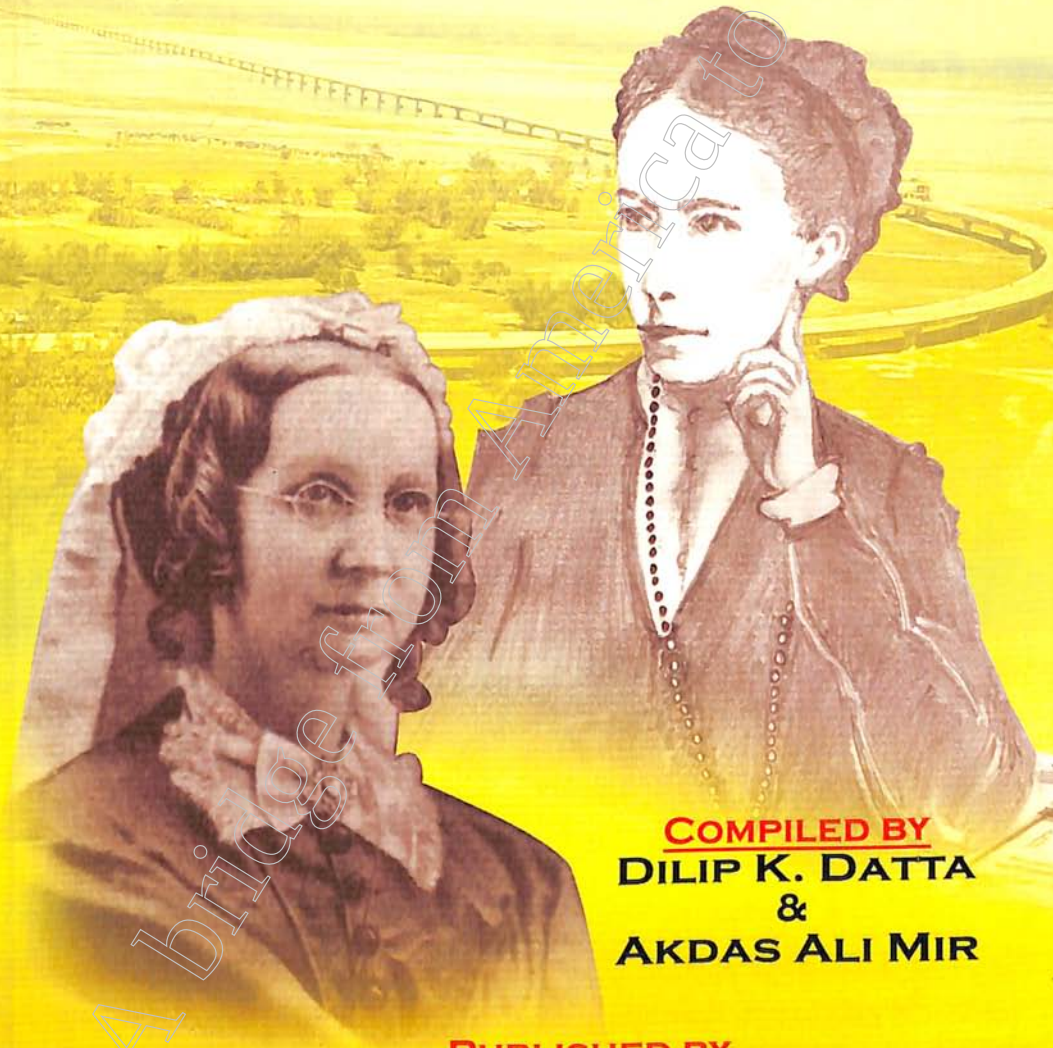
A BRIDGE FROM AMERICA TO SADIYA

(A COLLECTON OF THREE BIOGRAPHIES)



COMPILED BY
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&
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PUBLISHED BY
RAUSHANARA EDUCATION FOUNDATION
GUWAHATI

A BRIDGE FROM AMERICA TO SADIYA

(For the Cause of Education and Spiritual Enlightenment)

Compiled by

Dr. Dilip K. Datta
and
Akdas Ali Mir

Published by

Raushanara Education Foundation
Guwahati

A BRIDGE FROM AMERICA TO SADIYA

(For the Cause of Education and Spiritual Enlightenment)

This book is a collection of three rare nineteenth century biographies. Two of the biographies are about American missionaries who laid down their lives for the cause of education and spiritual enlightenment of the people of Assam. The third one is the biography of first native Assamese pastor of the Guwahati Church.

Each biography was written by well-known author of the time who was intimately connected with the life and the trials of his or her life. Thus Rev. E.H. Gray, D.D., the author of the Mrs. Eliza Whitney Brown, was an esteemed scholar and a close friend of Eliza and Rev. Nathan Brown. Sophie Bronson Titterington, the author of the other two biographies, was a popular writer of the nineteenth century America and a daughter of Rev. Miles Bronson.

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This book is dedicated to all the American Baptist Missionaries who had sacrificed their valuable lives for the cause of education and enlightenment of the people of Assam during 19th Century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1. *Mrs. Eliza Whitney Brown* by Rev. E.H. Gray, D.D., was originally published by Thomas Holman, Printer, Corner Centre and White Streets, New York (1871).

2. *The Wonderful Story of Kandura* by Sophia Bronson Titterington was originally published by The American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia (1892).

3. *Maria Bronson* by Sophie Bronson Titterington was originally published by American Woman's Baptist Missionary Society of the West, Chicago (1882) was published by Woman's Baptist Missionary Society, Chicago (1882)

Introduction

Early in the eighteenth century, long before the pillars for the Dhola-Sadiya bridge (Bhupen Hazarika Setu) were laid, the American Baptist missionaries had constructed a bridge between America and Assam. Many US citizens and Assamese folks have since trodden over that bridge to enrich themselves and the people of the two countries with faith, love and service. The biographies in this collection contain true stories of dedication, service and sacrifice of some pioneers who laid the foundation of that bridge for all days to come.

Eliza was born Eliza Whitney Ballard at Charlemont, Mass, USA on April 12, 1807, where she grew up and had her education. She started teaching in a seminary in nearby Benington, where she met Nathan Brown. Nathan Brown joined the same seminary soon afterwards. The two got married on May 6, 1830 and later moved to Brandon, Vermont.

On December 22, 1832, the Brown couple and their first child Dorothy Sophia sailed for Burma (now Myanmar). In May 1833, they reached Maulmain, Burma after a voyage lasting more than four months. They stayed in Burma till August 1835. That year Major Jenkins, the British officer in charge of Assam, offered the American Baptist Mission a sum of one thousand rupees to establish a mission in Sadiya. The American Baptist Mission accepted the offer and selected the Brown couple to start the mission. The Brown family arrived in Calcutta on September 2, 1835 and immediately embarked

on their arduous journey up the river Brahmaputra in a native boat. It took them four months to reach their destination. They arrived in Sadiya on March 2, 1936. That is where our story begins.

Eliza Whitney Brown (1807 - 1871) may be regarded as the mother of modern education in Assam. She was not only the first to start a school in Assam but also the author of several elementary texts in the Assamese language. She had mastered the Assamese language and was bold enough to show how to write scientific knowledge in the Assamese language. It is said that Mrs. Eliza Brown spoke Assamese like a native and wrote it better than any native could in those days. She wrote the first Assamese book on Modern arithmetic and the first Assamese text on geography. Her texts were used in schools for more than two decades. She also published a juvenile series of twelve tracts. They were the first ever published Assamese storybooks for children. It was because of her example that later Assamese were able to start writing Assamese texts for schools in Assam.

Eliza Brown did all those pioneering work for the Assamese language and education in Assam through immense hardships and personal suffering. Misfortunes came to Eliza one after the other, but this brave lady did never give up. Her life and works have been beautifully described by Rev. E.H. Gray in a memorable sermon preached at her funeral. The sermon was later printed in the form of a pamphlet, titled *Songs in the Night*.

In the year 1836, Rev. Miles Bronson, Rev. Jacob Thomas and their wives left America to join the Sadiya Mission. They reached Calcutta in 1837 after a perilous journey around Cape of Good Hope. On the 26th of April, Bronson and his party commenced their long journey up the Brahmaputra. As they approached Sadiya on the 7th of July, Bronson was taken seriously ill and Rev. Thomas took a small boat and hastened to Sadiya for medical help unaware of the dangers of erosion on the banks of rising Brahmaputra. Just as the small boat was approaching the banks near Sadiya a big tree fell

across the boat seriously injuring Rev. Jacob Thomas. Rev. Thomas died a few hours later but Miles Bronson was able to spend more than forty years in Assam opening schools, teaching, translating, preparing books in Assamese, Garo, Khamti, Naga and Singpho languages.

Maria (1841-1874), a daughter of Miles and Ruth Bronson was born in Nowgong. After seven wonderful years in Nowgong, Maria was taken to USA and put under the care of an American family in Springfield, NY. For nearly twenty years Maria went through various seminaries and trained herself to be a teacher with special training in gymnastics and ample experience of nursing old and needy. After her mother's death in 1869, Maria and Miles Bronson returned to Nowgong to resume the work that the missionaries had started in 1836. She was very happy to be engaged in teaching at a place she loved. Her joys and the circumstances of her sudden death are part of the narrative of this book.

Reverend Kandura Smith, was a distinguished Assamese gentleman of the nineteenth century and the first native pastor of the Guwahati Baptist Church. He was a student of Miles Bronson, who literally picked him up from the dirt and dust of Assam and nurtured him to be a great educator and preacher. His life is the subject of the book *The Wonderful Story of Kandura*.

One reason why we became interested in publishing this collection is best explained by Rev. George Peck, a former Principal of the Theological College, Jorhat and a former President of Andover Newton Theological School, USA, commented that the Baptist missionaries who labored in Assam after the land was ravaged by the Burmese:

> "were noted not only for their dedication and conviction but also for their capacity for cultural identification, their capacity for human empathy and for their ability to get inside of a community and a civilization and to become one with it. So that to-day in

retrospect, they are famous not only as evangelist and church builders, themselves noble task, but also as persons who contributed profoundly to the language and culture of the folk among whom they labored."

[at the Bronson Centennial Convocation, Nov 3, 1983].

The missionaries brought to the people of Assam Christian values, Christian way of life and above all a humanistic attitude towards the poor, the destitute and the ignorant. Following the footsteps of Scholar-Saints like Brown and Bronson many others, like Eliza Brown, Maria Bronson, and natives like Rev. Kandura Smith labored and made supreme sacrifices for the cause of education and spiritual enlightenment of the people of Assam. Their labors not only enriched those who embraced Christianity but also many others who embraced Christian values without formally abandoning the heritage of India, where Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and other religions had flourished since ancient times.

Everyone, irrespective of his or her religion, may benefit from the devotional philosophy of Vaishnavism and the spiritual humanism of the Baptists that exist in Assam today. As Dr. Jitendra G. Barpujari wrote in a paper presented at the Bronson convocation in Andover Newton Theological School in 1983:

"Are we to close our eyes to the teachings of Christ? Are we to turn a deaf year to the virtues of the western society and content ourselves by what we see on Hollywood movies or Television shows? While embracing materialistic and perverse aspects of a superficial section of western society, are we to completely ignore the moral and spiritual values that exist in the real cream of the western society?"

"If we study the history of the American Baptist mission, the lives of the missionaries and the society in which they grew up, we get a very different picture. Such studies are now very important because now as more

and more vices of the West are beginning to make inroads even to the remotest corner of India, it will be wise to learn how the missionaries tried to give moral leadership against such an eventuality."

As an individual born and brought up in Assam and who has been living in America for more than fifty years, the author has been trying to bridge the two nationalities with a common thread. The first fruit of that effort is described in *Tales of Western Inspiration and Indian Karma*. This collection of biographies is a follow up in the same vein. We have compiled this collection of biographies from the hundreds of papers that are scattered all over the American libraries and other sources. Thus, we found Rev. Gray's sermon Songs in The Night in the archive of Brown University Library, Providence, RI; Sophie Bronson Titterington's *Maria Bronson* in the American Baptist Historical Society Library, Rochester, NY; Sophie Bronson Titterington's other title *The Wonderful Story of Kandura* among the rare book sections of the Library of Congress, Washington.

Each of these biographies is written by a contemporary writer with intimate knowledge of his or her subject and the environment in which the subject labored. These biographies by themselves are great sources of social history of the time and inspiring tales of dedication, human enthema and conviction. We have not made any change of the original text but have added a glossary of pertinent information to assist the readers.

The Wonderful Story of Kandura was originally published by American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia (1892). Maria Bronson was originally published by American Woman's Baptist Missionary Society of the West, Chicago (1882) and *Mrs. Eliza Whitney Brown* was originally published by Thomas Holman Printer, Corner Centre and White Streets, New York (1871).

Photo: Debanjan Borthakur

Dilip Datta with Robert Allen, President, Green Mountain College, Vermont, USA. President Allen is a graduate of University of Rhode Island, where he was a student of Prof. Datta.

The Wonderful Story of Kandura was written by Sophie (also written as Sophia) Bronson Titterington, a daughter of Miles Bronson. Sophie B. Titterington is also the author of Maria Bronson. We thank the Brown University Library, the Library of Congress, and the American Baptist Historical Society Library, Rochester, NY for so carefully preserving the respective books and making them available to us.

Dilip K. Datta

(For fifty years a Math teacher in America)

Kingston,
Rhode Island, U.S.A.
11 July 2017

Message

The American Baptist Missionaries played a very significant role in Assam. Their contributions to the Assamese society, especially in the field of education and literature are highly acclaimed. Among them, Nathan Brown and Miles Bronson are well known. Brown's wife, Eliza Whitney Ballard, pioneered in women education by opening boarding schools for girls at Sivasagar. She translated Worcester's Premier and a dozen tracts into Assamese and also wrote arithmetic and story books for the children. Marie Bronson Coats was the daughter of Miles Bronson, rendered invaluable service to the women folk at Nogaon Mission School. Kandura Rollin Smith, one of the early Assamese Christians, was a co-worker of Brown and Bronson who did much pioneer work among Garos and served at Guwahati for about twenty years. He was the first national pastor of Guwahati Baptist Church.

The materials collected and compiled by Mr. Akdas Ali Mir along with Dr. Dilip K. Datta, a professor in USA, with ardent zeal into a captivating book. It unfolds a truthful and artistic portrait of Eliza, Marie and Kandura. Thus the book becomes an asset of Assamese language and culture. People of all faiths and idiologies may find wothwhile reading this book.

August 8, 2017

A. Haque
Pastor
Guwahati Baptist Church

ABOUT KANDURA

I am indeed very happy to learn that Mr. A.A. Mir on behalf of the Raushanara Education Foundation of Guwahati is going to publish *The Wonderful Story of Kandura (1892)* along with two others booklets about nineteen century American Baptist Missionaries in Assam.

Here I take pride to state that Kandura was my great grand father and my late father Jolly Smith was one of his grandsons. Kandura came in close touch with the missionaries at Nowgong when as a child he went begging along with his blind father who was then quite old. He later embraced Christianity and became a Pastor. Kandura was the first native Pastor of Gauhati Baptist Church in 1878 for a period of three years only. He finally settled down at Sibsagar, Assam with his family.

Following the footprints of the American Baptist Missionaries, Kandura had left behind a very rich legacy of service and sacrifice for the cause of humanity, education and spiritual enlightenment of the people of Assam.

As Kandura's descendant it gives me immense pleasure to say that Kandura will remain in the hearts and minds of very many evangelists and church-goers of Assam for his memorable contributions in religious and spritual achivements in Chistian world which he

created independently himself by composing devotional hymn songs in Assamese language written in the Assamese Hymn Book as against the hymn number 171- with popular caption- "Come to saviour make no delay" ; number 227- "More love to thee O' Christ" ; number 228 - "Sweet honour to prayer" and number 284- "Lead kindly light", the hymns that will fill the hearts of our people at Churches with the melody and fragrance of piety at all times.

I am also proud to say that Kandura's descendants are well-settled all over Assam and elsewhere. One of his great grandsons, Dr. Indrajit Smith served also as a physician in America and died there a few years back. We, his descendants are committed to continue and carry forward his ideals of good works and keep his legacy alive for all days to come. It is my sincere belief that this book will fill every heart with joy and inspire every soul to set noble goals in life. Appreciative readers will also be enriched by the rich repository of information of the rest of the American Baptists Missioneries in Assam encompassed within.

Guwahati
11th July, 2017.

Mohanlal Smith

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

RAUSHANARA EDUCATION FOUNDATION:

Raushanara Education Foundation (REF)was established in June 1991 as an Auqaf body with a small corpus belonging to late Raushanara Khatun which she left behind on her death that year at her birth place, Guwahati, Assam. Raushnara was an educationist of that era and was known for significant contribution in the field of education. Raushanara was one of the bold Assamese ladies of the first half of the nineteenth century, who ventured to travel to Calcutta for higher education. She and other Assamese students had to flee from Calcutta during the riot torn days of 1946. Raushanara was, however, able to obtain a master's degree from Calcutta University in 1948. In 1952 she was appointed as a program assistant of the newly established All India Radio Station at Guwahati. She along with Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, Biren Phukan, Purshuttam Das, and others, are the stalwarts who were responsible for making All India Radio, Gauhati, a center of excellence within a short period of time.

The Auqaf body was working for the cause of education amongst the downtrodden and weaker section of the society, more so was working for the overall welfare of the women folk of the urban and the rural areas of this region. One of the objects of this social welfare body is to work, recover and translate the antique historical books written in Persian language by the Mogul invaders in Assam during the six hundred year-long Ahom reigns. The body has since published more than fifteen numbers of such books, one among them is *Tarikh-e-Asham* written in original Persian language in the year 1663 A.D. by the renowned historian, Sehabuddin

Talesh. The book was translated into English by Dr. Mazhar Asif of Gauhati University and edited by this writer which was published by the REF in 2009 in collaboration with the DHAS, Guwahati. The above publication is a land mark contribution of the Foundation for the reason that this book is like a rich gold mine of the medieval history of Assam and also the basis of history of Assam.

My childhood friend Dr. Dilip K Datta of Rhode Island, USA encouraged me to take up the present project of publishing the three antique booklets which contained the biographies of the American Baptist Missionaries of the nineteenth century. The booklets were (1) *Songs in the Night:* A sermon preached at the funeral of Mrs. Eliza Whitney Brown, wife of Rev. Nathan Brown, by Rev. E.H. Gray, D.D., originally published by Thomas Holman, Printer, Corner Center and White Street, New York in the year 1871, (2) *The Wonderful Story of Kandura* by Mrs. Sophie Bronson Titterington originally published by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in the year 1892 and (3) *Maria Bronson* by also Mrs. Sophie Bronson Titterington, and originally published by Chicago Womens Baptist Mission Society of the West in the year 1882. All these books carried tremendous social, historical, spritual and moral values for which I was so enthused that without giving any second thought I gave consent to Dilip to complete the project of publishing the same in form of one book. The book as the illustrious biography of kandura is now preserved in the Library of Congress in Washington. The Sanctity of all these three books had been mantained without changing the basic character. The magnanimous works of these mission house publishers of these invaluable three booklets have received loudable appretiations from all corners and because of this we, today, have been able to pay our respectable homage to these dedicated spiritual icons, who bridged America with Sodia by their yeoman services to the people of Assam during the relevant time.

I am sure this the book **A Bridge From America To Sadiya** will reach the new generation and help them to appreciate the sacrifices the American Baptist Missionaries had made for the cause of the Assamese language and for the educational enlightenment of

the people of Assam in the *Orunudoi* age. Assam as a whole and the people of Assam will always remain indebted to those noble souls who labored so hard for these magnanimus causes. The contributions of the missionaries in developing and establishing the fact scientifically during those early years when the missionary works have been undertaken by them that the Assamese language is a separate and independent language by itself, the argument which the British administration was compelled to accept thus providing recognisation and full status to Assamese language officially as an independent language. We are publishing this book, titled **A Bridge From America To Sadiya** as a token of deep gratitude for these American Baptist Missionaries to Assam. We humbly dedicate this book in their memories and I have indeed a deep sense of contentment in doing so.

With regards to the biography of Kandura (Rollin Smith), I am extremely fascinated to investigate more about this clergy for the fact that I spent my childhood playing with neighborhood friends in the Gauhati Baptist mission compound, Kandura's sojourn where he lived and spent his priesthood days from 1878 to 1881 A.D. Kandura left behind a very rich legacy and his descendants are still living in Assam and elsewhere. Mr. Mohanlal Smith is a great grandson from the son's lineage of Kandura. I am grateful to him for helping us to publish the letters written by Kandura to his mission superiors in America which were in his family's possession. We have appended a few of them in the appendix so that the readers may get a good idea about this dedicated and most revered missionary. Kandura embraced Christianity in the year 1849 and was baptized by the legendary Miles Bronson. Kandura will perhaps live with posterity as an eminent evangelist in the hole of North-East. After Cyrus Barker, the first pastor when Kandura was appointed as the pastor at Gauhati the Churches in Assam were resonated with Assamese caroles that marked as a new era of Chirstanity in this reagion.

A great many people have helped me to complete this project beginning with the compilation, co-ordination and finally printing. Among those who deserve special thanks is Smt. Archana Devi an

established artist and also an advocate without whose help the sketches in the books could not have been made possible to reproduce so effectively. I am also greatfull to 'Compress' for recomposing and completing the DTP works a fresh of all the three books so speedily. We will all feel aptly rewarded if the readers heartily welcome the book both for its usefulness and to show appreciation of the extreme dedication, service and sacrifices of the American Missionaries of the yester years in Assam.

Akdas Ali Mir
(Sr. Advocate)
Managing Trustee,
The Raushanara Education Foundation

Guwahati, Assam,
12 July, 2017.

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SONGS IN THE NIGHT

A
SERMON,
PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL

OF
MRS. ELIZA WHITNEY BROWN,
WIFE OF REV. NATHAN BROWN,
(LATE MISSIONARY TO ASSAM)

IN CHARLEMONT, MASS, MAY, 17, 1871.

BY
REV. E. H. GRAY, D.D.

NEW YORK :
THOMAS HOLMAN, PRINTER, CORNER CENTRE AND WHITE STREETS.
1 8 7 1.

Extract from CONFERENCE MINUTES.

Voted,– That hearty thanks be given Mr. Bennett for the Sketch and that its publication in the Conference Minutes, in some paper in the United States, in the Japan Mail and in pamphlet form be requested.

Mrs. E. W. Brown.
(1807-1871)

Funeral Services of Mrs. Eliza W. Brown

ANTHEM.
READING THE SCRIPTURES.
By Rev. JOHN CADWELL, Pastor of the Baptist Church.

PRAYER,
By Rev. THOMAS P. BRIGGS, Pastor of the Baptist Church.

HYMN.
"How blest the scene when Christians die,
When holy souls retire to rest."

SERMON,
By Rev. E.H. GRAY, D.D.

CONCLUDING PRAYER
By Rev. Mr. SAVAGE, of the Congregational Church.

HYMN,
"Unvail thy bosom, faithful tomb,
Take this new treasure to thy trust."

Previous services were held at the residence of the deceased in Jersey City, on Monday, May 15th, the day following her death, when prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. W. H. PARMALY, and address were made by Rev. J. Duer, Rev. FREDREICK EVANS, her pastor, and Dr. PARNLY.

How blest the scene when Christians die,
When holy souls retire to rest;
How mildly beams the closing eye,
How gently heaves the expiring breast!

So fades a summer cloud away,
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er
So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies a wave along the shore.

Farewell, conflicting hopes and fears,
Where lights and shades alternate dwell;
How bright the unchanging morn appears!
Farewell, inconstant world, farewell!

Triumphant smiles the victor's brow,
Fanned by some guardian angel's wing;
O grave, where is thy victory now!
And where, O vanquished death, thy sting!

CORRESPONDENCE

Charlemont, Mass, May 18, 1871

Rev. E. H. Gray, D.D.

Dear Sir :– At a meeting of the relatives and friends of Mrs. E.W. Brown, May 18, 1871, the undersigned were appointed a committee to express to you their sincere thanks and high appreciation of your excellent and impressive funeral sermon, preached yesterday, and to solicit, if agreeable to you, a copy for publication.

Yours respectfully,

WAYNE GRISWOLD, Circleville O.
THOMAS P. BRIGGS, Charlemont.
E.C. HAWKS, ,,
HART LEAVITT, ,,
JONAS BALLARD, ,,
NATHAN B. BALLARD ,,
} Committee

MESSRS. DR. WAYNE GRISWOLD, REV. THOMAS P. BRIGGS, E.C. HAWKS, HART LEAVITT, JONAS BALLARD, and NATHAN B. BALLARD, Esquires.

Gentlemen : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note, requesting, for publication, a copy of the discourse delivered at the funeral of Mrs. ELIZA W. BROWN. I feel that the discourse in a very meagre sketch of one so refined by nature, so cultivated by mental and moral discipline, so devoted as a Christian, and so useful and heroic as a missionary. Still if, in your opinion, its publication will be gratifying to the bereaved friends, it is at your service.

SHELBURNE FALLS, MAES, *June* 5, 1871.

Yours truly,
E. H. GARY.

SERMON

"Where is God, my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?"– Job XXXV. 10.

HE is not far away; but nigh at hand. The sacred writer has a twofold object in view in the text and context : to rebuke the practical atheism of those who are living without God in the world; and to teach that men are not so abandoned of comforters, nor so wrapped in silence and gloom, as to have no sources of joy even in the darkest and most overshadowing passages of the wilderness.

There is no night so dark that hath not its songs.

I.– Night, in the world of nature, is vocal with songs.

For the world has its night. It seems necessary that it should. The sun shineth by day and men go forth to their labors. But they grow weary and worn, and nightfall cometh on like a sweet boon from heaven. Men and animals need the repose, which is favored by the silence and darkness of the night. As the shadows of the evening deepen, birds hie to their perch; animals to their inclosures or lairs– all, save those who make the darkness a cover to their search for prey– and men betake themselves to their homes and places of rest.

"All the air a solemn stillness holds."

Even the flowers and plants seem to welcome night, and to gather refreshed life from its dewy moisture.

But the night is not only a time for rest, but for thought. Hence, says the Psalmist, "I will meditate on thee in the night watches". Night is a great revealed. It is then that the astronomer turns his glass toward the heavens and discovers the extent and grandeur of God's vast empire, such as would transcend our boldest conception without such aid. Hence, the "darkness shows us worlds of light we never saw by day." Have you never risen from your couch at night,

and walked forth into the silence of the universe, when all the music of spheres from "God's great illuminated panorama" came rushing into the soul? And awestricken, have you not reverently inquired whence sprang this vast physical universe? What hand launched these flaming orbs into space? Whose eye omniscient has traced out their untrodden paths? What hand omnipotent upholds the stupendous fabric of nature? Oh, how full of God is the still silent night! As we stand under its vast canopy, we fancy we can hear the harps of heaven playing, and the celestial orbs, God's great hosts, making "music through the air." Yes, night has its songs. Indeed it is the hour of praise. Heavenly watchers keep their vigils o'er the earth, and heavely music soothes its slumbers. Every whispering breeze and rustling leaf and rippling stream and shooting star is vocal with its Maker's praise.

II.– There is also a moral night that is vocal with songs.

The history of moral beings begins with this brilliant record: "So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him." A wonderful creation was that of man. He was constituted head over all things. He was both the centre and radiating point of power. Man was placed in a position, as if he had his hand upon a point where ten thousand telegraphic wires met from every part of the universe, and he were able, with each volition, to send abroad an influence along these wires such as to reach every created being in heaven and on earth. He stood like one linked to every creature by a golden chain, and every pulsation of his heart or movement of his mind modified the pulsations of every other heart and the movements of every other in intellect. Wonderful, wonderful, both for honor and for happiness, was the position man occupied!

But sin was introduced, and with it came death, for the "wages of sin is death". Sin is not an abstraction, floating round, for which no one is accountable. It is not merely an infirmity or weakness; but sin is a transgression– disobedience– impiety– a CRIME! For it inaugurated rebellion against God's government and introduced chaos into the moral world.

But all was not lost. There were songs in the beginning of the night that unwrapped the world. For no sooner did night settle down

upon the race, than, through the appalling darkness, the bright promise was revealed, that the "Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." This was all the Bible given to the world at first. But, while dark shadows were stretching across entire generations, and overlying the habitations of men, additions were constantly made to the number of the promises. And the purposes of God became more and more fully developed, till the harp of Isaiah sounded out amid the darkness, "Unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given;" and then, after another interval, came the joyous proclamation, echoed from the hill country of Judea : "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to people; for unto you is born a Savior which is Christ the Lord."

