more than that of the three States, Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire. And although regarded as thinly populated, there are, as the tables show, nearly four millions of people, exceeding the population, not only of the three abovementioned States, but of all New England, by more than three hundred thousand. About two and one-half millions are Hindoos and Mussulmans ; but over two-thirds of these are crowded into the small southern valley, so that the district of Sylhet alone has over 84 per cent of all the Mussulmans of the province, and 997 percent of this people are Mussulmans and Hindoos. The population of this district is almost as dense again as that of Massachusetts, the most densely populated State of the Union.

The district of Goalpara, at the mouth of this valley, contains one-half of all the Mussulmans of the Assam Valley, or a little less than eight per cent of the Mussulmans of the province ; and Kamrup, the next district, has half of the remaining eight per cent.

The two districts together contain over one-half of the population of the whole valley, and about half of these are aboriginal and semi-Hindooized aboriginal nationalities. As we proceed up the valley, although the density of the population greatly decreases, the proportion of these tribes to the caste people rapidly increases.

* The population of the valley of the Brahmaputra was estimated in a Despatch of the Court of Directors in 1834 at 8,30,000. In 1853, according to the data supplied by district officers to Mills, the number exceeded twelve lakhs which rose to fifteen in 1872. The steady increase was due partly to natural growth under settled condition but mainly to the influx of outsiders : 65% of Bengal, 14% from United Province and 10.8% from Central Province (*An Account of the Province of Assam*, pp. 130-1 ; *Census Report*, 1905, pp. 29-32). Of the immigrants, majority were tea-garden labourers who had settled in the province after expiry of their agreement.

Of the semi-Hindooized aboriginals a large part are Koches. Of the 132,095 of Goalpara, 118,091 are Koches ; and of the 96,519 in Kamrup, 69,277 are Koches. The remaining 41,246 of the two districts is made up of nineteen different tribes. Of the 149,492 semi-Hindooized aboriginals of Darrang and Nowgong, over seventy per cent are Koches. There are also about twenty-four thousand in Sibsagor. The whole number of Koches is estimated at four hundred and five thousand, many living in Bengal, the adjoining province to the west.

The large number of semi-Hindooized aboriginals of Sibsagor and Lakimpur are mostly Ahoms, there being 138,246 of this race.

As our missions seem to have been more successful among the aboriginals proper, and these seem to give promise of more speedily accepting the gospel, I have given in table-form the location and number of each of the larger tribes of the plains. I have included under the head of "eighteen other tribes" all who do not exceed one thousand in number. Among them are the Santals, an interesting race, imported for labor on tea-gardens from Central India, where several thousand converts have been gathered during the last ten years. A noticeable fact shown by this table is, that each of the aboriginal tribes, as a rule, are very much by themselves. The Cacharis, the largest of the tribes, are found in goodly numbers in every district. But the same cannot be said of any other tribe. It will be noticed that not an individual of the Hajongs or of the Paharias are found in any but the Goalpara district ; and that of the 29,887 Meches, only ten persons had found their way out of Goalpara. Some twenty odd thousand Hajongs, however, are found at the southern foot of the Garo Hills, in the Mymensing district of Bengal. It will be seen also that over thirty thousand, or about one-half of all the Rabhas of the valley, are in the Goalpara district ; and the remainder are in the adjoining districts Kamrup and Darrang.

The Lalongs and Mikirs are also two tribes that are very little scattered, and are found mostly in the Nowgong district and in Kamrup adjoining.

All of these tribes, although not classified as semi-Hindooized, have been somewhat influenced by Hindoo ideas. Nevertheless, there are very few hindrances to the reception of the gospel,

other than is natural to the human heart. Not a few of these Cacharis and Rabhas are already members of the different churches belonging to our mission stations ; and some of them are prominent workers. I feel deeply that our society ought to have at least one mission family stationed among these people, whose whole attention would be given to the aboriginal tribes of Kamrup and Goalpara ; for in these two districts are found more than one-half of all the tribes of the valley, there being about 100,000 Cacharis, 60,000 Rabhas, 30,000 Meches, and some 6,000 other non-caste people. The Assamese language is the universal medium for all of these tribes, although in places their own tongue would probably be better understood. (*BMM, September 1880, pp. 327-29 and 333 ; Excerpts*).

DISTRICTS.	Cachori.	Daniya.	Garo.	Hajong.	Hazai.	Khampit.	Kal.	Lalung.	Maria.	Mech.	Mikir.	Miri.	Nat.	Paharia.	Rabha.	Saraniya.	Uraon.	Eighteen other Tribes.	Total.
Goalpara ..	22,755	22	9,957	3,353	.....	.....	.....	.....	15	29,877	383	.....	34	1,144	30,124	.....	.....	64	97,732
Kamrup ..	76,994	20	4,849	.....	.....	122	1,950	107	.....	.....	11,447	.....	1,735	.....	20,408	11,812	62	397	129,781
Darrang ..	62,214	.....	10	.....	.....	122	2	.....	.....	.....	510	2,048	252	.....	10,302	.....	78	371	76,094
Nowgong ..	8,828	.....	94	.....	3,263	.....	5	32,813	611	1	34,583	225	1,079	.....	10	.....	54	130	81,770
Sibsagor ..	15,320	817	.....	.....	.....	21	1,254	9	1,168	8	219	6,862	1,481	.....	55	.....	764	392	29,352
Lakhimpur	14,959	471	15	.....	.....	1,562	1,360	478	596	1	.....	4,886	146	.....	4	2,702	185	777	28,388
Total	201,070	1,330	14,925	3,353	3,263	1,583	2,741	35,252	2,497	29,887	47,142	14,021	4,727	1,144	60,903	14,514	1,143	2,130	443,117

THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY

BRONSON AND THE NAGAS

FIRST VISIT TO NAMSANG*

51. *Journal of Bronson, January 7, 1839** : At 12 reached Labang Kulá Potár. It is a fine rice field, and has a small stream rushing from the adjacent hills into it, which rendered the path very wet, and often muddy. For a long time we were obliged to make our way where the water was knee deep. At 1 o'clock came to a small stream, that runs through the famous coal mines discovered recently by Capt. Hannay. On the very road which I passed, appeared beautiful specimens of coal, and several springs of rock oil. At 3 P.M. reached the Nám Tippam Páni, a small stream emptying into the Búri Dihing. Here we stopped for the night, having pitched my little India rubber tent, which I found of the greatest service. The road here is crowded with salt traders, going to or coming from the Nogá *ha'th*, for the purpose of bartering various articles for the salt made at the Nogá Hills, by which means I shall have a large company of poor ignorant heathen with me all the way.

January 8 : Having had a refreshing sleep, rose early and pursued my journey. Our road led through a dense forest. On every side of us appeared the footsteps of the huge elephant, the buffalo, and the tiger, who roam here unmolested, and are not a little dangerous to the unwary traveller. Toward evening we reached the Nám Sisá Páni, having passed a most beautiful variety of hill and valley. This stream winds its way in so serpentine a course, that in travelling in a due easterly direction two hours, we crossed it no less than twenty-one times ! We stopped on the bank of the same stream for the night, enclosed on every side by high hills, giving the place an appearance of the

* On his arrival at Jaipur, in consultation with Captain Hannay, mention has already been made, (*supra.* pp. 13-4.) Bronson decided to work among the Nagas in preference to the Singphos. After preparing a Naga vocabulary and accompanied by an Assamese interpreter, he advanced into the hills on an exploratory mission and arrived at Namsang on 8 January 1839.

greatest security and romance. This whole valley is lined with rocks.

January 9 : Rose early, and sent a man forward to inform the Nogá chief of our approach. This seemed to be the more necessary, as we heard they were in a state of the greatest excitement at the coming of the white face, and suspected the motives I had in coming. Our road to-day has led through the most interesting and varied scenery I have beheld in this country. We were at one time passing through the narrowest defiles of steep and rugged mountains, and at another gazing into some deep valley that lay at our feet. Yet along this very height lay our only path, not exceeding six inches in width, whence one mis-step would have precipitated us upon the craggy cliffs far below. At another point rose several beautiful peaks of mountains, of moderate height ; and further on, the mountain-tops were lost in the clouds, but covered, as far as the eye could reach, with richest verdure. Many times, as I passed along, I involuntarily exclaimed, "How manifold are thy works, O Lord of Hosts !"

At 1 o'clock reached one of the salt springs, worked by the Nogás. The water was drawn from deep wells, by a bucket of leaves, and poured into large wooden troughs near by, for the purpose of boiling. Their mode of boiling is rude, and to one who had not seen it, would appear to be perfectly impracticable. They build a long arch of stone and clay. On the top, single joints of bamboos, cut thin, and spread open like a boat, are placed closely together. These hold from two to three quarts each. These boats are kept full of the brine, and a large fire kept blazing under them, without injury to the bamboo. On this arch I counted sixty boats, which they said would give, when boiled away, twenty or twenty-five boats of salt for the market. Thus their ingenuity has made them quite independent of the expensive furniture required at our own saltworks. One man to attend the arch, one to bring the brine, and four to gather wood, are all that is necessary to complete the establishment.

Here we were met by two of the chief's sons, and a numerous train of his warriors, who bade me welcome—expressed their pleasure that I had come, and declared the country mine, and

themselves my subjects. In return, I assured them of my best wishes and good intentions ; and although no white man had ever before ventured among them, that I felt the greatest confidence in them, as my brethren and friends. We then proceeded to the rude huts they had prepared for my use during my stay among them, and which, upon inquiry, I was sorry to find, were at quite a distance from their villages. They doubtless wish to be better assured of the object of my visit, before they admit me to their villages ; although the alleged reason was, that there was no water on their mountains, and that this would subject me to great inconvenience. They have hitherto allowed no one to know much of the interior of their country.

Their great fear was that I was a servant of the *Company*. Being weary, I dismissed them, requesting that the chief and his attendants would meet me the next day, as I had important words to speak to them. They promised to do so, and very courteously left me.

January 10 : About 11 o'clock the kingly train made their appearance, rushing like so many wild beasts from the tops of the highest peaks, and having their heads and ears ornamented with shells, precious stones, and many fanciful representations of battle. They halted a few rods from my house, and stuck their spears into the ground, together, where they left them during their visit. They then came in a very respectful manner, and seated themselves before me, on mats that they had brought for the purpose. Their names are as follows :

Burá Kumbou,* and his seven sons—Bor Kumbou, acting chief, Maji Kumbou, Latúng Dekhá, Telem Dekhá, Tengisi Dekhá, Kanyá Dekhá, Kápsam Dekhá and Gogui Kumbou, son of Bor Kumbou. Tengisi Dekhá is an interesting young man, and is the only Nám Sáng Nogá that can read or write. He has a desire to learn to read all our books, and his opinions are favourably received by the people.

Having now before me all the influential persons among the people, I entered again into a familiar explanation of my object in visiting them. I told them that there were many good people

* Correctly, *Bura Khunbao* or aged chief.

across the great waters, who had compassion on them, and had sent me up into their mountains, where no white man had ever before been, to teach them how to love God and go to heaven when they died. Bor Kumbou, through my interpreter, renewed the objections urged yesterday. They feared that I was a servant of the Company, come to spy out their roads, sources of wealth, number of slaves, amount of population, and means of defence, and the best methods of taking the country. Others feared that I might live peaceably among them for a time, and afterward get power and influence, and make them all my people. It was in vain that I told them of another country, beside the English, across the great waters. They replied, "Is not your color, your dress, your language, the same ; and what person would come so far, merely to give us books and teach us religion ?" Some of the more enlightened, and, I was happy to find, influential among them, appeared to be satisfied that my object was to benefit them, and began arguing in my favor.

The object of my visit having been pretty thoroughly explained, I called upon the chief to state, in the presence of his people, whether he thought education would be advantageous, or disadvantageous to them : also, whether he would give me his approbation and assistance in learning their language and teaching them. He promptly replied, that "if the people learned to read in their own language, it would be well ; but the Nogás were like birds and monkeys, lighting on this mountain, and stopping on that, and therefore no white man could live among them to teach them ; that as soon as their boys were old enough they put into their hands the dá (hatchet) and spear, and taught them how to fight and to make salt,—aside from that they knew nothing,—and how could they learn books ?" To all this I had a ready answer, either speaking directly to him in A'sámese, or through my interpreter. The day being far spent, I presented a few useful articles that I had brought for the purpose, without which I should have been considered extremely disrespectful. With these they appeared much pleased, and after intimating to Bor Kumbou my intention of visiting his village, they very courteously retired.

January 11 : Rose early, having slept but little, from anxiety about my future path of duty. Unless I can secure the confidence of the people sufficiently to live familiarly among them, I cannot expect to benefit them. Nor would it be wise for me to *presume* upon the kindness or integrity of a rude tribe of mountaineers, many of whom never before saw a white face. I endeavored to commend my way to God, and seek his direction.

Being pretty well satisfied that it was fear merely, that made them hesitate to receive me at their village, I despatched my interpreter with a small present to Burá Kumbou, who I understood was favourably inclined to me, saying that I felt much disappointment and chagrin in not finding my houses built near him and his people ; that I had come a great way to see them, to hear their language, to give them good words, and to teach them God's law ; and that I wished to come up into their village, and live among them as brothers and friends. He soon returned, saying that there was a great fear in the village at my coming ; that they considered me a divinity : that if I remained where I was, it would be very well, but it was the order of Bor Kumbou, that if I wished, I might come up into their village. This was all I wished. Without his approbation I should not have felt safe in going. I immediately made arrangements for going the next morning.

January 12 : An early breakfast, and we set out for the Nogá village, on the top of the mountain. It had rained for twenty four hours previous, and the path was steep and slippery. After winding our way over several hills for two hours, we reached a fine open space, commanding a most lovely prospect of hill and valley and winding streams. Several hamlets could be distinctly seen at once, and the report of a gun from this place was the signal for collecting their respective inhabitants. Here, hidden from all the civilized world, this people roam among the beauties of nature, and behold the grandeur of the works of God. From this place I found a wide and well prepared road, pursuing which for two hours, we reached the village.

I was kindly received at the village, and directed to a large, comfortable house, which they had prepared for my reception, and where several chiefs were assembled to meet me. My

wants were immediately inquired into, a fire was made, one of their springs of water given up to our company, eggs, milk and potatoes brought in abundance, and a small cook-house put up, in so short a time that I had no occasion to order any thing. Such was the generous hospitality of these wild mountaineers.

But this was no sooner done, than a long council was held concerning me (no less than six similar consultations have been held concerning me and the object of my visit) ; and the whole day has been spent in answering their objections. They were inquisitive about the great countries across the waters, and quite incredulous at my description of a passage to this country.

January 15 : By my request, Burá Kumbou came to visit me, accompanied by all his sons, and a large train of attendants. I laid out before him again the object of my visit, and found him evidently well disposed. He is the oldest man I have seen in this country, though as yet sprightly. He told me that he remembered the days of the first A'sámese kings. Although he long since gave up the government of his people to his eldest son, his advice is sought after, on account of his age and experience. I told him, that wishing to do him and his people good, I had been making Nogá books ; but not knowing whether I had written their books correctly I had come upto secure the benefit of his age and wisdom ; for I knew that he could give me all the words I desired. He seconded all my plans ; but he has two sons, who, if they had the power, would expel me from their village this very day. They then held a long consultation in their own tongue, some pleading in my favor, and others saying many bitter things to prejudice the people against me. Through the influence of my interpreter, and the advice of the old chief, the decision was favorable. He at length replied, that he was aged and could not sit all day with me, but would send two of his sons to teach me the language, when he could not come. He said that they would teach me all their language, build my houses, provide me with food, and assist me all in their power. I thanked them many times in return, expressed my best wishes for the prosperity of the Nogá people, and assured them that it was my intention to take nothing from them. Upon this they rose and left me.

January 19 : This afternoon, received an express from Jaipur, giving information that there was supposed to be a large Burman and Singpho force advancing, and already within three days of Jaipur ; that the sipahis had slept on their muskets for three nights, and many affrighted people were running away. What course to pursue, I know not. If I leave now, I shall defeat, in a great degree, the object of my tour.

Having pretty good information that no Burman force is so near, and hoping that it will prove to be a false report, I have concluded to make arrangements for obtaining daily news from Jaipur, and remain until the reports are confirmed. It is one of my sorest trials, to leave my defenceless family alone in a country like this, where war is liable to break out every day.

Completed the first revision of the Catechism in Noga this evening, having had the assistance of several of the heads of the people.

SECOND VISIT TO N'AMSANG

December 1 : Since my last, I have been making the necessary arrangements for a second tour to the Hills,—and getting through the press the Catechism, and a small book of phrases in Singpho and Nága.

I have much pleasure in informing you that the Hon. T.C. Robertson,* deputy governor of Bengal, has forwarded through Capt. Jenkins to me, 200 rs. for the Nága mission, to be spent in defraying the expenses of a second tour. That Hon. gentleman formerly held the post now occupied by Capt. Jenkins, and is a warm friend to the best interests of this province. I also forward to you a note from Capt. Jenkins who proposes to give a donation of 500 rs. for the benefit of schools among the Nágas.

December 20 : Having completed two or three elementary books, and made suitable preparations, I set out on a second tour to the Nám Sâng Nágas ; hoping to be able to communicate to them some of the truths of the gospel. I shall make an attempt to collect a few lads into school, and to translate a few select portions of scripture.

* T.C. Robertson, Agent to the Governor General, North-East Frontier (1832-4).

Their former hospitality and good feeling leads me to hope that they will receive instruction, and embrace the truth. Yet the facts, that they have no books, and that they are known to preserve the customs of their fathers with the greatest tenacity,—render the experiment far less encouraging than it otherwise would be, and make me feel inexpressibly anxious about my present undertaking.

December 21 : On my arrival I found the people unaware of my approach. They had not prepared any place for my reception, and I feared that I had come among them in an inauspicious time. I soon had need of wisdom and patience in meeting the rude assault of one of the chiefs, who appeared to be in a perfect rage ; ordering my interpreter “never to say again that I was not in league with the Company, and one of them ; for my color, dress, language, and customs, were the same ; that I sent letters, and received them ; that I ate, slept and lived with them”. Nothing was said in reply, and I managed soon to turn the conversation upon subjects more pleasing. In the course of the interview, however, I told him that he knew me to be the friend of the Nágas, and that I came among them solely to benefit them. I appealed to those present, and asked, “Do not all the people call me their friend ?” To this nearly every voice responded “Yes,” — and the enraged chief soon left, apparently rather chagrined. In this man I have uniformly found a violent opposer. He often says to the people, “Who wants religion from a foreigner, and who will alter the customs of their fathers to receive books ?”

Weary, sick, and almost discouraged, I retired to an oft frequented bower, where—shut out from every human eye—I felt a sweet pleasure in committing myself,—my absent family,—and the interests of this little mission, to Him who can still the rage of the heathen, and can bring light out of darkness. Returning, I threw myself down on the floor to rest ; when my old friend Tengasi Dekhá came in, bringing milk, potatoes, etc., and best of all—an approving smile. Soon after, several of my former friends came in, bringing whatever they thought I would relish—and manifesting the greatest pleasure at my arrival. I felt rebuked before God, for my distrust, and resolved to go

forward in His strength, however dark and adverse present apperances might be.

December 22 : Sabbath. My baggage not having arrived last evening, I had no conveniences for the night. Rolling myself up, however, in my over-coat, with a block of wood for my pillow, I slept as well as though I had reposed on a bed of down.

At break of day hearing a great tumult, I went out and found almost the whole village engaged in preparations to build me a house. I requested my interpreter to inform the chief, that I was highly gratified to find him so ready to assist me, and that I very much needed a house to make me comfortable ;—but it was the Lord's day, and I could not build on that day, and that I wished to see him early the next morning.

