

*Situation in Assam*", presented to the Assam Conference in 1907, pointed out that "the per centage of children in schools to all those of school age was 21.6 per cent for boys, 1.4 per cent for girls and 11.79 per cent for both". He goes on and comments that "these figures of themselves are depressing enough but when we consider the attainments of the pupils the situation seems a good deal worse. Only one out of one hundred of school age is reading above the lower primary, and of girls, not more than one in 4,000. Only one out of 560 of school age enters high school, to say nothing of completing it." It may be added to this statement that only 97 out of 60,000, in 1907, entered college. The above facts as given by Mr. Dowd pertain for the most part to the government. The mission, however, was not much better; if anything, it was worse. Because of its work being handicapped by financial difficulties, it was unable to supply the necessary teachers and equipment, and social ostracism put the Christian on a lower level in public estimation.

Mr. Dowd proceeds to point out that the four primary causes of the educational backwardness of the province were due mainly to poverty, climate, ignorance, and false religious beliefs. The reader can easily understand Mr. Dowd's statement without further elucidation. Suffice it to say that if the Christian community was not to disintegrate a united effort was needed to consolidate all the educational work; hence, plans were laid by which it would be possible to establish a school in some central station on the plains, to which all the missionaries could send such students as had received a primary and middle English training in their own districts. Jorhat was chosen as a central station for this purpose.

[130]

On January 12, 1905, the Rev. S. A. D. Boggs pitched his tent at Jorhat and proceeded to open that station by preparing the site for a mission compound and for the building of a missionary residence. In April, 1906, the Rev. Henry Goldsmith Babu, an Assamese, a tried and approved worker, came to Jorhat to be Mr. Boggs' assistant in the Bible school that was being opened. In 1907, Mr. Boggs reported regarding Henry Babu: "His coming has been a great help in every way, and was the beginning of the work which we had gone to Jorhat to inaugurate." The school began in April with five young men in the second-year class and thirteen in the beginning class. The students came from the various districts in the province, six came from Golaghat, two from Kamrup, one from Jorhat, four from the Mikir hills, one from North Lakhimpur, four from Nowgong, and one from Sibsagar. From a racial point of view they were Assamese, Garos, Kacharis, Mikirs, and Mundaris.

In 1919, Mr. Boggs again reported regarding the development of a Normal department. "After further consideration and after the selection of the School Board, which occurred in 1908, it was decided to raise the grade of the school to the Government Middle English standard and also to add a Primary Boarding Department. This latter department was felt by the School Board to be a necessity because of the backward condition of education in the Christian communities. It has not been the thought of the Board or of the missionary at Jorhat that this department should be permanent. It has been established to meet present conditions. It is a passing phase of the work and it is hoped that it can be dispensed with in a decade."

Another phase of Christian education was the grow-

[131]