True, the moral history of the past has been a melancholy one. God has sent light into the world, and men have hated the light, and have waged a perpetual crusade against it. Impelled by the dark passions of their alienated hearts, they have risen up and cried, "*put out that light!*" Nations and peoples have fallen in the struggle; and crowns have fallen like stars in the Apocalypse; but the angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, does not suspend his flight or rest upon his folded wings; but as he flies he is proclaiming still : "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to men!" Hear it, oh man, as one of the utterances of God; hear it in the harmonies of the universe, and in the voices of visionless things, that commune, like whispering angels, with the human soul.

Again, in the third place, I remark that God giveth songs in the night of affliction.

It was in one night of sorrow that the language of the text was uttered. The patriarch Job was suddenly stripped of his property, and bereaved of his children, and thrown into a state of extreme physical suffering. It was with him dark, dark night.

And how many such nights do we have? Nights of sorrow, nights of doubt, nights of anxiety, nights of oppression, nights of ignorance, nights of all kinds, which press upon our spirits and terrify our souls! It is indeed night in the household whenever death

enters. The mind is bruised, and the heart is crushed. But, blessed be God, the Christian man can say : "My God giveth me songs in the night!" What a song was that of Job, when, childless, he sang: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!" And that of David : "God is our refuse and strength; a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea!" And that of Jeremiah : "Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For the doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." And that of Habakkuk : "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation." And that of Paul : "We glory in tribulation." For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Thus God can teach his people how to sing when the night is dark and the heart is heavy. God, our Maker, giveth songs in the night.

IV.– There is one place more where songs are given in the night; that is, in the night of the grave.

How quiet is that great empire over which death hold-such undisputed sway. It is not the chamber of sickness, where the curtains are closely drawn, and every foot treads softly. It is not the hospital, where, in ward after ward, human beings are the victims of disease and suffering. But it is the broad earth, "billowy with graves", and filled with the bodies of the dead, where death reigns. And his empire remains undisturbed. The sleeper wakes not. Oh, the mystery of death! Mon's earthly being here ends is an eclipse. "He lieth down and riseth not till the heavens are no more."

And are there no utterances of joy that shall ever break in upon the mansions of the dead? Shall men forever molder in the grave? "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which *all* that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Such is

the language of the "Resurrection and the Life". Then the great drama of time will close, only to reveal the greater realities of eternity. The old heavens shall pass away with a great noise; the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth shall be burned up; but new heavens and new earth shall rise out of the ashes of the old; so that, what was sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption; what was sown in weakness, shall be raised in power; what was sown in dishonor, shall be raised is glory!" Oh then, the sweet faces and beautiful forms we have sealed up in the grave, we shall see again; and the musical voices, to which we have so often listened, we shall hear once more. Earth and sea shall no longer be the sepulchre of the departed world. Mountain and valley, holding the dust of generations, shall stir with life and form; and upspringing from the cravens of the deep, deep sea, myrinds of human beings shall leap upon the land, and clap their glad hands in jubilee, that Death, the great CANNIBAL, is dead. Oh then, the night of the grave shall be vocal with songs, and fragrant exhalations shall arise from this resurgent world; and at last, shall the prophetic vision be seen, and the prophetic precept obeyed: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

Hence we come to lay in the grave the inanimate form of our deceased sister, to await the morning of the resurrection. It is night now; but the morning cometh.

ELIZA WHITNEY BALLARD was born in this beautiful valley of the Deerfield, at Charlemont, Mass, April 12, 1807. Here, amid these green mountains and beside these rippling waters were her childhood and youth passed; here was her mind prepared for that career of usefulness which, in after years, has made her an ornament to her sex, to the church, and to the world.

When twenty-one years of age Miss Ballard was associated with her brother. Rev. James Ballard, as a teacher in a seminary in Bennington, Vt. Subsequently, Mr. Nathan Brown was added to the corps of instructors.

While here, under the ministry of Rev. Daniel A. Clark, pastor

of the Congregational Church, Eliza's mind was drawn to divine things, and her heart touched by the finger of God. After a season of penitence and earnest seeking, she found the Savior, "the chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely". For the first time, she realized the blessedness of full and free forgiveness. She was now in a new world, and a new creature. She was inspired by new hopes and was living a new life. Religion became her theme, and holy duties were pleasant and delightful. She had been liberated from the dreadful weight of guilt, and brought into the liberty of the people of God. Hence she immediately recognized the great principle that "we are not our own", and so far acted upon it, that her life became from that hour devoted to holy employments and useful pursuits.

When twenty-three years of age, May 6, 1830, Miss Ballard was married to our brother, Dr. Nathan Brown, who, after forty-one years of happy married life, now stricken with grief, and bowed under the crushing weight of sorrow, comes to-day, bringing back his bride, to lay her in the grave.

Soon after her marriage, Mrs. Brown was baptized by Rev. Mr. Johnson, and connected herself with the Baptist Church in Bennington.

In January, 1831 Mr. and Mrs. Brown removed to Brandon, Vt. where he took the editorial charge of the Vermont (Baptist) *Telegraph.* Here the attention of Mrs. Brown, in connection with that of her husband, was strongly turned to the missionary work.* They first looked at the subject from a distance; they saw its dim and shadowy outlines; they began to pray that their visions of converted heathen might be realized, and wondered who should go forth as the hearlds of light and salvation to the benighted tribes of men. They listened, and thought they heard the voice of the Master, saying : "The field is the world; the laborers are few; GO YE forth into the field; the harvest is ripe."

There is a beautiful poem that has been in circulation for several years I have seen it drifting about, anonymously, in papers, in

* Mr. Brown had previously had the subject uner consideration.

magazines, and in books, and in several instances set to music. It is not generally known that this poem was written by our brother, Dr. Brown, when a young man, and at the time when his attention was first turned to the missionary field, and his soul was all aglow with the inspiration of the missionary work. It begins thus :

"My soul is not at rest. There comes a strang
And secret wisper to my spirit, like
A dream of night, that tells me I am on
Enchanted ground. Why live I here? The vows
Of God are on me, and I may not stop
To play with shadows, or pluck earthly flowers,
Till I my work have done, and rendered up
Account. The voice of my departed Lord,
'Go teach all nations', from the Eastern world,
Comes on the night air, and awakes my ear.

"And I will go. I may no longer doubt
To give up friends, and home, and idol hopes,
And every tender tie that binds my heart
To thee, my country! Why should I regard
Earth's little store of borrowed sweets? I sure
Have had enough of bitter in my cup,
To show that never was it his design,
Or drink at pleasure's fountain.

"Henceforth, then,
It matters not, if storm or sunshine be
My earthly lot– bitter or sweet my cup;
I only pray, 'God fit me for the work!
God make me holy, and my spirit nerve
For the stern hour of strife.' Let me but know
There is an arm unseen that holds me up,
An eye that kindly watches all my path,
Till I my weary pilgrimage have done–
Let me but know I have a Friend that waits
To welcome me to glory, and I joy
To tread the dark and death-fraught wilderness."

Who can tell in how many breasts a missionary spirit has been awakened by these beautiful lines? Certainly Mrs. Brown caught the inspiration of her husband's spirit, so touchinly breathed forth in these persuasive and eloquent words, and cried, "I, TOO, WILL GO!"

Dr. Bolles, Secretary of the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, visited Mr. and Mrs. Brown at Brandon, and after a long interview, became satisfied that God had designed and called them both to the missionary work. As the result of this conference, they decided to give themselves exclusively to their Master's service and go forth to labor in a foreign field. Consequently, they left Brandon, Mr. Brown to spend the winter at Newton, and Mrs. Brown to visit her friends at Charlemont. Here, May 6, 1832, her first child was born, a lovely daughter, whom they called Dorothy Sophia. Mrs. Brown had a long and severe illness from which she rallied just in time to go Rutland, Vt., to be present at the ordination of her husband, and the setting apart and consecration of them both to the missionary work. Dr. Sharp of Boston preached the ordaining and consecration sermon. The services were of a deeply interesting nature, especially to the newly appointed missionaries and to their relatives and friends, whose prophetic thoughts would naturally connect this preparatory scene with the repentance of myriads in distant climes and in ages to come.

In November following, Mr. and Mrs. Brown took final leave of his parents and friends at Whitingham, Vt. and the next day of hers at Charlemont, Manss. and hastened to Boston to make ready for their voyage. They sailed in the ship Corvo on the 22nd of December, 1832. Friends came to exchange tokens and give the parting hand. The hour of departure has come. The ship swings off from her moorings and floats down the harbor. One sail after another is thrown out to the breath of heaven, and like a thing of life, the vessel is borne onward, and soon lost sight of. The spectators slowly and sadly turn away, praying the God of ocean and storm to protect the tiny bark on the wide waste of water and bring it safely into harbor.

After a long and tedious voyage they reached Calcutta, May 4,

1833, and then passed on at once to Maulmain. Here Mrs. Brown remained till she left for Assam, vigorously preparing to engage fully in the missionary work. Mr. Brown in the meantime made a tour to Ava.

In a broad extended valley, at the foot of the Himalaya Mountains, watered by the Brahmaputra, lived several tribes of men, differing from each other in character and in degrees of civilization. They were all subject to English rule, but bound fast in the superstitions of idolatry, and the willing victims of the most debasing passions of the human heart. An English officer, Major Jankins, who had charge of the affairs of the country at that time, proposed to the American Baptist Missionary Board to establish a mission there. He accompanied this proposition with the generous offer of one thousand rupees upon the arrival of the first missionary they should send, and one thousand more on the establishment of a printing press.

This offer was promptly accepted; Mr. Brown and his wife together with Mrs. Cutter, a printer, and his wife were selected for this new field. They were directed immediately to commence a mission at a point considered the most eligible for that purpose. To the Christian prospecting for the future, this was regarded a very important movement. It was hoped that, by the protection afforded by the East India Comapny, missionaries might join the caravans that yearly journeyed for traffic into the interior of China; and thus, while the jealous mandarins were excluding foreigners from their ports by this means Christianity might be introduced into the very heart of that great empire.* But doors, wide and effectual, have since been providentially opened into that country.

And now came the first great sorrow and bereavement to Mr. and Mrs. Brown. They had made all necessary arrangements to leave Maulmain for Assam; they had even engaged their passage to Calcutta, when suddenly, William Ballard, their second child, was violently seized with brain disease and died the very morning they were to leave.' Death among strangers– death far away from home – this is one of the

* *Cut Mothers Journal for 1852*

missionary's trials. They had come down to the mission compound the Saturday previous, and everything was in readiness to go aboard of the vessel. Dr. Judson came in to sympathize with, and comfort the stricken mourners. He advised that the funeral services should be held in the afternoon, and they should go on board in the evening. Dr. Judson preached a most touching and sympathizing discourse, showing that God had a purpose in this extraordinary visitation, though they could not understand it. The heart-stricken parents went on their way comforted. And as the sun went down, they were rapidly dropping down the river; Mrs. Brown to visit the spot no more.

They reached Calcutta September 2, and set out at once upon their long and tedious journey up the Brahmaputra, a thousand miles. And after having been traveling four months, in a native boat, through the windings of that far-rolling river, they reached Sadiya, March 22, 1836. Here the cloudy pillar, which had been leading them so long, rested; and here they pitched their tent, and began in good earnest their missionary work.

In September following, 1936, their child, Nathan Ballard, was born. And two years afterward, September, 1838, they were called to experience another great bereavement in the death of their daughter, a dear child six years of age. This, their first-born, seamed to have twined its affections sweetly and tenderly around the mother's heart. She was, indeed, a remarkable child, judging from the little memoir published.* She inherited the warm, affectionate heart and amiable disposition of the mother, and her piety was truly precocious and wonderful for a child of her years. Dr. Judson, in a letter of condolence from Maulmain, to the bereaved parents, says : "Your letter, giving an account of little Sophia's death, is received; and Mrs. J. and myself wept over it; and truly our hearts bled with yours. All things considered this appears to be the severest loss that his ever been occasioned by the death of any child belonging to the mission.****

You have been privileged to rear a tender nestling– a young immortal,– a native of the earth, but an heir of the skies. Grieve not that Jesus has plumed her unfledged wing for a premature fight, and taught

* "The Missionary's Daughter". Published by the Am. Bapt. Pub. Society.

her early to sing the songs of Paradise."

The bereaved parents closed the eyes of their dead child, shrouded and confined the little body and laid it away to rest in the grave. But it was soon disinterred, and the coffin broken open by the natives, in the expectation of finding gold and other treasures buried with the dead. The body was once more committed to the grave. But again and again were the remains of their dear child disturbed, but either natives or jackals, or both; till finally the parents gathered up the bones of the little one, and preserved them near their dwelling.

The next day after the death of little Dorothy, Elizabeth Whitney, their fourth child, was born.

And now, new calamities were ready to burst upon the little missionary band. Suddenly an attack at night was made upon their post by the natives; and the missionaries were obliged, by flight, to hasten away to save their lives. It was a fearful night. The station of Sadiya (military cantonments), was attacked and burned by the Khamtis, and many of the troops were killed, including Col. White, the commanding officer. The missionaries and their families, being about a mile distant from the cantonments, escaped in a canoe, hiding away in a small stream near their dwelling; and after remaining on the water during the night, they ventured to come into the station in the morning. Here they found temporary protection. The sufferings, however, that followed this attack; the great number of the sick and wounded crowded into the hospital (a part of which the missionaries occupied), and the frequent exposure to the sun, prostrated their little Nathan with a fever, from which, though he partially rallied, it was only to be crippled and palsied for the rest of his short life. As soon as possible, the missionaries removed to Jaipur, a safer station, three or four days' journey southeast from Sadiya. Here they were very comfortably settled, and had just got fairly at work, when a new disease appeared in the eye of their crippled child. Mrs. Brown started for Calcutta, a thousand miles, for medical aid, taking with her the two little children. She commenced this perilous journey in a native canoe, with Assamese boatmen, being often obliged to moor her boat for the night near dangerous jungles infested by wild beasts; sometimes in coves where huge alligators would strike against the sides of her little boat,

and at other times in places where robbers were accustomed to resort. This was by no means a pleasant excursion for a lone lady and two helpless children. Providence, however, mercifully protected and guided her in her journey. But when she reached Calcutta, the physicians failed to render the child any aid, and ultimately pronounced his disease incurable. Slowly and sadly did the heart-stricken mother retrace her steps, bearing back her invalid child, who, after a few months of great suffering, died in her arms, "Where is God, my Maker, who gives songs in the night?"

Jaipur being a little distant from the thickly populated region, the missionaries removed to Sibsagar, a more important town in the centre of the province. At this place, their youngest child, William Pearce, was born, December 12, 1842. Here, on the borders of the large and healthful Sibsagar tank (an artificial pond, covering over one hundred acres), Dr. and Mrs. Brown began to see their labors remarkably blessed. The number of inquirers was constantly increasing, and converts were multiplied. Mrs. Brown was busily engaged in superintending day-schools and in visiting among the native women, when suddenly disease again invaded her household. The little daughter, Elizabeth, was brought down to the very borders of the grave. The query arose, must the mother stand by and see her remaining children die in a malarious country? What should be done? The fortitude and energy of Mrs. Brown, in this emergency, were equal to the occasion. Knowing fall well that it was impossible for her husband to leave without breaking up the mission, she decided at once, in the hope of recruiting her wasting health and saving her children, to undertake a home ward voyage alone with her two little ones! Few women would have thought of such an undertaking. But with her it was only to know in what direction duty pointed. Her husband accompanied her to Calcutta, where, September 1, 1846, she started on her long and lonely voyage. The circumstances and the feelings of Mrs. Brown were not unlike those of the second Mrs. Judson when, expecting to part from her husband on the Isle of France, on her homeward voyage alone, she wrote that gem, commencing–

"We part on this green islet, love,
Thou for the eastern main;

I, for the setting sun, love,
Oh, when to meet again?

"My heart is sad for thee, love,
For lone they way will be;
And oft thy tears shall fall, love,
For thy children and for me."

So, with the living children, the devoted mother brought home the bones of her dead child, Dorothy Sophia, that could not find a resting place in Assam. After appropriate services in this house (which I remember well), the bones were quietly laid in the graveyard yonder, by the side of which we are about to lay the worn-out body of the mother.

The visit of Mrs. Brown at home, I recollect, did much to arouse attention and awaken an interest in the churches in reference to the Assam Mission. It resulted in the appointment of two-additional missionaries for that field; Rev. A. H. Danforth and Rev. Ira J. Stoddard, and their wives. But for this reinforcement the Assam Mission would, in all probability, have been abandoned; for public sentiment, both in the Board and in the churches at home, was much in favor of giving up the small missions!

After seeing her children recruited in health, and securing for them the best homes she could, Mrs. Brown turned her face to the East to return to her husband, and resume her labors for the heathen. Mothers, can you imagine with what feelings she did this? Ah no, you are not missionary mothers; there is a peculiar significance in the term "*missionary mother.*" I remember that parting scene of Mrs. Comstock, of Arracan. She had decided to send her two little children home. The four for them to leave had arrived. The vessel was lying in sight. As they were about to embark, the mother rose and took her two children, one in each hand, and leading them out to a grove of tamarind trees near the house, and kneeling between them, cried, with all the agony of a mother's love : "O JESUS, THIS I DO FOR THEE!" The day that vessel entered the harbor of New York with those precious children, the mother dies in Arracan.*

* Dr. Kincaid's Addresses in this country.

So, Mrs. Brown, with all the gushings of maternal tenderness and the strugglings of maternal love, such as only a mother's heart can feel; kissing away the tears of her little ones, could cry, with equal anguish and devotion : "O JESUS, THIS I DO FOR THEE!"

On returning to her field of labor in 1849, Mrs. Brown determined on a new plan for future action. The pupils in the day-schools were so much under the influence of their heathen relatives that but little salutary effect was produced. She therefore decided to gather a few girls, orphans and others, whom their parents and friends were willing entirely to give up, and take them into her own family for instruction. Some ten or twelve girls, with difficulty, were thus secured, and the success of this effort was surprising. Before Mrs. Brown's return to this country, nearly all these girls had been hopefully converted; and since, it has been ascertained, that every one has been added to the Christian Church. Most of them have now become wives of native preachers and teachers, and are exerting a wide and healthful influence as leaders in every good work.

As we might expect, the affection of Mrs. Brown's pupils was of the strongest kind. No person could have been more beloved by children, than was this teacher by her scholars. When Dr. Brown's health failed, and they were about to leave for this country, these young pupils, and also the women of the church, with inconsolable demonstrations, gathered around their dear teacher and spiritual guide, pleading with tears for the privilege of following her wherever she went. And their letters, since her return, have continued to breathe the same strong feeling of attachment. Verily, many shall rise up at the last day and call her blessed.

Mrs. Brown also devoted herself largely to the preparation of books and tracts for printing in the native language, with which she was nearly as familiar as with her vernacular tongue. A juvenile series of twelve tracts, some of them original and some translations, were among the first she prepared for the press. She also published a geography, arithmetic, and other school books, which will live while the language of Assam is spoken.

When from prostrate energies and wasted health Dr. and Mrs.

Brown returned home in 1855, as they came from Boston, I invited them to stop with us a few days for rest.* The Sabbath following I invited the Doctor to preach. Mrs. Gray had become greatly interested in them while on the missionary field, and desiring in some appropriate way to express the joy we all felt to see them back, after their hard service abroad, she wrote a hymn of welcome. After placing Mrs. Brown in the pew, and taking the Doctor into the pulpit, I rose and read the following hymn, which was sung.

"Welcome, ye servants of our God,
From India's idol strand;
No coea's shude, nor Burman sod,
Upon your grave yet stand.

"Green were your hills, and bright your hopes,
When Macedonia's cry
Came solfly o'er these mountain slopes:
'Oh help us, era we die!'

"Through years of suffering and of toil,
Ye've led the mission van;
And gathered souls– a precious spoil–
From heathen, dark Assam.

"Thriee welcome from the battle-field,
Rich trophies have ye won;
Here rest upon your red-cross shield,
Your Father says : 'Well done.'

"Be blest– we can not say how blest,
Until your work is done;
Let heathen converts tell the rest,
And about the 'harvest home'."

Since Mrs. Brown's return to this country, her heart has been still

* Mrs. Nathaniel Lamson claimed the privilege of taking them to her home, and nursing them for several weeks; which she did faithfully.

set upon the mission work. She has been active both in fitting out and assisting missionaries who have gone forth to foreign fields, and in receiving and aiding native converts who from time to time have been sent to this country for education. To relinquish her missionary work was the great trial of her life. She did not finally give up the hope of returning again to Assam till four or five years since, when her naturally strong constitution had become so impaired as to preclude all expectation of further labor in a foreign field.

Frequent and long-continued illness, brought on by the hardships of twenty-three years of missionary labor, made the last years of her life a scene of constant suffering. Two years ago she received injuries from a fall, from which she never fully recovered. Gaining strength sufficiently to attend the last anniversary of the Free Mission Society at Cincinnati, she spent several weeks in visiting her friends in Ohio, from which her general health was somewhat improved. But on her return, she was again attacked with her old complaints, induced by her labors and exposures in India. During the last few weeks of her illness she was confined to her room, coming down gradually to the close of life. All was peace and serenity. Her last hours were spent in such a manner as to give the clearest evidence to all who saw her that she was ripe for heaven. "Jesus", said she to her husband, "has been our Friend thus far, and I believe he will be our Friend all the way through." Thus, with a firm hope in the merits of the crucified One, she descended into the waters of the dark, deep Jordan, whose billows break upon the shores of human life. There was no fear; no confusion. Her soul was stayed on God, and the divine hand bore her through the last struggles peacefully, triumphantly. Among her last utterances were these beautiful words:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly."

And then, she so quietly fell asleep that the smile with which she always greeted her friends still lingered on her face, lovely even in death.

And what a victory over death is that, when a Christian dies full of faith and hope! No wonder the Psalmist exclaimed : "Though I

walk through the valley and the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." No wonder the apostle Paul could cry out : "Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?" No wonder Evarts could die, crying out at the top of his expiring voice: "Oh wonderful– wonderful glory! Jesus, I see him! Jesus, I'll praise him!" Such favored ones were permitted to look into heaven, not only through "Gates ajar", but through "Gates wide open!"

What a marvelous change has the spirit that animated this lifeless body undergone! The struggle over, and the victory won; convoyed by angels upward, she has passed the shining sun, and through the forest of stars that gleam like so many outstanding lamps before the gate of heaven. Oh, what a thrill of joy and delight shot through the soul of that redeemed one, as heaven, that great world of light and song, came fully into view! But hark! What are those multitudinous sounds? They are the welcome acclaim of ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, over the new arrival. As the spirit is emerging out of the dark night of time and is rising into their enraptured view, their joyous cry above her, and over and around her, is : "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord! Welcome– welcome home!" The Further's welcome is : "Come up hither." Christ's welcome from the mediatorial throne, is : "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" This is the welcome home.

Do you say this is fanciful, that such a welcome as this can not be given to those who pass up from earth to heaven? Why not? It possible that God the Father, as he sees, in the entrance of a soul into heaven, the fulfilling of that great salvation which he devised in the high counsels of eternity; is it possible that he takes no note of the arrival of the subjects of his everlasting love? Is it possible that the Lord Jesus should be indifferent to the arrival of a soul that cost him thirty years of exile from heaven, thirty years of toil and suffering, culminating in the agonies of death? And will not the angels, who rejoice over a repenting sinner, welcome home an emancipated spirit, with the tears all shed, and the labor all done, and the sorrows all over? And shall not the glorified in heaven, especially the spirits of our friends, stand ready to extend a joyous welcome to us on reaching home? Are they not in the full possession of all their intellectual pow-

ers? Are they not in the deepest and tenderest sympathy with all their friends who succeed in reaching heaven? Death, to the believer, is his birth into the family of God above. Is there no joy there? Death, to the believer, is his coronation day. Is there no rejoicing there? Death, to the believer, is his safe arrival home. Is there no gladness there?*

From these postulates I reason, and I think, logically, that when saints enter heaven, those already there greet them with a glad welcome home. Then, spirit of the departed, how glorious has been thy welcome home! Go on the thy wonderous way of life and love! We mourn thy absence, but we would not call thee back.

Thus has passed away this dear, dear friend; one of the loveliest and most devoted of women. She was always and everywhere a CHRISTIAN LADY; refined modest, gentle, affable, courteous, kind and dignified. She was just such a person as would be sure to attract you at once, and make you feel, instinctively, that you had met a true friend.

Mrs. Brown was rigidly conscientious. She was ever true to the principles of right. Right with her could not be compromised. She took her conscience especially into all her religious duties. With her the inquiry was, not what men say, but what does God require? As the needle points unswervingly to the pole, so she never lost sight of Jesus as her "Prophet, Priest, and King."

Her piety was uniform and constant; not of the flashy, meteoric style, all ablaze to-day, all dark tomorrow. It was like the luminary of the day, which though clouds muster their forces, and storms go rushing along the sky, keeps shining on. So, she kept steady to her course as a Christian, letting her light shine. Hence her path, life that of the just, shone "more and more unto the perfect day."

As a MISSIONARY, she was truly devoted to her work. She felt it to be a great work. Sweeping with her eye the moral horizon of the world, she saw that there was no great movement on earth commensurate with the missionary enterprise; and she was persuaded that if the aims of Christians were higher and their plans broader, then their ability would be vastly greater to feel and pray and consecrate their all to

* Spurgeon's Sermons.

Him. She showed herself ready, at the bidding of her Master, to sacrifice home, friends, and the comforts of life, to endure fatigue and hardship, and brave danger and death, for the salvation of the heathen, though they had upon her no claim, except what her Lord and Master had imposed upon her *equally* with all other Christians. Having entered upon the missionary work, she never faltered. She might have wavered, when with her husband and their two associates they started on their perilous journey of four months in a small boat up the winding Brahmaputra, through perils by robbers, by venomous reptiles, and by deadly malaria. She might have faltered, when, one by one, her children were snatched away by death, and their graves violated by wild beasts and barbarous natives. And when health failed, and with two remaining feeble children, she undertook a lonely voyage home, hoping to save them, and then turned, desolate and sad, to go back to her companion and to her work in dark India, she might have cried out : "Oh Lord, I pray thee, have me excused." Mrs. Dr. Carey, in India, with not half the provocation, said : "Let me go home." But Mrs. Brown said : "Lord, if I am worthy, let me work on;" and the Master said : "WORK ON". And she did work, faithfully, until health and strength and constitution all gave way, and then God directed her home to finish her work and here to die. "Blessed are the dead who dio thus in the Lord."

As a WIFE, Mrs. Brown was affectionate and loving. She was devoted to her husband, and strove by all means to aid him in his great work; by relieving him from family cares, and otherwise aiding him whenever her strength or counsel or assistance could be given.

As a MOTHER, she was tender and affectionate, kind and loving, shielding her children, as far as possible, from the contamination of the heathen, early imbuing their minds with the principles of the gospel, and teaching their young hearts to love and obey that Savior, who was the joy of her heart and the light of her soul.

But the woman, the wife, the mother, the Christian, and the missionary has done her work, and done it well. God has sent his angel to release her. She has passed through "glory's gate, and walks in paradise!" She has left one circle of friends to meet another. There is sorrow here; there is joy up yonder!

How pleasant to contemplate such a character as that of the deceased; a Christian, a Christian worker, a Christian worker for the world. Truly, our sister has left a name that deserves to be recorded on the scroll of fame; she deserves a monument, not of marble or of brass, but one that shall lift its summit into a halo of light that shall gild it with the beams of glory. And such a monument she has. When the mists of earth are dissipated, and light breaks in from above, we shall see it, with its base deep down as the darkness of the world of heathenism, and lifting its summit high as the throne of God.

Children bereaved : "Thank God for such a mother." Cherish her memory, treasure up her words, remember her counsel. Do not forget her prayers; a mother's prayers are precious. Cherish the fragrance of her characters; yield to her benign influence; copy her meek spirit; follow her Christian example, and make the God of your mother your Savior and Guide forever.

My brother bereft : We deeply sympathize with you. Your loss is indeed great; but, "Earth has no sorrow that heaven can not heal."

Bless God, my brother, for such a Christian wife; that he allowed her to accompany you into the dark night of heathenism, and that she so bravely wrought by your side. Bless God, that he permitted you to bring her back, to lay her in the sepulchres of her fathers. Thank God to-day that he suffered you to retain her so long, and took her over the river, ONLY A LITTLE WAY IN ADVANCE OF WHERE YOU STAND.

"We are waiting by the river,
We are watching on the abhor,
Only waiting for the angels,
Soon they'll come to bear us o'er.

"God has called for many a loved one,
We have seen them leave our side;
With our Savior *we shall meet them*
When we, too have crossed the tide."