December 23 : Received an early visit from Bor Kumbou, as I requested. He came with a number of the head men of the place. I told him I had much satisfaction in presenting him the two first books ever printed in the Nága language ; that it could now no longer be said that the Nágas had no books ;—and I had come among them this time, with the firm belief that they would take as much pains and pleasure in learning to read them, as I had in preparing them.

I then referred to my want of a house, and proposed to them the plan of a small bungalow,—promising to pay them for building me one. They arose and left me, to consult together on the subject. Soon after, a hundred or more were employed in its erection. I consider this an important object to be accomplished ; as, without a house of my own, I often discommode them ; am never able to seclude myself, or to carry on a school to any advantage.

They selected a delightful spot on a lofty cliff, overlooking a large extent of country. On two sides are deep vales sinking below you, almost as far as the eye can reach. Before you, in the distant view, roll the majestic Brahmaputra, and the beautiful Dihing ; while you can catch faint glimpses of Jaipúr, and the vicinity of Bõrháth, and Jorháth on the west. On the east, in a much nearer view, rises a lofty chain of mountain peaks, which is the height of land between this and the Burmese, Singpho, and Chinese territories ; while on the lower peaks, numerous

Nága villages are to be seen, at small distances, the light of whose fires, and the echo of whose rude music, enliven many a lone and dreary night. It was truly pleasing to think of devoting this beautiful eminence to the service of God. Oh, that God would dispose the hearts of this people to do His will.

December, 24 : The people have been engaged on the house to-day. The frame is up, and one side covered. It is very rough, and rude. The covering is of leaves. There appears to be a good feeling towards me, but an indifference to books, and perhaps a prejudice. I am often told that the people are afraid of my intentions, and believe that I have some secret object to accomplish in regard to their country.

Again, it is said, that if one learns, all will do so, and if I have no object but to teach them, they are much pleased. One thing is very encouraging,—they never hesitate to teach me their language.

December 28 : In closing up the duties of another week, I have great occasion for praise and thanks giving. I have removed into my own house, where I may once more enjoy the sweets of retirement, and secret intercourse with heaven ; and if there are yet some discomforts, I can rejoice in bearing them, knowing that it is for the accomplishment of the best of enterprises.

I might say much of the kindness I receive from this people ; in many cases my wants are actually anticipated. In fact, I am in this respect, very much like a pastor at home, who is daily receiving some testimonial of good will and affection from his parishioners.

January 24, 1840 : Having received information of the ill health of my family, I am obliged to hasten homeward as fast as possible. I regret leaving just now, as the few scholars I have, begin to manifest some interest in learning to read, and the young chief is evidently endeavoring to encourage others to attend. But I shall leave the assistant to attend to the school, and to avoid all appearance of retiring from the field.

January 25 : Started very early and reached Jaipur about sunset. Found my family better, though still feeble. In reviewing the present tour among the Nágas, I see much that should encourage us to effort. It will be remembered that they have no

caste, no religion, of any form, so far as we can learn ; and as the country about them is improving, they are slowly rising also,—and cannot long remain without some form of religion. Indeed, there are a few already who secretly incline to the Bráhmín faith—have taken A'sámese wives, and if there is any attempt at throwing off savage habits, they will adopt the equally degrading ones of the A'sámese. But the *mass of the people are unfettered by the tyrant chain*. We have fallen upon them in the very crisis which (may God grant it !) is calculated to give them a decided preference for the Christian religion. They ridicule the worship of idols as well as most of the ceremonial parts of the Bráhmín and Hindú superstitions. They are also an inquisitive people, independent in their views and feelings,—and may we not hope that such a people, when brought to understand the system of truth, will heartily embrace it ?

DONATIONS TO NAGA MISSION

52. <i>Extract of a letter of Bronson, April 1, 1840 :</i>	Rs
1838	
March By C. A. Bruce, Esq, Co.'s	100
August By same, a second donation	500
Sept Capt. S. F. Hannay	240
1839	
March By Lieut. Sturt	50
Nov By the Hon. T. C. Robertson Deputy Governor of Bengal	200
1840	
March By Lieut. Brodie	60
By Capt. S. F. Hannay, a second donation	240

I should state that Capt. Jenkins has signified his intention of devoting his next annual donation to the aid of the Nága Mission, which will make an addition to the above of 500 rupees.

The Board will be gratified to know that in this time of its pecuniary embarrassment, the Nága Mission will have been nearly supported this year (1839) by these unexpected and liberal donations. I have been thus particular to mention them here, that the Board may know of the deep interest felt in this mission by those who manage the political affairs of this country, and

also, to show some of the reasons which induced me to remove to the Hills, at so early a period of our operations.

EARLY DIFFICULTIES

April 1 : Being anxious to return to the Hills as soon as possible, after a few days I prepared for my departure. I had sent off my baggage, and was intending to start the next morning (Feb. 10) when a letter was received, stating that certain rumors were afloat that several tribes were united in a conspiracy against the Hon. Company, one of which was the Nágas, and that I should be in an unsafe situation among them. This made me hesitate for a short time, but at length, feeling inclined to disbelieve the rumors,—and especially that part which related to myself, I concluded to go forward. The next morning just before starting, I received a letter from the assistant, saying that “the school had increased, that the people were all well disposed, and were wishing me to return quickly”. I accordingly left, and on the second day reached the village, where I found all quiet, and friendly. After a few days I felt assured that the reports I heard were false, and that there were actually no new discouragements to removing my family. I accordingly proceeded to make the necessary arrangements. To the small bungalow built for me, I found it necessary to make an addition. In this the Nágas gave very little assistance, except furnishing whatever materials were necessary. The greater part of the addition is made into one large room, twenty feet square, with a verandah on two sides, which is the school room and place of worship. It is strong, and large enough to accommodate us for years to come. It is covered in the native way (i.e.), with a long kind of leaf brought from the jungles. The covering will require to be renewed often—and after my best efforts to make it proof against the rain, it would not be considered endurable under other circumstances. The school room I have fitted up with a few wooden benches, which I had split out of large logs, in the distant woods. Except “Holbrook’s Apparatus”, and the “cards” recently sent by the Board, the school room has no apparatus. I most sincerely regret that I cannot furnish the room in such a manner as to render it at once inviting and useful

to the scholars. This is a point of the utmost importance in creating and increasing an interest in our schools.

I have found much difficulty in establishing the school. One cause was the impression that none but young men and relatives of the chief could learn to read. The common people, it was thought, had not sufficient understanding, and would receive no benefit from books. It was also said that they could not be spared from their daily work,—the manufacture of salt. To these, and similar objections, equally cogent, I was obliged to listen for a time, thankful for the privilege of teaching the first elements of learning to the favored few who were supposed to have the requisite amount of ability, and confident that this very course would tend to give a popularity to the school, that would ultimately bring its privileges within the reach of all. It has also been difficult to gather them at any stated hour. It has often been amusing beyond expression, to notice their wild habits. While busily employed in reading,—no sooner is the bark of the hunting dog heard, than they exclaim, “*a deer ! a deer !*”—each one seizes his spear and hatchet, and rushes to the chase without ceremony. After this is over perhaps he returns to resume his lesson. Talking, laughing, and hallooing to each other in school, was not considered in the least improper. After a few days I commenced striking a *gong*, as a signal for them to commence at ten in the morning, and also in the evening. I soon had an increase in the evening, from those who labored during the day.

53. *Journal of Mrs. Bronson, March 22, 1840* : Having become somewhat settled in our new home, and our school room being finished, we to-day opened our doors for scholars. The young men, sons and relatives of the chiefs who had been learning to read during Mr. Bronson’s former visit among them, came in, and manifested an interest in their books. I never spent a happier day than this has been. The youths appear very intelligent, and would, I am sure, have excited a deep interest in the minds of our friends at home, could they have seen them during school hours to-day. They came armed with their *da’* (sword) and spear, and with their gay ornaments. In this respect they reminded me of the Aborigines of high rank in our own country.

The most of them could read easy words, and spell a little. Mr. Bronson told them at the close of the school, that as the female teacher had come, the school would now be taught by her, while his time would be occupied in preparing books for them, and in telling the people about the great truths of the Bible. We could plainly see that the idea of being taught by a female was not entirely agreeable to these proud young warriors, but we doubt not they will soon forget prejudices like this. Before closing the school I told them I wished to take their names, as it was the custom in schools to do so, in order to notice who were regular in their attendance, and who were not. On inquiring of them individually what name I should write, they very seriously said, "it is contrary to our custom to disclose our names to foreigners—we never can do it."

Well aware that the surest way of overcoming their little prejudices is not to take much notice of them, I waived the question, and contented myself with writing their several titles as they pass among the Asamese.

March 26 : Our little school slowly increases in number, and we think in interest. We have succeeded in collecting a class of ten little boys, who are as wild and untamed as the partridge on the mountains. The noise of a deer, or the baying of their hounds, frequently calls their attention from their books, and they are off instantly, without waiting to signify their wish to go, or to ask permission.

March 28 : We feel more and more at home among our dear people. Their kindness and hospitality remind us more of the sweet charities of life in our dear native land, than any thing we have before witnessed among the heathen. From the first day of our arrival they seemed to vie with each other in expressions of kind feeling and hospitality. Our little daughter is a great favorite with them, and nearly all their little presents are brought expressly for her. She has plenty of sour buffalo's milk, meat, etc., from her kind hearted friends. She returns their friendship warmly, and utters exclamations of joy when she sees any of them entering the house. We often see her seated on the floor with several of the chiefs around her, while she is showing and explaining to them the pictures in her little books.

April 6 : Soon after I had seated myself in the verandah, a train of youths emerged from the forest just in front of the house, equipped as for war ; with every variety of ornaments which their rude taste and fancy could suggest. Their beautiful and athletic forms thus arrayed, resembled very strikingly the pictures we see of the American warriors in their martial attire. They were sent by the chief to treat with a neighboring tribe concerning some difficulty that had arisen between some of their people. An aged chief, one of the most influential men of the tribe, called, and as Mr. Bronson was absent, he sat down with me in the verandah. We entered into conversation respecting the object of our coming to live among them. He expressed great surprise that a female should be contented to live among their hills, so far away from her parents and friends. As I told him of the reasons which influenced us, and the importance of our object, he became much interested, and expressed his desire that we might be able to accomplish our purpose. "But," said he, "you cannot teach our females. They are trained to bear burdens, to bring wood and water, and to make the salt by which we gain our subsistence. If they learn to read and to sew, they must give up these labors and remain at home ; then who will do this work ; as it is our business to watch the village, hunt deer, and fight our enemies ? Our young men can learn, but not our women ; it is not *our custom*." (*BMM, November 1841, pp. 317-20*)

SICKNESS IN THE FAMILY

54. *Journal of Mr. Bronson, June 16, 1840* : : For the last two weeks we have been in great anxiety in consequence of alarming illness in our own family. Our dear sister was first taken ill of fever, and two days after, our little daughter Mary. In a few days the former became convalescent, but our little daughter grew worse, until it was evident that without prompt and powerful measures to reduce the fever, she would not long survive. Our situation was rendered worse by having a very small supply of medicines on hand so that in the height of our distress we were obliged to send to Jaipur for medicines, and wait the issue of the disease. The fever continued about twelve days,

and then left her ; but it left her in so weak a state, that we had little or no hope of her recovery. We endeavored to prepare our minds for resigning the lent treasure to Him who gave it. We resolved, however, to try the use of stimulants, and soon had the pleasure of seeing an increase of animation. She continued in this doubtful state for nearly a whole day, when nature rallied, and she began to recover. During the whole of this time I have scarcely had an hour's quiet repose, Mrs. Bronson being also feeble ; but the Lord has given us strength equal to our day, and in a most wonderful manner has been gracious in redeeming from the grave.

June 25 : I have lately received several letters from benevolent gentlemen in this vicinity on the subject of promoting the temporal condition of the people, by encouraging in them industrious habits, by introducing the arts, and by assisting them in the cultivation and preparation of tea*. The subject appears to me of great importance, and one that should take its proper place in our efforts to benefit the people. Like all other wild tribes, the Nágas are naturally indolent and need some powerful stimulus to exertion. They are generally satisfied with gaining a bare subsistence. The ready sale of their salt always supplies their wants, with but little labor, leaving them much time for idleness and useless amusements. The commissioner of Upper A'sám, Capt. Jenkins, has interested himself in the subject, and has obtained for this object alone, twelve hundred rupees, to be laid out during the present year, if it can be advantageously done. He has proposed that they be supplied with a few mechanics' tools ; and that whatever will tend to improve the country, be urged upon their attention. Might not some energetic lay brother devote himself to benefiting the people in this way ? I sincerely regret that I have not more leisure to devote to their temporal improvement, but I must confine myself to other duties.

55. *Bronson to Peck, August 25* : In my last communication I mentioned the arrival of our sister, and also her illness, almost immediately on her reaching this place. Her attacks of fever have since been frequent—scarcely remitting longer than

* *Infra* pp. 253 ff.

two or three days— each attack leaving her still weaker than the former, until she became nearly helpless. Under these circumstances I felt it my duty to go down to Jaipur, to obtain medicines and provisions, of both of which we had but a very scanty supply. Accordingly on the 14th of July, having commended my sick family to God, I set out for Jaipur. The heavy rains had so swollen the Nám Sám river, that I was obliged to go by a circuitous and uneven route. Having no elephant, and the mud being deep, it was a journey of fatigue and exposure. At evening we came to a halting place, where was a small shed covered with leaves, open on three sides ; and although it was in a dense forest filled with swarms of musquitoes, I enjoyed it as much as I ever did a comfortable hotel in my native land. Spreading my mattress upon a few logs that lay there, I enjoyed a quiet sleep. Very early the next morning we started again and reached Jaipur at evening. Having obtained medicines and other things necessary for the sick, I set out on my return, and was permitted to meet my sick family again, under more favorable circumstances than I had feared.

In about a fortnight the jungle fever again attacked me and has scarcely left me until the present time ; but the rainy season is nearly over, and I hope to be benefited by the cold weather, so as not to leave this station alone.

56. *Bronson to Peck, Jaipur, October 4, 1840* : My last letter was dated Aug. 25th, in which I mentioned the improved state of my health. Since that time it has pleased God again to try us by sickness ; I have not only been brought low, and debarred from all missionary work for nearly three months, but am now suffering from other weaknesses, induced by the frequent attacks of fever, which have cut off my hopes of being able to continue in the field for some months to come. The thought of leaving our station among the hills alone, has been a very trying one, and I have remained in painful suspense as to the path of duty for some time past. I am, however, inclined to believe that, under existing circumstances, duty to myself and the cause of God, requires that I relinquish the labors of the mission for the present, and try to restore my health by a change of air and diet. I have, therefore, come down to this place with my family.

We arrived yesterday, and hope to be able to leave for a tour on the river in the course of two or three weeks. We intend to proceed as far as Calcutta, and perhaps farther, should it still seem to be duty. My sister's health appears to be improved, and she will spend her time during our absence in the study of the language, and in teaching whatever number of scholars she may obtain.

It is indeed an affliction to us to be obliged to leave our field of labor destitute of any one to carry on its operations,—particularly so, when we think of the difficulty with which we had obtained a footing among the people—the interest of the scholars in their books—and the kind feeling manifested by the people toward us from day to day. On hearing of our intention to leave, many came to express their regret ; and the day previous to our departure, the chiefs assembled at my house and desired me not to stay away longer than was necessary, but to return and complete what was begun in the school.

They said they had considered me as their religious teacher and guide ; and had received nothing but good from my hand ever since I had lived among them. The old chief, then pointing to four of his sons present, said—“I am old—perhaps I shall never see you again, but these my sons will remain—don't forget them” ; and turning to his sons, said—“You, my sons, don't reject the counsel and direction of the sahib ; always do accordingly and you will prosper.” The scene was truly affecting to me, and I felt a greater attachment to them than ever. The chief sent out to the villages and obtained coolies to carry down my baggage ; and the young chief and his nephew accompanied us all the way. O that there were some one to continue the school, and to enter at once into the labors we are obliged to leave ! O God ! may this infant mission yet live before Thee !

57. *Journal of Mrs. Bronson, October 2, 1840* : Little did I think at my last date, that a painful necessity would so soon oblige us to leave our dear people, and to relinquish, for a time at least, the labors so happily commenced. But an all wise Providence has thus ordered, and it is our part quietly to submit. Since my last date, sickness has nearly suspended all missionary work. The school has continued under the care of the native

teacher, but my own time has been fully taken up with the care of my sick husband and sister.

We have at length come to the decision, that it is our duty to leave our post for a season, and to seek the blessing of health, without which we can do nothing for the heathen. Thus to leave this people, like sheep without a shepherd, is inexpressibly painful to our feelings. But the path of duty is very plain to us, and we must go forward, trusting in Him who has said, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." The Nagas appear to regret our leaving, very much—but they say, "We cannot ask you to stay and die here ; go and get health, and then come to us again." The aged chief who has seen more than a hundred years, came to visit us yesterday, attended by his numerous sons. He said to Mr. B., "Before you return, I may be gone, for my hair is ripe, but these my sons will stand pledged to be friends to you." Then turning to his sons, who stood respectfully behind him, he charged them most solemnly, to listen to the instructions of the missionary, and always to be his friends. This they promised.

We are this morning in all the bustle of preparation for our tedious journey. Our Naga friends have been very kind in assisting us. Without their aid I hardly know how we should have been able to get our goods down to Jaipur. They bear no burdens for others, themselves, it being against their *custom* ; but they have assisted us in getting forty Abors from the upper ranges, who, for a fixed price, agree to take every thing down. The chiefs brought us a man this morning, saying "here is a trusty man whom we recommend to take little Mary". We shall therefore give the child to his care, to get her down the hills the best way he can. The only way will be, I suppose, to allow him to tie her firmly to his back. In this way he will probably take the child up and down the steep precipices far more safely than in any other. An English gentleman at Jaipur, has very kindly sent an elephant, upon which sister Rhoda and myself are to perform the journey.

DEATH OF RHODA BRONSON

58. *Bronson to Peck, December 10* : With a heavy heart I sit down to inform you that death has again entered our little circle, and torn away from us my dearly beloved sister. She

died on the 8th inst., from the effects of repeated attacks of fever—having been with us nearly eight months, during even of which she was for the greater part of the time enfeebled by disease. On the 8th of October she was again attacked with fever. Her illness was severe, and for a number of days did not yield to medicine. At length the fever left her very low, with an obstinate bowel complaint, which rendered her case a complicated and difficult one to manage. No physician was obtainable ; the brethren were absent from the station, and my supply of medicines scanty. Under such a responsibility, you can better imagine than I can express the anxiety I felt, while I saw that an inveterate disease was baffling all my attempts to restore her. She continued to sink away from week to week, until she became perfectly helpless—the mere skeleton of her former self. During the last month of her life, I had the privilege of being with her, by day and night ; and during all this time she never uttered a murmuring word—not the least unreconciliation to God’s dealings with her. She felt persuaded that she had not long to live, and said to me, “You must part with me soon.” Often she spoke of arrangements she desired should be made, if she should not recover ; and on one occasion, while I was carrying her emaciated form into a little room that I had just finished for her accommodation, she said, “Have I come in here to live or to die ?” But she generally refrained from saying much to me, because she saw it was painful to my feelings ; she, however, conversed freely with Mrs. Bronson, and other members of the mission.

REVIEW OF YEAR’S LABOUR

59. *Bronson to Peck, Jaipur, January 1, 1841* : Another year has rolled around, and it becomes my duty to lay before you what we have attempted to do the past year, as well as our prospects for the year to come.

