

of leadership and upon whom the mission is depending for support and leadership.

The story of the development of literature for the Garos is well told by Dr. Mason, in his *How Came the Bible into the Garo Language*. In this little booklet he has traced its course and has told of the obstacles encountered in reducing a new language to writing. The first attempt perhaps made by an Assam educational officer and by a Bengali gentleman, who published a phrase book and a vocabulary respectively, as early as 1867. These two works seem to have had no extended circulation. Later Dr. Bronson produced a small book of sentences, a *Brief Outline of Grammar*, and a *Garo Primer* in Roman and Bengali characters. Mr. Stoddard had a manuscript written for three primers, a catechism, and hymns, which Mr. Keith afterwards published. Mr. Keith also published an *Outline Grammar* and a small *Garo-Bengali English Dictionary*, and a translation of the four Gospels. The most of the translations of the Gospels were done by Garo helpers, which is evident from Keith's report where he said: "The Gospel of Matthew has been undertaken and with the efficient assistance of two or three of the native brethren has been carried forward to the twentieth chapter."¹⁵ Later he wrote that the work was good enough to warrant translation of the rest and of all the Four Gospels.

It should be mentioned that none of the missionaries working among the Garos up to the coming of Mason and Phillips knew the language, but had to depend on the help of active assistants. It is true that Keith learned the Garo language so that he could preach in it, but not until toward the end of his term; and then he was compelled to go home! Mr. Stoddard spent five years

at Goalpara and it may be thought that he should have learned the language in that time; but he learned the Bengali and Assamese instead. The Bengali characters had been used in all of the literature that was produced in those early days; and it was not until in 1902 or after the twenty-eight years of struggling with the Bengali alphabet that the Romanizing of the language was finally adopted. With the coming of Mason and Phillips there was a change in policy, as far as publication of literature was concerned. These two men were the first missionaries really to learn Garo. A definite plan was evolved to produce literature in that language, so that the students in school could learn to read it rather than Bengali or Assamese.

It was Dr. Mason's privilege to see the entire Bible translated into Garo; but besides this book there is very little other literature in that tongue. Had the missionaries been freed from the care of a growing Christian community, the care of the schools and multitudinous other problems, there would have been more books. To be sure, a good many pamphlets were printed and a magazine entitled "*Atchikni Ripeng*" has been published for a number of years. Dr. Harding emphasized the need of more literature as follows:

"One copy of every Garo book now in print stands before me. If I exclude the Garo Bible and measure the standing books I find they measure exactly six inches. A six-inch library and that includes our hymnal, tune books and school books, everything in Garo except the Bible!"

This statement was made in 1933 and very few pamphlets have been added since then. That, of course, does not include the thousands of pages that have been written but never bound. It does, however, show the