TROPIC LAND SERIES

THE

WONDERFUL STORY OF KANDURA

BY

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PHILADELPHIA :
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WONDERFUL STORY OF KANDURA

CHAPTER I

THE BLIND BEGGAR

KANDURA! What a funny name! Exclaim the children, as they open this little book. It does sound strange to us, to be sure; but if you were over in India, in the province of Assam, and were acquainted with their queer customs, you would not think it unusual, only you might laugh when you learned its meaning.

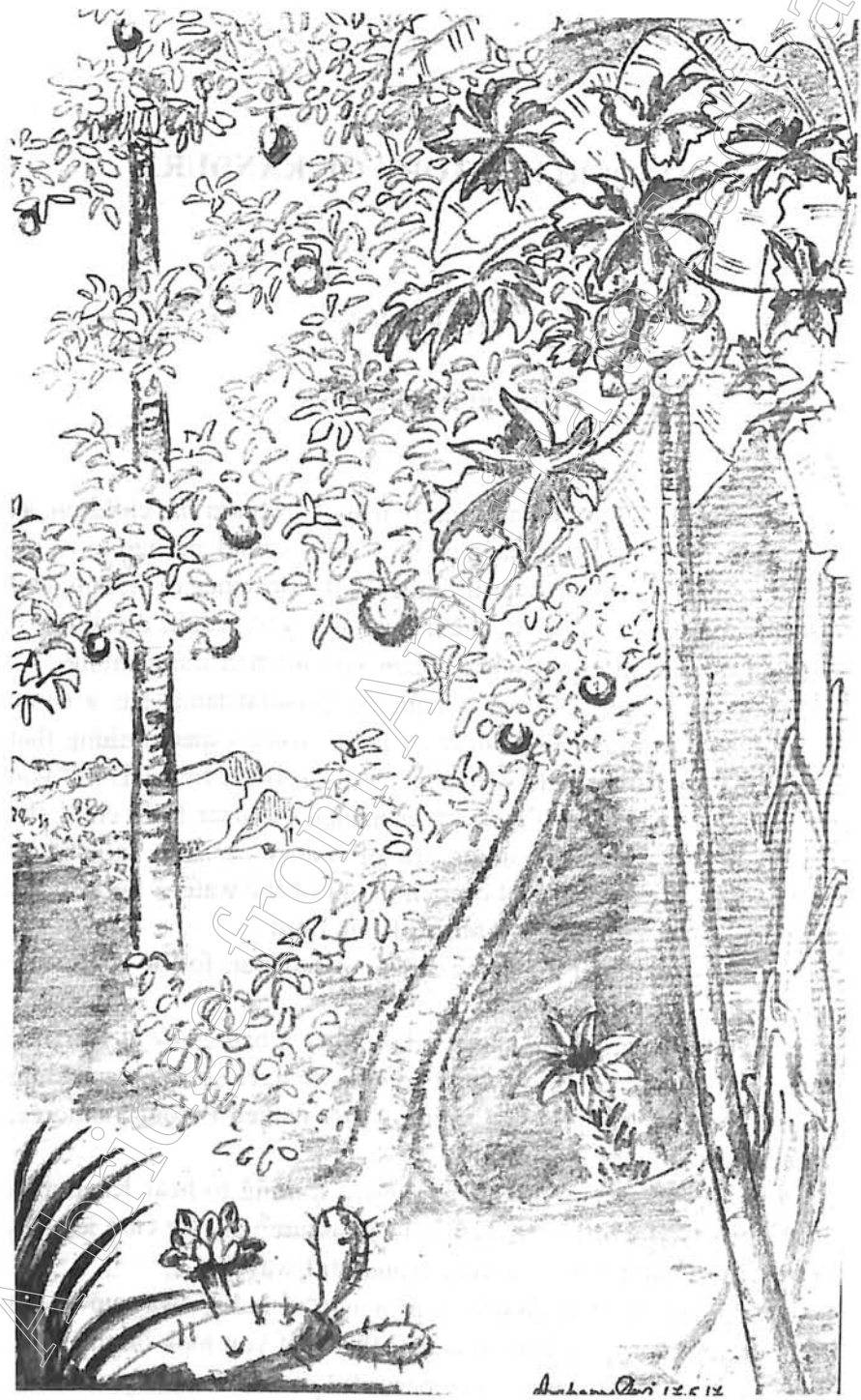
For I must tell you every baby in Oriental lands has a name given it to express some feature or habit; some especial thing that distinguishes it from others. Just so it was in Bible times. Don't you remember what Pharaoh's daughter named the dear little child she found on the river Nile in its ark of bulrushes? She called him Moses, because she said, "I drew him out of the water." So also the angel told Mary before the birth of our Lord :

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, or Saviour, for he shall save his people from their sins."

Kandura gained his name from rather a bad cause, I fear; for it means "cry-baby." How would you like to have such a name cling to you through life? He had a little sister named Porom Sundoree, which means "very beautiful".

But I expect you are all anxiously waiting to hear Kandura's story. It is well worth waiting for, I can assure you; for God led this poor little Hindu boy in a very wonderful way.

Kandura lived in Assam, a province of India, away up in the northeastern corner, where you will find it if you look on the map. You would think Assam a very beautiful country, could you see it.

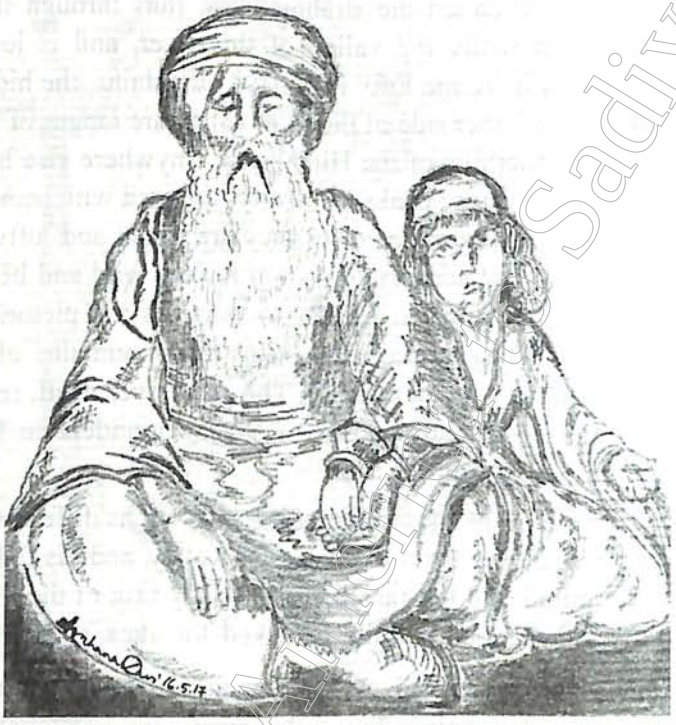


A great river, called the Brahmaputra, runs through it entire length. Assam is really the valley of this river, and is long and narrow. North of it are the lofty Himalaya mountains, the highest in the world; and on either side of the river valley are ranges of smaller hills, called the foothills of the Himalayas. Anywhere else but near this mighty range, whose peaks are always covered with snow, these would be called mountains too; for they are grand and lofty, many of them, at least. The scenery of Assam is very wild and beautiful. Tropical fruits and flowers, similar to those in the picture, grow everywhere; wild beasts roam the plains and mountains of which some are tamed, as seen on page 20. The great river itself, rising far up in the mountains, flows down in solemn grandeur to the sea, more than a thousand miles away.

The people of the plains and of the hills are as different as can be imagined. Kandura lived in the Assam valley, and his father was only a poor, blind, old beggar. It was the daily task of the little boy to lead his father around, while he asked for alms.

Kandura's village was Nowgong, on the Kullong river, a branch of the Brahmaputra, only a few miles away. Ten years before our story begins, a white missionary had come to Nowgong, to teach the poor, ignorant people about the true God. He had lived among them ever since, and some had listened to the sweet story of Jesus and his love. But it was slow, wearisome work, and often the missionary's heart grew sick with disappointment because so little was seemingly done. But the seed that he had so faithfully sown in tears was surely taking root in many hearts, ready to bring forth a joyful harvest later on.

They boy's keen eyes, day after day, had taken note of much that was new and strange about the white teacher and his family. His active mind dwelt upon what he had seen, and he felt that something made a great difference between their lives and the lives of the heathen around him. The father saw the world through the little fellow's eyes, and it was not long before he came to the chapel regularly on Sunday, not only because it was a good place in which to beg, but also to learn what his ears could tell him of this wonderful stranger.



This beggar, though blind, was noble-looking man, as can be seen from the picture, and soon attracted the attention of the missionary, as he stood among the crowd of listeners. Kandura, also interested him greatly. The boy was a handsome little fellow, with keen, black eyes that seemed to see everything, while his quick movements showed an active, inquiring mind.

The missionary understood the language well, for he had been five years in Assam at another station before coming to Nowgong. He told his hearers the sweet gospel story with all the earnestness of his heart, and repeated it day after day, and week after week, whenever and wherever he could find a listener. But after all these years of telling, so few had as yet given their hearts to Christ, that he felt often cast down, and tempted to call his work a sad failure. But when he saw the bright little boy leading his blind father, God put a thought into his mind that perhaps the children might be taught the true religions, so that when they grew up, there should be

no more worship of idols, such as we see pictured on the opposite page.

As time passed on, he could not help noticing the intense interest with which Kandura listened to the story of Jesus. As the preacher told of Christ's love and his death, that mankind might be saved, the bright, black eyes would soften, and sometimes fill with tears.

One day, after service, the blind man came up to the missionary, and with a low salaam asked for alms. Do you know, dear children, what salaam means? It is an Eastern form of greeting, which signifies great respect. A very low bow is made, the hands meanwhile coming slowly up till they touch the forehead. You would think it very graceful, could you see an Oriental offer his salaam.

After this greeting, performed in a very impressive manner, he said, in Assamese, "Alms, most noble sahib!" Then stood waiting, with folded hands, his sightless eyes and noble bearing making a most effective picture.

The little Kandura stood by, taking in the whole scene with eager eyes.

As the missionary looked at the man, he could not help thinking of the blind hearts of the people, a blinding far worse than that of the bodily eyes. He wanted to know more of the blind Hindu and the child that had interested him so much, and he told them to come to his bungalow, as the residence houses are called, on the following morning.

The blind man gave his promise to return at the appointed time, and led by the lad, he went away. All day long the teacher's heart was full of thought regarding this pair, who had impressed him so strongly. Even in his dreams he saw them, and with the early dawn he arose, attended to the work and study of the cool morning hours, and was ready to receive them before the usual hour of admission.

CHAPTER II

REDEEMED WITH A PRICE

AT the appointed hour the father and son presented themselves at the bungalow. The missionary was seated in the cool shade of the broad veranda with his pundit, or native teacher, busily engaged in translating the Bible into Assamese. He was very weary with his work of the day before, and pausing in his study, was gazing afar upon the lofty mountains, with their crown of eternal snow. Its glittering coolness seemed to mock the dwellers in the heated, torrid plain, and parched anew their fevered lips.

Although his mind had been so much upon the pair, he was just at this moment as busily engaged in thinking, that he did not notice their quiet approach until they stood directly before him. Again the princely form of the blind man was bowed nearly to the earth in his reverent salaam. Little Kandura, also, in imitation of his father, bent his small head, and touched his forehead in a graceful way.

The teacher asked the man many questions, and learned that Kandura was not his only child.

"No, sahib, I have four others at home, and my wife also. It takes much rice to feed them, and I alas, I have no eyes!"

As they talked, the missionary's mind went back to the look of interest in the boy's face, as he listened to the story of the cross the day before in the chapel. He said to the blind beggar:

"Will you not give me this little boy? I will feed him, clothe him, teach him, so that he will not be a tax on you any longer."

But to everything he said he could get but one answer:

"Oh, most noble sahib, he is my eyes! How could I give away my eyes?"

Every argument failed, and the missionary gave up the hope of getting the boy at this time to train up for Christ.

Thus matters went on for several months. The blind man, led by little Kandura, came weekly to the chapel, and as regularly stopped for the "pice", or money, always ready for him. In this way the white teacher hoped to keep hold of the man, that perhaps the Lord would some day give him the lad who had won a warm place in his heart.

And the dear Lord, who hears and answers prayer, did let this very thing happen at last. One weekday the beggar came to the missionary in great trouble. Is usually dignified manner was absent; his face showed real distress of mind. Yet for all this, he did not forget his usual salaam. Then he said:

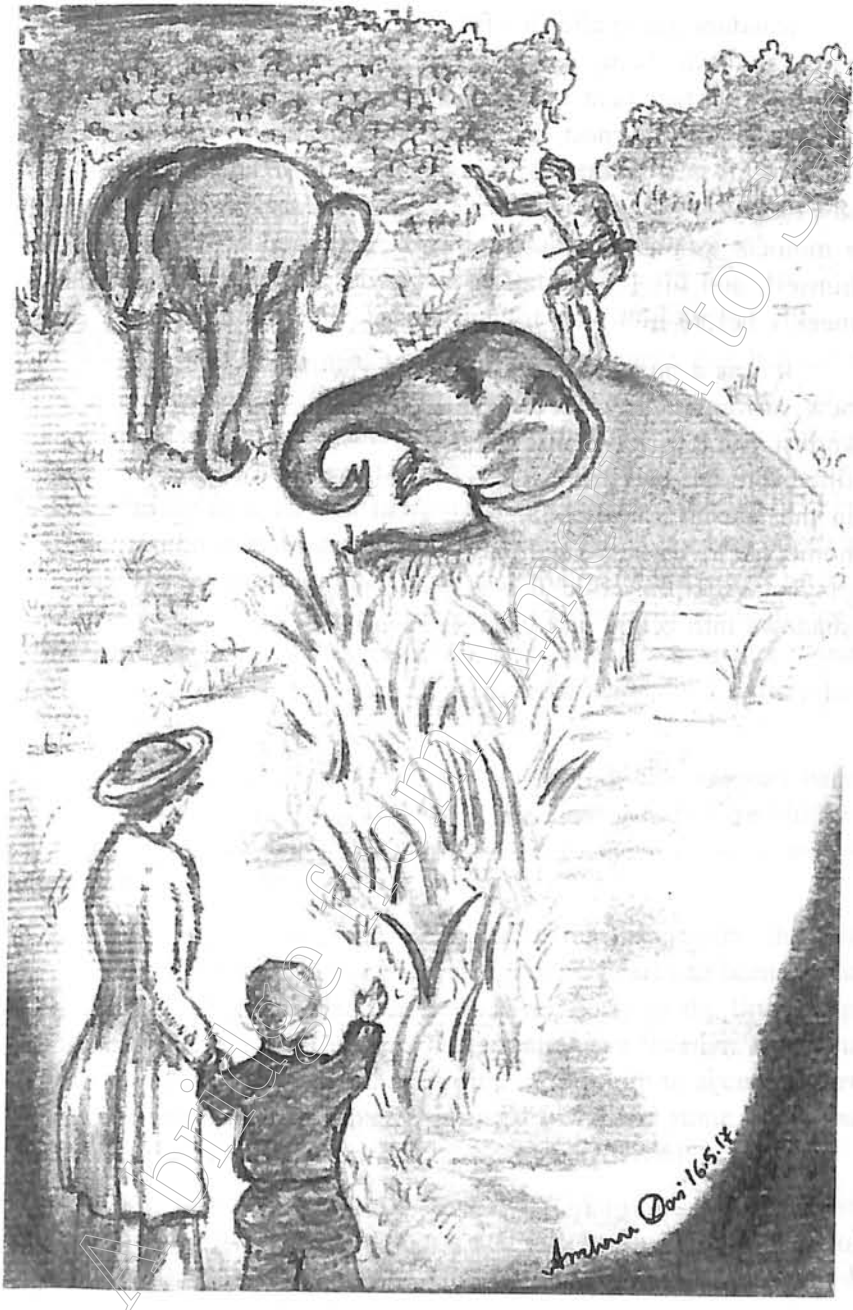
"Most noble sahib, your honourable self has long waited my boy. I am in debt, and know not where to look for the money. I shall be cast into prison if I do not pay."

Groping for the teacher's hand, he placed within it that of the little Kandura, saying:

"Here he is, worthy sahib. True, he is my eyes, but what can a man do in prison? Give me six rupees (about three dollars), and the child is yours."

"No", the missionary answered, "I will not *buy* your child. My religion forbids it. I will freely *give* you the six rupees, and then you may give me your boy for seven years."

Again the blind man bowed to the earth in reverent salutation. Having received the money, he embraced little Kandura, bidding him farewell, while the tears ran from his sightless eyes. Without another word he turned and went away, led by a younger child, a daughter. The precious silver that was to purchase his freedom from debt was carefully hidden away in his flowing robe.



Elephants Crossing a Stream

Kandura gazed after his father, crying softly, for it was a tie of nature that was being severed. Presently, he turned and looked up into the kind face bent over him. It was a look the missionary never forgot; so keen, earnest, inquiring, as if he would read the inmost heart of his new guardian. The child seemed satisfied with what he saw there, for the little dark arms wound themselves impulsively for a moment around the teacher's neck, then suddenly remembering himself, and his lowly station, he made a low salaam, and stood meekly before him with folded hands.

It was a puzzle at first to know what to do with the lad. His new surroundings were very different from anything he had ever known. But love solves all riddles, and it was not long before Kandura fitted into the new life as if he had always been there. The babies in the teacher's household were great aids in making him feel at home. He loved them, and they were wonderfully fond of their dark playmate. To the child it was like passing from a land of black shadows into bright and beautiful sunlight.

CHAPTER III

KANDURA'S NEW LIFE

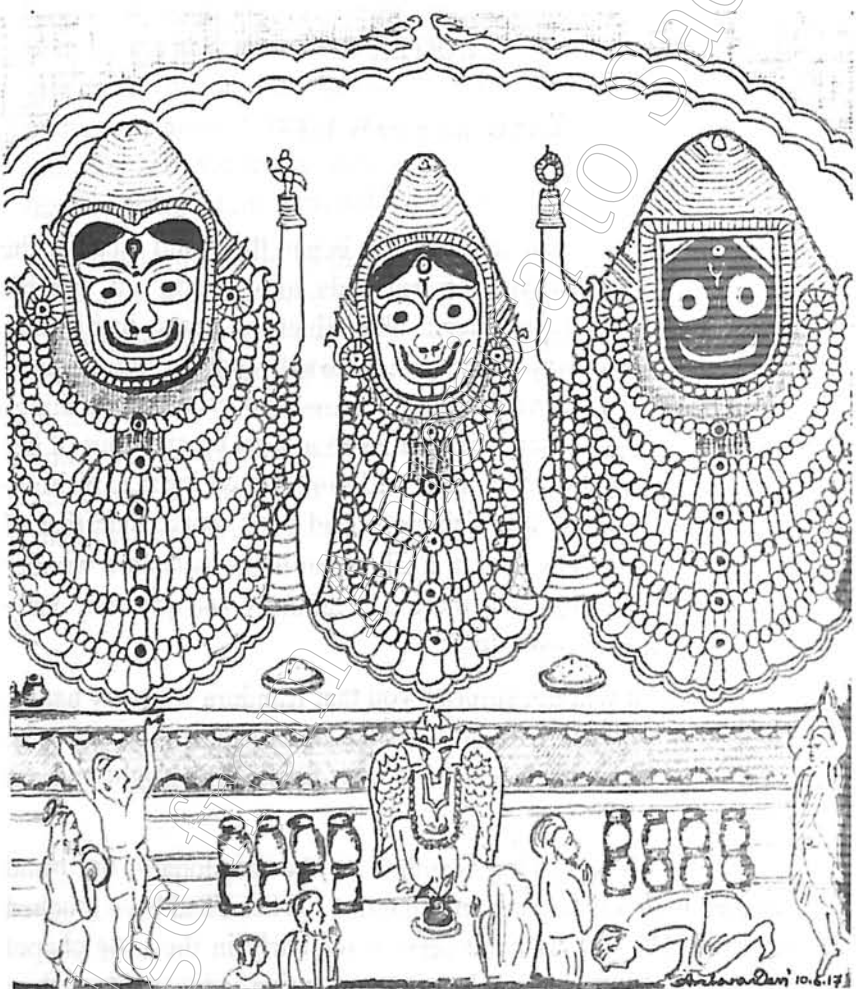
AS we have seen, a happy life began there and then for the dear little fellow. He was only mine years old, but his hard experiences made him seem older than his years. In his own home he had often known hunger and want, and his blind father, though usually kind, was frequently cross and cruel when things went wrongly. His mother's life had been almost crushed out of her by sorrow and hardship. A woman's life in heathen India is pitifully sad at the best, and the lot of this one had been worse than that of many of her sisters. The reason a Christian home is such a wonder to them is because they see there a brightness and joy they have never known in their own lives.

Therefore, it will not surprise you that Kandura was very happy. To the teacher and his wife he was like one of their own children. It was a great pleasure to teach the boy, for he was bright and apt at his lessons.

Very soon after giving Kandura to the missionary, the blind beggar died without showing any sign that his heart had been touched by the truth. He had attended service regularly in the little chapel for many months, and was always an attentive listener. More than once the teacher had talked with him, urging him to accept the true God and not bow any longer to idols of wood and stone, as you see them doing in the picture, but he always answered:

"No, sahib; my religion was the religion of my father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather, and all my fore-fathers. I cannot forsake the faith in which they died. Your words are good words, but they are not for me."

And so he died in darkness, a worshiper of false gods, turning away from the true Light which would have opened the blind eyes of his soul.



Kandura mourned for his father, but did not follow in his footsteps. In a few months it was plain that he had given his heart to Jesus. He was baptized before he was twelve years old. Even though so young, he was always ready to go out with the missionary in his tours in the jungle, telling the glad story of Christ's salvation to his countrymen. They would listen to the child in wondering astonishment when they had turned away from the white teacher's words.

How could they help listening to the boy? His dark eyes would shine in his eagerness to make the matter plain; and again fill with tears, as he told the story of the suffering Saviour on the cross.

So the years sped on. Other children had been gathered into a school, and here Kandura was being trained for usefulness, becoming after some years a well-educated young man, speaking and writing the English language almost as well as the missionaries themselves.

Did you ever read in the Bible of people that were raised up by God for some particular work? You remember how Samuel was given to God when a baby, and the Lord made him a prophet to fulfill a great and special mission for Israel. So Kandura, even in his boyhood, seemed appointed to be a Christian leader among his own people.

This was about fifty years ago. In that day, well-educated, trustworthy natives were very rare indeed. The English Government, as you know, rules India, and finds such men valuable. So Kandura was offered a great deal of money if he would work for the government instead of the missionaries. They, of course, could not pay him a large salary when money for mission work was always scarce.

It was a great temptation, and for a while he yielded, and accepted an office which brought him large pay. His old friends, the missionaries, were very sad to think that he had turned aside from Christian work. They played long and earnestly that he might be brought back to his duty.

One day, the teacher who had been like a father to him for so many years invited him to take a trip with him on the elephant.

It is a queer way

of riding, perched in a sort of cushioned box high up on the back of one of the huge beasts; but it is very comfortable, I assure you, when you once get used to it. And when your way lies through the jungle, where snakes and tigers abound, it is much safer than on the back of a pony.

The trip this time took an entire day in going and another in returning. The missionary improved the time faithfully by talking earnestly to Kandura, whom he had loved tenderly, and taught since he was a little boy leading about his blind father. He reminded him of this, and of the dreadful life from which he had been saved, and how the dear Lord had led him step by step, giving him the chance for an education, that he might use his powers in his service.

At first, Kandura would not say much, only to plead the excuse that he could do a great deal of good in his present position. He could earn the money that was so much needed, and give it to help the work along, instead of having to take from the scanty fund for his own support, as he would have to do if he was preaching.

But all the time Kandura was talking in this way, his conscience– that trouble-some little member– was making him ill at ease. The second day he became stubborn and silent, and the trip came to an end while he was in this mood. His old teacher had to let him go, mourning sorely over the blasting of so many bright hopes.

But Kandura's conscience was too faithful to allow the words that had been spoken to be forgotten. He was unhappy and restless by day, and at night he could not sleep. The battle was a hard one, but his better nature triumphed. In a week, he came to the missionary's bungalow, and said, with the tears running down his cheeks:

"Teacher, your words were true words. I knew it all the time.

I have given up my office under the government, and am ready to work wherever I am most needed."

The heart of his old friend leaped for joy.

"God has sent you back to us", he said. "The station down the river has been left alone, and we want you to take charge of the work there. How long can you hold out?"

Dear children, imagine the scene if you can. The noble, stalwart man, brought through such wonderful experiences from the little, black-eyed beggar boy, worshiping idols, to his present power for usefulness, looking towards heaven, raising his hands, and saying solemnly:

"God helping me, I will hold on till death!"

"Amen! God be praised!" Exclaimed the missionary, weeping tears of gladness. And thus did Kandura enter upon the great work of his life.

CHAPTER IV

KANDURA, THE PREACHER

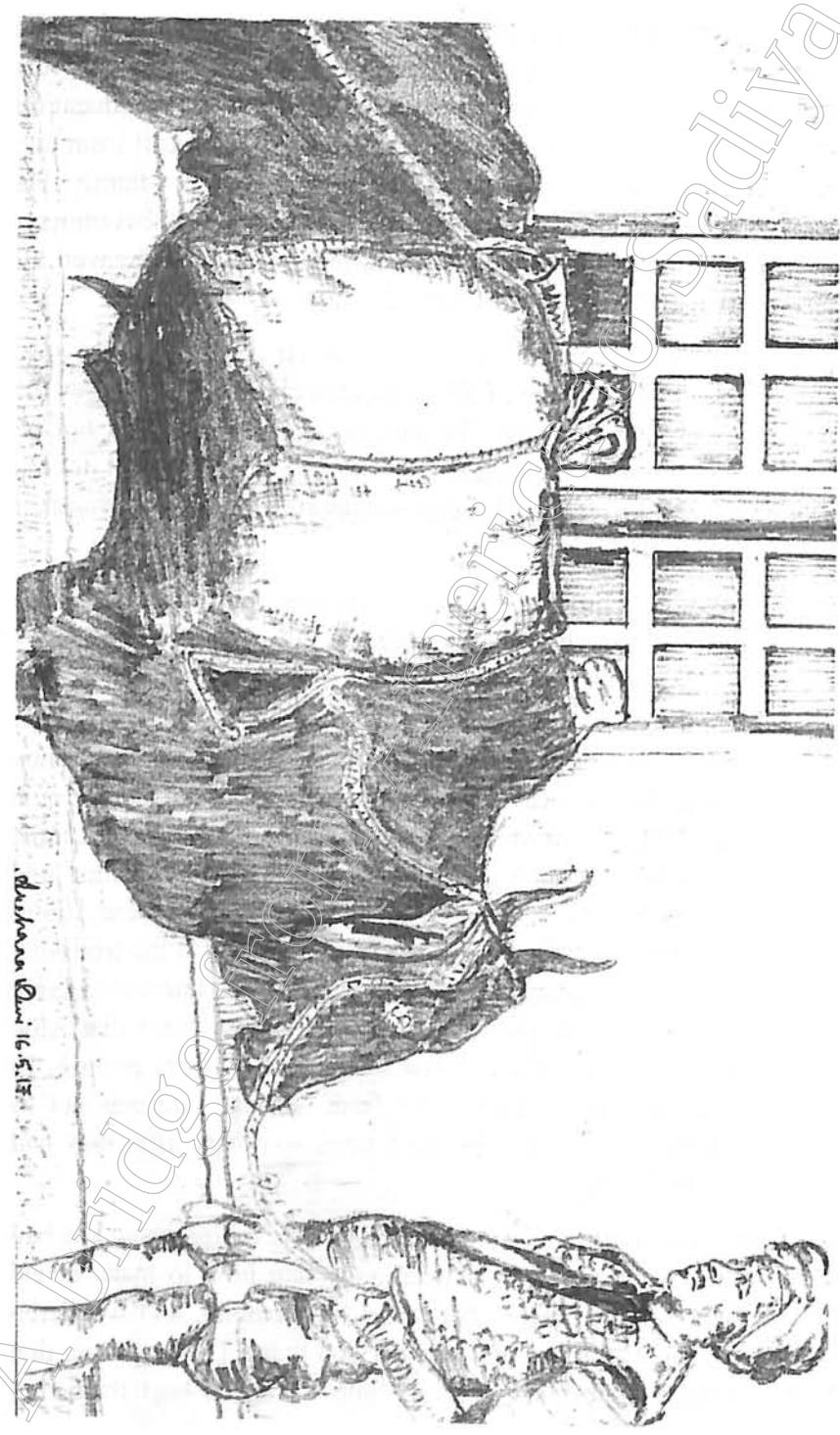
IT Would give you pleasure, dear children, if I could show you a picture of Kandura in his new home. The down river station, Gauhati, was on the mighty Brahmaputra, and was a much larger and more important place than Nowgong. The white missionaries had gone from Gauhati to America because of sickness, and the little church was in great need of some one to take care of

it. In all Assam there were not enough missionaries to sow the seed and reap the harvest, so you can see how useful Kandura was just at this time. There were no other native Christians with the education that he had, or with his natural ability. Obedient to the call from this needy flock, he was soon settled in Gauhati with his family. He received only a quarter of the salary he had under the government, but he had learned his lesson about earthly rewards. In heaven all these sacrifices will be amply repaid.