It has been our pleasure as a family to be more actively employed in missionary work during the year that is past than at any former period of our lives. The experiment of living upon the Nága hills with a family, and that too during the rainy season, has been fairly tried ; and I can truly say, that until sickness entered our abode, we were never so truly happy in this heathen

land. During the greater part of the eight months that we were on the hills, our little school was continued. A number of young men of good standing can now read their own language, and the romanized A'sámese ; and can repeat the Nága catechism : several other smaller lads can only read easy sentences in Nága. The larger boys can write tolerably well also. Mrs. Bronson has devoted almost her whole time to the school, which, with her domestic affairs, has required no small amount of labor. The first two weeks of our departed sister's missionary life was spent in the school,—with inexpressible joy to herself, and with great satisfaction to us all. Boliram, our valuable teacher, has been very faithful and useful. We daily instruct him also, and hope he may yet not only prove useful as a teacher of language, but of the blessed gospel also. Bhugchand, the interpreter, has also aided in teaching the smaller boys. The Nágas are a people of such a character, that what they do, they do with their might ; and when they come to read, all wish to read at once—and not wait one for another ; so that it has been a very useful measure to employ these assistants. Since we came down I sent Boliram up to see if they were daily reading or had forgotten what they had learned. He brought back a very favorable account of their reading together evenings. We should have been able to accomplish much more if it had not pleased God to afflict us so severely with sickness.

MISSION SUSPENDED

60. *Brown to Peck, February 16* : Last evening the brethren had a meeting, when the subject of relinquishing the Nága mission, or at least of suspending it for a time, was brought before us. I believe we all approved of such a measure, but as br. Bronson was not fully settled in his own mind, we thought it best not to decide the question fully until after further consideration. I have long been in doubt whether, in the present circumstances of the mission, and while there are so many inviting fields among the A'sámese, it is the duty of any brother to devote his life to the study of a language, and to the translation of the scriptures into it, which is spoken only by a few thousands of people. The Nágas, who speak the Nám Sám language, according to the

nearest estimate br. Bronson can make, amount to no more than about 6300, and of these, a large portion can already speak the A'sámese language with ease. Whether we ought to make a separate written language for so small a tribe, seems to be a serious question. I refer, of course, only to the Nagas that speak the Nám Sáng language. The Nágas, as that term is used, are indeed very numerous ; but it is to be noticed that this term does not designate a particular tribe or race, but is applied to all the hill tribes, however diverse in their origin, religion, customs, or language.

Br. Bronson is now prepared to labor in the A'sámese language, which he understands much better than he does or can understand the Nága, for a long time. We have been sadly disappointed in not receiving help from home. We fondly hoped that *ten* missionaries, at least, would have been sent among the A'sámese ; and until we have as many as that, it appears to me there ought to be none sent to the Nágas. The A'sámese are a most encouraging and inviting field ; they are in a great measure a civilized people ; a good portion of them can already read, and their country is rapidly becoming one of the most important in all the Company's possessions.

NAMSANG MISSION : CAUSES OF FAILURE

61. *Letter of Brown, June 15, 1850* : In this letter I will introduce a subject which appears to me likely still more important at least if our mission operations should be extended as I hope and trust they may be. In our letters to Bro. Stoddard you speak of Nowgong as the station affording facilities of access to the Nagas. I have seen the same idea in of Bro. Bronson's Letters...I believe it has been done hastily and without sufficient grounds. If any effort should henceforth be directed to the Nagas, I hope it may be after due deliberations and full knowledge of the most important advantageous positions. To begin in a headlong manner without knowing who and where people are and what is the state of their language...would be an error that might in the end render all our attempts abortive. One such mistake with reference to these people had already been made in this missions to the Namsangias a small tribe at the extremity

of the great family and with a language which by no means favourable ; it is possible that one common language, at least as the language of books, might be made to answer for the whole. But on this I could not speak confidently. It is an extremely difficult thing to effect even a slight change in the language of a people ; the practicability of such a measure could only be ascertained by actual experience.

One point is certain that Jorhath is the station of others in the plains most favourably located for access to the principal Naga tribes, and it is my opinion that the mission should not be hastily sent into the hills, but commence their operations by examining in field, acquiring the language, instructing Naga youngmen and going into the hills on preaching tours only in cold season... There is no station in Assam superior to Jorhath a position we should have selected in preference to either of the three now occupied had it not been for the absence of the English residents, a circumstance, which though generally regarded as disadvantageous, could by no means without is advantages.

(i) MATERIAL AND MORAL IMPROVEMENT

62. *Bronson to Jenkins, Nam Sang Naga Hills, March 14, 1840* : It is with much pleasure that I now inform you of the safe arrival of myself and family at this place. We arrived this evening after a tedious march of 2 days. I am greatly debted to Mr. Bruce's kindness in supplying me with elephants upon one of which Mrs. Bruce came nearly all the way. Mr. Cutter also attended me and gave me great assistance.

The Nagas appear pleased thus far and I hope our coming among them will tend to increase their confidence, and dispose them to habits of civilized life.

It strikes me that we should aim at benifitting the people in every way in our power ; and perhaps nothing is more needful than to correct their indolent habits and to introduce among them some knowledge of the arts. I have thought of introducing among them the manufacture of tea on the following plans, viz., to get them all engaged in the cultivation of the plant and in the manufacture of green Tea, which could be sold in this State to Mr. Bruce or some Company at one rupee or 1/4 per

seer. The process of crushing the leaves thus far is so simple that little instruction would be required, to enable them, to carry on the business independently ; the profit would all be theirs and tend to get industries habits introduced. Besides it would send a lot of Tea into the Market without trouble, and care on the part of Superintendents. It would also help to civilize the peoples and it would enrich and improve the country and bind the Nagas to the Company by another strong link. I have conversed with Mr. Bruce upon the plan and he has spoken very favourably. He thinks that the Government would approve such a plan I have now only to submit the plan for your consideration. Should you see no objection to it, and should you be of the opinion that I might safely hold out as encouragement to the people a good compensation for their tea leaves. I doubt not that I might succeed in enlisting them in the experiment pretty generally.

The Nagas appear to be ready to enter into the business as well as to cultivate anything that would be useful and profitable. I feel desirous of introducing several things such as wheat, potatoes, garden vegetables of all sorts—also cotton which would grow here finely. Apples would grow here and all fruit trees. The change in the people is striking when I first came up here ; men, women and children were running this way and that leaping down precipices—and fleeing to the woods for their lives. Now they are ready to keep about my house all the day and each one seems desirous to supply me with some thing which I need. I never received so much hospitality from strangers in a heathen land before.

(2) At the beginning of the next week I hope we shall be able to commence our school again. Seven of the largest lads began to read easy sentences when I closed up the school to remove my family. As Mrs. Bruce will be able to give her whole time to the school I trust we shall get a good school for six months to come.

(3) All is peace and quiet except the affair between Bur Duoria Nagas and the Nam Sangias. The decision of Mr. Strong*

* Sub-Assistant, Sibsagar.

to require the Bur D's to make over three disputed Abor Villages to the Nam Sangias, although agreed to on the part of the Bor Durias, is a sore business with them, and they appear to me to be ready for mischief. Although the two chiefs took oaths to be friends before Mr. Strong, they are not so and it strikes me that if justice were done the Bor Durias would be brought to see the necessity of their keeping and performing all promises and alliances made under oath before the Company and by their order. I mention the Bor Durias particularly as it has appeared to me that the Nam Sangias were disposed to remain on friendly terms. In all that I have within on this point I have only expressed my private opinion being heartily desirous of seeing these two tribes united again. (*FPP, 1840 ; May 11, nos. 128-9*).

63. To

T. H. Maddock Esquire

Secretary to the Government of India

In the Poll. Dept.

Fort William

Sir,

I beg to submit a copy of a letter from the Rev. Mr. Bronson, missionary, of the 14th ultimo suggesting a plan for the encouragement of the Nagas to the cultivation of Tea, and a copy of a letter of the 11 instant which I have addressed to Capt. Vetch* on the subject of that communication, and which I trust will be approved of by the Right Hon'ble the Governor General in Council.

2nd. Mr. Bronson is the first gentleman who has ever made himself acquainted with the language of the Nagas and ventured to reside amongst these interesting branch of the hill tribes around us, and I hope from the very friendly disposition that the Nagas have evinced towards Mr. Bronson, that much good will result from his mission to this comparatively inoffensive race, and it appears to me that Mr. Bronson has very judiciously turned the attention of the Nagas to industrious pursuits.

* Political Agent, Upper Assam.

3rd. I conceive that by a proper cooperation with that gentleman and the encouragement of the Nagas to cultivate the products of their hills and the tea in particular, we may hope ere long to see civilization greatly advanced among these Nagas, and our supremacy gradually extended over the hills, without which, and the consequent suppression of the constant feuds amongst the tribes, there seem to be little hope of effecting any great change in the habits of the people, or of our being able to avail ourselves of the great natural resources of the fine tract of mountainous country.

4th. I hope therefore His Lordship will approve of my instructions to Captain Vetch to endeavour the profit by the opening thus made by Mr. Bronson and to make some arrangements with the Nagas for the cultivation and manufacture of their own Tea—at present the Government may have to bear a small expense, but if we can effect any arrangement with the Assam Company or individual speculators will be happy to relieve Government of the charge.

5th. I trust I may be allowed to take this opportunity to soliciting the assistance of the Government for the support of the Naga school, which missionaries have succeeded in establishing in the country. The mission with Mr. Bronson is connected is struggling under great pecuniary difficulties, but if the Government would be pleased to allow me to expend a monthly sum not exceeding 100 rupees a month in aid of the mission, I have no doubt, I would give permanency to the schools, and extend their usefulness considerably. I beg with much difference to add that the Government were pleased in 1828/29 to support a similar school in the Garrow hills unfortunately was allowed to cease with the death of the first teacher*. I mention this lest his Lordship should suppose that the proposition now made was a novel one and at variance with the practice of the Government and an interference with the religion of the natives in making use of the missionary to conduct the schools. The Nagas like the Garrows, however, have no priesthood nothing

* *Supra* Introduction.

like a received religion, and there are consequently no religious prejudices to oppose or offend. I have the honour to be

Sir

Yours most obedient Servant

F. Jenkins

Governor General's Agent

Governor General's
Agent Office

N. E. Frontier, the 14th April, 1840

64. To

Captain F. Jenkins

Agent to Governor General.

N. E. Frontier

Poll. Dept.

Sir, I am directed by the RH the Governor General in cl to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 14th ultimo submitting copy from the Rev. Mr. Bronson in regard to the civilisation of the wild Naga tribes and in reply to state that H.L. in Council tho' sensible of the benefit that would attend the success of Mr. Bronson's proposals establishment for the education of the Nagas thinks nevertheless that it would not be consistent with the principle upon which the Govt. has hitherto acted and might give rise to inconvenient applications in other quarters, were the aid of Govt. to be given to an establishment with professed missionary views.

2. His Lordship however in consideration of the peculiar circumstances of the case, will consent for one season to pass in your contingent bill, of small sums, not amounting in the whole to more than 100 rupees monthly, for objects of practical utility connected with the improvement of the Naga country and spent with the view of teaching its population into habits of industry.

I have etc.

Sd/.

Asstt. Scy. to Govt. of India

11 May 1840

65. *Jenkins to Bronson, May 28, 1840* : I propose drawing all the Rs. 100 monthly...and I think it would be prudent if

you were to say nothing about appropriation made by the Government as they are very much affraid of any precedent of this sort...for the same wants exist with all the missions as with yours, and if the gift to us makes no noise, I may be able to get it continued...I shall send the letter of Government officially to Captains Vetch and Brodie and ask their advice how to proceed. I should like to employ all the money in purpose of practical utility and in attempts to teach them some of the arts and professions. Nothing apparently appears to be likely to be more service to them than teaching them to cultivate tea and I hope you will turn their attention to this by all means in your power. In giving them anything procurable with the money you will not fail to endeavour to impress upon them the kindness of the Government and state to them the gift proceeded from them for the some purpose of teaching and enabling them to live comfortably on the products of their own field. (*ABFMS also AS, Letter received from Miscellaneous Officers, Vol. 5(a)*)

66. *Bronson to Jenkins, Namsang, Naga Hills, June 29, 1840* : It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the receipt of your kind communication of May 28th, containing a copy of a letter from Government in reference to the proposed plan for the civilization of the wild Naga tribes in this vicinity. Allow me my dear Sir, to return you an expression of my warmest thanks, for your kind interest and readiness to second all our feeble efforts to improve the people. Be assured I shall ever be ready to do all in my power, consistent with other duties to carry your plan, now presented, into successful operation. The allowance on the part of Government is truly liberal, and I presume we shall not be able to lay out a greater sum to good advantage. But allow me to suggest that in the prosecution of our plans, the greatest prudence in management will be constantly required. The Nagas extremely jealous of the Company in consequence of their "*Onward March*" and the late movement in Mattak* have tended to make them still more suspicious. You cannot feel the force of this remark as I do having been

* Annexation of the territory of the Moamariahs or Muttocks in November, 1839.

obliged to carry very many of my points at first by...management. Their fears of me, and I trust nearly done away—but one imprudent step, particularly if it gave me the appearance of preparing the way for taking the country—as in Mattak—would turn these against me, and renew all my former difficulties. I mention this that you may fully understand the nature of the difficulties in our way—as well as the reason for the course I may hereafter pursue. On this account I should not approve of any course just now that in their eyes would connect me with the company's affairs, but until they become enlisted in our plans, carry them one more as it springing from ourself. Then I could safely lay your letters before them, and inform them the Government was wishing to assist them, and to avail themselves of the products of their Hills in such a way as would be profitable, and honorable to themselves.

2nd. You have kindly requested me to offer my suggestions that might present themselves to my mind as to the best was of expending the money. In reply I would say that the general plan proposed by yourself appears to me to be the best with some trifling exceptions. It strikes me, however, as preparatory to further efforts a new route to Jaipur should be opened avoiding the high hills...I would next mention on Tea-operations. I have laid this suggestion before the chiefs...and have had several different (talks) and have had greater and less encouragement. On receipt of your letter I laid the subject before them again and in 'due time' I shall be able to enlist them.

3rd. The salt make in 'Iron Basons' perhaps best. I know nothing about that business and should like to know it wood fire will not do instead of coal. I know no coal mine and should think that the Nagas would object on that account.

4th. I think that the Nagas would like to try cotton, wheat and all vegetables. Anything that would supply their wants during rainy season would be highly valued by them for at that season...specially rice is difficult to be got at the plains. I think we could not do a greater service to them than to send them a lot of cossya potatoes for planting and this would grow finely. I know from a trial I have already made.

67. *Bronson to Jenkins, Namsang, Naga Hills, July 22, 1840 (excerpts)* : Your letter of June 14 was received a number of days ago, but the sickness of my family, and subsequently want of suitable medicine and comforts in the shape of eatables having obliged me to visit Jaipur. I have been unable to reply until the present time...the rise of Namsang obliged me to go by a circuitous route over the Hills which with the rains much leeches and want of a horse or elephant wellnigh place me upon the 'sick list' and my own health had been pretty good, but my family is feeble, my sister has a slow lingering fever and I find myself very disadvantageously situated to make them comfortable. Under the circumstances I fear I shall be obliged to come down with my family.

I have lately been thinking whether it would not be well for you on the part of the Government to take some measures to get hold of the Nagas and to make them feel a sort of dependence upon them for livelihood and particularly for the administration of all their internal affairs. I see nothing that is so likely to prevent their improvement in civilization at least, as their perfect independence of feeling—and this is strengthened by the ready sale of their salt—which is ample to support them should they increase a hundred fold.

Now I profess no great skill in politics but if you will pardon the liberty, I will mention that I have thought upon the subject. I understand that the Government hold a claim to 1/2 of the salt springs—and that it is intended to place a Magistrate at Jaipur soon. Now even the Nagas say the Nam Sangas, Bor Duaorias, Pani Duaorias and Pulnyias* called down by this Magistrate, and hold a consultation with them, informing them that the Government wished to employ them in the manufacture of salt and Tea, and would reward them for the same and that they intended to work that portion of the salt wells that belonged to the Company so as to make it more profitable—using iron basons and coal fires. I think the effect upon the Nagas would be salutary. If they saw that in this way the Government salt was cheaper and better—they would be ready to work their own

* Naga clans, commonly known as Noctes.

wells in the same way. Besides they would feel that they were not so very independent of all other means of support after 1/2 of their salt wells are gone—and when salt is made better and cheaper than—they can do it. This might prepare them also to listen to our proposals about Tea operations—and other useful pursuits. *It is their salt*—that makes them so independent—and I confess that I see no likelier way to make them improve than for Government to make half themselves.

I think it very important that a Magistrate be placed at Jaipur or Borhath—and that the Nagas understand that he will listen to all their difficulties and that they never undertake to redress their own injuries—irrespective of him.

I think that occasional tours among the Upper Hills would create an influence for him—and prepare the way for any further effect in the way of opening a free communication with Burmah. Another point, Purunder before his days were numbered had the Nagas much more under his control than the Government now have. Crossing over the numerous wrongs he inflicted upon them still—he made them look to him in all important matters and when they did wrong he chastised them. He also made them subserve his interests in money matters. There are now 14 or 16 houses among the Bor Duorias who were obliged to work every man 10 days out of thirty in working the salt wells for Purunder. These 20 days they cultivated their rice and worked their salt but the remaining 10 days work was all received by the Raja. There is also now one large village called Khila Gong, which the Raja had made arrangements with the Nam Sangia and Bor Duorias to remove to another place when the (the Raja) designed to form a village of his own. The Khila Gongias were to labor for the Raja in the same way. It was considered as a tribute paid by the Nagas to the Raja—and would have brought in a vast amount of salt to the Raja. But just as the arrangement was completed the Raja was ejected. Matters came into the hands of the Company—and here this village is now claimed neither by Nam Sangias or Bor Duorias nor by the Government.

