

supervision of Captain Morton, the District Commissioner of Goalpara.⁴

Omed and Ramkhe went first to their own relatives and village. After a few weeks of preaching, a small group (six or seven) accepted Christianity and joined the two zealous preachers in establishing a new village — Rajasimla. This village became the nucleus for the Garo Christian community and one of the important Christian centers. The two evangelists continued to preach and to teach, dividing their work so that Omed remained at Rajasimla as an evangelist, while Ramkhe went to Damra about twelve miles away where he started a school. Later he took up a tract of waste land near to Damra and established a Christian village, Nisangram, which became another center of Christian influence.

Omed and Ramkhe met with considerable success, and the work grew to such proportions that they deemed it necessary to call Dr. Bronson to help them. In 1867, he made a visit to the Garo hills, and it must have been a day of great rejoicing for the missionary and for the Christian natives, for he baptized thirty-seven converts and organized them, with Omed, Ramkhe and Rangkhu, a Christian Garo policeman, into a church of forty members. He ordained Omed as the pastor, charging him to "range the hills, to preach, baptize, to do the work of a Christian pastor, and to be faithful until death."⁵ This rather large ingathering was cheering news to the missionaries and to the mission supporters in America who had begun to look upon Assam as a barren field.

That same year the Reverends I. J. Stoddard and M. B. Comfort arrived in Assam. Dr. Bronson, who had just toured the Garo hills, was impressed with its

possibilities and sensed the importance of settling missionaries in Goalpara as soon as conditions would permit. Consequently he purchased an appropriate compound with a bungalow at Goalpara for Rs. 800, which sum he succeeded in raising among its citizens and among friends of the field. The two new missionaries were keen in prospect of work among the Garos; and upon the approval of the Board they became the first missionaries to this tribe. While Goalpara was not a part of the Garo hills, it was chosen as a place from which work could be done conveniently, as to settle among the tribe was deemed inexpedient. Further, Goalpara was within easy reach of the hills and was located on the very banks of the Brahmaputra which made it easy of access to the rest of the world.

Space forbids to trace in detail the development of the work in this promising field. It is noted, however, that Mr. Stoddard visited many villages the following year, baptizing a goodly number of persons and thus becoming encouraged in the work.

The government contemplated moving headquarters to Tura, a place located near the center of the hills, in order to be able to check the bloody head-hunting raids made on the plains people. In this connection (1870) a definite invitation was extended to the mission to make Tura one of its stations. The government also suggested the possibility of granting an appropriation to defray the expenses of a medical missionary, if such a man could be procured; and if the mission accepted the invitation.

The following year Messrs. Bronson, Stoddard, and Comfort visited Tura with a view to occupying that station. They were convinced that it should be occupied; and they procured a mission compound and