He was ordained pastor of the church. He had charge, not only of the flock in the city, but of all the branch churches in villages for sixty miles around. You may be sure he had plenty to do, but he plunged into the work, heart and soul. In time, so successful did his labor prove, that he received his entire support from America, enrolled as a regular missionary.

His pleasant little home taught its own sweet lesson to the heathen around him. Everybody loved his charming, gentle, lady-like wife. Her name was Aitie, and she, like her husband, was educated in the mission school. She helped him by doing work that no man could do. For in all Hindu countries the high caste women are shut up in their homes, and can never see men outside their own households. If they hear anything about Jesus and his love, it must be told them by a woman going to these homes. So, as time and strength permitted, Aitie would visit the zenanas, as these Hindu homes are called, and teach the poor, ignorant women the truth that makes all free who accept it in their hearts. Do you know how good water testes when you are very thirsty? The good news that Aitie carried seemed like the water borne by the carrier of the picture. To the women she came like an angel from heaven. Life was not so hard and dreadful, nor their prison houses so dreary after they had learned about Jesus.

Aitie had another mission besides visiting the zenanas. She had to show the heathen women all around them how to make a real home. They watched her in her sweet motherhood, and wondered what made the difference between her and them. They saw too, that Kandura did not beat his wife, as their husbands beat them, but



treated her as if she was as good, or even better than he was. They began to think that a religion that would bring about such a state of things must be a very good and delightful thing to have. They also saw the beautiful neatness of her home, and that she ate her meals with her husband and sons, a thing not heard of among the heathen. Perhaps in some of these things Kandura and his family and more influence through their example than white missionaries would have had.

Time passed on. Kandura's hair began to show streaks of gray, while Aitie became less able to go out among the zenanas. Disease was laying hold of her slowly but surely. God had given them four noble sons and one dear little daughter, whom they named Santimoni, or "Pearl of Comfort." She was as dainty and sweet a little maiden as any you could find in all America.

The boys had the same thirst for education that Kandura had in his boyhood, and by hard work took the full course at the University of Calcutta. Santimoni was the youngest, but you may be sure that both father and brothers took good care that she should have the very best education that could be had in India, the land where girls, under the old heathen rule, are denied having even a soul. But all this is fast changing, in the light and progress that have come through the gospel.

Years passed, but the brave heart still held on in the good work. His abundant labors wore out his body, but his soul never wearied.

It seemed as if he knew everything that happened all over his great field. His guardian love watched tenderly over every one of the converts in all the churches. He rejoiced over every baptism as over the finding of lost treasure. He had faults, to be sure, but his daily life showed that he was earnest in service.

The missionary who was more than a father to Kandura went home to his reward years before the work of his adopted son was ended. For over forty years he had labored in Assam, sowing in the stony hearts of the people seed that afterward sprang up to eternal life. Before he died he was permitted to see the idol temples

crumbling, and many Christian chapels dotting the plain and the steep hillsides. When he died, in far-off America, he fancied himself in the dear old Assam valley preparing to make a tour in the jungles with Kandura. Happy in this belief he closed his eyes on earthly scenes, to open them in the glory of heaven.

We now come to the end of Kandura's life. His hard, ceaseless labor made him old before his time. He was pastor of the church in Gauhati until a brief time before his death, although missionaries had come to his help in the general work. In his pleasant home, with his loved Aitie beside him, he passed away one beautiful morning, in the refreshing coolness of the early day. As his soul, freed from the imprisoned body, passed into eternity, how joyful the meeting must have been with the dear ones, so tenderly loved, who had gone before.

Dear children, is not this truly a wonderful story? God took this beggar boy who had learned to worship idols, and led him, step by step, to be a noble, successful preacher of the gospel that had rescued him.

There are many Kanduras in heathen lands to-day, only waiting to be set in places where they may learn of Jesus. God asks each of us to help. We can give of our money to send messengers with the "good news", which is what the word "gospel" means. We can pray that the dear Lord will speed the work. Perhaps he may want some of us to give ourselves. What will we answer?

CHAPTER V

KANDURA'S SISTER

AS I have told you, Kandura's blind father had a large family of children. One of these little ones was a bright, pretty girl, much younger than Kandura, named Junaki. A queer name, isn't it? At the best it was hard for the poor, blind old man to beg enough food for so many months; and often the children knew what it was to go hungry. When we died it as worse still; and at last the mother found that she must part with some of the little ones.

By this time Kandura was married and had a dear, good wife, and one baby boy. He offered to take Junaki, and care for her as for his own. The mother hated the Christians, especially since the missionary had taken Kandura, and taught him to worship the new God. It seemed worse to her than if he had died. Junaki was her favorite child, and the idea of having her also a Christian was a bitter thought. But there seemed no other way. She could not let the girl starve. So she bade her go and live with her brother. The other children were boys, and they could do more to help her than Junaki, for she was only a girl; and this, in heathen India, means a great deal. Thus it came about that the little one found a pleasant home in Kandura's family, and was given a chance to become an intelligent Christian woman. She had a good disposition, and was really very lovable. But her ignorance was pitiful. She had never had any chance to learn anything good; for besides leading about her blind father before he died, she had never done useful work. Of course, she could not read or write, because girls in India are not allowed to learn; and so her days had been spent in play, and her nights in sound, careless sleep. Kandura's wife had been taught in the mission school, so she could teach her little sister-in-law many things. Junaki

Women Water-carriers

learned from her to read and sew, and keep the house in the native fashion, which is not like American ways.

Would you like to know something about Assamese housekeeping? Even when the natives become Christians they do not adopt American ways of living, for those would not be suited to them. They do learn to be neater, and the spirit of the home is as different from the old as light is from darkness. Yet so far as the food and customs go, they are mostly unchanged.

Rice and curry is the universal dish of India and Burma. It is a compound of meat of fowl, made hot with a number of spices, and served in a mound of boiled rice. It is a very pleasing dish, and many foreigners like it also.

The few dishes in an Assamese home are of brass. Every good housekeeper must keep these shining, as if they were made of gold. This was *one* of the things Junaki learned to do, by scouring them with sand. She also learned to "lip" the house. It had only a mud floor, and when it needed cleaning, she was taught how to take mud in her hands, mix it in their way until it was soft and smooth, then rub it smoothly over the floor. This sounds strange to you, but I assure you that when it is well done, the result looks very well.

All this time Junaki was learning about Jesus and his love, and her heart received the blessed truth. When she was twelve years old, she asked to be baptized; but the church was afraid she was too young to fully understand what it meant. Two years later she was married; for girls marry much younger in that country than they do in America. Everybody thought she had found a good husband, and for a time she was happy. But soon it was discovered that Ram Sal, her husband, was an opium eater, and it was not long before trouble came upon poor Junaki in good earnest. The craving for opium made him do what many drunkards in our own land do to find the means with which to buy the stuff that is ruining them soul and body. He sold all Junaki's jewels, her clothes, everything he could lay his hands on. Little children were born, and in order to support them, she took in work. But he used up her earnings too; and, at last, when he had taken all, he went away, and quite forgot both

wife and little ones.

It was better that he should go, for now she could work and feed her hungry little ones. Her Christian friends helped her to find employment, and she could now take good care of her three children. But her heart was sad, for she had loved her husband, and his ruin was a dreadful sorrow. Feeling the comfort that Jesus alone can give, and the need of the sympathy of his followers, she again asked to be baptized. This time she was gladly received and numbered among the disciples. Surely she had proved that she knew the love of Christ.

More sorrow was in store. One night, cholera, the scourge of India, took one of her children, a beautiful boy of four years. Six months after this, her baby boy also died. It seemed as if Junaki's heart would surely break, but God sent her his own blessed comfort.

But she must show by another hard trial her real truth and devotion. Soon after the dear baby went to be with the Saviour, her husband came home to die. The opium had filled his body with loathsome disease, and taken from him all hope and strength. His mind was also wrecked by the dreadful drug. For two months he lived in the most terrible suffering, during which time she took loving and tender care of him. It seemed as if she had forgotten the hard, sorrowful years he had caused her, and remembered only that he was her husband. Night and day she waited on him, never thinking of her own weariness, hardly leaving him to get food, so fearful was she that he might miss her. At last the poor soul was freed from its ruined house, she body, and Junaki's labor of love was done. Life had been so full of sorrow that it was hard for her to see, the sun still shone; but she did not lose her faith and trust in God.

For some time she continued work as nurse in the station. She had shown that she could care for the sick, and by this she earned daily bread for herself and little girl.

But she longed to tell of Jesus to the heathen around her whom the priests could not help. Especially did she wish to be the messenger of glad tidings to the women who needed the comfort her message might bring. At last she was permitted to have her desire, and joyfully

A Brahmin Priest

did she enter on her mission.

In India there are many jewels ransomed for the Master. Is it not a blessed work?

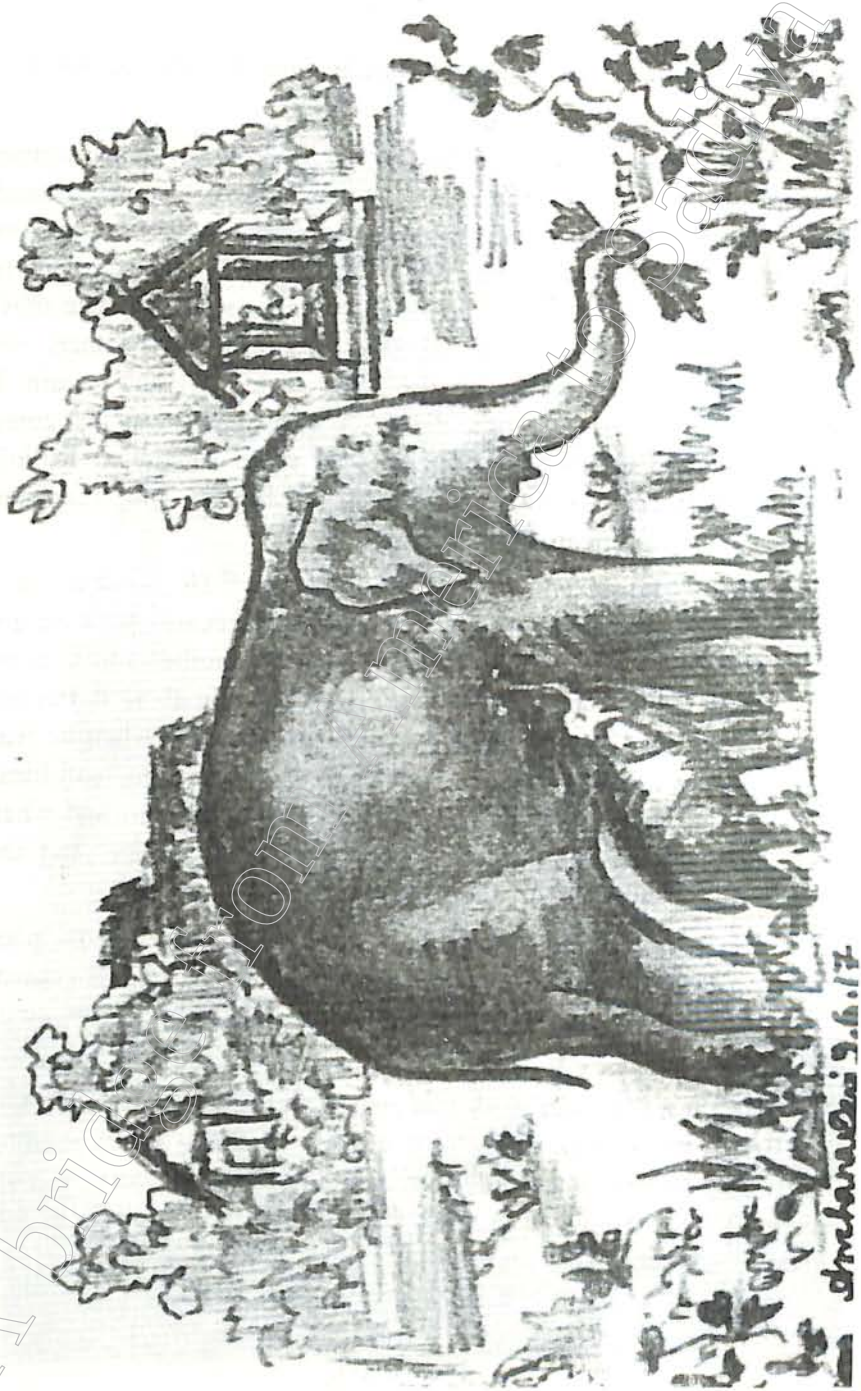
Junaki's little daughter, Rotin, is a sweet comfort to her mother. It seems as if she had caught some of the spirit which comes through deep affliction. As her mother goes about among the homes, and out into the villages, Rotin often goes with her. She is always ready to tell the dear gospel story when she has the opportunity. The other day, a little child died in the village. The family was heathen, and so the poor mother had no hope of ever seeing her baby again. It seemed as if her sorrow would drive her wild. Junaki was just going in to see what comfort she could give, when she heard Rotin's voice, talking very earnestly. And this was what she said, translated for her little American friends:

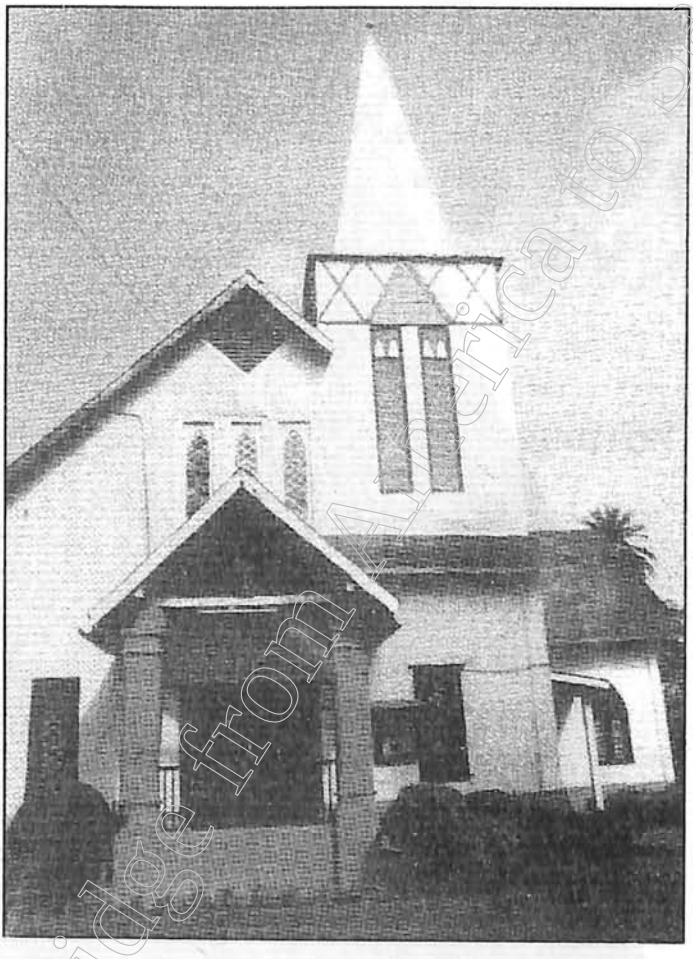
> "Why should you cry so for your baby? He is happy in a beautiful garden with the angels. I know, because we have got two there, and we are going sometime, mother and I, to be with them. Your idols can't tell you anything about it, but our Jesus can. He loves the dear little babies, and when he was on the earth he used to take them up in his arms, and bless them. He is up in heaven, but he loves them yet; and when the babies die, they go right to his lovely home, and the angels take care of them."

Don't you suppose this was a wonderful story to the poor mother? She stopped crying to listen, and as Rotin's voice ceased, Junaki was there to take up the talk and explain to her the precious truth.

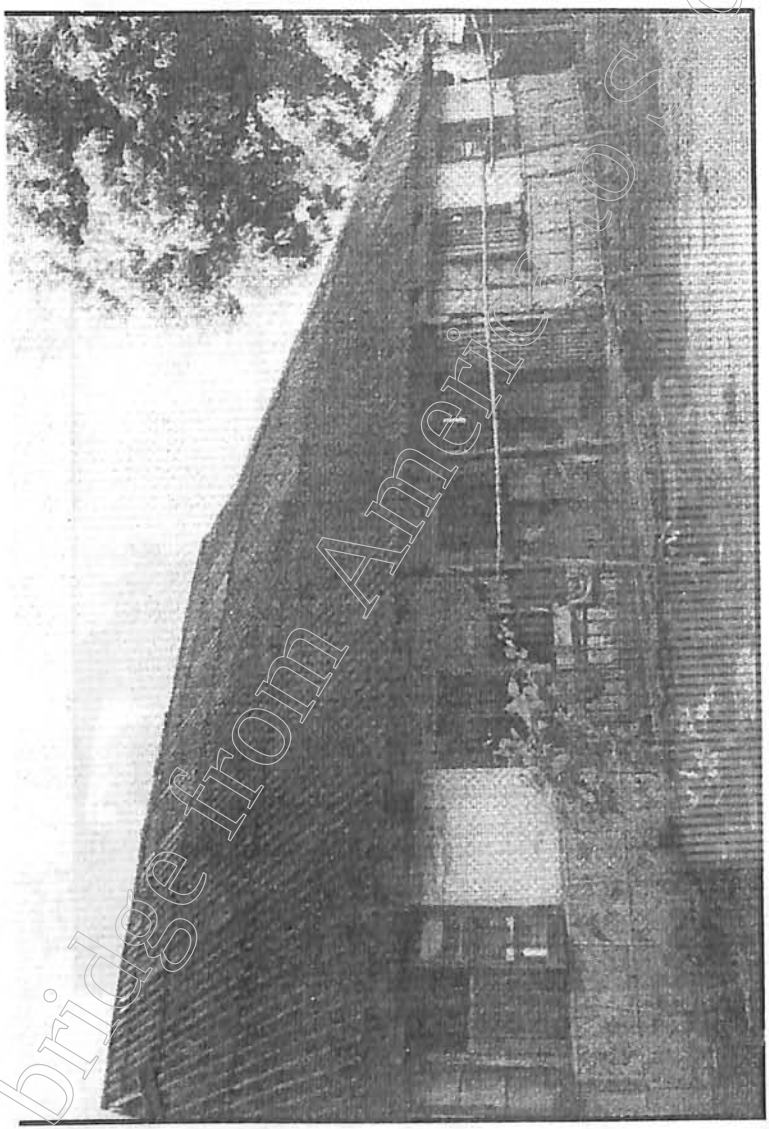
Isn't it a beautiful work that Junaki and little Rotin are doing? Christians in America are helping them to do this work by sending the money to feed and clothe them while they tell the story of Jesus to these poor women. Let even the children have a share in this blessed service.

THE END.





Gauhati Baptist Church built in 1914 (Panbazar)



Temporary Gauhati Baptist Church built after earthquake of 1897 (Panbazar)

BIOGRAPHICAL SERIES NO. 3

Jan. 22, 1841 March 13, 1874

MARIA BRONSON

BY

MRS. SOPHIA BRONSON TITTERINGTON

"They have but left our weary ways
To live in memory here, in heaven by love and praise."

CHICAGO ::
WOMEN'S BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY
OF THE WEST
1882

JAMES GUILBERT, PRINTER

Maria Bronson (1841-1874)

MARIA BRONSON

The Assam valley might in all justice be called the "Paradise of India". The plains of Bengal are flat and arid, while this beautiful valley through which flows the Brahmaputra river, is clothed with perpetual verdure.

The province of Assam lies south-east of the Himalaya range. The course of the river, after breaking through its lofty mountain barrier, determines the direction of the valley. Ranges of hills bound this plain, running parallel with the river, forming the boundaries on the north-west and south-east. These hills are inhabited by many warlike tribes, as the Garos, Mikirs, Nagas and others, all of which present a grand field for missionary labor. The approach of Assam is thus well described: "It is reached from Calcutta, the nearest sea-port by ascending the Ganges a short distance, and its tributary the Brahmaputra. Nearing Assam, distant hills are to be seen. They become more frequent and closely grouped, till, as you enter the valley, you pass through a gateway of rocks, high hills, beautifully covered with tropic verdure, wild and romantic in the extreme, and continuing like bulwarks each side of the deep and rapid stream."

Going up the river past native villages and English stations, we come at last to Jaipur, which is situated in the Northern part of the province, almost beneath the shadow of the Himalaya. Here, at this wild lonely station, Jan. 22nd, 1841, was born Maria Bronson, second daughter of Miles and Ruth

Montague Bronson. Soon after her birth the family removed to Nowgong, a station in central Assam, situated on the Kullung river, a branch of the Brahmaputra.

Around the old Nowgong home the sweetest associations linger. One by one, little children came to brighten the exile of the parents, till six daughters filled the mission bungalow with music and sunshine.

For seven years Maria remained with her parents in India. Very few traces are left of those early years. Her older sister remembers the missionary spirit she shewed even then. Old native women, still living in Nowgong often speak of "Maria Baba", and the sympathy she manifested for the degraded heathen around her. Often she asked permission to give her own little dresses to clothe the poor, naked children, whom she used to gather about her, and teach of the one true God, and have them learn the Catechism, and recite it to her. Soon came to these parents the duty which constitutes the great trial of Missionary service. More than the exile from home and native land, is the stern necessity of sending away from them their darling children. Oh, the agony of the mother's heart. But the children cannot be reared in that climate, in either physical or moral health, so the sacrifice must be made, though the hearts of the parents are high to breaking!

In the year 1849 when Maria was eight years old, the father and mother took five of the little band of daughters and brought them to their native land. The youngest, a lovely child of eighteen months, was of too tender an age to be exposed to the hardships and privations of the long sea voyage, so she was left behind in the loving care of dear missionary associates. The good shepherd took the little lamb to his own fold during the parents' absence.

The voyage homeward was a formidable undertaking with

five restless little children, the oldest only ten years of age. It was long and tedious, and Mr. and Mrs. Bronson went on shore at Boston, with their charge, thankful that they had been permitted to cross the ocean in safety. Once in America, the burden of the parents hearts was "what shall be done with the children?" They committed this, with all their other anxieties, to their Father in heaven. Pleasant Christian homes opened their doors for each of the little ones, with one exception. The right place not offering itself for their fourth daughter Hattie, they took her back to India with them. Marin and her sister Lizzie were privileged to find a home together. A Christian lady, to whom had been denied the gift of children of her own, lavished upon them the love and devotion of her generous heart. The name of Mrs. Davis Cotes, of Springfield, N.Y. will ever be held in loving grateful remembrance by many for the service she did for Christ and the cause of missions. At this time she was principal of the flourishing school, known as "Locust Hill Female Seminary" in Springfield. The free advantages of this school were open to Maria and her sister. After a time it was closed on account of Mr. Cotes' failing health, but the education of the sisters went on without interruption. Mrs. Cotes was possessed of ample means which were freely expended for the benefit of her adopted daughters. Governesses were provided at home, and at one time they attended for a few terms the "Cherry Valley Female Seminary" an institution ten miles from Springfield. Maria's journal kept through these years containing a faithful record of her life, and sent monthly to her parents in India, gives us glimpses of an energetic, positive character, and of a strength of will which often gave cause for repentance, but, which under the wise control of her foster-mother, added to the race efficiency of later years."

When sufficiently advanced to pass the examinations at

Mt. Holyoke Seminary, Maria and her sister went there hoping to take the entire course. They were ambitious, and like too many others, the system prevailing there was too much for their strength and endurance. Maria's school days ended with a long and dangerous illness, during which her friends despaired of her life, while her sister, whose history during these years seems so closely entwined with hers, as hardly to be separated from it, struggled along with failing strength, until she too left school to be a life-long invalid. Anxious to complete the course she did not complain until the mischief was beyond repair. Her dear foster-mother spared no means necessary to restore the

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* Soon after finding a home at Springfield, Maria and Lizzie were converted and united with the Presbyterian Church, of which their foster-parents were members. From the first, Maria's religious life seemed to be of an active rather than a meditative type. As one has aptly said in reference to her, she shewed her "faith by her works". Her journal shows her to have been conscientious and highly appreciative of the loving care and training bestowed upon her.

A few words will explain a matter which has puzzled many. Maria's name, especially in her private correspondence often appears as Maria Bronson Cotes, and it is so given upon her tomb-stone. The facts in the case are these:- Mrs. Cotes adopted the girls legally, thus giving them a right to her name, that in the case of her sudden death, they should not be left unprovided for. Their own name was by no means given up, but the name of Cotes was added. When Maria accompanied her father back to India, under appointment from the Missionary Union, she was known under the name of Bronson, as was natural under the circumstances. Let, as has been said her love and gratitude to her foster mother led her to retain her name as far as possible, and so we frequently find the full signature in letters to family and personal friends.

In 1855 Mrs. Bronson returned to America bringing her daughter Harriette, and Mrs. Cotes had taken this child also into her heart and home, so that three of the sisters were sheltered in one Christian household. The children were permitted to greet both parents a few years later, when failing health drove them from the field at the time of the Sepoy rebellion, and pleasant gatherings were held at their temporary home at Hamilton, N.Y.

lost health, while Maria to whom the care of the sick seemed a special gift watched over her suffering sister with the tenderest care.

Maria's intellectual endowments were above the medium, still her bent was practical rather than purely intellectual and scholarly. She belonged to the New England type of efficient, clear-headed women, whose energy and executive ability must find a tangible outlet. This very trait made her the missionary that she was. She was quick to plan, equally ready to execute.

About the year 1863, Maria went to Lawrence, Mass, to visit the family of her eldest sister. While here her lungs having been troublesome with tendency to cough, she entered the school of "Physical Culture", in Boston, under the charge of Dr. Dio Lewis, and took a course of his "Light Gymnastics." This proved of great benefit to her physically, and after graduating in one of the normal classes, she and her youngest sister, who had previously taken the same course, went to Auburn, N.Y., to teach gymnastic classes. They met with good success during their stay, and Maria, as usual, made many warm friends. She had a singularly winning manner, which never failed to attract those around her, and usually a friendship once made was life-long.

Soon after this time, the shadow of a great sorrow fell upon her life, and her health, both physical and mental, suffered in consequence. Her friends watched her with solicitude, fearing that the old energy and strength would never return. Everything that love could procure was lavished upon her, and at last Maria began to rally. Her return to health was not rapid, but it was sure, and once more she was her old self, except that the busy brain planned more eagerly and the hands were more restless in their activity.

In 1868 the glad news came that the beloved parents were

again on their way home. This was to be the last home coming for the precious mother, for the soon entered the heavenly home. Dr. Bronson's health was in a very precarious condition, and his life depended on an immediate change of climate. During the trip from Calcutta to London he improved rapidly, and Mrs. Bronson's health was unusually good. But sad times awaited them. One morning on the voyage, Mrs. Bronson was violently thrown from a couch in the upper cabin, which fall broke the hip-bone, and inflicted other injuries. The poor sufferer was carried to her berth and the rest of the journey was passed in agony. The lurching of the steamer would undo all the work of bandaging and placing the limb, so that no relief could be obtained before reaching New York. Once there, the best medical aid was procured, so that in a few weeks she was able to be taken to Springfield, N.Y., to her anxiously waiting children.

The mother's heart, for so many years repressed in its longings, cried out to have her children all about her once more. So it was arranged that all should meet at Chicago, at the home of Mrs. Tolman, the eldest sister, and spend the winter together.

This plan was carried out, but the joy of being together was tempered with dark shadows of coming sorrow. The beloved mother was slowly, but surely fading away. The shock to her system from the accident on the homeward journey was too great, and a terrible wasting disease took possession of her frame. It was pitiful to see her look around upon her daughters, whom she had given up when little children, now grown to womanhood without her loving watch-care, and to hear her say, "My life has been one long hunger for my children. God helped me, else I should have died long ago!"

There was almost more sorrow than joy mingled with that winter's reunion. The dear invalid sister was stricken down

with brain-fever, went down to the river's very edge, and even dipped her foot in its cold waters; then came, oh, so slowly, back to life and consciousness again. Then the mother's constant suffering, as the clay tenement wasted away, was agony to the watching ones who loved her.