A knowledge of these facts have led me to inquire whether an interview with the chiefs on this subject would not secure to you all these men to aid in carrying on Tea and Salt operations,

on a similar but more liberal plan. You might locate them all on some peak near the wells, and Tea—or a part near the wells—and a part at the Tea Gardens. Through these people you might carry on operations quite independently and at the same time reward them as you saw them worthy or not unless something of the kind is done I am inclined to think that some time will elapse before the Nagas will be induced to do much in the work of improvement. (*FPP, 1840 ; November 9. No. 82*)

68. *Bronson to Jenkins, August 24, 1840* : I have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of July 19th I regret that so long an interval has elapsed without a reply—but a severe attack of fever which brought as low and weak as ever, has prevented me from writing. Through the all abounding mercy of God, I am now convalescent again—though I cannot walk half a mile without great fatigue—and a feeling of complete frustration. The delay has given me an opportunity, however, of laying your benevolent plans before this tribe—and of ascertaining something definitely about their desire for improvement. I regret to say that I feel almost discouraged about the Nagas becoming a reform—civilised—and Christian people. Certain it is that a mightier than human arm must effect the change. On the reception of your last letter, I sent word to the Chief that you had made certain inquiries and propositions, which I wished to consult with them about, and desired that he could assemble the people for that purpose, accordingly on the following day the people were assembled and the Chief sent for me. I informed him that you had been informed of their wish to have books—and to become wise—and that you were highly gratified on account of it—and that you wished to benefit them and their country every way in your power and wished to teach them the useful arts—and how to live more comfortably on their own Hills. I then spread out before them the immense profit of the Tea trade—and how easily they could become well acquainted with the whole business—so as to secure to themselves all its advantages—and that you had a great desire to have them do so—and would assist them to get their *Barries** under cultivation

* Tea gardens.

and would also send up well qualified persons to teach them how to manufacture the article—and afterwards would secure the same to them as hereditary property—and be always ready to pay them a good price for all their Tea. I told that this was your proposition—made with a view to their own benefit—and not being able to answer you on the subject—I submitted it to them to say what reply I should return. It was evidently a subject of considerable importance in their minds. They debated among themselves for nearly two hours—repeating the proposition—and speaking about its effect upon them—and finally replied—that their village was always in danger of being destroyed by neighbouring villages—and that as the *Barri* was half a day distant and the work would oblige them to be absent a number of days at a time. They could not undertake it. Besides from days of old, they had always lived on their salt that God gave them as a means of subsistence and this work suited them—and allowed them to be idle when they wished—and to hunt and sport when they pleased—but the Tea would require them to labour incessantly. I then asked them if this was their reply to you—they said yes—I then reminded them that after you had so kindly offered to assist them to become a wise and happy people, it was not well to utterly decline your offers, and I do not like to send you such a reply, but would suggest whether they might not form a small village on the Tea Ground out of the various villages that were tributary to them, the members of which should do the work and receive a portion of the profit or whether they might not employ coolies and send down four or five of their men to oversee them or transplant and from a large tea-garden close by their village. I told them that I would ask you to assist them in the outset to get 5,000 or 10,000 plants set out near their village. But they replied to it all very summarily—saying we gave the Tea to the Bor Sahab*, let him do with it what he pleases as far as we have *Salt*—and why do we want the Tea—I replied that it was because you saw that they could be greatly benefitted that you had proposed it and again inquired if this was their reply—they said yes—I then left them.

* Principal Assistant, at present Deputy Commissioner of a District.

They had a long discussion afterwards and perhaps I ought to say that turn of the headmen would have approved of an acceptance of the proposals and afterwards said that if you would place those 14 or 15 houses that they formerly gave to the Company at their disposal to locate on the Tea Ground they would still undertake the Tea. I have to beg your indulgence for troubling you with so long a detail of my conversation with the people about engaging in the Tea business—but I desire to say before you the difficulties of doing anything with so rude and independent a people—I have done all I can do on the subject for the present and I shall be much obliged for any advice or suggestion that you may have to present.

On the whole perhaps we ought not to be wholly discouraged yet. This people first refused—then wish to hear again—and often several conversations embrace our views—and now I might get two of the heads employed if any worthy plan could be recommended. (*AS, Letters received from Miscellaneous Officers, 5 (a)*).

69. *Jenkins to Bronson, Gowahatty, August 27, 1840* : I have been longer in reply to your letter of the 22nd ultimo, than I intended, but I have had a pressure of letters...I have sent a copy of your letter to Lieutenant Brodie with particular advertance to that part of it which recommends that the Nagas should be made to feel their dependance on us. This advice of yours entirely accord on my own opinion, that the Nagas are directly under Lieutenant Brodie. I would go along with him in all measures to be taken for the improvement of these interesting tribes.

You will be glad to hear that Mt. Grange's* two late expeditions to the Angami Nagas promise to be attended with the best effects. The result at present has been the entire cessation of the barbarous atrocities they were in the habit of committing upon our hill Cachar subjects.

To take advantage of the impression thus made upon them it is my intention to send Captain Bigge† to their hills immediately

* Sub Assistant, Nowgong.

† Principal Assistant, Nowgong. For Peace Missions see Barpujari, *Problem of the Hill Tribes North-East Frontier, i*, pp. 172-3, 180. ff.

after the rains to endeavour to get them to enter into written agreements with us to obey orders and withhold from any depredations on our subjects or their own neighbouring tribes on which condition we shall give them free access to our plains at *hauts*.

Whilst Captain Bigge is in the hills it might be a good opportunity to you to endeavour to explore the Naga country down westward towards him ; he will go peaceable intent and carry valuable presents with him, but at the same time he will be prepared to punish any aggression. I have no doubt his mission will be spread far and wide in the hill and the influence of it might be useful in establishing you to proceed on your message of peace...the chiefs of the Lhota Nagas well disposed I imagined to receive you. (They) in that direction invited me to the hills year before last. I think it might be useful to you were you to put yourself in communication with Mr. C. Bruce at Gabroo purbut and endeavour to procure from him information of the Naga tribes near him, and of their disposition to receive you as a visitor. (*FPP, 1840 ; November 9, No. 82*).

70. *Bronson to Jenkins, September 9, 1841* : I have the pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your letter of Augt. 18th enclosing a copy of a letter from the Govt. also an extract of a letter from the Hon'ble, the Court of Directors enquiring into the progress of our school operations among the Nagas in reference to which I have to state, that it was with the most sincere regret, that in consequence of protracted illness I was obliged to relinquish the duties of the school and ultimately to retire to the plain. The very severe sickness I have since had, has induced my friends generally to recommend my discontinuing duties of the Naga mission for the present. Mr Barkar has located at Rungpore and does not hold any connection with the Nagas. You will see therefore that the prospect of our operations being carried forward among the Nagas is at present very small.

I will state, however, that while the school was in operation, we had nearly all the sons of the chiefs, who made such proficiency as to be able to read the elementary books I had prepared for them : several could write extremely well and I understand that even now they read together daily. I saw a desire among them

to learn the native Bengali character (Assamese), and think that would now learn to read their own language even in this character with greater zeal than they do the Roman.

To your enquiry whether any of them attend school at this place, I am sorry to say that they do not ; neither do I think that they could be induced to live in the plains. I have repeatedly offered to feed and clothe them if they would do so, but have never succeeded—nothing important will ever be effected among these Naga tribes either towards their education or civilization until they are made less independent of the Govt. by the occupation of their salt springs or by occupying so many of them as will supply the demand with a better and cheaper kind of salt. Then they might be more readily induced to cultivate the tea and so become more industrious in habits. Had I been permitted to remain and carried out the plans devised, I doubt not that a slow improvement would have been going on among them ; and it is therefore with the deepest regret that I relinquish them for the present specially since the Govt. have so promptly offered their generous aid and put into our hands the means of carrying forward our operations for their improvements to the full extent of our desires. (*FPP, 1841 ; November 22, No. 124*).

(ii) *THE AOS AND THE ANGAMIS*

71. *Letter from Clark, Sibsagor, December 5, 1871 (excerpts) :* Several months ago I set one of the very best of my native assistants at picking up Naga. He has partially mastered one dialect ; he has been on to the Hills. At first he was doubtless in considerable peril for his life, as they suspected him of being a Government spy. Even after he had got in one of their villages, for three days no man, woman or child would speak with him socially. All the talk was official,—with the officers of the villages. But at the end of the three days, they became convinced that he was not a Government spy ; and then there was entire freedom of conversation and a very great desire to hear the Gospel. He was then shown every favor and honor which they could bestow. He was one week on the Hills. For many reasons I had desired him not to remain long on the Hills, the first time he went up. When he left, men, women and children shed tears. They sent

two of their chief men and a body guard with him to his very house.

Now a few words about these savages of the Hills. They are men of blood and war. Their fighting is all hand to hand, with big knives and spears. With them it is no glory to kill a non-combatant or a slave. But as our Indians prized a scalp, so these men glory in the head of a warrior ; and as, among some of the tribes, a man is hardly considered a man till he has taken human life, so they are not always very particular whether the man they kill is an enemy or not, provided, if not an enemy, it is done secretly.

They live only on the crests of hills, in villages of from 300 to 1300 inhabitants. The accessible points to these villages or "sangs" are guarded night and day. They wear very little clothing, and eat meat when either fresh or putrid. They have some small patches of rice cultivation on the hillsides, not far from their sangs. When they work at cultivation, sentinels are on guard to prevent surprise from hostile sangs.

Their forms of government are usually quite democratic. A few tribes have a king or a great chief.

They are religious, or rather superstitious ; but their religion amounts to little. They have no caste.

They have no written language. Sometimes fifty or more sangs speak a common language ; sometimes, but three or four sangs. The tribe to which my native preacher Godhula went has probably fifty or more sangs, which speak a common language. He only went to two or three sangs ; but had pressing invitations to go to others.

On the frontier, this tribe seems to extend from a point about opposite to Sibsagor to a point about opposite Jorhat,—say 35 or 40 miles. How far back into the Hills these sangs of this tribe extend, I have not very reliable information.

These Nagas have a good name for truthfulness and for general purity of life, except that they are dirty and blood thirsty. They are probably as faithful friends as they are implacable enemies.

72. "Of all the tribes into which the Naga group is divided the most powerful and warlike, as it is also the most enterprising, intelligent and civilized, so to say, is the turbulent Angamis."

Physically they are well developed race. Their dwellings are collected into large villages on the tops or slopes of high hills of their rugged country. Their simple diet is largely supplied from the rice fields which they cultivated with more skill and ease than their neighbours. Cows, pigs and chicken are kept for food and trade. Cotton sufficient for their garment is cultivated on the fields and woven by their women. The clothing of men consists of a band of eighteen inches wide round the hips and a blanket nearly square thrown about the body. Ornaments of various kinds made of metal, shells and goat hair dyed red are added to their simple dress according to wealth and deeds of blood so that a warrior in full dress present a very picturesque appearance. In his hand he invariably carries a spear, and in a block on his back a large axe-like weapon. The dress of the women is the same as that of the men, viz., a band and blanket ; except that the band reaches to the knees. Around the neck numerous strings of beads and shells are worn, and on arms huge brass bands. (Rivenburg, S. W. ; "Historical Sketch of the Angami Naga Mission", *Jubilee Papers*, pp. 84-5)

THE PEOPLE OF THE GARROW HILLS

73. The Garrows, whom we propose in this paper to introduce to the notice of our readers, occupy the mountainous country between the left bank of the Brahmaputra and the Khasia hills. We have neither history nor popular tradition to tell us the origin of the tribe, and it is only a careful examination of their language that helps us to ascertain their relation to their neighbors of the Cis-Himalayas. Occupying a range of hills detached from the Himalayan chain, and differing in physique, as well as in habits and customs, from the people of Bootan, it would not readily occur to one to ally them to the Himalayan tribes. Nevertheless, that they are so allied is evident from the strong affinity between their language and the dialects of these tribes. Their emigration to the comparatively remote hills in which we find them, and the influences that have since then served to modify their character and manners, have also left an impress on their language ; but radical terms are the same among the Garrows as among the other mountain tribes of the eastern frontier, and prove an identity inherent in the primitive structure of the dialects. (*Miscellany, BMM, January 1867, pp. 24-30.*)

THE GARROWS AND THE ZEMINDERS

The attention of the British government was first drawn to the Garrows by the fierce and bloodthirsty reprisals with which this cruel and dangerous people visited the Bengali Zemindars of the lower slopes and contiguous plains. Under the Mogul suzerainty, the Zemindars, whose estates bordered on these hills, had been treated more as tributaries than as subjects. This was owing partly to the wild and uncultivated state of the country, which rendered anything like a regular assessment impossible, and partly to the policy common among Mogul rulers, which sought to conciliate the good-will of those who possessed local influence on distant frontiers. Many of the Zemindars were allied to the Garrows by inter-marriage, and their influence in checking the frequent irruptions of the

savages into the plains was fully appreciated by the Mohammedan government. To encourage them to use this influence at all fitting times, the government forbore to assess their estates, and left it with them to restrain the turbulence of their hill neighbors. They were thus free to chastise the Garrows in their own way, and to any extent they pleased ; nor did the authorities consider it their duty to inquire minutely into their actions, or to control them. Practically free to execute their own will upon their neighbors, it is not surprising that these Zemindar chiefs were tempted to make a cruel use of their liberty. If ever the mountaineers ventured into the plains intent on conflagration and massacre, the Zemindar, within whose limits the outrage occurred, immediately collected his armed followers together, and in his retaliation confounding the innocent with the guilty, visited the entire hill track whence the ruffians had issued with fire and sword. No official notice was taken of these reprisals, and so long as the Zemindars succeeded in checking incursions into the low country, no heed was given to the precise means by which they made their power felt.

And this was the state of relations between the Zemindars and the Garrows for some time after Bengal had passed into the hands of the British. At length two of the most powerful of these Zemindars, harassed, as was alleged, by ceaseless raids on their property, conceived the idea of seizing and holding in permanent subjection certain of the lower tracts of the Garrow country. With this view they collected a large body of armed men, and, entering the hills, were engaged for two or three years in prosecuting their scheme of conquest. They succeeded in reducing several clans, which thenceforward became tributaries to them. But when the one man died to whose local experience and administrative ability these Zemindars owed the success with which they had kept the savage clans under their yoke, the Garrows rose in revolt, and recovered their independence. In compassing their object, they massacred the Bengalis with such indiscriminate revenge, that the Zemindars were constrained to apply to the British authorities for assistance ; and a detachment of native infantry was sent to chastise the hill men, and restore security to the plains.

Having now the management of the Garrow country forced on our consideration, the government deputed one of its officers to visit it, and report on the relations to be established with its people. It became evident, on inquiry, that the Zemindars had by their oppressions greatly exasperated the Garrows, and so themselves stimulated the outrages which they were afterwards unable to restrain ; and, this being the case, it was found necessary as well to defend the Garrows from ill-usage as to protect the rightful interests of the Zemindars. As the rights of the latter in the hill tracts were of little value compared with the interests at stake ; and as the maintenance of these rights risked much mischief, and was likely to prevent much good, the government interposed to divest the Zemindars of their hill property, allowing them a compensation equivalent to the lawful profits it yielded. Taking the Garrows of the lower tracts under its own immediate care, it simply arranged to levy a duty upon the produce of the hills brought down by the people for barter. Since that time, every irruption, or threatened irruption, into the plains has been met by the immediate and rigorous suspension for a given period of all commercial intercourse. When their supplies are stopped, the Garrows return to reason. The raids, once so frequent, have all but ceased, and now these savages may be found in our Bengali markets bartering their cotton, in a peaceable and friendly way, for the salt, fish and brass ornaments, which are not to be had in their hills.

Still, it is only the clans of the lower slopes that come down to the frontier villages, or mingle at all with Bengalis, or whose chiefs acknowledge subjection to our government by the payment of an annual tribute. The tribes occupying the higher ranges retain their independence. No European foot has yet entered their fastnesses ; nor have we any reliable information respecting the geogra-member of the clan refusing to aid in the infliction of the retributive measures that may be determined on, is irredeemably disgraced.

The Garrow population is divided into freemen and slaves. Indeed, two-fifths of the population are slaves, belonging, for the most part, to the chiefs of clans, and their influence predominates in all questions of peace and war.

MARRIAGE SYSTEM

When the preliminaries of marriage have been arranged, a day is appointed for the nuptials, and the friends of the families about to be connected are invited to the house of the bride. The proceedings begin with a feast, at which roasted puppies and fermented liquor are in great requisition. The bride is then taken down to the nearest stream and bathed ; and when her ablutions are over, the whole party adjourns to the house of the bridegroom, who, on hearing their shouts and songs as they approach, makes as though he would run away. He is, however, pursued, and soon brought back, when he is subjected to an ablution similar to that which the expectant bride has already undergone. His parents now get up a funeral howl, pretending that their son is dead, and at last suffer him to be taken away to the dwelling of the bride. Here a cock and hen are sacrificed to propitiate the Spirit of evil in behalf of the newly married pair, and the company return to their feasting and dancing. If a man should at any time wish to dismiss an unfaithful wife, the law of his people compels him to give up to her not only his children, but all his property ; and this he is naturally loath to do, unless he happens to know some other woman richer than himself, who is willing to take him for a husband. On the other hand, a woman may dismiss her husband whenever she pleases, retaining for herself all his property and the children ; and, having thus summarily disposed of him, she may endow some other expectant swain with her affections and the property of her discarded spouse.

The law of succession to the chiefship of a clan, and the conditions with which that succession is fettered, are curious. When a chief dies, he is succeeded, not by his own son, but by any one of his sisters' sons whom his widow may select. The young man so chosen, if married, must dismiss his wife and marry his uncle's widow, who is then in a position to bestow upon him her fortune as well as her rank. A red turban, bracelets of bell-metal, and a string of beads fastened round the neck, constitute his investiture as a chief of the clan. Indeed, the insignia of his office never cost more than a hundred rupees, or ten pounds,

—a sorry compensation one would think, for the sacrifice of himself and of his young wife to the fancy of a toothless bride. When his aunt-wife dies, he is at liberty to marry again ; and when he dies, his widow selects her next husband and his successor from the number of his sister's sons.

FUNERAL RITES

The funeral ceremonies of the Garrows are expensive. When a Garrow dies, his relations are summoned from far and near, and ten or twelve days are allowed for their arrival. As they assemble they are feasted, so that a feast may have to be provided for many days continuously before the number of the guests is complete. The corpse in the meantime becomes most offensive ; but no one seems to care about that. A stake is driven into the ground, the head of which is carved so as to resemble a man. This is supposed to be the dead man, and around this stake the daily feastings go on. When the guests have all arrived, the body is brought out and burned ; the charred bones are then collected together, and the company disperse. When it is the chief of a clan that has died, a number of his slaves sally forth together prior to the obsequies, and, cutting off the head of the first individual they meet with belonging to a hostile tribe, fling it on the pile on which the chief's body is to be burned.

FOOD AND DRINK

Feasting a large circle of relations is often a serious drain on the country, indulge most freely in animal food, and have a decided partiality for spirituous liquors. The drink most commonly used by them is a fermented liquor prepared from rice. The poor among them can afford to get drunk only once a month, but the chiefs claim the luxury twice a week. The people eat the flesh of all animals, except the jackal, and, in common with all the other Indo-Chinese tribes, regard milk as an impure secretion, and will not touch it. If they have a weakness in the gastronomical line, it is for whole-roasted puppies, which are prepared in a very *recherche* style. The animal is coaxed into eating as much rice as it can, and is then stuffed

with as much more as it can possibly hold ; and then, while still alive, is thrown into the fire to be roasted. When sufficiently done, it is withdrawn, and cut up into several portions, which are served up with the seasoning ; the whole is washed down with the liquors, in which, on such occasions, men, women and children freely indulge.

DRESS

The Garrows wear next to no clothing, a narrow strip of cloth girdling the loins being all the dress they care for. The women, whose beauty consists in their ugliness, though indifferent to much clothing, are extravagantly fond of metal ornaments. A dozen brass rings, each as thick as a goose-quill, may not unfrequently be observed crowded into the lobe of a single ear, and by their weight stretching the lobe down to their very shoulder, at the same time that the neck is covered with as many chains as it is possible to put round it. The houses of the people are raised on piles several feet above the ground, and are roofed with a thatching of long grass. Some of them are as much as a hundred and fifty feet long, with a breadth of forty feet ; but they are not usually divided into apartments.

FEUD

Dr. Buchanan*, who undertook in the course of his travels over India to gather some information respecting these people, states that "the chiefs and headman of every family assemble in a council, and endeavor to reconcile all those of a clan who have disputes ; for it would appear that they have no right to inflict any punishment unless a man should be detected in uttering a falsehood before them, in which case he would be put to instant death, more from popular indignation than from a regular process of justice. Dishonesty and stealing seem rarely to be perpetrated ; and almost the only source of dispute seems to be murder, which would appear to be an ordinary crime.

* Dr Francis Buchanan *alias* Buchanan Hamilton in his *Account of Assam*, which forms a part of his survey of the territories under the Presidency of Fort William (1908-14), provides a mine of informations on the topography of the land, history of the people besides administration, products, communication, trade and commerce.