During the fall and early winter, Maria and her youngest sister taught a select school in the south part of the city, also a private class in gymnastics. Her energy and perseverance were strongly displayed in this enterprise, overcoming obstacles that to many would have been insuperable. Her mother's health failed so rapidly, that after a while, all outside work was necessarily given up, that she might take her place by the bedside as nurse and chief caretaker to the dear one, a task for which she was peculiarly fitted.

It was during this winter, before the hope of her mother's ultimate recovery was given up, that she decided to return to India with them, and take up mission work as the work of her life. With the delusion of disease, Mrs. Bronson thought she would be able to return to Assam the next fall; and talked much of the happiness it would be to have Maria with them. She clung to this hope to the very last, and no one had the heart to tell her it could never be.

While in Chicago, Maria and her sister Hattie, were baptized by their father into the fellowship of the First Baptist Church of that city. It will be remembered that Mrs. Cotes being a member of the Presbyterian church, her adopted daughters had joined that organization. Maria retained her membership with the first church until her death, and always regarded it with the deepest affection.

In the spring of 1869, there was a breaking up of the family circle, united after so many, many years of separation. The youngest daughter, Sophie, was married, going to her new home in the west, after which, Dr. Bronson, accompanied by

Maria, took his wife to her early home in Central New York, the other girls went back to the dear Springfield home, leaving Mrs. Tolman once more alone with her own family. Mrs. Bronson's health still failing rapidly. She was taken to the Water Cure at Elmira, N.Y., with Maria still her faithful, devoted nurse and care taker. Everything that love and medical skill could suggest, was done, but the lamp of life flickered for a while in its socket, then went out forever. To the last her heart was with the dear mission. Among her parting words to her husband were these: "Hasten back to our loved work. I will be thy guardian angel, and await thee at the pearly gate." Maria's tender ministrations were an in expressible comfort to her, so long deprived of the companionship of her children. The pet name "Mitie" used in the long-ago childhood, was oftenest on her lips.

An extract from Maria's journal, written at this time, will show the depth of love and devotion in her heart, for her sainted mother. The date is Sept. 30th, 1869.

> "About seven o'clock this evening, darling mamma passed away to the spirit land. O, what months of suffering have been hers'. Since May I have been with her almost constantly. She sighed for rest. God has given it to her the "Rest that remaineth for the people of God!" When I found she would never speak to me again, I never could do anything more for her, my heart was almost broken. Dear Saviour, comfort dear papa! Dear, sainted mamma!"

The precious remains of the dear mother were taken to her native village of Madison, N.Y., for burial. The emaciated, suffering look passed away from her face, after the death angel had set his seal upon it. The lost youth and beauty came back, and an expression of such perfect peace, that all who looked

upon her in the flower-laden casket, felt that God had indeed given "to His beloved, sleep!"

After the funeral, Maria's heart and hands were full with the preparations for an early departure of herself and father for India. Two were to go in a lonely path when there were to have been three, but one had been called by the Master to exchange the earthly toil for the heavenly crown. Maria felt that she had an especial work to do, in being the companion and support of her bereaved father, and nobly did she fulfill her mission. A month after Mrs. Bronson's funeral, Dr. Bronson and Maria went to St. Louis to attend the anniversaries. Before this time all missionaries had been sent to India by the old route on sailing vessels. It was proposed at this meeting that funds be raised to send these two by the overland route, as being more comfortable and expeditious.

We find the following record in Maria's journal:

> "The pleasant thing of all was Mr. Jacob's interest in our going overland to India. Through him nearly the extra amount needed was raised. Our father does care for us, and we are saved the long way by the cape, and shall reach Assam three months earlier."

From St. Louis Maria returned to Chicago for the final leave taking from dear friends there. On the evening of November 23, after a precious, never-to-be-forgotten farewell service, our travelers turned their faces toward New York. In a letter written the evening before taking ship, to her brother-in-law, she writes :

> "To-morrow noon we are to be on board the Nevada, which will bear us away from all we hold dear. But it is a comfort to know that it will not

> take us away from our precious Saviour. He has seemed doubly near these last days of trial. O, it is sweet to live for Jesus! I am glad I can serve Him, and not this wicked world. Pray earnestly for your absent sister, that she may ever be faithful. Our meeting hereafter will be made all the more precious by the long separation. "God bless my dear brother! Good bye."

They sailed from New York, in the steamship "Nevada", Capt. Green, Dec. 15th, 1869. We can imagine how much was crowded into that last week, although she has kept no record of it. She was very seasick for some days, so that the first entry we find in her ship journal is dated Dec. 25th. She thus introduces us to her new life:

> "We left New York at two o'clock, Dec. 15th, Mr. and Mrs. Cross, with dear papa and myself, compose our missionary circle. There are fifteen passengers with ourselves, most of them very delightful people. There are only five ladies. Fortunately, we are all very good friends. *** Last eve, saw the light off Cape Clear, and to-day have seen the dim outline of the Irish coast."

She relates the events of the journey with a clear minuteness that makes the entire trip stand out with peculiar vividness. The party, after making a short stop in Liverpool, went to London, Dec. 27th, where they made a stay of several weeks, to make purchases for outfit, etc. Dr. Bronson had dear friends residing here, some of them old India acquaintances, and Maria found association with them very delightful. The party had some opportunities for sight-seeing in this great city, of which Maria gives graphic description.

Jan. 1st, 1870. She writes:

"It seems almost sad to spend this first day of the New Year in a strange land, so far away from those we love, but so it is. Our hearts are full of gratitude when we remember how we have been carried safely across the mighty deep. Yes, many things fill me with thankfulness, one especially, that one so sinful, so unworthy, should be permitted to carry the glad tidings of salvation to a benighted people. May this New-Year be the most devoted of my whole life to my Master's work! O, that many sheaves may be gathered– that a glorious harvest may be reaped for the kingdom of heaven. It is privilege to be with dear papa. The old year took our precious mamma from us, but 'our loss is her eternal gain."

The missionary company left London Jan. 13th for Calais, experiencing the usual discomforts in crossing the English Channel. The next day they went on to Paris. Here they found some old American friends, and enjoyed their week's stay in the brilliant French capital exceedingly. Jan. 14th, they were once more on their way, crossing France by rail to Marseilles. Jan. 22nd, was Maria's birthday, and we find this entry in her journal.

"My birthday! Just one year ago, our precious mamma was with us. Little did I think then that dear papa and I would now be on our way to our Indian home without her. O, how I loved her, and how sadly I miss her, but God knows best. She has borne her cross and now is wearing a fadeless crown. May God help me to be His faithful follower that we may at last meet in heaven. I believed we shall know each other there! O, the influence such parents leave behind them!

This has certainly been a most eventful birthday.

"We had rather a hard night, as we found nothing like the delightful accommodations of our American sleeping cars. Found it difficult to keep warm, notwithstanding our many wraps, and the hot tins at our feet, for it was a very frosty night, I was glad when morning dawned upon us, and we could enjoy the country. The numerous towns we passed looked very strange– such odd-looking houses and people! Apple-orchards were abundant, and most of the frees, as we neared Marseilles, were covered with foliage, reminding us we were fleeing from stern winter. I was glad to arrive at Marseilles, which was near moon. We look our baggage directly to our S.S. "Poonah", Capt. Hazelwood. We were delighted with our vessel. It is very large, and our staterooms are pleasant for a steamer. * * * * * *

"It was pleasant to be on board ship, and have no motion to tire one's head. Yes, I felt happy and thankful all the evening, happy, that my Heavenly Father was permitting me to go on a mission of love to the perishing heathen, and thankful, that we had thus far been brought safely on our way."

We now see our travelers embarked on the Mediterranean Sea, their faces tuned toward the Orient, where lay the land of their desire. For two or three days they experienced very rough weather. Then, a smoother sea brought relief. Under date of Jan. 25th, Maria thus describes a pleasant episode of the journey:

"Very early this morning, we passed Stromboli. The Captain told us he saw smoke and fire issuing from it. I regretted missing the sight. Soon after breakfast, I was out on deck,

enjoying the island of Sicily on one side, and Italy on the other. It was glorious sight. We were near enough to see the houses, and orange trees, covered with luxuriant foliage. I enjoyed it all so much. We saw the lease of Mt. Etna, a mist nearly obscured the distant peaks. What was most beautiful of all, as we were passing through the Straits, a most perfect rainbow nearly arched the waters, lasting for some moments. O, this bow of promise! I believe it is always a comfort to God's believing ones. I felt it was a renewed assurance that He would be with us, and bring us safely to our journey's end." Jan. 28th, she writes:

> "About eight this morning, we arrived in Alexandria– not a very attractive looking place, so low and sandy. We had some difficulty with the Egyptians. Quite a quarrel ensued which boat should be taken by our party, till they all seized upon our baggage, and had to be brought to order by the officers of our ship. I now realize more than ever that we are fast leaving an enlightened country, and going farther and farther into lands whose people are sitting in darkness. Nothing, like such scenes as we witness here, can lead us to lift up hearts of gratitude that we have had the blessed Bible to be 'a lamp unto our feet, and a guide unto our path."

The entire record of their sight seeing in Alexandria, is exceedingly fascinating in its vividness of description. They visited "Pompey's Pillar", and many other Egyptian wonders. But the true missionary spirit so filled her soul, that even the world renowned ruins that lay all around them, could not make her forget that God's noblest creation– human souls– were perishing in eternal ruin. She writes:

> "As we rode through the native portion of the city, and saw the utter degradation of the people, especially the *women*, my heart ached for them, and I longed that the blessed gospel might find a hold in this dark land. ****** I am quite bewildered when I think of all my eyes have seen to-day. I know I am thankful that my lot has not been cast here, though were it my work to labor among these people. I should earnestly strive to raise them from their low condition. But O, how unable should we be to do this work without the aid of our Heavenly Father!"

Jan. 31st, they left Alexandria, going by rail to Cairo. Marin seems to have enjoyed this glimpse of the country very much. She was enthusiastic at sight of the Nile, the famous river of Egypt. At Cairo they remained five days, which were all too short to see the wonders in that vicinity. They visited the Heliopolis, or Temple of the Sun, the beautiful and mysterious Pyramids, and other renowned places. Feb. 5th they went by rail to a point a few miles distant from Suez, where the S.S. Deccan was awaiting their arrival. Maria speaks of seeing the partially completed Suez canal in the distance, also the plain where the Israelites are supposed to have crossed the Red Sea. Feb. 6th they were fairly under way on the waters of the Red Sea, and the day following she commenced the study of the Assamese language. The weather grows oppressively warm very rapidly as they advanced into the tropics. At Aden she records a delightful moonlight trip into the city, and notices that the people are much more intelligent and interesting than in Egypt. Feb. 11th, they entered the Indian Ocean, and reached Ceylon on the 20th, where they went on shore for change and rest. They spent two delightful days on the island meeting some pleasant Christian people, and enjoying the charming

scenery. They reached Madras Feb. 25th, but the waves were running so high they did not go on shore. Maria began to realize that she was really in the midst of Paganism, and her heart's desire was to reach her journey's end and be really at her chosen work. As soon as the sea was sufficiently calm, to make the transit safely, Mr. and Mrs. Cross who had been their companions thus far on the long journey, left them for the Rangoon steamer, which would take them to their field of labor in Burmah. It was hard to part with these dear friends, but they were cheered with the thought that soon the weary voyage would be done, and the dear old home in Assam valley be reached, March 2nd, they reached the Sandheads, and took in the pilot whose duty it was to guide the ship through the treacherous Hoogly river to Calcutta. This is a dangerous and difficult piece of navigation, but a kind providence watched over our travelers, and brought them in safety to their destination. We will let Maria tell the story of her feelings on their arrival:

> "About four p.m. we neared Calcutta. The pier was lined with those hoping to meet their friends. Every face was beaming with smiles. I thought if I could see the dear familiar faces from 'over the other side' waiting to welcome me, I should have a truly happy heart. Yet I can say, *I was happy*, for though the loved ones were far away, there was pleasure in the thought I had left them for my precious Saviour!"

They were not without warm greetings from friends, however. They were at once taken to the charming home of an old and dear acquaintance, where they enjoyed the most generous hospitality during their stay in the city.

March 14th, Dr. Bronson and Maria started on the last

stage of their long journey. They went by rail to Golando on the Brahmaputra, the mighty river which from its unknown source far beyond the Himalayas, bursts through the mountains, and rolls its resistless flood through the Assam valley to the sea. At Golando they took the steamer "Punjaub", Capt. Elder. Thirty years before, the missionaries for Assam made the journey in little native boats, rowing against the strong current, but the finger of progress has touched India after her sleep of centuries, and English enterprise has introduced many of the comforts and conveniences of modern civilization.

Our travelers had a very pleasant trip up the river. In her journal she mentions the following interesting incident:

> "We anchored near a native village called Juggernaut Gunge. The jolly boat took us ashore. We followed a path that led through clumps of bamboos, mangoes and jack trees, Presently one of the villagers met us and invited us to a musical entertainment in honor of one of these gods, we soon had a large crowd about us, looking intently at the white lady. We found a strange looking image, to whom these deluded people were paying homage. The rude band commenced their discordant sounds, when two gaily dressed women began to dance. I was shocked at their lack of modesty. Two bright little boys with wonderful voices, sang at intervals. The place was lighted with torches. O how like a savage country it seemed as those horrid sounds greeted our ears, and we looked upon those crowds of half naked people. They treated us with great respect, and took much pains to provide us with seats."

She thus chronicles her entrance into Assam proper: "We

are leaving the dreary plains, and coming right on to the grand hills. The scenery here is beautiful. We anchored at a most romantic place, high hills on one side and a plain on the other." Near Gowalpara, Dr. Bronson had the pleasure of meeting his life-long friend and missionary associate, Dr. Stoddard, in whose family the little Frances Jane was left, when the parents brought the other children to America, a score of years before. Maria speaks of the joy of this reunion of the veteran laborers. Dr. Stoddard went on with them until they met the down steamer. At Guwahati, where they spent twenty-four hours, the native Christians were overjoyed at seeing their beloved teacher once more, and welcomed his daughter with tears mingled with smiles of joy, and seemed to transfer to her the affection they had felt for the mother, who could never return to them. At Koliabor they left the Punjaub and the Brahmaputra, and proceeded to Nowgong, which is situated thirty-two miles distant on the banks of the Kullung. The rest of the journey must be made on the backs of elephants. This was a new experience to Maria. She describes it is her journal as follows:

> "At half-past three we started for Nowgong. I was surprised to find such a good road through the jungle. Were not a bridge wanted here and there we might take the journey in a carriage. I really enjoyed the ride on the back of our monster elephant. Then we had a nice fresh breeze and the motion was not at all hard. All that was needed was a little change to break the monotony. Most of the way was through jungle. We passed through the pleasantest part of our ride after dark, so I could not enjoy the scenery. At the half-way bridge we stopped a few moments, for rest and refreshments. Here we met a well-educated native, a Deist. Papa had a plain talk with him, and as he uderstood

English, I could say a few words to him of the Saviour. Thus I have tried to begin my work for Jesus. May the seed spring up, and be the means of bringing this poor deluded one to the foot of the cross! The native Christians came to meet us, so our company formed quite a procession.

"It was nearly ten before we arrived at Nowgong. We received the warmest of welcomes from dear Mrs. Scott."

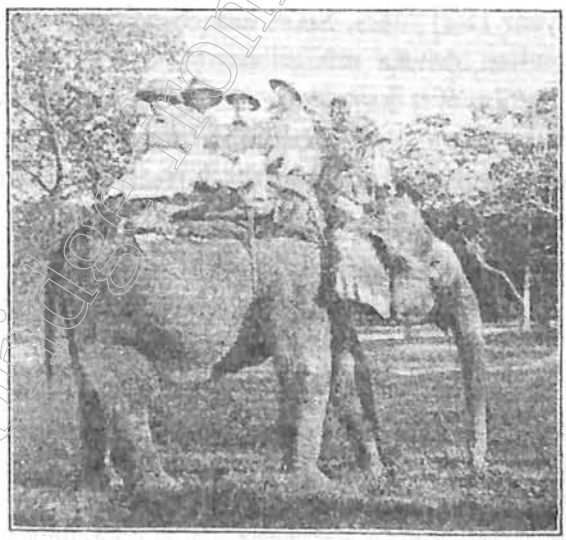
Thus the long journey began Dec. 15th, was ended March 28th, and Maria found herself in the old home from which she had gone out, a little child. There were the trees which her father had planted upon the birth of each daughter. Every where were memorials of the mother whose faithful work had for so many years been done in this spot. The native Christians met them with emotions of joy and sorrow. Sorrow for the one that was not, and joy, that once more they were to have the instruction of their revered "Bronson sahib", and that "Maria Baba" had come to take her mother's place. Many of the older ones remembered her. Among them, her old "Ayah", or nurse, who had cared for her in infancy, though infirm and feeble, came tottering in to see her child. She writes, under date of March 29th, 1870:

"My first Sabbath in my new field of labor. It has been a happy one with me, though a great contrast to the many pleasant ones which have been spent in dear America. At eight this morning, with the English residents, seventeen in all, we met in the chapel for worship. Papa preached a beautiful sermon, which I feel must do good. He alluded very touchingly at the close to his return, and the bereavements which we had sustained. At eleven

a.m. he preached again in Assamese. Nearly one hundred present I was glad to see such good attention. This p.m. the S.S. classes met at the Bungalow. I am to have a few who understand English. This eve we had a prayer-meeting with the native Christians. My thoughts have been much with the dear ones at home. I feel sure they have remembered us at the mercy-seat."

The above extract from her journal will give an idea of the Sabbath routine in the mission stations. In a letter dated May 20th, 1870, written to her sister in Chicago, she says:

"I began the second book in Assamese yesterday. I enjoy the study of the language. I can say a few sentences, and begin to understand a little that is said. O, how I long to talk! I can then accomplish so much more. The people seem delighted when they hear me using a new word."



Missionary Laborers at Nowgong, Assam

It will be seen from this that Miss Bronson made rapid progress in acquiring the language. It has been remarked that the children of missionaries, who have spoken several tongues when small, show a wonderful facility in the mastery of languages, when older. As in this, and many other cases, they may have quite forgotten all the tongues spoken in childhood except the English, but their talent as linguists makes itself evident in maturer life.

A few months later she writes to a friend: "I am happy and contented for I find much to do. The days are too short even in India to accomplish all the duties planned. It is nearly a year since we arrived here, and it seems the shortest year of my life." This sentence gives us the key note of her earnest enthusiastic missionary life. She literally gave *herself*, body and soul to her work, and while greatly interested in the general and zenana work her especial charge was the Nowgong girl's school. It was established by her mother, in 1844, and thus came to her as a legacy from the departed. She loved it as the apple of her eye, and its success must be attributed to her untiring, devoted labor. During the year 1871, Mrs. Scott left Nowgong to assist in the work at Gowhati. Maria missed her and the three little ones sadly. It seemed as if a large share of the light and sunshine had gone out of the home. A few months later Mrs. F.A. Danforth formerly connected with the mission, arrived from America and soon after was united to Dr. Bronson in marriage.

In 1873, Miss Bronson's support was assumed by the "Woman's Baptist Missionary Society of the West," and henceforth she was one of its missionaries. But she was much worn with her three years of incessant labor, and now, that Mrs. Bronson was there to care for the girl's school, and the other departments which Maria had superintended, she took a little respite and visited Mrs. Scott at Gowhati. On her return, she wrote her sister Dec. 14, 1873:

"I am at dear old Nowgong once more, after an absence of a little more than four months. The last two months I was able to help Mrs. Scott some in her girl's school and zenana work, but my strength did not allow me to do all that my heart prompted. I am deeply interested in the work that is being done at Gowhati and trust it is but the beginning of brighter days for that hardened place.

"I spent twelve pleasant days in the mission boat. The first Sabbath we were in a large Hindoo village, where the 'Gongbura' received me very kindly. I had with me three of our native Christians, one of whom is now ready to teach and to preach. We went to the head man's house, where we found the people from far and near, assembled for a feast. We spent some time talking and singing with them. I think I never felt happier in my life, than while trying to tell these poor ignorant ones the story of the cross. They listened with deep attention, and I prayed that some poor soul might feel the truth, and seek to know more of our blessed religion. In the evening the women gathered around my boat. I tried to gain their confidence, at first, by asking them about their children and their homes. When they saw I wished to be their friend, they answered my questions readily, and began to ply me with innumerable inquiries, which opened the way for me to speak of the things that lay nearest my heart. Poor creatures! So ignorant and so full of superstition! They say: 'Why should *women* learn to read? Why should they forsake the customs and religion of their fathers? Ram would save them from danger.'

"The alligators were numerous around the sand-bank where we were stopping. I asked if they ever carried off their people? 'O yes!' they replied: but we throw into the river an offering to the river deities, and we have no more fear. I found one of these offerings, and had my men draw it to shore. It was made of the plantain tree and covered with flowers. Inside were two white pigeons, with feathers dyed red, living on the rice which nearly filled the tiny boat. I brought the little creatures home. I stopped at a place called Jah Ghaut the next Saturday. There were thriving villages on both sides of the river. I sent word to the people that I would visit them the next day. Old men came around my boat to ask after their old Sahib, (papa). They gladly welcomed his daughter and seemed pleased that I was willing to go to their houses. But what was my disappointment to wake early Sabbath morning and find it raining hard. We had not expected rain at this season of the year, so the best cover was not water proof and my bed and luggage were becoming wet, and not daring to risk my health, I made my way reluctantly homeward. The dear ones were at chapel. The first sound that greeted my ears was the sweet hymn of praise sung by our native congregation. I rejoice to be once more with this band of disciples in our station. Home never looked pleasanter to me."

Nowgong Shool students (circa 1873)

She was much encouraged soon after her return by the visit of the Government Inspector of Schools, who seemed greatly pleased with the way in which she conducted her Girl's school. He wrote a very flattering commendation in the "visitor's book," and what was better promised to secure a "grant-in-aid," as soon as practicable. It is pleasant to record that he was as good as his work, and the help thus received enabled her to carry out more fully her plans for the school. He also sent her a present of forty rupees, which assistance was most timely.

She thus pleads the cause of this cherished object of her affections in a letter written to her friends in Chicago:

> "Can you not help us in some little way to make our new school house attractive? We would like to have some pictures to help us teach the little ones. What I want most of all is a *whole series* of large colored *Bible pictures*, and also pictures illustrating *Pilgrims Progress*, and pictures of birds, beasts, and any others that we could use in object teaching. We should have all these hung on the walls. How

> nice it would be if friends could give us these things, with large-sized slates, and all sorts of stationary. I want the pictures very much. I will also beg for the sewing and fancy work department, which interests our women and girls. You know what is found useful in a work like ours. Don't call me troublesome, will you? I am not begging for myself, but for the *cause I love*".

Thus passed four happy years, full of labor for Christ and perishing souls. The work of those years cannot be letter summed up than in the words of her sister, in the sketch written for the "Helping Hand" soon after her death:

> "Her natural energy, her hopefulness, and her strong will, all served her in planning and carrying forward her work. She saw before her, not the lost, the wretchedly undone, but God's chosen ones, who were to become His open followers. She never saw giants in the way, but rather the 'angel of His presence' who has said, 'Lo, I am with you always.' Four years she went about from house to house, or taught in her school, and by the purity and beauty of her life, as well as by her direct teachings, won souls to Jesus, and raised many dull and listless ones to higher aims. She had the affectionate regard and the highest esteem of her pupils, and of the Zenana women. God seemed to give her the heart of every one with whom she came in contact."

But the shadow of coming change settled slowly upon the Nowgong home. Soon after her arrival, Mrs. Bronson's health began to show signs of failing, very gradually, but insidiously, did disease fasten itself upon her, until consumption ended the life story. But, with the usual deceitful character of the malady,

the invalid herself was the last to see the hopelessness of her case. It was at last decided that she should go to Calcutta for medical advice and treatment. She bagged earnestly that her husband should not leave his work to go with her, saying: "I came to India to help, not to hinder". Maria was about to go to Calcutta to make some necessary purchases, and attend to some pressing business. Mrs. Bronson insisted that she should go by rail from Goalundo as first proposed, to save her valuable time, while she herself would take the longer route by river all the way, hoping that the fresh breezes and quiet travel would restore the wasted energies. The family were reluctant to have her go any part of the way alone, but her distress at any change in their plans was so evident, that they at last acceded to her wishes; Dr. Bronson staying alone in the home at Nowgong, with the neighbors as missionary associates, and Maria going by rail from Goalundo to Calcutta.

She reached the city quite a little in advance of Mrs. Bronson, who, on her arrival, went directly to Miss Seelye's sanitarium. Maria was shocked at the change in her appearance, although Mrs. Bronson herself could not realize she was really worse. But she failed so rapidly that the physicians ordered her off at once for a sea voyage to Singapore, summoning Maria to accompany her. She had less than twenty-four hours to arrange for this unexpected change in her plans, but with her usual energy and efficiency she was ready at the appointed hour.

During the first few days at sea, the invalid rallied considerably and became quite confident that she would return sufficiently restored to health, to take up her work once more. Maria's letters give the incidents of the voyage, the calls at Rangoon and Maulmain on their way out, where they had delightful meetings with missionary friends. The improvement in Mrs. Bronson's condition was transient, and her strength

failed day by day. As they neared Rangoon on the return voyage it became evident that Mrs. Bronson could not live to reach Calcutta. With great difficulty she was conveyed on shore to the home of Dr. and Mrs. Stevens. Maria speaks with the deepest gratitude of the tender sympathy and care and help of the missionaries here. All that lay in the power of human love and kindness was done. Death came at last to the weary sufferer, and she passed away in perfect peace on Tuesday, Feb. 3rd, 1874.

The last sad offices for the dear departed having been performed, Maria prepared to take up the lonely homeward way. But she was mentally and physically exhausted, and this exhaustion prepared the way for the sad event which soon followed.

Dr. Bronson came down to Calcutta expecting to meet his wife and daughter on their return. He was confronted with the telegram telling of his wife's death and burial at Rangoon. The shock to him was terrible, as may be imagined. He looked so feeble that Maria feared they must start for America at once. But under the sunshine of her presence, and tender ministrations, he rallied again. Although so worn by the experiences through which she had been passing she gave herself little time for rest. She was impatient to return to her beloved school, and her mind was filled with plans for its improved management. When they were ready to return Dr. Bronson insisted that they go all the way by the river to give Maria some opportunity for the rest and recuperation she so evidently needed. She seemed to enjoy the trip very much, and to gain vigor daily.

We have before us the last letter (so far as known) written by her pen. It is full of sad interest on that account and also because it shews the eager anticipations never to be realized. We give a portion, dated March 8th, 1874:

"The last days in Calcutta were such busy ones I could not write letters. We came on board the "Raj Mahal" just one week ago. Instead of taking the rail to Goalundo we have come all the way from Calcutta by steamer. We shall have gone through some thirty-four rivers before we get into the great Brahmaputra. It is only yesterday that we left the 'Sunderbunds' beautiful forests or tree jungles where there are no human beings; nothing but wild beasts. We shall probably leave the steamer at Koliabor about the 20th, and there have two days journey, through the country to our old home."

The "old home," alas! was never to receive the light of her presence. The busy earnest life closed suddenly, and Maria Bronson was not for God took her. The story of her brief illness and unexpected death can best be told in the words of her stricken father:

"The rest and quiet seemed to do Maria much good. On the morning of the 18th of March she complained of slight nausea. At breakfast time she had fallen asleep, and I did not waken her. About noon she grew worse. I called a native doctor, who was very attentive, but medicine was of no avail. Soon terrible cramps set in; her eyes were sunken, her voice unnatural; and I knew by these unmistakable symptoms that our dear Maria had that fearful disease, cholera, in its worst form. The lady passengers on board the "Raj Mahal" did all in their power to relieve her, but the disease went relentlessly on. 'Shall I recover?' was her earnest inquiry of the native physician. He made no reply. Again she asked, "Shall I recover?" I then said,

'My daughter you are very ill. We hope you may recover; but should it be God's will that you do not, has death any terror?' She whispered, 'No'– 'Is the Saviour with you?'– 'Yes'– 'Have you any messages for your sisters, your foster mother, or your school-girls?' She gave me an earnest, loving look, and said, 'I cannot talk'.

"We reached Gowalpara, landing about sundown. I sent immediately for Bro. Keith and the European surgeon. They had to travel eight miles, and did not reach us until nearly midnight, too late. In about half an hour after their arrival, she sweetly slept in Jesus. As I stood by the lifeless form of my dear child, in that lonely cabin, Jesus' sweet words came with power to my mind, 'What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter'. I felt to give up my dear child, my only companion and comfort in my desolate home in this dark land, and I wish to tell you, to the praise and honor of His name, that under this double bereavement I have been sustained and comforted."