But the relations of the man killed are by custom held bound to demand blood for blood, and ought to put to death either the murderer, or one of his kindred, or at least one of his slaves. The other family is then bound to prosecute a similar mode of retaliation ; and the feud would thus continue endless, unless the council interfered, and brought about a mutual reconciliation, which it is usually able to effectuate by inducing the party to accept a price for the blood that has been spilt”.

When a quarrel arises between two Garrows, the weaker man flees to a distant hill to escape the vengeance of his more powerful adversary. Each party immediately plants a tree bearing a certain sour fruit, and takes on oath that he will not eat its fruit until he can mix with it the juice of his adversary's head. A generation may pass without either party finding a favorable opportunity for revenge, in which case the feud becomes hereditary, and descends to the children.

The man who eventually succeeds in avenging himself upon his enemy, cuts off the head of his victim, summons his friends, boils the head along with the fruit of the tree he has planted, and drinking some of the mingled juice himself, apportions the remainder among his guests. The tree is then cut down, and the feud is at an end. Race sympathies are also strong among them. If a Garrow has been slain by a foreigner, the entire clan to which he belonged is bound in honor to avenge his death, and rises as one man for the purpose. No compulsion is used ; but it is understood that any phy or natural products of the interior hills.

The last Garrow raid of any importance took place in the year 1860. A detachment of troops, dividing into two parties, under the command of Capt. Morton and Lieut. Chambers respectively, entered the hills from two opposite directions, and inflicting summary chastisement on the offending tribes, brought the campaign to a speedy and successful issue. Once more, during the recent Jyntia revolt, an attempt was made to disturb some of the lowland villages ; but it was nipped in the bud, and from that time the profoundest quiet has prevailed.

It may be asked why the Garrows have betrayed such implacable hostility towards a people so essentially unwarlike

as the Bengalis. The fact we believe is, that in former years they suffered so severely from the ambition of rapacious Zemindars, that regarding all Bengalis as identified with Zemindari interests, they came to look upon them as their natural enemies, and so have taken every opportunity to avenge themselves upon them. On returning from an irruption into the lowlands, they were in the habit of inviting their relations and neighbors to aid them in a festive celebration of their successes. The heads of their victims, filled with food and liquor, were placed in the midst of the assembled guests, who, having partaken of the contents, rose up and danced round them, shouting their songs of triumph. They were then buried, and after some weeks exhumed to furnish occasion for a second boisterous revelry.

HEAD HUNTING

Mr. Sisson, magistrate of the neighboring district of Rungpore, in communicating to the government the information he had gleaned respecting the people, says of their murderous expeditions : "It seems a mistaken notion to think that it is merely the love of human skulls that instigates the mountaineers to these bloody scenes of massacre ; were that notion well founded, the skulls of persons dying a natural death would be esteemed, instead of which they are abominated. It is argued by some again, that the head of a Bengali is a necessary article in the funeral pile of a decesased chief. Knowing this opinion to prevail among the English (to whom I suspect it is confined), I made various inquiries with a view to ascertain whether the practice was really prevalent among the Garrows, and all accounts concurred in denying the prevalence of such a custom. I think the more rational way of accounting for this love of Bengali skulls is to attribute it to the possession of these members of the human body in their bloody state being an unequivocal proof of the prowess of the possessor in revenging himself and his tribe on their oppressors, the lowlanders." To this official disquisition on Bengali skulls may be added the fact that the Garrows burn to ashes the skulls of all their own dead, lest they should at any time be mistaken for Bengali crania. As

the science of ethnology is not cultivated among them, perhaps this is the surest means of distinguishing the races.

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

We have thus far endeavored to show what the Garrow is in his relations to his Bengali neighbors. Let us now try and sketch him as he is to be found in his native hills. These hills, covered with dense forests, and watered by frequent streams, offer a rich return for agricultural labor. The Garrows have, to some extent, availed themselves of the fertility of the soil to cultivate the cotton that supplies the neighboring Bengali markets, and are more agricultural in their habits than the Khasias and Jyntias, and other frontier tribes, who depend for their livelihood more on the produce of their cattle than the tillage of their ground. They are a short, thick-set, active people, with the features of the Indo-Chinese family. They are extremely muscular, and are capable of carrying immense loads up and down hill. Indeed, a Garrow woman will carry a heavier burden up hill than the burliest Bengali will consent to do along his own level plains. They are not insolent bullies like the Bhootias, nor are they cowards. They do not, like the Bengalis, make rice their staple food ; but sources of the dead man's household, and it may be some months before they recover from the financial collapse occasioned by the funeral entertainment ; but as soon as they have recovered from it, and are able to lay in a fresh supply of food and liquor, the relations are summoned once more to take part in the ceremony of throwing the dead man's bones into the river.

It is difficult to say what the religious belief of the Garrows is. They are certainly not Hindus, and they cannot be said to be Buddhists. They have so long lived separate from the parent stock, that the Buddhist creed has died out among them. It has been asserted that they believe in the transmigration of souls ; but as this belief is confined to the clans of the lower slopes, it may be fairly inferred that it was derived from the Hindus. It is at all events unknown among the independent Garrows of the higher ranges. They worship the heavenly bodies, and the spirits of the hills, and rivers and forests. To these spirits white cocks

are sacrificed, and offerings made of fermented liquor, rice and flowers. The people have neither temples nor images.

A very noticeable feature in the character of the Garrows is their truthfulness. A Garrow may commit a murder ; he may cherish a blood-feud all through his life, and pursue his enemy with malignant hatred ; but he will never tell a lie, and nothing will tempt him from the severest honesty in his business transactions. Indeed, his truthfulness and honesty contrast so conspicuously with the lying and chicanery ingrained in the Bengali character, that the subject was noticed in an official report to the Court of Directors, written so long ago as the year 1819 : “Though their conduct towards our people is frequently marked, on the occasion of their incursions, by that fierce spirit which usually attends a state of barbarism among a border race of mountaineers, we have observed that there are other traits in their character, which may induce us to hope that they may be found susceptible of moral and intellectual improvement.”

LAISSEZ-FAIRE

Having thus early discovered their susceptibility to “moral and intellectual improvement,” it is but fair to ask whether the Court of Directors ever sought to give them the advantages of education, or to bring them within the sphere of civilizing influences ? The question is soon answered. The British Government have done nothing for the Garrows. So long as they refrain from disturbing the plains, they are suffered to continue in their savageism ; and the only occasions on which they are visited, are when a tribute has to be paid, or a chastisement to be inflicted. The history of the Garrows is, in fact, the history of the other hill tribes of the frontier. So long as they do not molest the Bengali population, we Englishmen do not care to improve our acquaintance with them, or benefit them in any way. We begin to seek their welfare only when their untamed habits have wrought some unusual disaster among our people, and we are forced to the adoption of some policy that shall create among them that enlightened self-interest which is the true safeguard against revolts and murderous jacqueries. This was

the case with the Khasias and Jyntias, and it may yet be the case of the Garrows. In the meanwhile, neither the government nor philanthropists of any kind have attempted anything among them. Mr. Robinson, the late inspector of government schools in North-eastern Bengal and Assam, became interested in them some years ago, and having acquired their language, reduced their grammar to a system, and wrote for them one or two little books illustrated with wood-cuts representing some of the more prominent wonders of the animal kingdom and of human art ; but no systematic effort has been made to bring them into continuous contact with civilized life, or to prepare the way for their education.

The Garrow hills have as yet not even attracted missionary enterprise. Desultory attempts have been made to reach those of the people that come down to the markets of the plains ; but if results of a lasting kind are to be accomplished, they must grow out of a specially organized Garrow mission. It is, nevertheless, pleasant to know that even these savages have already brought their first-fruits to Christ. some four or five years ago, the Rev. Mr. Bion, one of the Baptist Missionary Society's agents in Dacca, visited Doorgapore, in the Mymensing district, a market town at the foot of the Garrow range. Here he fell in with a party of Garrows who, as they understood Bengali, became intelligent hearers of the gospel. They carried the tidings to their homes, and pondering the preachers' words, felt desirous of further instruction. A Bengali brahmin having, in the meantime, visited their village, was questioned by them as to his acquaintance with the Christian religion, and was asked whether he could direct them where to seek for more information. He dissuaded them from having anything to do with Christianity, and sought instead to make them proselytes to Hinduism. But they were not to be persuaded. Finding their way into Assam, they met with the Rev. Mr. Bronson, an honored and successful agent of the American Baptist Board of Missions, from whom they learned the way of God more fully, and were by him baptized into the Christian faith.

With the populous districts of Bengal still so sparsely occupied by the missionary agency, it will probably be a long time before any systematic attempt is made to supply the religious needs of

the Garrows. This is to be regretted ; for one cannot help thinking that, being free from the social influences that are so serious a barrier to the progress of the truth in the plains, they would respond more readily than the Hindus to the invitations of the gospel. (*Christian Work*)

GARROW HATS

74. *Journal of Comfort, Neebaree, December 14, 1870 :* Arrived at our destination, we found abundant accommodation in huts recently erected in view of expected visits of the district officers. One of them was so large that we were able to dispense with our tent. Neebaree is the farthest place south, occupied by the Government, at the base of the hills, in all this section of country. It is on the bank of a considerable stream, the valley of which extends far into the hills, which skirt it both on the east and west.

The government keeps a police force here, the "Thanah" constituting one of the border outposts. Here also is held every Wednesday a large "hat," or market, at which we had laid our plans to be present. We can then meet many people and good opportunities are afforded for the Garo assistants to make known the glad news. The people assemble in great numbers on the preceding day, and then is the most favourable time for preaching, for they are not engaged in their trading.

The Garos bring down cotton in large quantities, coming from long distances. Larger numbers than usual are coming down this year, we learn, owing to a scarcity which prevails in the hills.

More people were present on this occasion than I met even at Damra last year, and they had also a wilder appearance. This was true alike of the men and women. Their dress was also a less remove from the primitive state of nudity than I had before seen. But even previously it was less than you would imagine, or the people at home would think.

They looked more uncivilized than those I had before met. Wherever a number were grouped together, several spears were stuck into the ground close at hand. They did not bring them in order to defend themselves from the attacks of wild beasts, though they doubtless pass through many jungles in which such

animals are found in profusion. Indeed, in reaching Neebaree, we journeyed through a jungle where a few years ago brn. Bronson and Stoddard were suddenly started by the heavy roar of a tiger which they had aroused. It kept up its roar, if it did not even pursue them, for a short time. But by putting their ponies into the full gallop and thus riding for a long distance, they escaped. It is not the fear of such monsters, however, which causes the Garos to come armed to the place of trade. They have their spears in case of feuds arising among themselves. Such a thing is not improbable, seeing that the fair is visited by some who are termed "omilas". These are Garos who have never made terms with the government, and do not allow foreigners to pass through their territory. But their necessities lead some of them to come down for purposes of trade, though they will not have any other intercourse with strangers.

In our queries in regard to the distances they had to come, the names of their villages and the numbers of people in them, they answered not a word, but sat as mute as statues though we assured them of our peaceful intentions, and that we had no ulterior motive in making such inquiries.

The government compels these people to remain on the outskirts of the place where the market is held, so that they are kept apart from the friendly Garos. They may thereby be led slowly to see that better facilities for trade will be afforded them, and that it will be to their advantage to make peace with the government.

The cotton for sale is brought in large coarsely braided bamboo baskets, about four feet long and two in diameter. These rest on the backs of the men, being supported by a strip of bark which passes around and across the forehead. So these hill people carry all their burdens. A large number of men moving along in Indian file, each with one of those baskets looking twice as large as the bearer, and filled with cotton, is a novel sight. They can be seen coming to the market by all the roads which converge towards that point.

A space of some acres is largely covered by the many hundreds of baskets, filled with cotton. Groups of people gather around little fires, kindled here and there. Some are cooking their food ;

others are eating their rice from plaintain leaves, lying on the ground. Others still are trying to get a little warmth, which the almost entire absence of clothing renders necessary. The hum of many voices comes from all sides. As we pass among them, we at once greatly attract their attention ; for a white face they do not often see. As soon as we stop, curiosity surrounds us with a good audience.

EVANGELISATION : EARLY PHASE

75. *Bronson to Warren, April 27, 1864* : Another thing that has pleased me in connection with our visit to Gowahati, is the desire of our two Garrow brethren, *Omed* and *Ramkhe*, to go out and teach their rude, ignorant countrymen in the Gawalpara district. They said they had good government situations ; but they, being the first of all their countrymen to embrace the Christian religion, were ready to give up all for this work. Just at this time, the magistrate at Gawalpara, who is a decidedly Christian man, called and entered warmly into their proposition, offered to assist them in their plans, and to aid me in supporting them. So thinking that this thing might be of God, I told them that when they were honorably dismissed from government employ, I would send them as colporteurs, and allow them each 10 rupees per month.

Since reaching Nowgong, I have received the following from Col. Campbell, under whom Omed has served for many years. "I am sorry Omed wishes to leave the regiment, as he is a very steady, well-conducted sepoy, and quite an example to many in the regiment ; but I, of course, cannot keep him against his desire, as there are no reasons I could at present urge for doing so. Consequently he will be free on the 1st proximo to go and commence his mission, in which I need hardly say I sincerely trust he will succeed." I feel considerable confidence in these brethren, and as Capt. Morton writes, "If God prosper the work, who can tell to what this small beginning may lead." It is a gratification also to us, to see individual Christians in America moved in spirit to come forward with specific contributions over and above their regular donations, to meet these expenses. Now after we have once taken them from government

employ and sent them into the broad harvest field of missions, I hope those dear friends in America will see to it that we are not obliged to recall them for want of support.

76. *Bronson to Warren, February 11, 1866* : God has a people and work here, connected with the interests among the Assamese, the Mikirs, the Garrows, our outstations at Durrung where Bhubon is, and No Noi, where Sonaram, Charles Thomas and Besai are, as well as at Gowahati, too long left alone. At all these places the torch of Divine truth is held up.

I received a most encouraging letter from Capt. Morton,* at Gowalpara, regarding our two native assistants there. A third Garrow young man has made his way to us, and won our love and Christian esteem by his humble deportment and patient study of the Scriptures, and thoroughness of character. He has a warm Christian heart, good talents, and is about twenty-five years of age. His one prayer is that he may be baptized and allowed to go back and teach his ignorant countrymen, along with Omed and *Ramkhe*. I cannot, I dare not hold him back ; and yet I have not at present funds to support him. I give his name (*Rungkhoo*), for praying Christians at home to remember. I expect that this young man will yet exert a strong Christian influence upon his countrymen.

I long to be actively moving about among these outstations, and travelling with the native assistants.

We ask all to pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, as it is with you.

77. *Stoddard to Warren, November 3, 1867* : Our journey to Gowahati was safely performed in about six months. Here, it was our pleasure to meet several native Christians, some of whom we had led to Christ and baptized in the first years of our missionary work. Our hearts were greatly rejoiced to find them steadfast in the Lord, though alone and sorely tempted.

We had scarcely got settled, when a company of six or eight Garos, from twenty and thirty miles distant, came in upon us. Three were Christians. One a young man who has recently joined the church ; the other two, *Ramkhe* and *Rungkhu*, were

* Principal Assistant, Gowalpara.

among the first Garo converts, and have been laboring as teachers and colporteurs. They seemed greatly delighted to find us here as *their* teachers and missionaries. Ramkhe was obliged to return in a day or two to his school at Damra, some twenty miles or a day's march.

I retained Rungkhu and one or two of the normal school boys, that we might at once make a beginning in the language, and also be learning something of this new people. It is yet quite too early to travel in an unexplored country. In fact, the old residents tell us it is not safe to travel to the Garo hills before the first of January, by which time the marshy places will have become dry ; also much of the rank jungle will have been burned, rendering it more safe on account of wild beasts.

The first of January I hope to be joined by Mr. Bronson for his anticipated visit to the Garo church, schools, and as many villages as strength and time will permit. I verily believe Christ has many souls in Garo land.

I had the pleasure of an interview with the Lieut. Governor of Bengal, as he was making his tour of inspection through Assam last September. He had but recently sanctioned a grant-in-aid for our Garo schools. He expressed himself gratified with an interview with one who was willing to attempt the reformation of "those blood-thirsty savages," as he termed them. He hoped the mission would succeed, in tones that indicated profound unbelief. He referred to the efforts of Government in their behalf for the last hundred years or more, to the fact that they had been for the last quarter of a century at least, entirely surrounded by British territory ; the Kasias, their immediate neighbors and kin, had long since given themselves up peaceably to government rule. Surely the Garos were most desperate and incorrigible, to say the least.

78. *Mission to the Assamese : Fifty-fourth Annual Report :* The one distinguishing feature of the mission during the past year is the work of grace among the Garos, a tribe occupying the Hills on the south of the Brahmaputra, one hundred and fifty or two hundred miles below, that is, west of Gowahati. The English civil and military station for the district is Gawalpara, a town beautifully located on the south bank of the river,

These men,—Omed, Ramkhe and Rongkhoo, being sepoy in the British army, heard something of the way of life through the native preachers at Gowahati, and subsequently came under the instructions of Mr. Bronson. At intervals of a year or more they were severally baptized by him, and, after giving evidence of their sincerity and stability of purpose, were encouraged to go to their native hills, and tell the story of the cross to their countrymen. They were received with unexpected favor,—one acting as colporteur and school-teacher, and another as preacher.

In response to earnest and repeated solicitations, Mr. Bronson visited this new field in the spring of last year. After spending three days among the people, he gave an account of what he had seen and heard, under date of Gowalpara, April 17, 1867.

“I got in last evening from my first tour among the Garos, am resting here at Capt. Campbell’s for a day, expecting the steamer to-morrow, when I shall go on to Gowahati to consult with our new missionary associates there, who passed up yesterday on the steamer *Burmah*. During my whole missionary life I have never seen anything so wonderful as the work now going on among the Garos. Those two Garo assistants, Omed and Ramkhe, have worked quietly and faithfully on amid ridicule, reproach, and even threats of personal violence, and have proved themselves to be reliable, trustworthy and faithful men, as I took them to be when I baptized them at Gowahati. Let me give in brief the account of my tour. Friday, the 12th inst., furnished with two elephants, by the kindness of Capt. Campbell, I set out. I purposely left all coolies, and even my Mussulman cook, making one of our native preachers and a Christian boy do every thing for me. Reached Damra at 5 P.M., found Ramkhe well, and a school of fifteen boys,—eleven Garos, the others, Rabbha and Rajboni, all very nice boys. Spent the evening in examining them in their studies, in which they have made good progress. Ramkhe teaches well. To a late hour we talked and sung the Christian hymns they so delight in, and closed with reading the Scriptures and prayer. All kneeled in prayer, and seemed heartily interested. At this station Ramkhe has regular Sabbath worship, at which many go and come, and Christian light is being daily disseminated.