Owing to the extreme heat, and the nature of the disease, it was imperative that the burial take place as soon as possible. Besides, the steamer could not long delay; so in the night hours a coffin was hastily constructed, and in the early morning the last remains of Maria Bronson were taken on shore, the officers and passengers following in the procession to the foot of the hill upon which Gowalpara is situated. Then they turned back, leaving the stricken father, accompanied only by the station physician, to go on his desolate way with his dead. Six wild Garo hill men served as bearers. A grave had been dug in the beautiful cemetery overlooking the Brahmaputra. Bro. Keith

was not there, so the bereaved, agonized father offered the last prayer over the coffin of his idolized child, committing "ashes to ashes, dust to dust, with no near and dear earthly friend at hand to comfort and console him. Only Jesus, in invisible presence, stood by the solitary mourner that morning on Gowalpara hill, breathing His own loving consolation into the stricken heart. When the news of her death was received it fell as a terrible blow upon Assam. Especially at Nowgong they were looking forward to her return in a very few days, and their great joy was by this providence turned into bitter morning. Mrs. Neighbor writes:

> "The news came like a thunder-clap to us yesterday morning. The light seemed to go out of everything, for we loved Miss Bronson as a dear sister. Every one here feels her death very sorely. When my husband spoke of it after service yesterday, there were few dry eyes, the women sobbing aloud. When I met her school-girls in my Sabbath school class in the afternoon, they were all in tears, and during the conversation cried as if their hearts would break. This morning they said they never wanted to go to school again, since the teacher had gone from them.
>
> "Our dear sister had a kind, winning way with children, and she had won all hearts. She was devoted to her school, esteeming it a pleasure to have her girls with her, while they, on their part, were longing for her return."

Can we picture to our minds the desolation of the station, the loneliness of the home whence two had gone out, expecting to return, but whose footsteps would never more cross the threshold; the school without a teacher; the Bible-readers left without their leader?

At home the news brought a terrible shock, not only to the foster-mother, the sisters and other relatives, but to all connected with the "Society of the West". It was the first break made in the ranks of the workers on the field by death, and many tears fell at the thought of that new made grave in far off Assam. Even in dying she served the cause she so loved; for other earnest young souls were led by it to consecrate themselves to the work of missions.

A beautiful poem, suggested by the death of the two, so near together in point of time, but whose mortal remains rest in such widely different places, was written for the Helping Hand by Miss E.W. Brown, daughter of our venerable missionary Rev. Nathan Brown, D.D. We give the poem entire.

SCATTERED GRAVES

The sacred river's silvery mist
Is by the morning sunshine kissed;
But dark the rushing wave below,
As one is borne against its flow,
Who wist not yester-morn 't would be
Her day-break of eternity.

Closed are those eyes of liquid light,
In starless, unawakening night.
Not e'en a father's anguish now
Can call back life to lips or brow;
Nor the high work her spirit chose
Awake her from this long repose.

Her work is done. On distant shore,
Dear dying eyes seek hers no more;

From home, from kindred far, she kept
Love's vigil, till her sufferer slept;
In its last clasp the cold hand pressed,
Then laid the sainted to her rest.

Her own, how near! Death's shadowy wing
O'er watched and watcher hovering;
While in that soft and hallowed light
Her soul grew ready for its flight.
Stayed but to cheer the mourner's heart,
Then heard the summons, "Child, depart".

Now to its grave that dust so dear
Is borne by savage mountaineer;
With troubled voice the man of God
Com nits her to her native sod,
Then, doubly stricken, bows his head,
Alone with sorrow and his dead.

Nay, not alone! God's angels keep
His watch o'er those who wake and sleep;
E'en death, through his providing care,
Will plant the seed whose fruitage fair
Of ransomed souls in years to come
Shall swell the reapers' "Harvest home".

Yet, land bereaved, beloved! for thee
Thy children's tears fall silently.
The sickle dropped, the grain unbound
Stands whitening all the fertile ground,
While scattered laborers, strong in faith,
Toil on, through suffering, unto death.

Oh, shall the anguish and the tears,
The martyr-lives of other years,
Whose agony of soul was given
To lift thy souls from hell to heaven,
Bring forth their future fruit in naught
But tender memory, reverent thought?

No! The dear ashes scattered wide
By Orient and by western tide,
Cry, "Speed the torch from hand to hand,
Till hut and fane illumined stand;
Till warrior, priest and devotee
In one glad worship bend the knee".

And let the sound of Sabbath bell
Over thy mountain barriers swell,
Till eastward meet and westward wave,
And in far isle and desert cave
That faith be held, that praise be sung,
Which know no bounds of clime or tongue.

A monument has been erected over Maria's grave, bearing the following inscription:

MARIA BRONSON COTES,

Beloved daughter of
REV. MILES BRONSON, D.D.,
Missionary of the
AMERICAN BEPTIST MISSIONARY UNION.
She died of Cholera at Gowalpara
On her way from Calcutta to Nowgong, March 18th, 1874.
Aged 33 years, I month, and 26 days.
This monument is erected by her bereaved Father and
affectionate Foster-Mother, who, with a large
circle of relatives and friends, deeply
mourn her loss.
"Precious in the sight of Lord
is the death of His saints."
Ps. 116:15.

The grave, with its crowning monument, can be seen from all the steamers ascending or descending the Brahmaputra. Thank God! Maria Bronson sleeps in a Christian cemetery, where her tomb will be guarded and kept in safety. She might have died in the wild and lonely "Sunderbunds", through which they had just passed, where her grave would be at the mercy of wild beasts. But God cares for His own, and though she sleeps far away from home, and kindred, yet her dust will be held as a precious legacy by the native Christians of Assam.

Sleep, sweet sister! After life's fitful fever, sleep well! A sainted mother watched for thy coming, Now, in the fields of Paradise, watch for our coming feet! Till then we say, "Hail! and Farewell!"

"My God, I would not coldly offer Thee
The withered hue of feelings' flower,
The fragment of a passing hour, –
Gifs which have nothing cost to me.

But, looking down into my heart,
Whatever treasure it hath hidden deep.
Whatever talent it would strive to keep,
With these, to Thee, O God, I part.
I should not dare to bring affections blighted,
By the rude blast of worldliness and pride,
Nor lay a worn-out heart the earth had slighted,
Upon the altar of the Crucified.
But in Life's dewy hours, when hope is on the wing,
My love, myself, my all, to Thee I bring."

(Taken from MISS BRONSON'S Commonplace Book.)

Apendix No 1. : Letter by Kandura address to Rev. J.N. Murdock D.D. dated : October 24th, 1879.

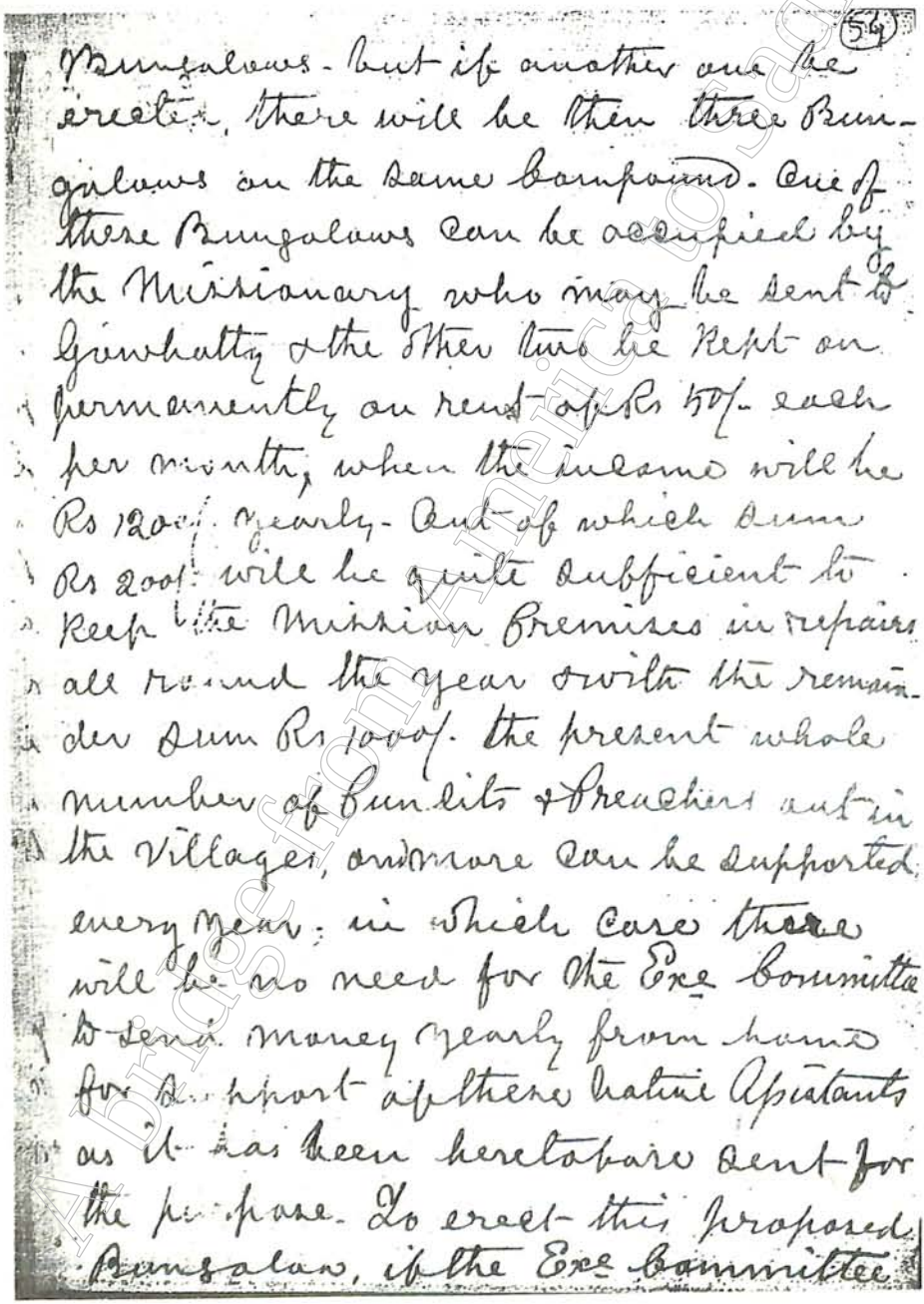
Gowhatty. Oct. 24. 1879. (53)

My dear Sir,

I have not been able to write you for a pretty long time for which I am sorry I hope you will Kindly excuse me. I have been for the last few months heavily pressed with different Kinds of business. Brother Apunta went down in July last at Nowgong. Mason's request, to "Shamnagar" a place below of Goalpara, where there is a Church belonging to the Cura Mission to stay for a time with the disciples there. He returned from there yesterday.

My principal object of writing you this short letter is to propose a plan with the hope that you & the Exe Committee would take into favorable consideration:

In the Mission Compound there are at present two Mission



(54)

Bungalows - but if another one be
erected, there will be then three Bun-
galows on the same Compound. One of
these Bungalows can be occupied by
the Missionary who may be sent to
Gauhatty & the other two be kept on
permanently on rent of Rs 50/- each
per month, when the income will be
Rs 1200/- yearly - out of which sum
Rs 200/- will be quite sufficient to
keep the Mission Premises in repairs
all round the year & with the remain-
der sum Rs 1000/- the present whole
number of Pundits & Preachers out in
the Villages, and more can be supported
every year: in which case there
will be no need for the Exe Committee
to send money yearly from home
for the support of these native Assistants
as it has been heretofore sent for
the purpose. To erect this proposed
Bungalow, if the Exe Committee

(55)

2d

would ask where to get the money, I would most humbly beg to answer, that if they would keep back sending a Missionary to Gowhatty for two years longer, his Salary for these two years will be sufficient to prepare the required Bungalow. If my humble plan be approved of & money sent home I shall have no time to erect the Bungalow in question within two years time. After when the Bungalow has been prepared & let out, the Exe Committee may then send any Missionary they like to Gowhatty. As to renting the Mission Bungalows, there is no fear at all. The site of the Mission Compound is so nice & healthy that every European Gentleman prefers the Mission Bungalow

Bungalows to several other Bungalows in the Lanew, to occupy.

As regards the management of the Mission business here until a Missionary comes up, I would humbly volunteer myself to do it. I do confess it indeed that I am weak & unfit to take the responsibility - but the Kind Providence will I am quite confident, give me strength to hold it on without any difficulty.

In conclusion I feel myself happy & most thankful to God, in being able to state that everything connected with the Mission, is in its usual progress. The Native Assistants, men & women, are all doing their duties as faithfully as ever. All the native disciples in & abroad are keeping well & remaining steadfast: Our Sabbath & weekly

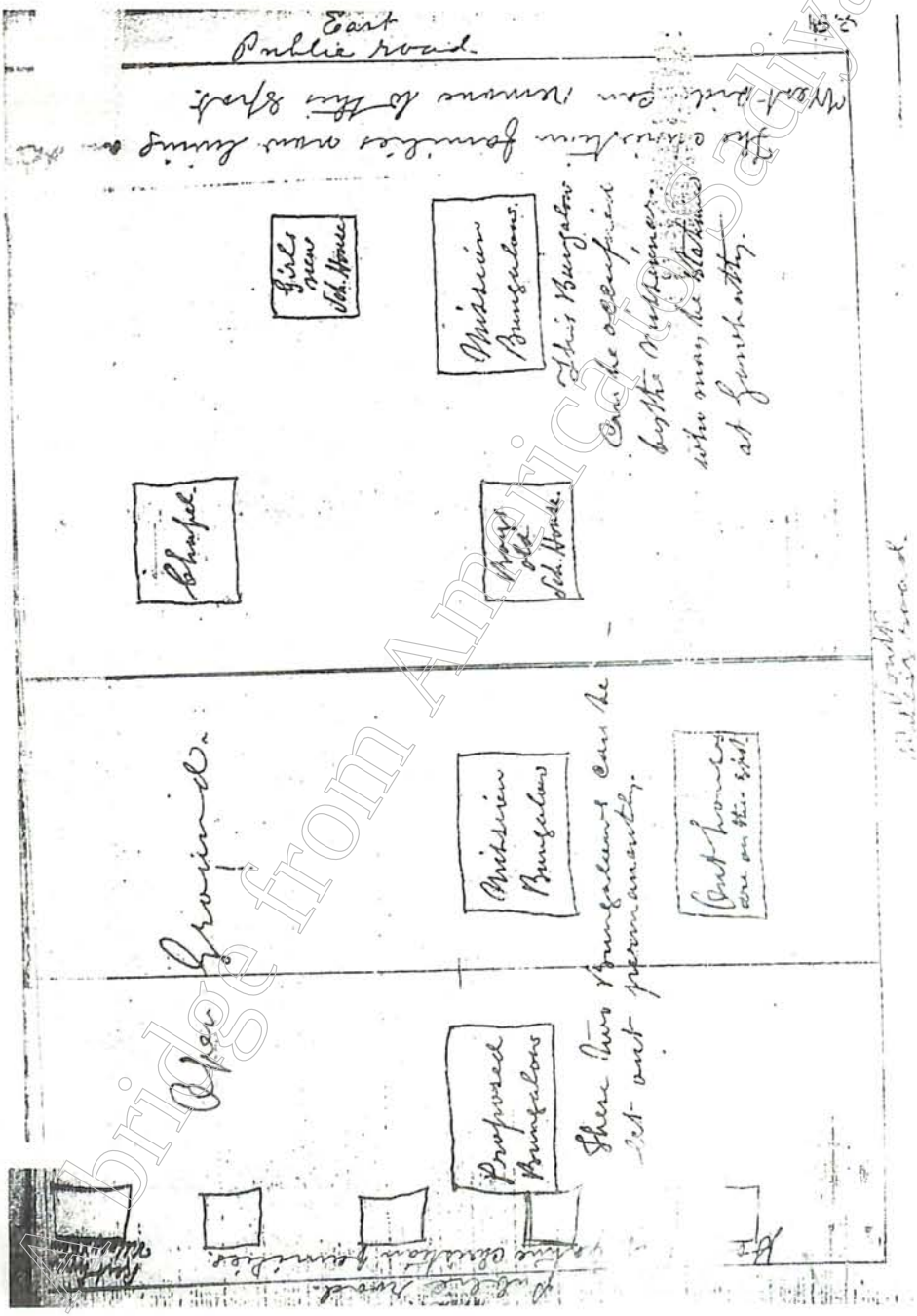
-32-

Meetings for worship are kept up regularly. some of the European Officers also occasionally visit our Sunday meeting. Our girls School on the Mission compound & the Zenana work in the Station are in their general progress.

Please pray for us to God that he would Kindly bestow his blessings upon us abundantly that we may be enabled to do our duties faithfully & to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hoping this will reach you in the enjoyment of perfect health. With respects & regards.

I remain,
Yours Sincerely,
Rev. J. N. Murdock, D.D. } Rand
Cor. Secy.

P.S. A rough sketch of the Mission Compound & Premises, showing how they are situated, is sent herewith. Rand



Gauhatty. July. 10. 1880.

My dear Sir,

I wrote you re my last about the misunderstanding that took place between Mrs. Robinson & myself, that she wants to occupy one of the Mission Bungalows & I refused to agree with her, because I had not received any order from you to that effect. Intimations have now come to me, at my request, from Rev. Mr. Moore, & Mr. Keeler of Nowgong, that there is no difference in the performance of the Mission affairs, between you & the Women's Secy. Mrs. Bacon, who has appointed Mrs. Robinson of Gauhatty as Missionary to the Mission Station. I should like myself that Mrs.

quite ignorant about the unity between you & Mrs. Barnard, before. I have already written to Rev. Mr. Hanson of Jorhat, for necessary instructions in respect of providing Mrs. B. with a house; he will doubtless instruct me for every needful things, which will I believe stop further confusion. In the meanwhile, not be able to ask the present occupants of the Mipsion Bungalows, to remove from them before December next; as the Bungalows have been rented to them under that understanding. I have found the gentlemen very quiet & regular in payment of their rent.

I have however, proposed to Mr. Mason, to prepare the school house about which I told you in

my last, for Mrs. Robinsons 73
occupation, till January next,
when she will be able to occupy
one of the Bungalows, at once. Or,
if she likes the Girls New School
house, which Dr. Brouson had
left half built, but I have now
put it nearly into completion,
to live in. I can prepare it within
a month's time, by employing
as many laborers as I will be
able to procure. This house has
two large & two smaller rooms
with a Verandah, & Mrs. Robinson wife
I am sure, find herself quite
comfortable to live in this
house. I will speak to Mrs. R.
about it when I see her. I will
day pay instants provide
Mrs. R. with a house on the
Mission Compound, as soon

as potable, in which she will be able to live comfortably, until the Bungalows are vacated.

In conclusion, I feel most happy to state that our native disciples are all keeping well & remaining steadfast in the Lord. The Pundits & Preachers are doing their duties faithfully & the best advantage of the spread of the Gospel. I have received encouraging & hopeful reports from some of the native Assistants in the villages. I am very anxious to pay a short visit, at least to some of the villages, but am sorry that on account of some business, which requires my presence

3.

presence, I am detained for about a month or little longer.

Mrs. Rahmien, took over charge from me of the Zenana Deh artment, on the 2nd inst. I hope she will prove herself useful to many heathen women, who are shut up day & night in their respective houses, without coming out-doors, the want of the one thing needful of all."

Trusting this will find you well. With respects & best regards.

I remain,

Yours Sincerely,

Kandura.

To

Rev. J. N. Murdock D.D.

Mis. Secy.

Apendix No 2. : Brief report of the 100th Anniversary Convocation in honur of Miles Bronson, for 43 years a missionary to Assam, held at Andover Newton Theological School, November 4, 1983.

"What follows is a brief report of the 100th Anniversary Convocation in honor of Miles Bronson, for 43 years a missionary to Assam, held at Andover Newton Theological School, November 4, 1983.

Faith, Language, and Culture

DILIP K. DATTA

The convocation was inaugurated by President George Peck. He welcomed the guests, first in fluent Assamese and then in English. President Peck introduced the families of the great-grand children of Miles Bronson, Albert & Marie Billard, Frederick & Veronica Billard, and Esther Mckenna, who were present at the convocation. Other distinguished guests introduced by President Peck included Dr. Frederick Downs of United Methodical College, Bangalore (India) and of Theological Seminary, Lombard, Illinois, and Dr. William Brackney, the Executive Director of American Baptist Historical Society, Rochester, New York.

A service of remembrance was led by Dr. Downs. Then scripture lessons were read first in English by Miss Barbara Radtke and then in Assamese by Prof. Datta. Ms. Melissa Heim led the concluding prayers.

In his address President Peck remarked, "If we look with an open mind at the missionary movement of the past one hundred and seventy-five years, especially at its nineteenth-century segment, I believe we shall marvel that in the providence of God, so striking a train of scholar-saints was raised up to give it leadership and in that company of scholar-saints the Bronsons are to be numbered." Recalling Bronson and other scholar-saints like Judson and Nathan Brown, President Peck said, "These were people noted not only for their dedication and conviction but also for their capacity for cultural identification, their capacity for human empathy and for their ability to get inside of a community and a civilization and to become one with it. So that today in retrospect, they are famous not only as evangelists and church builders, themselves noble tasks, but also as persons who

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contributed profoundly to the language and culture of the folk among whom they labored."

Nine papers were presented at the convocation in two sessions separated by a coffee break. The first session was presided over by Dr. Brackney and the second session was chaired by Dr. Downs.

ABSTRACTS

1. Kripanath Borah, 34 Overlook Trail, Morris Plains, NJ 07950, *The Assamese language, its origin, its near extinction and Bronson's contributions to its renaissance.*

The origin of the Assamese language can be traced back to the Indo-European family of languages. In the early part of the nineteenth century, after the British conquered Assam, the Assamese language nearly went into oblivion. But due to the untiring efforts of the American missionaries led by Bronson, the Assamese language received its new life, shape, and form.

2. Frederick S. Downs, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, IL 60148 and United Theological College, Bangalore, India, *Missionaries and the language controversy in Assam.*

The decision to introduce Bengali as the language of Assam was taken by the English Government in 1838. The missionaries first accepted this decision without any opposition. During the 1840s Brown had become a recognised scholar and authority on the Assamese language. In the preface to his *Notes on Assamese Grammar*, Brown had advanced arguments on behalf of the Assamese that became the basis of the later missionary campaign to have that language reintroduced into the courts and the schools of Assam. The immediate cause of the missionaries' decision to enter into public debate with the Government was the deputation to Assam of A.J. Moffat Mills in 1853. Judge Mills expressed his decided opinion in favor of Assamese. But the initial optimism about a favorable response from the Government was tempered by the news that Robinson, in Calcutta at the time the Mills report was being studied, was undermining Mills' position by arguing on behalf of the continuance of Bengali. It was at this point that the missionaries decided that they must go on the offensive by placing their views directly before the Government. Initiative in this matter was taken by Bronson, who was more of an activist than Brown.

The Government decided to continue using the Bengali language in Assam (1854). Due to a controversy with the Home Board, Nathan Brown left Assam in 1856. This was followed by the disruption of the Rebellion of 1857-58. The Assamese leader Dhekial Phukan died in 1859. Despite these many problems Bronson never lost sight of the Assamese language issue. Soon after he returned to Assam in 1861, Bronson was in the leader-

ship of the efforts on behalf of Assamese once again. His *Dictionary in Assamese and English*, published in 1867, was, in part, designed to establish the claims of Assamese as a distinct language. Finally, in 1873, the Government gave in and ordered that Assamese should be reinstated as the language of the courts and schools in Assam.

3. Jitendra G. Borpujari, International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C., *Bronson as a messenger of Christ in Brahmanic Assam.*

The Reverend Miles Bronson's mission to distant Assam was to convert the native Animists, Hindus, and Muslims to Christianity. But the vast majority of the Assamese who commemorate his death centenary today are non-Christians and what they are gathered today to discuss is not Christianity. Is an unredeemed Hindu's commemoration of Bronson as a secular hero an acknowledgement also of his failure as a messenger of Christ? The question cannot be answered adequately through a crude head count of Bronson's converts. Instead, one must judge his achievements as a part of cumulative impact that Christian evangelism has had on the consciousness of Brahmanic India. The focus is on Brahmanic India as that is primarily the India of the author's experience.

To a self-tutored outsider, missionaries such as Bronson would seem to have contributed handsomely toward a radical Christianization of the ancient Brahmanic concept of what constitutes an individual in society. A reconstruction of how an individual was defined in the basic scriptures of Brahmanism is attempted. The transition from the Brahmanic heritage to the Christian ideal was facilitated by Bronson's low key approach in the Brahmanic milieu where crude evangelism appears grossly irrational. The concern he showed for Brahmanic Assam's outcasts was in itself a repudiation of Brahmanism's studied indifference toward worldly miseries. The proper context for judging Bronson's achievements is his underlying stress on the spirit of service to common humanity through the examples of a Christian life. Bronson took up the causes of the meek as altars at which to expand his Christian idealism. In the process, he carved out for himself a permanent place in the collective memory of a whole people, a large proportion of which has embraced the basic Christian values without formally abandoning the heritage of Brahmanic India.

4. Barbara Anne Radtke, Franklin Trask Library, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Center, MA 02159, *Miles Bronson and the Nowgong Mission School.*

Throughout Miles and Ruth Bronson's years of service to the American Mission in Assam, they exhibited a strong commitment to education as an integral dimension of their ministry. Although the Bronsons were involved in a number of schools in which they assisted or supervised, the author's interest is in the first sixteen years of their tenure in Nowgong. This is a

report of research in progress. The topic is part of a larger project in which the author is investigating Miles Bronson's theological approach to the mission of the Church. The author offers glimpses of three different types of educational institutions: the mission day-school, the outschools established in villages and the Nowgong Orphan Institution.

About one village outschool Bronson wrote in his journal, "The school has given me an influence in that vicinity I could not have hoped to acquire in any other way." In another place Bronson links teaching and preaching as part of the missionary vision when he says, "I beg of you by all that is dear in the missionary cause, give me the means of connecting preaching and teaching as I go from place to place."

In 1843, Bronson started the Orphan Institution and laid out his plans, "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 a large boarding school where they may be constantly kept under the influence of Christianity for ten to twelve years." The Orphan Institution steadily prospered and it enjoyed two major religious revivals. Around the time between 1846 and 1851, we have vivid account of the Orphan Institution. In 1851, the Nowgong Orphan Institution was endorsed and mechanized as a common interest of the Assam Mission. At the close of 1851 spirits were high and prospects were great for a flourishing mission. But in 1852, the American Baptist Missionary Union sent a delegation to the Asiatic Mission. After the visit of the delegation, major changes took place. The focus of the remaining missionaries attention was to be preaching to adults as the primary and soul-evangelising tool. This changed the course of the Orphan Institution. It was to be converted to a school whose main emphasis was the training of native teachers. In addition, many restrictions were imposed on the institution. Miles Bronson doubted that the school could exist under such conditions and by July 1856, the Orphan Institution was closed.

5. Indu Suryanarayan, 154 Biscuit City Road, Kingston, R.I. 02881, *Sophie Bronson Titterington.*

Even though Miles Bronson belonged historically to the times when conversion of natives into Christians was the order of the day, spiritually he is a rare example of the modern missionary who saves lives first and then the souls of the so called "heathens." Bronson had tremendous support from his first wife and the five daughters from her in his vocation. Though all of his daughters inherited his gift to sympathize with and understand the Assamese people, it was left to his youngest daughter (from his first wife) Sophie to give expression to the experiences of a Baptist missionary in Assam. In her numerous books, Sophie displays a vision that is the essence

of life itself. In her comprehensive view of life, she goes beyond baptism and religion and places her finger on the pulse of what constitutes an Assamese. The two dominant aspects of Sophie Bronson Titterington's writing, one as a biographer and the other as a historian are the focus of this paper. The author also gives a bibliography of 66 books and monographs written by Sophie Bronson Titterington.

6. Melissa L. Heim, 91 Herrick Road, Newton Center, MA 02159, *Ruth Bronson in Assam: Mission work and family responsibilities.*

Ruth's life is representative of how missionary wives combined religious work with traditional childcare responsibilities. Like many mission wives of this period and subsequent ones, Ruth continued to work in her husband's absence. She did all the teaching at the school she organized in Jaipur. She also served as secretary for her husband. She copied Bronson's journal so it could be sent to the United States for publication. Ruth felt that her help was important because it allowed her "dear husband to save more of his precious time for missionary labour." Ruth combined her mission work with childcare, taking infant Mary with her and her husband on evangelization tours. Goats were taken along to supply milk.