“The next morning, the 13th, we set out for Omed’s village in Monja Masuri, near Ran Mari, afterwards called Raj Simda. This is a new village, is at the foot of the hills—it was established by Omed,—a lovely spot, with a fine stream of water close at hand, with plenty of land suitable for cultivation. A crowd was waiting to receive us. We found the village clean, the houses, about forty, new and orderly arranged. The largest and best house in the village is a place of Christian worship recently built by themselves, which is every Sabbath crowded with listeners. A house, very clean, was placed at my disposal, so that although I had a small tent, I never pitched it. As soon as I could, I went to the chapel, which I found crowded with people waiting to hear from me the word of God. I spoke to them as simply as possible in Assamese, which was understood by some, the three assistants interpreting the same to the hill people, who understood only the Garo language. It was deeply affecting to me to witness their fixed attention and deep interest as I spoke to them of Christ and His love to poor sinners, and that He died to save even poor Garos. O, it is easy work to preach Christ under such circumstances ! It was soon evident that the story of the cross was familiar to them. Omed has made it the burden of his message to his countrymen, and their hearts have begun to melt under its mighty power. At last I put the question, How many of you love this Saviour, and abandoning all your heathen worship and practices, worship Him alone ? Twenty-six, all residents of this village, arose. I closely questioned them as to their motives, explained to them what it might cost them to become Christians—ridicule, reproach, opposition, perhaps death. They replied, ‘Yes, we have thought this all over ; we expect opposition ; we have decided.’ It appears that some of them have had to leave their friends on account of opposition, and have come down from the mountains and joined this Christian village. These all desired to become Christ’s disciples and to be baptized. The native assistants, who have for months been watching for their conversion, speak of their changed conduct, particularly in their abandonment of their old rites of worship, and in the disuse of all intoxicating drinks, which has cost some of them a great struggle. They were therefore received as candidates for Christian

baptism. It was late before I could retire for a little rest, and then I left them still assembled.

“Sunday, 14th, a day of days,—early morning worship ; also at ten o’clock ; after which we repaired to the beautiful stream, dammed up for the purpose, where I baptized, in the name of the sacred Trinity, twenty-six Garos, men and women. A crowd of wild, savage-looking people stood on the bank ; but all were as quiet, serious and respectful as though accustomed to such scenes. (*BMM, July 1868, pp. 254-5*)

79. *Stoddard to Warren, March 15, 1868* : Br. Bronson and I left Gowalpara early in February. Marching south by east one day, or twenty-four miles, brings us to Damra. Here is our Garo Normal School,—at present fifteen Normal pupils, besides about as many other lads. Government aids this school by a grant of 50 rupees a month. We have secured a beautiful lot for school and chapel on the banks of a mountain stream that tenters the large river above Gowalpara, and is navigable by large boats in the rains. There is no Garo village just at Damra, but the place is wisely selected for school and missionary purposes.

A weekly *hat* (fair or market) is held here. We attended one, and saw over 1000 Garos,—mostly from the hills, and some from the interior, three and four days’ journey. These *hats* are a great and peculiar institution in this country.

We had the privilege of repeating the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners to hundreds who heard this Wonderful Name for the first time.

Damra is important also, as being central to other *hats* visited by Garos. Look east to Rungjali and Lama *hats*, then west to Teera and Nibari *hats*, all within an easy march or a march and a half of Damra,—all visited by Garos, and three of the five *hats* are very largely attended, viz. : Nibari, Damra, and Rungjoli. Again, Damra may prove a healthy point for a missionary family, at least a good portion of the year. Though advised by all English residents not to try the experiment, we feel inclined to do so a few months, commencing with the next cold season.

Two hours by ponies brought us to Amjonga. It is a purely Garo village in the plains, and we could speak without an interpreter, as the people understood Assamese. Precious is the memory of our two or three days' visit here. Here we found the parents of Rudram, whose mother brought him to us soon after our arrival in Gowalpara, and who had to hasten back because her husband was lame and bitterly persecuted for having recently confessed Christ. I baptized the household,—father, mother, and only child. Here also we found the parents of Naran, mentioned in a previous letter, who asked prayers for his friends who had lately confessed Christ, and were being persecuted and threatened for having left the sacrificing to devils.

Leaving this new interest, we rode southeast two hours, up between the hills, to the Christian village of Raja Simala. The entire population, cleanly clad and with smiling faces, met us at the entrance of the town. It was a goodly sight—men, women, and children, a Christian village in this wild place! Only a day's march from this point into the hills, and the people are savages,—so we are informed,—where they take a man's head with the same delight with which we would that of a mad dog. Yes, and the large majority of this village have but recently come down from the hills to join this new faith. Some four years ago Omed and Ramkhe were sent out by their own request to preach Christ to their countrymen. They went from village to village in the hills. They soon found it would not be safe to make a home in the hills at present. Some are inclined to believe the new doctrine and forsake devil offerings. This the more enraged others. Hence Omed selected this beautiful little place in the valley at the base of the hills for Christ. It was then a dense jungle, inhabited by wild beasts, as tigers, bears, and elephants. He showed me the little grass hut still standing, where he and his brave wife, also a Christian, lived two years while the 'good news' was finding its way to the hearts of a few. Nearly one year almost entirely alone in this dreadful place because of the beasts and savages! At the end of two years several families from the hills had joined them. The heathen became more and more enraged, threatened hard things, at last fixed a day, set in order

their spears and sharpened bamboos for a bloody descent upon this little community of the 'new faith'. But the Lord interposed. The elements were against them. Their purposes were frustrated. At the end of three years br. Bronson made his first visit, baptized, and constituted a church of forty Garos, established schools, ordained a preacher, etc.

"On the 22nd, leaving Damra we marched west to Jara, only four hours' ride, and attended the weekly *hat* here on the 24th. It was not so largely attended as that at Damra, though we had a good opportunity to talk to hundreds of Garos. They listened to the name of Jesus Christ with apparent interest and astonishment. One old man, very talkative, said, 'We Garos have no souls. When a man dies, that is the end of him. Hence we have no need of your religion.'

"Three hours' ride on the 25th brought us over a spur of the hills to Nibari *hat*. This is one of the largest Garo *hats*. From far into the hills the Garos come to this place to trade ; we saw many hundreds at least. They look more wild and savage than any we had met before. We observed also that every man was armed with spear or sword, which is not the case in places further east.

"Leaving this place, we were obliged to go north to Baligana *hat*, as the bridle path across a narrow hill was impassable for our baggage elephant. Baligana is only three hours from Gawalpara. The market here is very small. Still I hope to start a school among the Garos near here. In this village lives Ramsing, who was baptized at Rajarimala (*sic*). He has been police constable for many years, in the employ of the government. He reads and writes the Assamese well. Thus God is raising up men for His work among the Garos. Already we have in the Garo church eight men who were educated years ago in the government Garo Normal School then at Gawalpara, but for some reason given up long ago. Here is material already prepared to our hand.

"At Luckimpoor we spent a night. Here also is a *hat* under the control of a wealthy nabob. A few Garos living mostly in the plains attend.

“*Burmese Colonists*—At Bengalkhata I found a large community of Burmese.* They had spent most of their lives in Upper Assam, but were colonized in this place during the late Sepoy rebellion, to assist government against any attack or trouble among the Garos. They spoke Assamese well, and listened to the truth with great attention, and said if I would send them a teacher, they and their children would receive the light and take the religion of Jesus Christ. I became much interested in that community of foreigners, but do not yet know what I can do for them.

“Four days from this place brought me to Tura station. It is situated on the side of the mountain Tura, some 1,500 feet above the sea, which seems to be about the height of the range of hills inhabited by the Garos. I was received kindly by Lieut. Williamson, the Assistant Commissioner in charge of the hills. Hitherto he has been well-treated by the hill-people. Their looks are rather against them, and I observed that the men always went armed—that as I passed through the fields they were cultivating, the men (women also work out of doors) all had a sword or spear stuck in the ground nearby.

“The object of this Commission of government seems to be an experiment to tame the savages, and thus put a stop, if possible, to their annual raids into the plains after Bengali heads as offerings to their tormentors,—the whatever it may be that causes pain, sickness, trouble, and death.”

GOVERNMENT PATRONAGE

80. *Stoddard to Warren, October 1, 1870* : Among the Garos, the Government do not object to our making as much of religion as we please in the schools they aid. I had the pleasure of another interview with the Lieut. Governor of Bengal, Sir William Grey, on his visit to Assam in July last. He expressed himself as very highly pleased with the success of our work since three years ago. Since his return to Calcutta, I have been favored with a copy of the Lieut. Governor’s remarks and

* Or the *Shans* who were settled at Singimari by Scott after the expulsion of the Burmese from Assam.

resolutions, on reviewing the annual report of the Commissioner of the Garo Hills, in which I find the following paragraph.

“Every encouragement will be given to the American missionaries in their efforts to educate the Garos. Perhaps the missionaries might take up a station at Tura, if opportunities were given them. And, as many American missionaries are qualified medical men, the difficulty of providing a separate medical officer for Tura might be met by a Government allowance to the gentleman so stationed, if able to perform these duties. The subject is one which deserves the continued attention of the Commissioner.”

At the same time the Commissioner writes me this :—

“My dear Mr. Stoddard,—You will see from the enclosed that there is a clear field at Tura yet, and you will not doubt that I will give the American missionaries every encouragement in my power. I should think you would do better in every way at Tura than in Gowalpara. However, I know little. A cold and healthy station from which, when the season permitted, you could descend to all parts, invigorated rather than enfeebled by the hot season, is an advantage, not, I think, to be despised. Hoping you continue well, believe me yours sincerely, Signed,

J. C. Haughton.”

THE MIKIRS, MIRIS, SINGPHO AND ABOR TRIBES

81. The Mikirs are one element of the "hashy", conglomerate mass of humanity that inhabits Assam ; and their language, which has no printed grammar, is one of the forty spoken in that province. The literature of this people comprises at present one incomplete vocabulary, a small primer, a first catechism and a little hymnbook.

The hills in and bordering on the Nowgong District, an area contained between the 92nd and 94th meridians of east longitude, and the 25th and 27th parallels of north latitude, includes most of their homes ; but though they are a hill tribe the present time finds many of them in the plains. Here they are considered of lower rank than the people of the plains with whom they mingle, and whose language many of them acquire. The government map gives the majority of the more than 90,000 Mikirs as situated in the south-east quarter of the Nowgong District, or just across the border ; but the compiler admits that this attempt at locating was only a random shot. Of the area above indicated I think comparatively few are on the north side of the Brahmaputra River.

PSYSICALLY

The average Mikir is less than five feet and six inches in height. He is a little lighter colored than the plain's man. His weight is about 115 pounds. Of the many I have weighed I think 135 is the highest figure, but I presume a Mikir might be found who would weigh 150 pounds or even more. These light weights are, however, capable of considerable endurance. I have often had them come at about 7-30 a.m., and work till sundown, with nothing to eat save *tamul*, the barks they chew, etc. They eat morning and evening only. The work was cutting jungle, bringing bamboos and building houses. A load of bamboos was usually six, if not exceeding twelve feet in length ; but these hill bamboos, especially when cut ten

or twelve feet from the ground, are not very heavy. In getting thatch each man cuts and binds sixty large handfuls, and brings them in from the jungle, for a day's work. Twenty of these handfuls are brought for a load and I do not consider them light, for I have occasionally carried such bundles a short distance myself. Mikir women will walk eight miles and bring back sixty pounds of rice the same day.

FOOD AND CLOTHING

I have an idea the race of Mikirs will increase somewhat in stature when they become Christianized and civilized. After weaning, the child does not get proper food. Often he does not get enough even of improper food to satisfy him. Our little three year-old Carey weighs about the same as our mail carrier's little Sartura who is called six, and I do not think is remarkably light for his age. When the rice ripens all seem to have enough to eat, though they admit that at this time it is somewhat unwholesome on account of its newness. They also drink a great deal of it in their native liquor. We consider this worse than wasted, but they think they must have it. In the average family the rice supply gives out before the year is even half gone. Then they live on roots, tender shoots of the bamboo, leaves and twigs of trees, and certain grasses that come up as large as asparagus. Meat they have but little of except small fish which are to be found in their ponds and streams. When taken fresh and cooked with a little mustard oil they make a good seasoning for the rice. When dried for commercial transport purposes they smell pretty "high". I have never tasted the dried kind.

Mikirs cultivate cotton and raise silk-worms, and know how to make all they require in the way of clothing ; but some of them, especially those who live in the plains, buy some imported cotton goods. The ordinary Mikir coat is woven like a long towel, and fringed at the ends. To make a coat of it just double it, cut a hole in the center, slip the man's head through this slit, then sew from the bottom up to the arms on each side and the coat is done. They put on four or five, one over the other, on great dress occasions, and the more coats a man has on the more he is dressed, literally, as well as aesthetically.

To me the wonder is that the minds of this and other heathen people are as good as they are. I have noticed women standing by while I was trying to teach the children a list of printed words on a chart, and by simply hearing them a few times they would be able to prompt the little ones who did not yet know them. I think a few generations of training would place Mikirs well alongside American boys in mental capacity. One cannot judge of Mikir minds by writings, for except what little the missionaries have gotten out in the Bengali character they have no literature. Their language is said by persons who know to be more difficult to acquire than the Garo.

THE "OCHA"

This man, I am told, has no other business than to attend to cases of death caused by tigers. A Mikir must not touch the belongings of a person who has been killed by a tiger. All that the "ocha" wants, the clothing, the dao or knife, the brass dishes, the money,—everything is his. In return what service does he render? If he hears of such a death when the person was poor he probably does not go to the place at all; but if there are some good things to be had he goes, says some mantras and breaks an egg. If the yolk does not break when it falls to the ground no one else will be taken from that village by the tiger; but if it breaks the tiger god will order the tiger to take another victim and the village must move away. However, as a matter of fact, they seem always to move away after a person has been taken, regardless of the "ocha" and his egg. There are some who claim that in former days the really genuine "ocha" could feed the wild tiger from his hand without being harmed; but if you ask for some one to do it now, the reply is that they have degenerated. I do not know whether "ochas" are created or born, nor how many of them there are. The one who lives at Koung-Jeng has a house well filled with spoils that became his through tiger kills. He has some reason for disliking me since I killed the man-eater that was said to have been in the habit of taking someone every week during the rains, and often a person in the dry weather. For a year after that I did not hear of that "ocha" getting any addition to his tiger spoils. He keeps

servants who cultivate for him, and he is probably the richest Mikir in that place. He had to pay seventy rupees for violating the government liquor law last season, but he did not seem to feel badly about so little a matter.

Mikirs are fairly courageous, but they specially fear tigers, for according to their belief a person eaten by a tiger can never be born into this world again : dying any other death he may come back as a little babe.

GOVERNMENT

The Mikirs are subject to the Government of India, but they have also a government of their own ; though this applies chiefly if not exclusively, to the hill Mikirs. In the "mauza", where I have spent two winters, they have about twelve men who are called "Pinpo", a sort of petty kings or princes. They are judge in small cases of litigation, are not to perform any manual labor and can demand rice and fowls of their fellow villagers and of the inhabitants of other near villages. In addition to these there are twelve other officers called "hubbais", who may be called to consult with the "pinpos" about trial matters, but they are much less important. They do manual labor and pretty nearly support their own families. Then there is the head man of every village who demands a little something in the way of respect and attention. He is the mayor of the village, and attends to the execution of the law rather than to the making of it.

MORALS, RELIGION AND CASTE

In regard to morals, the head man of the village where we have camped the past two years does not allow his daughter to come into his house because she is separated from her husband, and the fault is on her side. In her father's absence she is allowed to live at home. This may mean that the mother is more forgiving, or it may indicate a different view of the quarrel. I do not think it means that Mikir women are less moral than the men. Though there are cases of separation among married people such action is not looked upon lightly, and the one who is in fault violates what is considered good taste by taking another companion. Polygamy is not common, but a rich man is allowed to have three,

four, and I have heard of five, wives at once ; still I think the woman has a relatively higher place in Mikir society than among the people of the plains. I am scarcely in a position to say whether Mikirs are more given to lying than the average Hindu. My Mikir pundit tells me that they are not commonly liars, but that when they once begin they can quite out do the plains people. I have paid in advance a great many times, and I remember losing but two pice by doing so.

As to religion they have none, and except as the work of Christ for the lost avails for those who die in infancy, and for idiots, they are utterly without hope. Knowing nothing of God they have not the slightest conception of his character. They sacrifice to the demons by whom they suppose every sickness and every calamity is sent upon them. This worship is to propitiate the evil spirits who are simply feared—not loved. Talk to a Mikir of hell and the everlasting burnings and his all-sufficient answer is, “If I go there then all the rest of the Mikirs will be with me”.

The severe caste rules of the Mikirs may be appreciated by a knowledge of their practices,—their actions are an index to their faith. A woman, whose husband was absent from home, gave birth to a child. Her home was within 20 feet of a high way and centrally located in the village. She called for water for nearly two days, saying she was dying of thirst. She died, and no hand was lifted to help her, because she was of different caste from the passers-by. She remained unburied for days, for the same reason. I heard of the affair after she died, and got the child, too late to save it. After about three days it died, and I buried it, alone at daylight at the river’s edge with a prayer for these deluded, sin-stricken people, and I could not keep back the tears as I filled the little grave. (*Moor, P. E., Fourth Triennial Conference, BMM, 1895, pp. 50-4*)

82. The term Miri means “a go between”, and was originally applied by the Assamese to those Abor tribes which lived near the Assam border and acted as interpreters and traders between the more remote hill tribes and the Assamese themselves.

The Hill tribe known as Bor-Abors which occupies the mountains to the north-east of the Lakhimpur district, has been a numerous and powerful tribe as far back as anything can be

known about it. It is certain that previous to the close of the last century several branches of this tribe had broken off from the parent stock and had occupied other hills and valleys than those in which their fathers dwelt. Being separated into several petty tribes, quarrels soon arose which led to hatred and war ; so that from about 1790 to 1827 fighting seems to have been their principle occupation. By this means some of these tribes, or families, had become so reduced in numbers, that they were utterly unable to continue the conflict with their more numerous opponents. But Providence stepped in here, in the form of a British force which occupied the Brahmaputra valley as a defensive measure during the war with Burma, in 1824-5 and 6 ; and in this case, as in most others, the British had not only come, they had come to stay. At least this force was sufficiently strong and permanent in the eyes of these poor war weary wanderers as to cause several families, known as Miris, to run with gladness for protection under the outstretched arms of the new government, which had by this time possessed itself of all Assam.

SETTLEMENTS AND DWELLINGS

The fact that none of these first immigrants cared to return to the hills, and the uniform good reports of the peaceful state of affairs in the valley, led many others to descend into the plains nearest their own mountain camps ; so that within the space of ten years from the time the first Miri families came into Assam, the majority of several small tribes had found new and permanent homes on the banks of Lakhimpur's many streams. From that time until the present, but few additions have been made by new arrivals from the hills. Living in peace, plenty and quietness, those who first came have increased in numbers more rapidly than any people in Assam, excepting, perhaps, the Bengalis ; until at the present time there are not less than 45,000 Miri souls in and near the Lakhimpur district.

I said that these people live *on* the banks of the streams, but I do not use the term *on*, as when we speak of London on the Thames, or Omaha on the Missouri. The Miris live, without known exception, close to the water, in villages comprised, on an

average, of fifteen well built *sang** houses ; with from three to five families in each house. In this respect the Miris are far ahead of any people in the Lakhimpur District. The houses are elevated from three to five feet from the ground on strong posts, and are from about fifteen to twenty feet wide, and from forty-five to seventy feet long. In front of each house there is a porch, which is nothing more than a continuation of the roof and *sang*, without walls. In addition to the dwelling-houses, there are, in most villages, high *sang* granaries, one or two houses for cattle, and a large shed, or sheds, where the women and girls sit and weave the cloth for their families, and sing the ditties of the day.

Although the Miris in the plains are quite uniform in their way of living and building, and although to the casual observer they are one people, they are divided at the present time into about thirty distinct clans, a list of the names of which I would rather exhibit than try to pronounce.

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The predominant ethnical characteristic of the Abor and all his Miri children is decidedly Mongolian. Yet one meets here and there, a group of Miris whose sharper features betray the presence of Caucasian blood. There is not, perhaps, in all history written, sufficient fact to enable anyone to state exactly the ethnical relations of any tribe in Assam, much less the Assamese themselves, whose blood is like their religion ; fearfully and wonderfully mixed. Whatever mixture or inter-mixture of people has taken place in the past, to produce the Miri of to-day, we know not. But this we know, God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and the Miri is in that all, as he is in the "all the world" to which Jesus has sent his Gospel ; and he is hearing it.