The Bronson family came to the States in 1849 and Ruth began looking for foster homes for their daughters. A year later, the Bronsons returned to Assam leaving behind four of their children in America. This frequent practice among nineteenth-century missionaries of parting with their children is puzzling. A consideration of Ruth Bronson's experience will highlight some of the factors in this difficult decision. Ruth Bronson, like many mission wives of the period, experienced conflict between her work and childcare. Her life in Assam involved an adjustment between the conflicting demands of mission activity and motherhood. Religious faith strongly affected how Ruth worked out this adjustment.

7. Marie Billard, 91 Burroughs Hill Road, Amston, Conn 06231, *Discovering very special great-grandparents, Ruth and Miles Bronson: A brief family look into the past.*

A rich family history found in the Bronson papers is of special interest to the members of the Billard family. We are especially interested in what the letters reveal about the family life, the personalities, the cares and concerns of these ancestors of so long ago. It is fortunate to discover that these people of 125 years ago were able to express their thoughts and feelings so openly and naturally in their letters to one another. It is a rich heritage for us all. What wife among us would not feel sustained and cherished upon receiving an endearing letter, expressing not only love, but appreciation for years of effort and sacrifice as was given to Ruth Bronson by Miles on her birthday in 1860 on board a ship returning to India? "This is your 47th Birthday and during almost 25 years have we been travelling life's pathway

together. How manifold have been our mercies and looking back upon the past we can both joyously exclaim 'Goodness and Mercy hath followed us.' You have been a faithful companion to me; a devoted loving mother to our dear children and besides that, have ever been willing to make sacrifices, costly ones for Christ, and the heathen. Let this cheer you today, as you go forward again at duty's call. He who hath been with you will still be with you, and even amid the infirmities of years, will strengthen and uphold you. . . ."

Miles and Ruth Bronson had seven daughters, one of whom was named Elizia. Elizia married Rev. Albert Barnes Robinson, and their daughter was the mother of the Billard brothers who donated the Bronson papers to Andover Newton Theological School.

There are many interesting bits of information in the Bronson letters that reveal glimpses into the life and times of these ancestors. There are many sad events recorded among the letters and papers. The author reveals some of these facts with excerpts from the Bronson papers.

8. Dilip K. Datta, Department of Mathematics, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I. 02881, *Assamese letters in Bronson's Trunk.*

Among the papers found in Bronson's trunk are six letters written in the Assamese language. In addition to complete translations of the Assamese texts of the letters this paper contains information about the individuals who wrote the letters, a critical study of the language and style of the letters, and an assessment of Bronson's personality as revealed by these letters. The letters show how Bronson's love had touched every heart that came in contact with him. Bronson was so strong in his faith in God and so dedicated in his mission to spread the messages of Christ's love that everybody who came to know him was filled with a wonderful experience of love. The Assamese men and women who wrote these letters were virtually at a loss to find words to describe the love and gratitude they felt for Bronson. The sentiments they tried to express through those letters does simply overwhelm one with the joy of realising that in the final analysis 'love of God' is the key to all human relationships.*

**Note.* Copies of any of the above papers may be obtained from the Secretary, Assam Foundation of North America, P.O. Box 17057, Louisville, KY 40217.

Apendix No 3. :

SOPHIE BRONSON TITTERINGTON

Indu Suryanarayana

Sharing is a human instinct, however degenerated the concept might seem to be in the world today. Sharing a good thing not only speaks for the belief of one individual that he has something better than his fellow being but that he himself would not be able to enjoy the awareness or knowledge that he possesses unless he shares it with those who are without it. Sharing, at all levels, demands and establishes a communication; sometimes the barriers that have to be surmounted in order to realize first, the communication and then, the sharing can be quite formidable. The Christian Baptist missionaries of the west set out to share their religion and faith with non-Christian people who, they believed, were less fortunate than themselves. First their conviction that they had something better to offer these people, whom they chose to call heathens, and secondly their willingness to sacrifice all they had in order to reach out to these people who needed to be shown the light of Christianity, led the missionaries to far off countries like India, China, Burma and many others in the far east. The missionaries succeeded in converting millions of these people to Christianity on account of their faith and dedication. From

the missionary point of view, the Christian is the only kind of person who shall receive salvation, go to heaven. All other religions are figments of Heathenism and barbarism and the followers of these are doomed with their practices which cannot even be termed religion. Thus converting these people is also saving these people.

Democracy in the modern times has defined and redefined terms like freedom of religious beliefs, liberty of worship and so on. Caught in such whirlpools, the missionary work of dedicated people has undergone a variety of changes, too. The missionaries continue to help as best as they can; they are found wherever there is trouble for innocent people, famine, tornado, wars or other havocs caused by nature or by man. The missionary zeal to better the lot of fellow human beings is as alive as ever. The roles and the situations might change but the purpose and goal remain the same.

Even though Miles Bronson belonged historically to the times when conversion of natives into Christians was the order of the day, spiritually he is a rare example of the modern missionary who saves lives first and then the souls of the so called "heathens". Venturing forth to a country like India, which was at the time indeed a dark continent to the western man, in the last century Miles led a life amidst Indians that might make sense even today. It was because Bronson identified himself with the people, learnt their language, helped them become better people rather than better Christians. In a case like this one might even ask the question who converted whom here ? The Assamese loved Bronson as a friend, philosopher and guide. He loved the people in return and felt his life meaningless away from them. Such a conviction was not only held by Bronson but

by his wife and daughters as well. This kind of sharing is the best there is , when people become equal in the eyes of God. IT might even be appropriate to say, they see God in one another. Rather than standing at a height to preach to the people below, Bronson mingled with them and shared their joys and sorrows, not as a preacher but a simple human being who cared for others more than he cared for himself.

Bronson had tremendous support from his first wife and the five daughters from her in his vocation. Though all of his daughters inherited his gift to sympathize with and understand the Assamese people, it was left to his youngest daughter (from his first wife) Sophie to give expression to the experiences of a Baptist missionary in Assam. In her numerous books, Sophie displays a vision that is the essence of life itself. In her comprehensive view of life, she goes beyond Baptism and religion and places her finger on the pulse of what constitutes an Assamese.

It is not possible to cover all aspects of Sophie Bronson Titterington as a writer. The two dominant aspects of her writing, one as a biographer and the other as a historian will be kdthe focus of this paper. Her sense of history is as sweeping as it is accurate and lively, her sense of missionary women, their roles and their emotions, is both insightful and objective. Thus Sophie Bronson brings to history a humaneness and to biography a detachment. These two representative facets of the objective and subjective talents are complementary to one another. This balance is maintained effortlessly, even, one might say, instintively. The personality of the writer is flawlessly refelected in her works, even as deep, still waters put forth the best reflectu:ons.

A Century of Baptist Foreign Missions, though called an outline sketch, is a veracious documentation of the Baptist Missionary Movement in the 18th and the 19th centuries. Apart from the brief introduction, the book is divided into four sections, Burma, Karen, Assam and Shans. The introduction itself deals with the Mission as it sprouted in England and branched out in America. In 1803, the Baptist Missionary Society of Massachussetts was formed. The most interesting part of the survey is perhaps the chapter on Assam; I will skip the first chapters wherein the work in Burma is analysed and assessed and take up the chapter on Assam.

The Assam Mission was established in 1836. In october of the same year, Rev. Jacob Thomas and Rev. Miles Bronson, with their wives, were sent to this new region. Sophie describes the event as follows:"On the journey up the Brahmaputra river, Bronson was taken ill with fever. In a small boat with a native boatmen, Mr. Thomas hastened on to obtain medicine and help. When within sight of Sadiya, a tree fell across the boat, crushing it, and drowning Mr. Thomas. It was a sad blow to the mission, and to the wife and friends left behind."

The work had to proceed, however. Mr. Bronson faced Singphos and the Nagas who were an important tribe of the region. He later moved to Nowgong where there were many more tribes including Assamese. Mrs. Bronson opened a large Mission School here. The missionary work done here by Bronson was to go on for forty-three years. After his first wife died in the U.S., Bronson came back with his daughter Maria to continue the work in Assam. Maria fell a victim to cholera; and Bronson who was alone in his work married again to continue his missionary work among the Assamese.

What stands out in this book of history besides the facts themselves, is Sophie's unquenchable thirst for detail; she gathers information and transforms them into lucid, interesting writing. Whether it is history of the Baptist mission or the biography of an individual involved in such a mission, Sophie reveals a human involvment and also an artistic detachment. Logic and universality are the constant guidelines to her writing. For instance, describing of the parallel presence of the East India Company and the missionaries in India, she says:"The East India Company was a trading Organization which ruled India. It was unfavorable to missionary labor, lest it might interfere with its money-making schemes. It refused to carry missionaries upon its ships." In spite of these discouraging blocks, the missionaries made progress in their work. As Sophie writes, "With the beginning of 1800, (Serampore) became the headquarters of the English Baptist Mission, with a printing press, and a reinforcement of missionaries from England."

Judging both by her style and her profuse references to the journal kept by Maria, it is easy to see why Sophie wrote about her elder sister Maria; she was drawn to her as a sister and a writer. This short biography of a dedicated young woman who literally gave her life to the Assamese people is as interesting as it is touching. The softer side of Sophie, her keen awareness of natural beauty and the love for a sister are evident in every line of this biography. Maria herself was a gifted writer. Unlike Sophie, she never married and died at a young age. She regularly kept journals which are often quoted in this book by Sophie. The very opening paragraph in the book sets the emotional mood and the challenges that Maria faced in her brief lifetime:

> "The Assam Valley might in all justice be called the Paradise of India. The plains of Bengal are flat and arid, while this beautiful valley through which flows the Brahmaputra river, is clothed with perpetual verdure."

Since the book is about Maria, we are introduced to Maria when she was an eight year old girl accompanying her parents and sisters to India. The relationship between a mother and daughter are worked out in a noble and emotional pitch by Sophie. She describes with many examples the mutual love and understanding that existed between Maria and her mother. Maria, though living away from her parents, grew up to be a conscientious and dedicated young woman. She was a teacher and served the mission in this capacity.

After the death of her mother, which is the most moving part of the book besides Maria's own death, Sophie turns her attention to Maria completely and sees her in her mother's image. Maria died of an epidemic and her sudden death is touchingly described as follows:

> "Owing to the extreme heat, and the nature of the disease, it was imperative that the burial take place as soon as possible. Besides, the steamer could not long delay; so in the night hours a coffin was hastily constructed, and in the early morning the last remains of Maria Bronson were taken on shore, the officers and passengers following in the procession to the foot of the hill upon which Gowalpara is situated. Then they turned back, leaving the stricken father, accompanied only by the station physician, to go on his desolate way with his dead. Six Garo hillmen served as bearers. A grave had been dug

in the beautiful cemetery overlooking the Brahmaputra. When the news of her death was received it fell as a terrible blow upon Assam. Especially at Nowgong they were looking forward to her return in a very few days, and their great joy was by this providence turned into bitter mourning."

The youthful zest of Maria, her pure, single-minded dedication and her essentially gentle nature are all brought out beautifully in this book by Sophie. She uses Maria's journals judiciously, never overburdening her own work with too many references. There is respect and love, understanding and sympathy here. The book concludes:

Sleep, sweet sister! After life's fitful fever sleep well ! A sainted mother watched for thy coming. Now, in the fields of Paradise, watch for our coming feet! Till then we say, "Hail! and Farewell!"

With these two books as examples, a reader can deduce that all the other books by Sophie Bronson Titterington should be equally fascinating and enduring; for, certainly, Sophie brings to the role and duties of the missionary, the broader sense of life in general. Whether a Christian or not, whether a Baptist or not, whether a missionary or not, even whether an Assamese or not, any reader can appreciate and enjoy the books of Sophie Bronson Titterington.

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Apendix No 4. : Bronson as a messenger of Christ in Brahmanic Assam

DRAFT: OCTOBER 20, 1983

BRONSON AS A MESSENGER OF CHRIST IN BRAHMANIC ASSAM 1/

Jitendra G. Borpujari
Washington, D.C.

I. An Overview

The Reverend Miles Bronson's mission in distant Assam was to convert the native Animists, Hindus and Muslims to Christianity. But the vast majority of the Assamese who commemorate his death centenary today are non-Christians and what they are gathered here today to discuss is not Christianity. I am of course grateful for Bronson's many personal sacrifices that contributed so much to preserve the Assamese cultural heritage in another perilous hour facing the Assamese. But is an unredeemed Hindu's commemoration of Bronson as a secular hero an acknowledgement also of his failure as a messenger of Christ?

The question cannot be answered adequately through a crude head count of Bronson's converts. Instead, one must judge his achievements as a part of the cumulative impact that Christian evangelism has had on the consciousness of Brahmanic India. I have neither the training nor the scholarship required to do justice to such a broad issue. But I do have a point of view derived from a life astride Brahmanism and Christianity. I focus on Brahmanic India as that is primarily the India of my experience. Also, with the conspicuous exception of militant Islam, there is hardly an Indian religion or faith which is not rooted fundamentally in Brahmanism. As such, a measure of Christianity's impact on the Brahmanic consciousness is essential for a balanced judgment on Bronson's effectiveness as a messenger of Christ.

To a self-tutored outsider, missionaries such as Bronson would seem to have contributed handsomely toward a radical Christianization of the ancient Brahmanic concept of what constitutes an individual in society. As proof, I shall concentrate on a reconstruction of how an individual was defined in the basic scriptures of Brahmanism. My aim is to present the idea synthetically rather than engage in the less interesting and perhaps impossible task of tracing its development chronologically. That definition will implicitly outline the contrasting Christian concept which is so pervasive today. I shall note how the transition from the Brahmanic heritage to the Christian ideal was facilitated by Bronson's low key approach in the Brahmanic milieu where crude evangelism appears

1/ Prepared for the convocation on "Faith, Language, and Culture" to be held on Friday, November 4, 1983 at the Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Center, Massachusetts as part of the celebrations marking the Death Centenary of Reverend Miles Bronson (1812-83) under the auspice of the Assam Foundation of North America.

grossly irrational. The concern he showed for Brahmanic Assam's outcasts was in itself a repudiation of Brahmanism's studied indifference toward worldly miseries. In conclusion, I note the irony today of nominal Christians flocking to various oriental gurus for an escape into the very world view from which yesterday's Brahmanic faithfuls had gladly escaped by imitating the examples set by Christians such as Bronson.

II. The individual's place in Brahmanic India

For the Brahmanic purist, an individual is at once the Supreme Reality and the ultimate nonentity. But whereas the former is merely an abstraction that recognizes the presence of God in every being, the latter is an experience that is concretely realized every moment through the ritual confinement of everybody into the role found at the moment of birth. As such, Brahmanic orthodoxy could justify all wordly iniquities without ever having to deny God's universal presence.

Brahmanic mythology traces the origin of all living beings to God's explicit will. For instance, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (circa 400 B.C.) stated:

> "In the beginning this was Self alone in the shape of a person. . . . But he felt no delight . . . . He then made this his Self to fall in two and thence arose husband and wife. He embraced her, and men were born. She thought, 'How can he embrace me, after having produced me from himself? I shall hide myself.' She became a cow. The other became a bull and embraced her and hence cows were born . . . ." (Macnicol, p. 49).

The treatise carries on thus to explain how the universe, including the key Brahmanic doctrines of transmigration of souls, the caste system and nirvana, came into being and, in the process, anticipates virtually the entire future course of Brahmanic Indian thought (Chattopadhyaya). There are numerous verses in the scriptures such as the Gita (9:32) where the ultimate equality of all individuals as divine entities is recognized. At the same time, the quintessential Brahmanic ideal of life's end is summed up typically in the chant "He is I; I am He" 1/ which celebrates an individual's communion with God. Or witness the incomparable ecstasy of the disciple who chants:

> "The Divine Presence is offered a sacrificial offering that is the Divine Presence, through a fire that is the Divine Presence, toward a destination that is the Divine Presence, to fulfill purposes that are of the Divine Presence, by the one making the offering who is Himself the Divine Presence." 2/

1/ Sah ahang, ahang sah.

2/ Brahmarpanang Brahmahabih Brahmagnoi Brahmanahutam
Brahmoiva tena gantavyam Brahmakarmasamadhina.

APENDIX

Between the idealized origin and end, however, is the individual's terrestrial life where the doctrine of karma fully justifies the status quo. A man is in theory born into Brahmanic India not as a unique human who explores life's potentials under a sentence of death to be carried out any time anywhere. Instead, he enters the world as an incumbent of a hierarchic role that awaited his birth and will survive his death. Man is not to blame or praise even God for the role into which he is born because it is he, and not God, who chose the conditions of his current life through what he did, or failed to do, in a previous life. A single life is in itself devoid of any ultimate sense; even the chain of various single lives makes sense only in contrast with the higher condition of liberation outside itself.

Since birth brings each man a role he earned in a previous life, it is in his own interest to adjust perfectly to the current conditions of his life vis-a-vis society, his own body and the rest of nature so as to earn credits toward a life of higher order in the hereafter. In fact, if he accepts the status quo well enough, he makes progress towards release into nirvana from this mindless wandering through pre-set hierarchic roles. Naturally, this outlook left no scope for a rebellion of man against either the limitations of nature or the oppression by one's fellowmen that so bedevils an individual's life on earth. This was an ideology that impelled man to be on his knees willingly before the vagaries of nature as well as the tyranny of the strong over the weak. Thus, the fountains of progress in technology and in social relations dried up at their sources. Instead, Brahmanic India became a land of voluntary servitude of the masses to a microscopic elite of priests and royalty which created virtually the entire high culture of a whole sub-continent.

That individuals are divinely ordained both at the beginning and the end, and yet are justly unequal in the terrestrial interim, is an idea that formed the fundamental basis of Brahmanic India's social order which was codified by Manu (Jones; Cox). In practice, the idea amounted to a dogmatic refusal to accept the notion that the human condition is essentially the same irrespective of time and place. There was effectively a ban on the development of a purely rational attitude. Instead, the scriptures provided a mythological explanation of the key phenomena and exhorted men toward an unquestioning acceptance of the caste system and its attendant view of human liberation. As Cox (Ibid., pp. 23-24) puts it:

> "Not by accident are men here unequal, not by luck or by variations in personal effort, nor because of differences in race or defeat in war, but because of the Divine Plan in the creation of the social order [so that] caste survival is a preoccupation of all castes."

The situation was described poignantly by Mahatma Gandhi who noted:

> "If I see an [untouchable] and ask him to sit by my side and offer him something to eat, he will shake with fear." (Erickson, p. 373

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The literature of Brahmanic India can be quoted extensively to illustrate Brahmanism's total and irreconcilable opposition to the notion of the individual as a unique spark of life fashioned in the image of God. For instance, the Gita (1:37-43), which is generally regarded as the quintessential outpouring of Brahmanic idealism, was triggered by Prince Arjuna's worry that his participation in a fratricidal war would be sinful as it might create a situation that would enable lower caste men to consort with higher caste women, thus causing a breakdown of the caste system. Later in that magnificent discourse (9:32-33), God Himself is credited with referring to the world's lowly, including all traders, serfs and women, as the "papayonayah" or "those born of sinning wombs." So deep seated was this tradition that even a leprous and immoral Brahmin felt impelled to maintain Manu's prescribed distance from an untouchable no matter how healthy and virtuous the latter might be (Cox, Ibid., pp. 20-32). Even death does not reduce the hierarchy of uncleanliness; the Brahmanical purification penance is harsher for the lower castes (Vidyaratna).

The ancient Indian scriptures would force one to conclude that the Brahmanic God did indeed see all mankind, except male priests and their royal patrons, as born of sinful wombs. Modern apologists of ancient Brahmanism have confounded the issues through self-serving interpretations such as the attempt by Chatterjee (p. 156) to relate Brahmanism's hierarchic view of society to differences in acquired skills rather than in birth. Indeed, he goes so far as to compare the message of the Gita (9:32-33) with the promise of Jesus that the publicans and harlots will be favored in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 21: 31-2). To be sure, the Gita (5:18-19) speaks of the equality of all beings due to the Divine Presence in each. But, as the classical commentator Shri Madhusudan Saraswati pointed out:

> "Merely by reflecting the sun's rays, the purity of the water of the Ganga does not purify and the profanity of liquor does not pollute the sun. Similarly, the cleanness or uncleanness of the residence does not have effect on the Divine Presence." (Jagadeeswarananda, p. 134)

Brahmanic India's effective condemnation of India's vast majority into a horde of ultimate nonentities in practice is easy to explain. The entire civilization of ancient India was perched precariously on an impoverished economy which produced very little in excess of what was needed for the population's bare survival. In such circumstance, cultural pursuits through the regular provision of a leisured class of royalty and priests was possible only through a subjugation of the masses and a limitation of mass consumption to the barest subsistence levels. Overwhelmed by nature's fickle sway over man's sustenance and totally unaware --like all other ancients--of man's future triumphs over nature, the Brahmanic idealists created an ideological literature that wholly justified the status quo. As a result,there was no need under Brahmanic idealism to either justify the luxuries of the rich few or alleviate the sufferings of the poor who were so many. Both plenty and poverty were in that vision but aspects of the same divine order.

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III. The transformation of Brahmanic India

Modern Brahmanic India--which is in general abysmally illiterate in Sanskrit--may repeat parrot-like the injunctions of the ancient Sanskrit scriptures, but the pervasive Indian view today of what constitutes an individual is essentially indistinguishable from that prevailing in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions. The transformation has been brought about by forces from both within and without. Specifically, the first onslaught of contrary ideas came from inside the Brahmanic tradition itself followed much later by the searing swords of Islam and finally by Christianity.

Common sense and humanist sentiments kept challenging the profound misanthropy of orthodox Brahmanism. The major rebellions such as Buddhism and Jainism were, however, contained and eventually eliminated as serious threats through assimilation into the Brahmanic tradition. In fact, usually an act of rebellion against Brahmanism simply added another caste or sect into the ever changing social divisions of Brahmanic India. Less well known is the intellectual opposition that emerged from within the Brahmanic tradition itself. The earliest instances can be found, for instance, in the Chandogya Upanishad (Macnicol, Ibid., pp. 117-94) which presented a nascent hylozoism and found virtue in an earthly gratification of the self. The simple idea that the world is what a man makes of it evidently kept nagging the Brahmanic mind. For instance, the Gita (3:5,8) recognizes activity to be the ontological reality of being. But then the humanist potential of that viewpoint was lost subsequently as the Gita (3:42) sliced the human whole into layers of increasing subtlety in which the gross somatic body gets the bottom rank below the senses, the mind, the intelligence, and the Divine Presence, in that ascendent order. As Chatterjee (p. 75) points out: "This doctrine does not enthrone experience as the supreme authority; it denies the validity of experience altogether." More dramatically, cults such as Tantrism arose to place man at the center of their cosmogony; the Tantrics admit the reality of the somatic world, downgrade caste-sex distinctions, reject ascetic renunciation and extol human fulfillment in history (Rawson). But, idealists themselves, these cults primarily provided ritual escapes for those denied access to the conventional Brahmanic rites because of caste or sex.

A more effective and serious threat to Brahmanic idealism came from the diehard materialists such as the Lokayatas (circa 300 B.C.) who dismissed the mythology of the Vedas and declared:

> "Just as rice . . . and the other ingredients of producing wine did not by themselves possess an intoxicating quality to emerge, so did the material elements constituting the material human body, though themselves without consciousness, caused consciousness to emerge when combined in a particular way to form the human body." (Chattopadhyaya, Ibid., p. 186).

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Ajita Kesakambali (Ibid., p. 194), possibly a contemporary of the Buddha, added: "Fools and wisemen alike, on the dissolution of the body are cut off, annihilated, and after death they are not." The Lokayatas were emphatic in their total rejection of Brahmanic India:

> "Hence, it is only as a means of livelihood that Brahmins have established all these ceremonies for the dead, -- There is no other fruit anywhere. The three authors of the Vedas were buffoons, knaves and thieves." (Ibid., p. 14)

Needless to say, the rebellion of the Lokayatas was mostly ineffective and their idealistic opponents simply condemned the followers of such heresies to suffer transmigration through increasingly demonic wombs as well as persecution here and now (Raju; the Gita 16:6-20). The intellectuals, then as now, served mostly the status quo in observance of the admonition in the Kama Sutra:

> "The wise man should never mix with a group despised,
> A group that scorns the rules of society."
> (Vatsayana, p. 114)

and

> "In view of present benefits,
> In view of benefits to come,
> A courtesan should avoid men
> Who earn their bread by sweat
> Or who have grown hard and bitter
> Asking favors from the King."
> (Ibid., p. 114)

The stupor into which India fell under the stranglehold of Brahmanic idealism thus remained largely undisturbed until the rude awakening about a thousand years ago under the conquering sword of Islam. The Islamic impact was of course complex and far reaching. Yet, the essentials are easy to grasp as the new faith was utterly self-confident and had no intention whatsoever to be co-opted by Brahmanic India. Instead, the vanquished Indians had three simple choices. They could either reject Brahmanism and convert to Islam, or remain infidels but pay the jiziya tax for protection against disorders without an obligation for military servic or choose to die. A powerful impulse was created by the Sufis who were Muslim saints and who did much to integrate indigenous rituals and pattern of thought into their own teachings thus providing a bridge over which many Hindus, especially of the lower castes, could walk into Islam without self-betrayal. The evidence shows that while millions upon millions converted to Islam and many others preferred death, the vast majority of Indians sought accommodation. Eventually, the two religious identities learned to live in more or less peaceful co-existence and gave rise to the current pattern of life in the subcontinent which is above all a complex mosaic of Brahmanic and Islamic traditions.

Christianity, by contrast, has of course a far older native heritage going back to the legendary martyrdom of St. Thomas in South India. Yet, for over a millenium and a half, Christianity remained by and large a curiosity on the periphery of a Brahmanic society. With the coming of the Europeans, however, it acquired a respectability that is always accorded to the ways of the powerful. At the same time, given the separation of church and state in most of the Christian world, Christian evangelism seldom received the militant political patronage that Islam could once claim. Instead, it remained largely an enterprise nourished by the churches and private enthusiasts. While coerced conversions were rare, the country was opened for evangelical work under state protection.

What followed was above all the magnificent spectacle of foreign missionaries such as Bronson adopting the outcasts of Brahmanic India as altars for service to a benign God. As it happens, this was obviously also the most effective approach for evangelism in Brahmanic India; Brahmanism accepts the various religious approaches to God as so many rivers leading to a common ocean so that conversion from the religion of one's birth is considered to be simply irrational. What was jarring, however, to orthodox India was the spectacle of Christianity embracing the very human beings who were discarded heretofore as pollutants under Brahmanism. Since the new practices had the full protection of the law as well, assimilation of the new ideas was the only choice left for the orthodox. Indeed, orthodoxy was soon on the offensive as the Brahmanic faithfuls themselves started imitating the Christian evangelists by forming organizations such as the Ramakrishna Mission and the Aryya Samaj. The end result was a seepage into the consciousness of Brahmanic India of a new and alien concept of the individual that is indistinguishable from what Christianity has upheld from the beginning.

IV. Bronson's approach to evangelism in Assam

Indications are that Bronson's life excellently illustrated the best tradition of missionary work that championed the spiritually downtrodden with a stress on formal conversion to Christianity as only an available option. The extant Assamese letters to Bronson are mostly from the impoverished and the depressed sections of the local population (see AFNA Bulletin, Spring-Summer 1983). Also, a reading of the various issues of the church journal Orunodoi ("Dawn"), which was edited by Bronson during 1861-68, shows that even critical references to local religious practices were generally made in terms of deviations from the higher intentions of the native scriptures. For instance, the attached report on the gruesome practice of "Sati" (widow burning) is an admirably balanced statement that stresses the exceptions permitted by the scriptures to a ritual that was already illegal in any case in British India (Exhibit 1). Furthe the journal gave prominence to the tragedies of ordinary people such as the story of an opium addict (Exhibit 2). Finally, an excellent example of Bronson's own humanist work is the hymn in Assamese entitled "Oh! How He Loves" where Christ's coming is described in the locally familiar motif of incarnations, but with emphasis wholly on Christ's gifts to the wretched of the earth (Exhibit 3).

The examples can be multiplied but it should by now be apparent that the proper context for judging Bronson's literary and cultural achievements in Assam--as indeed the similar successes of his colleagues in all of Brahmanic India--is their underlying stress on the spirit of service to common humanity through the examples of a Christian life. Bronson took up the causes of the meek as altars at which to expend his Christian idealism. In the process, he carved out for himself a permanent place in the collective memory of a whole people, a large proportion of which has embraced the basic Christian values without formally abandoning the heritage of Brahmanic India.

V. An afterthought

The eulogy above of Bronson's contribution to the radical transformation of Brahmanic Assam would make one wonder even more about the curious contemporary spectacle of nominal Christians from the affluent West flocking to various gurus who have successfully peddled the very same verities of ancient Brahmanism. So far, the movement appears to have affected only fringe groups which are of little or no consequence to the power centers of Western society. In any case, it is of interest to know what explains this fascination of the idle rich for ancient India's doctrines of indifference to the world's lowly and preoccupation with egocentric salvation. Is this in effect an adoption by the self-indulgent today of an ideology that had served so well the ruling elite of ancient India?

Words such as ennui and alienation perhaps best describe the spirit that binds the easy riders. Would not these wanderers otherwise have to pursue the far more difficult and beneficial odysseys of such noble souls as St. Francis of Assisi, the Reverend Miles Bronson of Assam and Mother Teresa of Calcutta? But then, one must avoid judgments as we lesser mortals are all no doubt doomed in one way or another to a personal spirit that crawls hopelessly hither and thither like crabs in a steam-cooker with no higher assurance to sustain us than that contained in a passage from the only Latin prayer I know, my college grace:

Oculi omnium in te sperant Domine:
Tu das iis escam eorum in tempore opportuna
Aperis tu manum tuam:
Et imples omne animal benedictione tua.

The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord,
And thou givest them their food in due season.
Thou openest thy hand,
And fillest every living thing with thy blessing.

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Exhibit 1

সতি জোআব নকুচা।

Immolation of Widows.

আগেও হিন্দু লোকব অনেক অনেক তিবোতাই আপোনাক সতি জানি আপোন আপোন প্রিয়ু স্বামিব লগত চিতাত উঠি দাহ হই। কোনোও আপোন ইচাবে আক কোনোও বা গিয়াতি কুটুমব বুধিবে এই কপে মবি জাই। ইয়াব কাবন এই, ব্রাহ্মন আদি তল্প লোকব তিবোতাই স্বামি মবিলে আকৌ বিয়া হোআ দস্তুব নাই; এই হেতুকে আগলৈ দুখ বেজাব হব হেন জানি কোনোও মবনকে ভাল বুলি বিচাব কবে; কোনোও পণ্ডিতব মুখে অনেক জনমত সেই স্বামিব বিজোগ ন হৈ মবগব ভোগ কবিব, আক অনেক কুল উদ্ধাব হব হেন সুনি পৈএকব লগত প্রিয়ু হই। হিন্দু শাস্ত্রতে কোনো ঠাইত সতিব বিধান আচে, কোনো ঠাইত নিসেধ আচে। তাতে আগব কালত অনেক মানুহ সতি গৈচিলে, কিন্তু ১৮২৯ ইং সকত শ্রীযুত লর্ড উলিয়ম বেণ্টিঙ্ক গবর্নর জেনবল বাহাদুবে এই কথা বিচাব কবি সতি জোআ আত্মা ঘাতি হেন জানি, নিবাবন কবি কানন চলালে।

আক এতিয়া সুনিচোঁ, কলিকতা নগবত কেতবোব পণ্ডিত লোকে সভা পাতি বিচাব কবি হিন্দু লোকব স্বামি প্রিয়ু হলে তিবোতাই আন পুৰুষে লৈতে বিয়া হব পাই, ইয়াকে থিব কবি জানিলে। সকলো খ্রিষ্টিয়ান দেশতে তিমি লোক বিধবা হলে, আন স্বামিএ লৈতে বিয়া হৈছে।

বর্ত্তমান সকব এপ্রেল মাহব ২৬ তাবিখে সিবসাগব জিলাব দখিন কালে কাল্লু গাঁওব শ্রীলম্বোদব মৌজাদাবব ককায়েক প্রিয়ু হোআব পুৰ্বে তেওব বৈনিএকে স্বামিব লগত সতি জাবব নিমিত্তে অগ্নি পবিধাকে আদি কবি সকলো কপে প্রমান চাই সতি হই জেন জানি মৌজাদাবে শ্রীযুত বিচাব পতিব আগত সেই কথা জনালত দাবোগাব দোআবাই সতিক নিবাবন কবিলে।

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Exhibit 2

কানিয়া মানুহ এজনি মৰাৰ কথা।

Death of an Opium Eater.

শিৱসাগৰ জিলাৰ কাঠপৰা গাঁৱৰ মুমুখিৰি নামে এজনি বুঢ়ি মানুহ বৰ্ত্তমান মাহৰ ১২ তাৰিখত মৃত্যু হল। পূৰ্ব্বে কলিতাৰ জিয়ৰি, লোনাই নামে এক আহম মানুহে তাইক নিচিলে। সেই দৈপএক মৰিবৰ ৬ বছৰ ৭ বছৰ মান হল। দৈপএক কানিয়া, দৈনিএকেও কানি থাইছিল। সিইতৰ পুতেক এটা, জিএক দুজনি এতিয়াইলৈকে আছে। কোনো এদিন চোৰৰ বস্তু সেই মানুহৰ ঘৰত ওলাল; তাতে সি চোৰ দেখাৰ নোঅৱাত বস্তুৰ গৰাকিএ তাক ধৰি ফাটকত দিয়াবলৈ উপাই কৰিলে। সেই জগৰৰ হাত লাবিবলৈ ধন নাই কিয়া দেখি পিয়াহ খোজা জিএকে দৈনতে সেই দৈনিএকক কোনো মঙলমানৰ ঘৰত বেটিকৈ বেচি ধন লৈ জগৰ ভাঙ্গিলে। এবছৰ মানৰ পাচত সি মৰিল। পাচে বেটিকৈ কিনি লোৱা এই অসম দেশৰ অনেক মানুহ নজিআ মহন্ত সকলৰ শিষ্য; সেই শিষ্যৰ মাজৰ কোনোটোএ ধৰমৰ কি নিতিৰ কি মৰ্ম্মাৰ বৰ নক বুজি আন ঠাইলৈ গলে তাৰ বাপেকৰ গুৰু মহন্তে ধৰি নি অনেক লাজ লঘু কৰি ডিঙ্গিত কলহ আৰি তাৰ লগৰ মানুহেৰে ধাৰ চুবলৈ বাধা কৰি এৰিলো মুলি খুটা মাৰে, পাচে অনেক ঝিনি ধন তাৰি লৈ লগ দিএ, এনে দস্তুৰ আছিল: বাস্তৱত এনে কথা আৰ দেশত নাই, আৰ কম্পানি বাহাদুৰৰ শাসিত দেশত কেতিআও তেনে কৰিব নোআৰে, আপোন ইচাৰে জি জেনে ধৰম ভাল পাই তাকে লব পাৰে।

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Exhibit 3

৬০ Oh ! How He Loves.

(F-doh). Welsh Melody. SS. 69

১। কবোঁ খ্রীষ্টৰ প্ৰেমৰ কীৰ্ত্তন, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
মৰ্ত্ত্য লোকৰ হিতৰ কাৰণ, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
অৱতাৰ হৈ জনম ললে, শিশু-অৱস্থা সহিলে,
নৰৰ কাৰণ দুখ ভুগিলে, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !

২। লবাবোৰক কাষত চপাই, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
কোলাত লৈ বৰ দিলে কৃপাই, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
ৰক্ষা কৰে আপোন মেৰৰ, উদ্ধাৰ কৰে সকল ক্লেশত,
গ্ৰাহ্য কৰিব স্বৰ্গপুৰত, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !

৩। দেখি তেওঁ আমাৰ দুৰ্গতি, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
দিলে জীৱন কৃপা কৰি, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
পেৱেছত নিজ প্ৰাণ এৰিলে ; তাতে মোৰ পাপ ক্ষমা কৰে,
আপোন লোকক নিৰ্ভয় ৰাখে, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !

৪। মৃত্যুৰ বন্ধন কৰি নাশন, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
ৰাজ্য কৰে তিনিও ভুৱন ; তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
যি জন তেৱে আপোনাৰ দিলে, হৈছে ওপৰ যাজক তেৱেঁ,
আপোন লোকৰ সব দুখ ভোগে, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !

৫। স্বৰ্গীয় সুখ নোভোগোঁমানে, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
ৰবিম তত্ত একান্ত মনে, তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !
আমাৰ কবি অকল খ্ৰীষ্টত, বাখি ভাবমা তেওঁৰ প্ৰেমত,
কম মই জীৱন মৰণ কালত, "তেওঁৰ কেনে প্ৰেম !"

Miles Bronson.

APENDIX

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GLOSSARY

Bronson, Miles (1812-1873) and Ruth (1813-1869)

Miles Bronson was born in Norway, New York on July 10, 1812. He graduated from Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution (Now Colgate University) in 1836. On April 29, 1836, he received an appointment from the American Baptist Missionary Union for service in Assam.

Ruth Montague Lucas born in Madison, New York, August 13, 1813. She was educated at Ladies Seminary in Hamilton. Ruth was married to Miles on September 7, 1836 and on that date she also received an appointment from the American Baptist Missionary Union for service in Assam.

Late in the year 1836, Rev. Miles Bronson, Rev.Jacob Thomas and their wives left America to join the Sadiya Mission. They reached Calcutta in 1837 and by the time they could leave for Sadiya, the monsoon season set in and the mighty river Brahmaputra was already swelling. An army officer urged Bronson not to attempt the journey at that season. "Would you hesitate", he asked the officer, if you were ordered to join the regiment in Sadiya".

"No sir", was the response.

"Then sir, we dare not delay when our Heavenly Captain bids us advance to join the little force awaiting and expecting our arrival." said Rev. Bronson.

So on the 26th of April, Bronson and his party commenced

their long journey up the Brahmaputra in a twelve-oared budgerow. As they approached Sadiya on the 7th of July, Bronson was taken seriously ill and Rev. Thomas took a small boat and hastened to Sadiya for medical help unaware of the dangers of erosion on the banks of rising Brahmaputra. Just as the small boat was approaching the banks near Sadiya a big tree fell across the boat causing it instantly to sink. Rev. Thomas died a few hours later but Miles Bronson was able to spend more than forty years in Assam opening schools, teaching, translating, preparing books in Assamese, Garo, Khamti, Naga and Singpho languages.

The Bronsons first worked in Joypur and Namsang near the Burmese border. In 1841, the Bronsons were sent to Nowgong. During their long sojourn in Assam, Miles and Ruth made three visits to US 1848-50, 1855, and 1857-1860. The Bronsons went back to India in 1860 and stayed in Nowgong till 1868. They stayed in US, where Ruth died in1969. The same year Miles returned to the Nowgong station.

In 1972 Frances Studley Danforth, the widow of another American missionary to Assam returned to Assam to carry on her husband's work. Miles and Frances got married soon after her arrival in Assam and the two continued the work at Nowgong. Frances died in Rangoon on February 3, 1874.

Miles married Mary Rankin on July 16 the same year. Miles and Mary returned to US in 1879 and settled in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, where he died on November 9, 1883.

Children of Miles and Ruth Lucas Bronson:

Mary Rebecca (1838-19030) married Cyrus Tolman.

Maria (1841-1874), Unmarried.

Eliza (1842-1912), married Albert Robinson.

Harriette (1844-1929), married William Gunn.

Ann Sophia (1846-1920), married John Titterington.

Frances Jane (147-1849),
Martha 1850, died infancy

Children of Miles and Mary Rankin:
Miles (1875-
Ruth & Laura b. 1878

An expert on languages Dr. Bronson was able to tackle the problems of the Assamese and other languages of the region. He immediately started his endeavour to give them form and structure. He took up the cause of the Assamese language at a time when the political and social changes of the region were but hammering coffin nails to the Assamese language. He fought

to establish Assamese as the official language of Assam in place of Bengali that the British government had unjustly imposed on the people of Assam. To support the Assamese cause he wrote articles, songs and books in Assamese and also about the language [(Spelling book in Assamese, Singpho and Naga (1839),

Bible in Assamese (1843), Garo primer (1867)]. Then he undertook the momentous task of compiling an Assamese dictionary, the first of its kind, which was published posthumously in 1886. He was also closely associated with the first Assamese news magazine ORUNUDOI (1846 - 1882).

Dr. Bronson did all these in spite of ill health, great physical hardships and sufferings. In a way the misfortunes that he faced on that fateful day of July when he approached Sadiya never parted his company. Ill health forced him to return to America more than once. But as soon as he felt better he always returned to Assam. After losing his dear friend Jacob Thomas, who met a watery grave while seeking medical help

for Bronson, "he met sore bereavement in the death of his best-loved, first the wife of his youth who for more than thirty years had been an inspiration and a joy in his home, again by the death of his second wife at Rangoon. And a few weeks later his loved daughter Marie fell, the victim of cholera. Within a few days' journey of home, the poor father, who was returning with her from Calcutta, in the absence of all mission friends had, with his own trembling lips, to read the funeral service over his child, and then proceed on his sad journey to the now empty bungalow."

Rev. Bronson continued to work in Assam with a deep faith in God and a genuine love for the people of Assam and the Assamese language. In a way, Bronson, more than any other Assamese with the exclusion of the great Vaishnav Guru Shankardev, showed what an Assamese should do towards the Assamese and other native languages of Assam and also towards the tribal people of the region. To work for the betterment of the Assamese language and the Tibeto-Burman tongues of the region with a spiritual zeal, not for materialistic gains but to bring education and spiritual enlightenment to the illiterate masses of the hills and plains of Assam we have in Miles Bronson a truly ideal example.

Bronson Papers

In 1977, Charles Pettengill found an old trunk in the attic of his Hebron Connecticut home, which was previously owned by the family (the Billards) of a grand daughter of Reverend Miles Bronson. It turned out that the box contained century-old Assamese letters and other documents which are of considerable importance to the Assamese.

The sons of the Billard family, Albert B. of Amston, Conn., Curtis M. of Simsbury, Conn., and Frederick L. of McLean, N.Y., have donated the papers in Bronson's box to

the Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass., where it has now been carefully kept in the Franklin Task Library. There are more than two thousand items in the Bronson collection, which provide a very rich source of information concerning nineteenth century Assam and on just about everything that happened in the Assam Mission up till 1882. The materials have now been catalogued and microfilmed.

Prof. Dilip Datta has donated a set of the microfilms to the History Department of the North East Hill University and another to Dr. Debabrata Sarma, Jorhat

Brown, Nathan (1807 - 1886) and Eliza (1807-1871)

[Note: Their daughter Elizabeth wrote a biography of Nathan Brown, The Whole World Kin. Dilip K. Datta's Tales of Western Inspiration and Indian Karma contains a complete bibliography of Brown's publications.]

Nathan Brown was born in Ipswich, New Hampshire, USA. Williams College, Williamsburgh, Mass (Class of 1827) and Andover Newton Theological School, Newton, Mass (1832). He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Williams College in 1854.

Eliza was born Eliza Whitney Ballard at Charlemont, Mass, USA on April 12, 1807, where she grew up and had her education. She started teaching in a seminary in nearby Benington when she was twenty-one years old. Nathan Brown joined the same seminary soon afterwards. Here, the two were drawn to each other and to missionary work. The two got married on May 6, 1830 and later moved to Brandon, Vermont, where Nathan became the Editor of the Vermont Baptist Telegraph. On December 22, 1832 the Brown couple and their first child Dorothy Sophia sailed for Burma.

They reached Maulmain, Burma in May, 1833, after a

voyage lasting more than four months. They stayed in Burma till August, 1835. That year Major Jenkins, the British officer in charge of Assam, offered the American Baptist Mission a sum of one thousand rupees to establish a mission in Sadiya. The American Baptist Mission accepted the offer and selected the Brown couple to start the mission. Sorrow and bereavement came to Eliza and her husband right from the day they started their journey for that assignment.

The Browns booked their passage to Calcutta, but their second child was seized with brain disease and died the very morning they were to leave. They had the funeral services the same afternoon, graced by Dr. Judson who preached a touching sermon. The same evening, they set sail for their new appointment. They arrived in Calcutta on September 2, 1835 and immediately embarked on their arduous journey up the river Brahmaputra in a native boat. It took them four months to reach their destination. They arrived in Sadiya on March 2, 1936. What they did in Sadiya and their misfortunes there are described in chapter 2 of this Tales of Western Inspiration and Indian Karma. In Sadiya, Eliza gave birth to two more children. After the Khamti raid, the Browns moved to Jaipur, where they were comfortably placed but the climate there proved very unhealthy and her children had to endure physical ailment of one kind or another. To give them medical attention Eliza once made a perilous journey to Calcutta alone with her two little children only to be told that her son's disease was incurable. The little child succumbed to the disease after returning to Jaipur. Finally, the Brown family moved to Sibsagar.

The climate in Sibsagar seemed more favorable and the Browns were able to engage in productive activities both in missionary work and in running schools. As the Assam Mission was able to set up a press in Sibsagar, Eliza , like her husband, started writing texts for use in the schools they were

establishing. In the beginning, Eliza was planning to keep her children with her and to educate them at home and in her school. She, however, had to abandon that idea after her husband narrowly escaped death from an attack of cholera and her daughter came near death with fever.

After losing three children in a foreign land, she tried to find an answer to the question, should a mother stand by and see her remaining children die in a country where malaria, cholera and black-disease kill thousands each year. Eliza Brown also knew that it was impossible for her husband to leave missionary work that finally looked promising. The fortitude and energy of Eliza Brown rose to the occasion, she decided on a course that was later adopted by missionaries who followed the Browns. She decided to take her children back to America and look for suitable family or families who would be willing to adopt and raise them. The arrangement would be made so that the children would maintain their ties with their biological parents but would be loyal to their adopted parents. It was not to be a formal arrangement with legal papers but an arrangement based on mutual love and respect. With that idea in mind in September 1846, the brave lady started a homeward voyage with her two little children-one may appreciate her courage when one thinks about the realities of a sea voyage from Calcutta to Boston in a sailing boat across the oceans and around the cape of Good Hope lasting more than four months. Eliza Brown made it safely to America. In America, Eliza Brown not only secured for the children the best homes possible, but also found ways to save the Assam Mission. While in America, Eliza Brown discovered that the Assam Mission which her husband had so laboriously established was facing abandonment because of the lack of public support in the churches and in the Board. So, the energetic Eliza Brown led a vigorous campaign to arouse attention and interest to the

Assam Mission. Her campaign was successful and it resulted in the appointment of two additional missionaries for Assam.

Mission accomplished, she again headed to Assam to join her husband.

It should be pointed out that Eliza Brown's solution to the problem of raising and educating children whom the parents may not be able to provide a healthy environment, seems to be a very humane solution. Most of the missionary children who were raised in that manner did prove to be very capable and fruitful persons. One shining example is Eliza Brown's daughter Elizabeth Whitney Brown. Elizabeth was born a day after the death of Dorothy Sophia and she was the baby that Eliza had in her arms while fleeing the Khamti raid, and she is the author of The Whole World Kin, a major source of this book. Following Eliza's example, Miles Bronson, another famous missionary to Assam, had later placed his children at homes in America. Among them, Sophie Bronson Titterington established herself as a very successful author, especially of children's book, and Harriet Bronson Gunn wrote the memorable book In a Far Country.

In 1849, Eliza Brown rejoined her husband in Assam, and started her most productive work in the Assamese language. Nathan and Eliza Brown left Assam in 1855. Back in the States, the Browns gave up missionary work for a while. Eliza Brown's last years of life were marked by constant suffering with frequent and long-continued illness, brought on by the hardships of twenty-three years of hard life in Assam. In 1869, she was injured from a fall, from which she never recovered. Rev. Gray tells us that Mrs. Brown cherished in her heart a desire to return to Assam almost till her death in 1871. She lies buried in a family graveyard in East Charlemont, Mass, next to her children where friends and relatives constructed a monument honoring the Brown family.

Some Documented Tributes

Rev. Nathan Brown was a well-known intellectual of his time. His interest in language studies, his energy and interest, his unflinching adherence to his convictions and his noble visions had profound influence on culture, science of language and people of his time. Below are some documented tributes to Nathan Brown.

In 1855, after twenty-two years of toil and sufferings, both returned to America, where Dr. Brown was pronounced 'a wreck in body and mind.' After a rest of two years and a partial recovery of health he became editor of the American Baptist, a position which he held for fifteen yeas. The term of his editorship was a most important period in the history of the nation, and his editorials discussed the affairs of a government in a vigorous way. His pronounced anti-slavery principles, sometimes, occasioned him personal danger. On account of his prominence in such discussions he was selected as one of the committee of three to wait on President Lincoln before the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation. (Hewitt, John, Williams College and Mission, hereafter referred to as WCM, 138).

His scholarly and literary impulses were powerful enough, had he aspired to the prizes of worldly ambition, to have assured him a distinguished worldly career. Fifteen years after his graduation at college the tradition of his attainments was living there. He was permitted to render a protracted service in what was to him the highest of human callings and he rests well. [Rev. Dr. L.E. Smith in the editorial column of the Watchman (quoted here from Williams Obituary Record 6)].

He has left an untarnished record, extending over three score years and ten; and has set a noble example of ceaseless industry, and of self-sacrificing, unflinching adherence to what he believed to be right. (American Baptist magazine, July, 1986, 182).

Teeming with information, felicitous in language, independent in thought, vigorously combining logic and rhetoric to strengthen his points, and connected and consistent in all the minutiæ of his discourse, he possesses abilities which render him one of the ablest preachers whom we have heard on this course. (WCM 138-139).

Professor F. Max Müller, one of the founders of modern Philology, was a great admirer of Nathan Brown both as a pioneer in the field of Comparative Philology and as a philosopher. He has quoted Nathan Brown in his famous books The Science of Language, Vols. I & II, Professor Max Müller writes:

Thus Brown says: 'To be without language, spoken or written, is almost to be without thought.' But he qualifies this almost by what follows: 'That man can reason without language of any kind, and consequently without general terms-though the opposite opinion is maintained by many very eminent philosophers. (Max Müller, F., The Science of Language, Vols. I, Charles Scribner's and Sons, New York, 1891, 78)

Among modern philosophers, Brown dwells most strongly on the same subject: 'How much the mere materialism of our language has itself operated in darkening our conceptions of the nature of the mind, and of its various phenomena, is a question which is, obviously beyond our power to solve, since the solution of it would imply that the mind of the solver was itself free from the influence which he traced and described. (Max Müller, F., The Science of Language, Vols. II, Charles Scribner's and Sons, New York, 1891, 702)

In The Whole World Kin: A Pioneer Experience Among Remote Tribes, and Other Labors of Nathan Brown, we also find the following quotes of a letter that Prof. Max Müller wrote to Sir Charles Trevelyan, Oxford, Oct. 25, 1854.

I return Mr. Brown's letter with many thanks-it is a very interesting letter-it has turned a name with which I have been familiar for many years, into a real man, and what a man! ... I should like to write to Mr. Brown, and send to him my book on the Turanian Languages, where I have had to quote him so many times. He is one of the few men whose opinion I should like to have on the classification of these dialects on the borders of India and China, which I have attempted there for the first time. (WWK, 602)

Unfortunately the theory of Turanian Language put forward by Max Müller and Nathan Brown did not find support from latter scholars. So, Brown's contributions to Philology got obscured by the later Theory of Indo-European Languages. Brown's work just became a footnote in the history of Philology. Thus, William Dwight Whitney, Professor of Sanskrit and Modern Languages in Yale college, and an exponent of the modern classification of Languages while mentioning the difficulties of learning about 'the exceedingly numerous and not less discordant dialects which crowd the mountain valleys on either sides of the great range of the Himalayas,' acknowledged the distinguished service rendered by Brown as one of the enterprising collectors in a footnote:

Among these, Rev N. Brown and Mr. B.H. Hodgson have especially distinguished themselves. (Language and Study of Language, Charles Scribner & Company, New York, 1867, 22)

Norway

Norway is a town in Herkimer County, New York, United States. The population was 762 at the 2010 census. The Town of Norway is located in the east-central part of the county and is northeast of Utica. The town borders the Adirondack Park. Its Elevation is 1,526 ft and area is 35.9 square miles.

Wikipedia

Titterington, Sophie Bronson

Sophie Bronson Titterington (born: Nowgong 1846 and died: America 1920), a daughter of Rev. Miles Bronson, was a noted American author belonging to the period popularly referred to as `the turn of the century'. The present author first came across Sophie Titterington from her letters in Bronson's Trunk. Further inquiries revealed that she was a prolific writer and had published as many as sixty six books, three of which contain a lot of information about nineteenth century Assam. A few of her books were collected and brought to the attention of several scholars interested in `turn of the century' authors. One of them, Dr. Indu Suryanarayan, an English lecturer and editor of a journal here, took a keen interest and presented a paper on Sophie Bronson Titterington at the Andover-Newton convocation held during the Bronson Death centenary celebrations.

It may be recalled that after returning from Assam in 1879, Bronson came and lived near Sophie in Eaton Rapids, where Sophie`s husband was the pastor of a local church. Thus Sophie was a close companion of Miles during the last few years before his death in 1883. It may be safely assumed that Sophie had most of her information about Assam from Miles Bronson. Of course, there is also ample evidence that Sophie took a keen interest in the happenings of her birthplace and gathered materials from others like her sisters Mary Tolman and Maria Bronson.

Bhupen Hazarika (1926 - 2011)

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the legendary music maestro of Assam is a true jewel of India. He was a many-sided genius- a legendary singer, a lyricist, a composer, a scholar, an artist and above all a genuine humanist who dared to dream of a classless society in Assam, India and everywhere else. During

his long life, Hazarika worked ceaselessly and produced a rich and vibrant body of work in music, literature and film that brought him a range of top honours, including the Dadasaheb Phalke Award.

Bhupen Hazarika Setu

Bhupen Hazarika Setu is a beam bridge in India, connecting Dhola and Sadiya in the northeast state of Assam. It is the longest bridge above water in India (9,150 m, that is, 30,020 ft or 2.21 mi).

India's Prime minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the bridge on May 26, 2017 and named it Bhupen Hazarika Setu. The Assamese word setu means bridge. The actual construction of the Bhupen Hazarika Setu started in November 2011. The bridge cost 950 crore rupees to construct.

The bridge is over Lohit river, which is a tributary of the mighty riverBrahmaputra, that flows through Assam.

Dr. Indrajit Smith (1942-1988)

Dr. Indrajit Smith was a son of James Smith of Jorhat. James was a son of Suryamohan Smith, the third son of Rev. Kandura Smith. Suryamohan operated an orange garden in Sonapur and was a close hunting associate of Tarunram Phukan. The queen of Bijni was so impressed by Suryamohan that she presented him a rifle, a rare gift in those days.

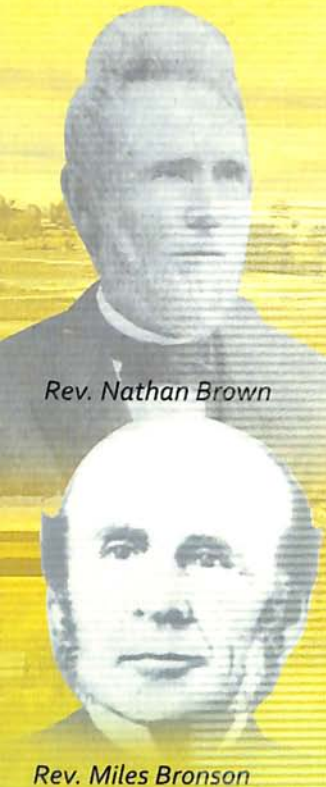
Dr. Indrajit Smith received his MBBS degree in1968 from the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh. He later received the MS degree from Poona and received training in CMC hospital, Vellore. He married Shanta in 1973. In 1982, Dr. Smith and his family came to the States and from there went to Guyana to work as a missionary doctor. He returned to the States a year

later for some treatment. However, some wrong treatment put him in coma and he was admitted in Greenery Coma Rehab Center, Boston, where he died on February 3, 1988 without ever gaining consciousness.

Dr. Indrajit Smith left behind his wife, two sons [Akash (b.1975) and Uday (b. 1981)] and a host of friends and relatives. Just a few months before losing his father, Akash had his teachers and friends in tears by reading an article where he wrote: "He was very dedicated in his work, a very loving father, and a friend to lots and lots of people. He helped people a lot and was a good Christian. I want to be like my father, be a surgeon some day and a dedicated missionary like him. I wonder if I will ever get my father's love again."

A BRIDGE FROM AMERICA TO SADIYA

(For the Cause of Education and Enlightenment of the People of Assam)



Rev. Nathan Brown

Rev. Miles Bronson

Early in the nineteenth century, long before the pillars for the Dhola-Sadiya bridge (Bhupen Hazarika Setu) were laid, the American Baptist missionaries had constructed a bridge between America and Assam. Many US citizens and Assamese folks have since trodden over that bridge to enrich themselves and the people of the two countries with faith, love and service. The biographies in this collection contain true stories of dedication, service and sacrifice of some pioneers who laid the foundation of that bridge for all days to come.

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