Having brought into drowsy Assam the blood which ran for many generations in the veins of their mountain-climbing forefathers, the Miris are of a much finer physique than the native Assamese. Generally speaking, they are not much taller than their neighbours ; but they carry an average of ten or twelve

* A house with a raised bamboo platform,

pounds more weight than the natives of the soil. This extra weight is seen in the larger bone and firmer muscle of the Miri. But his superior physique is not entirely due to a mountain ancestry, for these people possess some energy which being spent in the cultivation of the soil, hewing timber, and propelling boats, has the effect of developing the muscular system to an admirable extent. It must not be inferred from this, that the Miris are a very energetic people, they are only energetic when compared with other people in the Brahmaputra valley.

When in their mountain homes, it seems to me that these people must have been simple and truthful ; for with the exception of those who live near large towns, where buying and selling with other people is necessary, they are not entitled to the name given to the Cretians when Paul wrote to Titus ; and in many other respects they show that they have breathed a purer moral atmosphere than most of the people by which they are surrounded. In this, however, I might be greatly mistaken, as it takes time to *know*. We had on two occasions, for three weeks at a time, three boatmen with us, whose moral conduct, as far as it could be observed, would compare very favourably with the good, non-Christian young man of England or America. Only one of these six used opium, with the result that he was not worth half so much as any of the others in the way of work. In spite of all this the Miris are not angels, nor are they good men in the truest sense of the word : they are selfish ; and they have their full share of that suspiciousness which is so characteristic of the Mongolian peoples. If you tell a Miri anything he pretends to believe you at once ; but it is quite clear from his conduct that he is searching for a proof that what you say is truth. And if you tell him anything for his own good, he thinks a greater good will result to you than to himself if he believes it. He cannot conceive the idea which underlies the word disinterestedness. The Miris too, many of them, are maud drinkers ; in some villages this habit is so prevalent that the majority of the people will show its effects at the same time ; at such times they are annoyingly generous ; too exceedingly polite, and ready to believe anything from Sinai, Calvary, Benares or Mecca. But I thank God that this habit is by no means universal among them. In many villages no signs of it

appear. The use of opium is quite extensive amongst them ; perhaps most of them use a little in some shape or form ; yet it is but a minority of this people which are slaves to this terrible drug. There is but one word I would use in connection with this habit : whether regarded from its permission, prevalence or products, it is horrible.

The Miris are quite a law-abiding people. Having plenty of food and drink for themselves, they mind their own business, which seems to consist principally in preparing these good things for consumption. No little share of this work falls to the lot of the women and girls who, in addition to doing household work and weaving cloth, do much in the rice-fields, from seed-time to harvest. The women are quite skilful in making several kinds of cloth, and as a result their families are as well clad as any people in Assam. The only improvement one could wish in this respect is that they would begin to clothe their children at an earlier age than they do, for many of these go until they are eight or ten years old before they don a garment.

There is very little to disturb the domestic tranquility of these people in homes where the husband has but one wife ; but where two or more wives are owned by one husband, as is sometimes the case with those who are very well-to-do, there is often much trouble. I said where wives are owned because marriage is in most cases a simple matter of barter between the fathers of girls and the seekers after wives. Yet in many Miri homes there is every appearance of affection.

RELIGION

Having been in Assam for at least three quarters of a century it is not strange that these people should have come, to some extent, under the influence of Hinduism. But it is plain to me that the Miri regards Hinduism as a social, rather than a religious system. Some few of them have been sufficiently well instructed in Hindu mythology to put forward the claims of Ram and Krishna, when they are told that there is but one name under heaven given among men whereby they might be saved, and to be very angry when shown that these names belonged to sinful men rather than to a sinless Deity. In most cases,

however, when you ask one of these men why he observes this or that Hindu custom, he will reply : “because the Assamese do the same.” There is no doubt, but what the gukhis (*Gossain*) have some influence over these people, but in spite of all the gukhis in Assam (and their name is legion) the Miri sticks to his chicken, his pork and mutton with such a determination that one has said : “If the Miri has a god at all, that god is his *pet* (stomach).”

Paul spoke to the Christians of Ephesus as those who had been dead in trespasses and sins. Ezekiel in his vision saw a valley full of very dry bones ; but what Ezekiel saw in a vision we see in an awful spiritual reality in the Brahmaputra valley. None were ever more dead in trespasses and sins than the Miris. With regard to sin their consciences are not only scared they are charred. When you tell them that lying, stealing and many other things are sins, they agree with you at once ; but they have not the remotest idea that such things concern them individually. Yet we have seen sufficient of the effects of “preaching as we are commanded” to give us hope that the Eternal Breath of God will cause even these Miris to stand upon their feet as those who have been quickened from the dead.

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

The language spoken by the Daphlas, Miris and Abors are shown by Mr. Needham to be almost identical. They belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages ; and any one having acquired the Abor, would readily speak Miri or Daphla. Yet each petty tribe of Miris or Daphlas within the plains, or in the mountains is said to have many words peculiar to itself. The only works in the Abor-Miri language of which I have heard are a “Vocabulary and Phrase Book” by Captain E. F. Smith, 23rd B.N.I., printed at the Mission Press in Sibsagar in 1847 ; and an “Outline Grammar of the Shaiyang-Miri Language,” by J. F. Needham, Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya (1886). To anyone working among the Hill Miris or Daphlas these works might prove useful. But I am more and more convinced that the Assamese is the better language for work amongst the Miris

of the plains. And has the advantage of being known by many other peoples living near them.

In the matter of education these people are as far behind as any in Assam. There are several schools on the Ronga River, several on the Subensiri, two on the Guna Suti, and two or three on the Brahmaputra. These are, with one known exception, conducted by Assamese (Hindu) pandits. As a rule these young men are inefficient and void of that knowledge of order and tact in governing, which is so essential to the mental development of the individual scholar, and the progress and we, being of the school at large. Still I believe that these young men do their best ; which is certainly much better than nothing ; for by their efforts about 8% of the Miri men and boys can read Assamese, and a less percentage of them possess some knowledge of writing in the Bengali character. To us this shows the wonderful Providence of God ; for, had the Miris no knowledge of the written language the story of the Life of Christ, as told by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, would at this moment be a closed book to them, whereas by this knowledge they can and do read that word "which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edge sword," even that word which is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And, brethren, He who wrought upon the minds of men and actuated them to write, shall surely work upon the minds of these men and give them spiritual understanding and soul saving faith in Jesus Christ. So that when the number of God's elect shall have been accomplished, Miris shall be found amongst that throng which no man can number. (*Paul Joseph, Fourth Triennial Conference ; BMM, 1985, pp. 54-9*)

83. *Brown to Bolles, March 6, 1836* : The Singphos are the great southern tribe, and divide with the Shyans nearly the whole territory between here and Ava. Within these limits, it is generally agreed by the natives, that the Singphos are fully equal, if not superior, in point of numbers, to the Shyans. Including, however, all the branches of the Shyan family, dwelling north, east, and south of Ava, *that* is doubtless far the most numerous of all the Indo-Chinese races.

The Singphos are an entirely different race from the Shyans ; less civilized, but more energetic, and in war more savage. Their language possesses little affinity to any of the neighboring dialects. They have no regular and settled religious system, like the Shyans, who borrowed their religion from their conquerors, the Burmans. But the Singphos exhibit few or no traces of Buddhism, though they possess some rude and general ideas of religion. So far as their religion is concerned, we should not suppose it to present those obstacles to the introduction of Christianity which attend those preaching of the gospel in countries where Hinduism or even Buddhism prevails. They, as well as the Abors, appear to be in very much the same state as the Karens, whose general ideas of religion constitute a state of mind far more favourable for the reception of the gospel, than is to be found in those countries where deep-rooted systems of idolatry are interwoven with the whole fabric and texture of society.

The Singphos, at least a large portion of them, are easy of access from this place. Companies of them are constantly coming in, for the purposes of trade, and many of the people here understand the Singpho language. The tea forests lie chiefly within the Singpho territory, which, in proportion as they are cultivated, will become the means of increasing the facilities for communication with this people. Many of their villages are included within the possessions of the English government, and of course the residence of a missionary among them would be entirely safe. Healthy locations might probably be found amongst them, otherwise a missionary will have to retreat to Sadiya during the rain. Ningru, a fine village on the banks of the Buri Dihing, three or four days' journey south of this place, in the midst of the tea country, has been mentioned as offering a good location for a missionary.

The Abors are the great family of the north. This race includes also the Bor Abors and Miris, who speak the same language. *Miri* is a term applied to those who have descended to the plains, and mingling with the Asamese and other races, have partially adopted the habits of more civilized life. The term *Abor* (signifying *Independent*) is applied to those who live on the highlands in a savage state, and have never acknowledged the

supremacy of the Asam rajas ; but on the contrary have heretofore been in the habit of descending annually to levy tribute on the people of the plains, and not unfrequently carrying off many of them as slaves. *Bor Abors* (or *Great Abors*), is a term used to denote the main body of this people, who occupy the higher and more distant ranges of the north, and stretch far on to the borders of Thibet. The banks of the great river Dihong, (the *Sampou* of geographers), are entirely occupied by this race, and all the eastern ranges of mountains, as far as the river Dibong.

It would of course be imprudent for a missionary to proceed at once into the midst of this savage people. His first efforts would naturally be amongst the *Miris*, settled about *Sadiya*, from whom he would learn the language. He might then advance without danger to the *Abor* villages, or the precincts of the *Sadiya* valley, and afterwards to those which were more remote, according as he should find the disposition of the people favorable.

Neither the *Singphos* nor *Abors* have any books, or any knowledge of letters whatever. The first thing to be done is to give them a *written language*. The foundation of their literature is to be laid. This you will at once perceive to be a very important circumstance. Those who shall first give them a written and printed language, and select their books for fifty years to come, will give character to all their future literature. They will open the fountain, whose properties, either good or evil, will assuredly be communicated to all the streams that flow from it in after ages. How important then that in the outset we should lay for them the foundation of a literature truly Christian—that their first books should be pure truth, the truth revealed in God's word. Mankind in the rude state of these tribes, look up to their literature, if they have one, as their oracle ; and it is an undeniable fact, that the grand prop of almost every heathen religion is the heathen literature connected with it.

THE HILL TRIBES OF ASSAM

84. These are quite free from Hindoo influences, and still more susceptible to the gospel ; although the truth must in the main be presented in their own tongues.

The hill section, over which the British claim control, includes the Garo Hills, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, a part of Cachar, and most of the Naga Hills districts, but not most of the Naga territory. Its area is 18,387 square miles, a little larger than the two States of Massachusetts and Vermont. Among these tribes, government is not yet sufficiently systemized for making an accurate census. The figures given are therefore either approximate counts, or guesses made by officials who have travelled more or less among them. Many and various estimates have from time to time been made ; but I depend mostly upon figures and opinions of a pamphlet by the late G. H. Damant, M.A.,* who was killed last October in the uprising of the Nagas, as described by brother King in the February number of this MAGAZINE. Mr Damant had officiated in almost every section of the hills, and had travelled on foot from the Burman border east of Manipur through the hills to the Brahmaputra at the western point of the Garo Hills. He was therefore as capable, doubtless, of making estimates, as any who have attempted it ; and his pamphlet has the advantage of being the latest published, being printed in 1879, and coming from the press, I think, since his death. In this pamphlet Mr Damant “attempts a brief account of the wild tribes dwelling between the Brahmaputra and the Kaiendwen, Namtonai, or Ningthi, as it is indifferently called, the great western branch of the Irrawaddy”. He also “attempts to classify the different dialects

* A philologist of repute, G. H. Damant officiated as Political Agent, Manipur and assumed the charge of the Political Officer, Naga Hills district in July 1878. In his endeavour to bring the Angamis under effective control he was killed at Khnomah on 14 October, 1880.

philologically, as far as is at present possible from our limited knowledge of the subject”.

All of these tribes are regarded by writers generally as of the Mongolian stock, and are called Indo-Chinese races. In a pamphlet by a former inspector of schools of Assam, the Garo language was classed as different from the other tribes, and as belonging to the Bhutan, viz., the Thibetan language. Mr Damant classifies all under three families,—the Thibeto-Burman, Tai and Khasi, but says, “The distribution of these numerous tribes into their various sub-families is a matter of great difficulty. Of the Nagas alone there are not less, and probably more, than thirty different tribes, all speaking different languages, and mutually unintelligible one to another.”

The Khasi family consists of Khasias only, who live in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills district. The population of this district, says Dr Hunter, “consists almost exclusively of aboriginal tribes and races ; viz., Khasias and Syntengs (who form the bulk of the inhabitants of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills respectively), Mikirs, Garos, and Kukis.” This district contains the seat of the Assam government ; and the people, about 141,000 in number, are industrious, the most civilized, and best educated of any of the hill tribes. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission was organized in May 1840, and in that year sent their first missionary to Cherrapoonjee of this district ; and they have since sent seven or eight more to the same field, five or six of whom are still laboring for the Khasias. They have given much attention to education, receiving £ 500 per annum from government, besides the full salary of one of the missionaries, who is principal of the normal school. In 1878 they reported 21 churches, 848 communicants, 1,526 nominal native Christians, 1,374 scholars in Sunday Schools.

Under the Tai family Mr Damant includes the Khamtis, mentioned in table, p. 230, who are located between Dibrugarh and Sadiya in the Lakimpur district ; the “Aitonia Shans”, the Mans, and the Ahoms before mentioned, who are very largely Hindooized. The Shans are found in small detached villages of Lakimpur, Sibsagor, and the Naga Hills districts. They number about 3,000. They are Buddhists, holding to their

own customs, and are visited from time to time by Burman priests..

The Mans, "numbering perhaps 2,000 are found in eight or ten small villages at the foot of the Garo Hills. They have forgotten their own language, but have preserved their religion. They are said to be descendants of Shan soldiers, who accompanied the Burmans when they invaded Assam in 1825." These Mans are intimately related to the Shans of Upper Assam. Some of them are members of one of our Garo Christian churches.

The Thibeto-Burman family Mr Damant divides into six sub-families ; viz., Cacharis-Koch, Kuki, Mikir, Western Naga, Central Naga and Eastern Naga. The Mikirs are the only tribe of the Mikir sub-family. These are mentioned in table, on p. 230 ; but, besides those there mentioned, Mr Damant estimates that about 15,000 live in North Cachar, Jaintia and Naga Hills. Our Nowgong church is largely composed of Mikirs ; and the Mikir part of the work at that station seems the most promising.

The other five sub-families Mr Damant sub-divides (as given on page 308).

There are also a great number of subdivisions in these tribes, and the people as often pass under the subdivisinal name as otherwise ; moreover, each tribe, as a rule, has a different name for each of the other tribes.

The Hill Cacharis, Meches, Koches and Rabhas of the Cachari-Koch sub-family, are those of the plains, mentioned in table, p. 230. But Mr Damant estimates that there are, besides those there mentioned, about 21,000 Hill Cacharis, or Hojais, who live south-east of Nowgong, and who have fully retained their old customs. Mr Damant regards the Hojai dialect as the standard of all Cachari, and the mother of the Mech tongue. The Lalungs mentioned in the table he also regards as very closely allied to the Hojai. The Rabhas and Koches, says Mr Damant, in dialect, manners, and customs, are closely allied to the Garo, the most primitive of all the Cachari family.

As to the location and numbers of the Garos, I have seen several confusing statements. It should be clearly understood,

CACHARI-KOCH SUB-FAMILY

Hojai or Hill Cachari Mech Koch Rabha Garo Chutia Tipperah

KUKI SUB-FAMILY

New Kuki Old Kuki Lumyang Manipuri Looes Lushai Sakte Shindie or Poi Kabui Cheru Maring

WESTERN NAGA SUB-FAMILY

Mao Arung Rengma Angami Luhupa

CENTRAL NAGA SUB-FAMILY

Lhota Semi Hatigoria Rengma Nagas of Mellomi Nagas of Primi Mezam

EASTERN NAGA SUB-FAMILY

Tablung Sangloi Bangera Mutonia Mohongia Namsangia
 25,000 25,000 20,000 4,000 10,000 25,000 or 30,000

therefore, that they occupy the Garo Hills district at the extreme western end of the hill range, separated from the Naga Hills by the district of Khasi and Jaintia Hills. An airline over the mountain-tops from our station here at Tura almost directly east to Samaguting, the nearest of the Naga stations, where brother King has begun work, is about 225 miles. Another airline of seventy odd miles north-east from Samaguting would reach brother Clark's tribe. As has been elsewhere mentioned, Mr Clark is literally nearer Bahmo than We is to the Garos, and yet I have seen his work represented as among the Garos. The Garo Hills district has an area of 3,180 square miles, just one-half larger than the State of Delaware ; and the Garos are just about equal in numbers to the population of Delaware. The Garos of the district were estimated at eighty thousand, and that is still the Government basis ; but Mr Damant, who acted as Deputy-Commissioner here, estimated them from eighty thousand to one hundred thousand ; and Capt. Peet, the present Deputy-Commissioner, now estimates them at one hundred thousand. Besides these, as shown in table (p. 230), there are large numbers of Garos in adjoining districts ; not because the Garos are scattered, but because the district boundary-lines pass through their villages. Besides the fifteen thousand shown in the table as found in the district to the north, Mymensing, to the south, is supposed to contain about as many more. Mr Damant estimated that twenty-seven thousand Garos live outside of the district-lines. Capt. Peet thinks they may be safely counted at thirty thousand. Hence the Garo population is now estimated from one hundred and seven thousand to one hundred and thirty thousand ; the latter being the estimate of the present officer. I need not here mention our mission work among the Garos, as it is already known or can be easily gathered from other sources.

The tribes of the Kuki sub-family are almost entirely independent, and, except the Manipuris, are all in a state of barbarism. Although subdivided into many tribes, all are located in the "Hill tracts", extending from the plains of Assam on the north to Burmah on the south, and from the Khasi Hills on the west

to the country of the Luhupa and Angama Nagas on the east.

The Manipuris, "the most civilized of all the tribes in that part of the country," are about seventy thousand strong, and occupy the independent territory well indicated on the maps. The New Kukis and Old Kukis, embracing fifteen sub-tribes, number twenty-one thousand or twenty-two thousand, and are found in Manipur, Cachar and Naga Hills.

The Lushais are from sixty thousand to eighty thousand strong, and live south of Cachar, east of Tipperah, and north of the Chittagong hill tracts. The Pais are "a numerous and powerful tribe to the south-east of the Lushais, whom they are gradually driving to the north". These are distinguished from others by the way they dress their hair, "which they bind in a knot over the forehead like a horn". This peculiarity also five or six tribes of this sub-family are found near the boundaries of Manipur, and may number in all fifty thousand or sixty thousand. It should be remembered that the estimates of these comparatively unknown tribes are but little more than guesses, often gathered only from talking with traders.

In the Western Naga sub-family, belong the interesting tribe of Angamis, for whom brother King has begun labors, and who have given the Government so much trouble of late. These "the most warlike and probably the most numerous of all the Naga tribes"; are not the most numerous of the Assam tribes, however, as is seen from comparison. This is what Mr Damant says of them : "Their country is about fifty miles long from north to south, and about eighty or one hundred from east to west." "In language they differ so much from all around them, that it is doubtful whether they should not be classed as a distinct family of themselves." "They are generally separated into two divisions, known as the Eastern and Western Angamis." "They are essentially the same tribe, but there are slight differences in dialect and dress. The Western Angamis hold forty-six villages, containing about six thousand four hundred houses, with a population of about thirty-two thousand. Their principal villages are Jatsoma, Kohima, Khonoma and Mezoma," in the

south-east of the Naga Hills district, near the northern boundary of Manipur. "Of the Eastern Angamis we have no accurate statistics ; but they have probably not less than eighty villages, with a population of seventy thousand."

The Lahupas are a large tribe found to the north-east of Manipur. Their country is unexplored, and it is quite uncertain how far they extend to the east. Native report says eight days' journey.

The Rengmas, Arungs and Maos with their subdivisions, are closely allied, and number in all some forty-two thousand, living mostly south and east of the Angamis.

The Central Naga sub-family has three large and powerful tribes. These lie east of the Naga Hills district, and south-east of Sibsagor district. Wakha, a British political station, is one of the chief towns of the Lhota Nagas, who number from forty thousand to fifty thousand.

"These are dirty, badly clothed, small men, a great contrast to the clean, decently clad Angamis."

The Semes lie immediately south of the Lhotas, and extend far to the east. Their number "may be safely estimated at fifty thousand".

The Hatigorría is the largest of these tribes. Brother Clark's work is among this tribe. Mr Damant says of them, "This large and warlike tribe is found to the east of the Lhotas and Semes ; but how far east they extend it is impossible to say. In their own language they are called Samaina, or Nissomeh. Of the number of their villages and population it is difficult to give anything like an exact estimate, but their numbers in all probability do not fall far short of one hundred thousand. The tribes known as Assiringias, Dupdorías, Dekha-Haimong and Khari, are really part of the Hatigorría tribe, and are included with them."

"The Eastern Naga sub-family includes all the tribes east of the Hatigorría country, extending to the Singpho country on the east." "There are many different tribes, some of them consisting only of a few villages, and all, or nearly all, speaking

languages unintelligible the one to the other. Within twenty miles of country five or six different dialects are often to be found. We do not yet possess vocabularies of many of the languages of this area ; but, so far as our knowledge extends at present, a considerable affinity appears to exist among them. In several of the tribes the women are perfectly naked, in others the men.” The estimated population of the six tribes is as given above under their respective names. (Mason, M. C., “*The People of Assam*”; *BMM*, September 1880, pp. 329-32)

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BARKAR, REV CYRUS : Born at Portsmouth in 1807 Barkar was educated at the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute. He was ordained in September 1838. Accompanied by Mrs Barkar and Rhoda Bronson he arrived at Jaipur, May 1840, with the object of establishing a mission amongst the Naga tribes. Since Bronson had already started a school at Namsang Barkar left for Sibsagar where a school was started in 1841. Soon he moved to Guwahati and organised the Guwahati church, February 1845. Preaching apart he opened several schools in and around Guwahati. The Cacharis in the north attracted the attention of Barkar, but ill-health compelled him to leave the mission, and on his voyage to America died near the Mozambique channel, 31 January, 1850.

BRONSON, REV MILES : The patriarch of the Assamese, Miles Bronson was born at Norway NY, 20 July, 1812. Educated at Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute he was ordained in April 1836. Accompanied by Mrs Bronson and the family of Jacob Thomas he left for Assam, July 1837, with the object of starting a mission amongst the Singphos. On his arrival at Sadiya, he learnt Assamese and Singhpho dialects and prepared a few books for the Singphos. He started a mission at Jaipur and in early 1840 moved to Namsang, Naga hills. Bronson's gentle, suave and persuasive manners enabled him to overcome the initial difficulties in starting a school at Namsang where he taught the Nagas the Bible and industrial arts. Continued illness of his own and the death of his sister Rhoda obliged him to leave the hills and to establish a mission at Nowgong (1841). The Orphan Institution was his significant contribution which turned out native preachers for several years. He failed to convert the Assamese into Christianity, but he was immensely successful in Garo field with the aid of his able lieutenants Omed and Ramkhe. Ill-health prevented him from starting a mission for the tea-garden labourers at Dibrugarh to which he moved in 1879. For recovery of health he left for America with his wife

in 1848, 1858 and 1868. On the death of Mrs Bronson, while she was in United States in 1869, he married the widow of Danforth. Unfortunately she also died soon followed by the death of his beloved daughter Maria of cholera at Gowalpara. Bereavements one after another and broken in health, Bronson left Assam in 1879 after a dedicated service of forty-two years never to return. He expired at Michigan, 9 November, 1883.

As an evangelist Bronson bitterly attacked at times all those who opposed to the spread of the gospel. Nonetheless his name will be written in letters of gold in the annals of Assam for his monumental work *Assamese-English Dictionary*. He laid the Assamese people under deep obligation for the untiring efforts he made for the restitution of the Assamese language in its rightful place and in inspiring the Assamese youths to take the lead in regenerating their countrymen. His love for Assam and the Assamese is eloquently expressed when he said in his farewell address. "I do not want to go, my heart is here. I desire above all things to live and labour for Christianity here."

—, MRS *alias* RUTH MONTAGU LUCAS : Born at Madison NY, 3 August, 1813, Ruth was married to Bronson September 1836. Accompanied by her husband she came to Assam and till the end continued to be the "Companion, comforter and helper" in his evangelical and literary works. She died at Elmira NY, 30 September, 1869.

—, MISS MARIE COTES : Born at Jaipur (1838) Marie was educated and baptised in America. On her mother's death in 1869 she returned with her father to Assam and engaged herself in *zenana* and teaching works. In fact from her childhood Marie gathered around her young pupils and taught them the Bible. She accompanied Mrs Danforth Bronson to Singapur for recovery of health ; when the latter died at Rangoon on her return journey, Marie herself fell a victim to cholera at Goalpara.

—, MISS RHODA : Arrived at Jaipur with the family of Barkar in May 1840. Hardly had she studied the language and started work with Miles Bronson at Namsang when she fell ill and died on 8 December, 1840.

BROWN, REV NATHAN : Son of Nathan and Betsey Goldsmith Brown, Nathan Brown was born at New Ipswich

NY, 22 June, 1807. Graduated from the Williams College (1827) with a brilliant career, he accepted in 1830 the editorship of the theological weekly *The Vermont Telegraph*. In 1832 when the appeal for reinforcement reached home from Burma, Brown resigned his editorship and having ordained at Ruthland after a few months training at the Newton Theological Seminary, sailed for Burma with his wife and arrived at Moulmein in early 1833. He welcomed the proposal of the Board to establish a mission at Sadiya as the gateway to China. Accompanied by Mrs Brown and the family of Oliver Cutter he arrived at Sadiya in March 1836. Despite ordeals of a pioneer he learnt the Khamti, Tai and Assamese languages, and started preparation and publication of reading materials apart from evangelisation. The insurrection of the Khamtis (1839) compelled him to move to Jaipur and finally to Sibsagar. Inadequate assistance and domestic worries could not daunt the spirit of Brown in spreading the message of Christ in Upper Assam. But for his strongest advocacy, it is doubtful if the Home Board would have retained the mission in Assam at the hour of its financial crisis, all the more when the spiritual harvest was exceedingly low. The different views held by the Foreign Secretary in the policy and programme of evangelisation left no alternative for Brown but to leave the mission he built up with a spirit of dedication for nearly twenty years. In February 1855 he returned home and joined the anti-slavery movement; later he settled as a missionary in Japan where at Yokohama he expired on 1 January, 1886.

A scholar, linguist and philologist of international repute, Brown made comparative studies of the Assamese, Bengali, Sanskrit with Persian, Russian, Latin and Gothic languages of Europe. Acknowledging his authoritative opinion Max Müller wrote : "He is one of the few men whose opinion I should like to have on the classifications on these dialects on the borders of India and China which I have attempted these for the first time." (Max Müller to Trevelyan, 25 October, 1854; cited in *The Whole World Kin*, p. 602.) Brown's original papers include : "Alphabets of the Tai Language", *Journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal*, VI, 1837; "Comparison of Indo-Chinese Language", *ibid*, "Specimens of Eastern Languages", *BMM*, XIX, 1830)

—, MRS ELIZA W., BALLARD : Eliza was born in April 1807 at Deerfield and married to Nathan Brown at Charlemont. After a stormy voyage of over six months she arrived with her husband at Moulmein in 1833. Misfortune dogged her steps from the very beginning. On the very day of her departure for Sadiya her young son died and two years later passed away daughter Sophia who had accompanied her from America. Hardly had the family settled down at Sadiya and started operations, uprisings of the Khamtis forced them to flee for lives to Jaipur, and there they found their son crippled with loss of eyesight. He also died in February 1841. She borne her lot bravely and promoted the cause of the mission by opening several schools and producing reading materials. Besides an elementary arithmetic and geography, she is credited with preparation and translation of a series of juvenile literature the first of its kind in Assamese. In 1855 Mrs Brown left Assam with her husband to America where she died in 1871.

CLARK, REV EDWARD. W. : Born at North-East NY in 1830 Clark graduated from the Brown University in 1857 and trained at Newton and Rochester Theological Seminaries. Serving a few years as the editor of *The Witness*, Indianapolis, he left for Assam and arrived at Sibsagar in 1869. On the departure of William Ward he was in charge of the church as well as of the press. With the aid of Godhula, an Assamese convert, he opened a centre amongst the AO Nagas at Deka Haimong and despite overwhelming odds succeeded in establishing a mission at Molung in 1876. He was instrumental in starting operation amongst the Angamis and the Lothas. Ably assisted by his wife Clark extended operations amongst the AOs, started schools and prepared books in AO language.

CUTTER, MR OLIVER, T. : Born at Lexington. Appointed a printer for the mission Cutter left with his wife in 1831 for Moulmein. In March 1836 he arrived at Sadiya with a printing press in the company of Brown and started teaching and preparing books for the press. Primarily in charge of the printing establishment, Cutter opened schools in and around Sadiya, edited the *Orunodoi* for a few months and actively assisted Brown for the spread of the gospel. For “immoral acts”,

unfortunately, he was dismissed from his service in March 1853. Serving a few years as Superintendent, Government Press, Calcutta, he left for London where he died in April 1881.

—, MRS HARRIET LOW : Accompanied by her husband Mrs Cutter arrived at Sadiya where she started the earliest school of the mission, June 1836. Apart from teaching programme at Sadiya, Jaipur and Sibsagar, she prepared a reading book of miscellaneous character and compiled a *Vocabulary and Phrases in English and Assamese*, published by the Mission press in 1841.

DANFORTH, REV APPLETON HOW : Born at Pelham Mass, July 1817, Danforth had his theological training at the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute (1845 and 1847). He arrived as a missionary at Guwahati in 1848 and relieved Barker who left for home for recovery of health. With the assistance of William Ward, who had also joined the mission, he started construction of brick mission building, school house and the chapel. He had to move to Sibsagar on the departure of Brown, but returned to Guwahati when Stoddards and Wards left for America. Facing the financial crisis and early phases of the Mutiny, he too left Assam in 1858. A champion of the cause of the Assamese language Danforth edited the *Orunodoi*, translated the *Pilgrims Progress* and made in-depth study of the local languages.

DÄUBLE, REV G. : A member of the Lutheran Church, Tezpur, converted and baptised as a Baptist, Däuble was appointed in 1850 a teacher of the Orphan Institution, Nowgong. In the following year having ordained he worked as a missionary, but soon died of cholera, 22 March, 1853.

FARWELL, NIDHI LEVI *alias* NIDHIRAM : An orphan of a low caste Hindu of Gohpur (in present district of Sonitpur), Nidhiram was admitted into Mrs Cutter's school at Sadiya and was appointed at the same time a compositor at the Mission Press. First Assamese to embrace Christianity, Nidhi was baptised by Bronson on the Buridihing at Jaipur, 13 June, 1841. He was not destined to have a happy married life : Tuku, the first Assamese Christian woman whom he married died in 1851 followed by the death of Eliza, whom he later married, in 1853. One of the trio in Assamese-Christian

literature, Nidhi Levi is credited with several works both in prose and verse. He wrote articles on natural science in popular language apart from translation of the Indian Penal Code. A regular contributor to the *Orunodoi* he gave a new orientation to Assamese religio-literary poetry.

GODHULA *alias* **RUTUS BROWN** : Son of an Assamese convert Kolibor, Godhula had his education at the Orphan Institution, Nowgong. After training he endeavoured to open a centre at Majuli, but failed on the opposition of the vaisnavite Hindus. Under direction of Clark in 1870 he learnt the AO dialect and made several trips to Deka Haimong where he succeeded in inducing several Nagas to accept Christianity and also in erecting a chapel. Until the arrival of Clark in 1876, he was in charge of the church at Haimong.

GURNEY, REV A. K. : Born at Cumberland and educated at Newton Theological Seminary, Gurney was ordained in August 1874. Arrived as missionary at Sibsagar in 1876. It was to the lasting credit of Gurney that he completed the translation of the *Old Testament* into Assamese (1903). He prepared several books in Assamese : of these *Kamini Kantar Charitra* with Mrs Gurney's *Fulmani and Karuna* may be said to have made the beginning of Assamese novel.

KING, REV C. D. : Graduated from the Rochester University and Theological Seminary, King was ordained in 1874. He arrived at Samaguting as a missionary in 1879 to work amongst the Angamis. Insecurity in the hills compelled him to take shelter for a few months at Sibsagar. On return of normalcy in 1880 he moved to Kohima and started a school. He found in Henry Goldsmith an able assistant, yet operation amongst the Angamese continued to be disappointing. Ill-health compelled him in 1889 to leave the hills and return to America.

MASON, REV MARCUS, C. : A native of Strykerville NY, Mason had his education at the Madison University and Theological Seminary. Having ordained in 1874 and accompanied by the family of E. G. Phillips, he left for Assam to work amongst the Garos. For two years both of them carried on their operations from Goalpara. In 1876 Phillips moved to Tura and established a mission to which Mason also followed in

1878. The arrival of Mason and Phillips was remarkable for the increase in number of churches, multiplication of schools and production of literary works in Garo language. In 1882 he left for America for the recovery of health of Mrs Mason, but the later died soon at Michigan.

OMED AND RAMKHE MOMIN : Native of Watrepara village, Garo Hills, Omed and his nephew Ramkhe had their early education at the government school, Goalpara, established by Jenkins in 1847. Omed left the school after two years and enlisted himself as a sepoy at Guwahati. Ramkhe followed suit and joined as head constable at Damra in the district of Goalpara. Both of them left their jobs and under the influence of Kandura, an Assamese convert, embraced Christianity and were baptised by Bronson in February 1863. To spread the message of Christ amongst their co-villagers Ramkhe started a school at Damra and Omed a centre at Rajsimla. Despite too many odds they succeeded in evangelisation ; in 1867 Bronson had thirty-seven Garos baptised and organised the church at Rajsimla with Omed as its pastor. The spirit of dedications and sacrifice with which the pioneers worked resulted in rapid growth of the Garo church ; the membership of which rose to over four hundred within a period of seven years.

PHILLIPS, REV E. G. : Graduated from the Madison University and Theological Seminary, Phillips was ordained in July 1874. In the same year accompanied by the family of Mason, he arrived at Goalpara to work among the Garo mountaineers. In 1876 he established a mission at Tura which had in the meantime been made headquarters of the district. Evangelisation apart, Phillips is credited with several textbooks besides translation of the gospel and scriptures.

RAE, REV JAMES : A native of Dumfries, having baptised and ordained by the Serampur mission, Rae arrived with his family at Guwahati and established a school in 1829. Apart from teaching he carried on preaching in Lower Assam with the object of placing the gospel in each Hindu temple. He erected a chapel at Guwahati and in 1836 it had twelve members, of which six were baptised. Inadequate assistance, lack of

funds and above all death of his wife compelled him to leave the mission in 1837 and joined as a school master under the government.

RIVENBURG, REV SIDNEY W. : Born at Clifford PA, October 1857, Rivenburg had his education at the Brown University and Rochester Theological Seminary. In December 1883 accompanied by his wife he came to Assam and arrived at Molung to relieve Clark who left on furlough. On the departure of C. D. King he was placed in charge of the Kohima church. In spite of his earnest endeavours success of the mission was minimal. Besides translation of scriptures and hymns, Rivenburg brought out a few textbooks and the *Angami-English Phrases*.

ROBINSON, REV WILLIAM : As a Serampur missionary Robinson joined the Guwahati centre in 1836 and worked with Rae for about two years. The moribund condition of the church compelled him to leave the mission and join as Headmaster, Government School, Guwahati and later Inspector of Schools, North-Eastern Bengal and Assam Division. He bitterly opposed the language policy of the American Baptists, but lent support to their activities and championed the cause of the Assamese youths for their higher education. Robinson was the author of *A Grammar of Assamese Language* (1839) and *A Descriptive Account of Assam* (1840), the earliest grammar and history of Assam.

STODDARD, REV IRA J. : In 1820 Stoddard had his birth at Eden NY and was educated at Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute. With his wife he sailed from Boston in November 1847 and arrived at Nowgong to relieve Bronson who went on furlough. He worked until 1855 when for reasons of health left for America. On return in 1867 he laboured among the Garos for six years after which left Assam on account of broken health. Stoddard got prepared with native assistants a Garo Primer, catechisms and hymns in Assamese language.

JACOB, REV THOMAS : Born at Elbridge NY, Thomas had his training at the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute. Accompanied by his wife and the family of Bronson he arrived at Guwahati in the middle of 1837. In his upward journey

by boat to Sadiya he was suddenly killed by the falling of a tree on the boat from the bank of the river. Mrs Thomas moved to Jaipur with the family of Bronson and later went to Burma where she married a missionary.

WARD, REV. WILLIAM : A scholar, thinker and writer of repute Ward graduated from the Madison University. On his arrival at Guwahati in 1848 he worked with Danforth and made extensive tours for the spread of the gospel. As in cases of other missionaries he left for America in 1857 for recovery of health. On his return to Sibsagar in 1860, apart from being the head of the mission he managed the press, edited the *Orunodoi* and translated into Assamese several psalms and hymns. He died at Sibsagar in 1873.

—, MRS SUSAN R. : Born at Belcherton Mrs Susan was married to Judson Benjamin in 1848. On the death of her husband she became the wife of William Ward and engaged herself in teaching at Sibsagar. After the death of Ward, besides assisting Clark in the mission, she served as a teacher at the government school, edited the *Orunodoi*, revised and published Mrs Cutter's *Vocabulary* as *Brief Vocabulary in English and Assamese* (1864). She was the author of *A Glimpse of Assam* (1884). She died in Calcutta while under medical treatment in 1884.

WHITING, REV. SAMUEL MELLEN SUTTON : Whiting was born at Massachusetts and graduated from the Trinity College, Hartford. In 1851 he came to Sibsagar with his wife Mary Elizabeth Flint and served the mission for a period of ten years as a pastor, teacher and translator of theological literature. A Hebrew scholar of repute, he is reported to have aided Bronson in his Dictionary project. In 1861 he returned to America and served several years as a pastor of the churches in Vermont and Connecticut and died at New Haven in 1878. Whiting had a genuine love for Assam and the Assamese which is borne out when he expressed : "I am satisfied in this thought that Assam is my home, and my home for life. Let me yearly sow the Gospel forth in all those parts until I am relieved from earthly work."

WITTER, REV. WILLIAM E. : Born at La Grange NY, Witter graduated from the Rochester University (1880) and Rochester Theological Institute. Having ordained in 1883 he came to Assam and was directed to open a centre amongst the Lothas. Hardly had he opened a school and prepared a few books for the Nagas, ill-health compelled him to leave the hills and return to America.

ERRATA

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217	37	<i>jbors</i>	<i>ibors</i>
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286	2	Rajsimla	Rajsimda
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