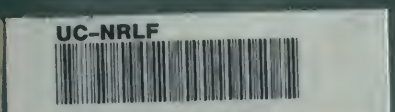

SOME ASSAMESE PROVERBS.

(SECOND EDITION.)

COMPILED AND ANNOTATED

BY

MAJOR P. R. T. GURDON, I.A.,

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, AND SUPERINTENDENT OF ETHNOGRAPHY

IN ASSAM.

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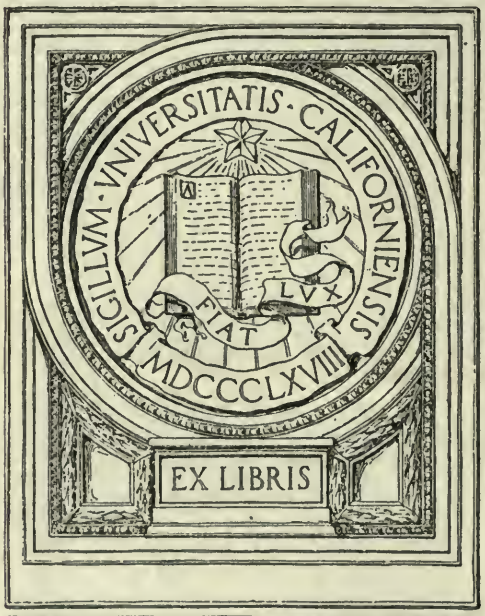

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THANKS to the liberality of the Assam Administration it has been possible to publish a Second Edition of "Some Assamese Proverbs." The first edition, although it met with a favourable reception at the time, contained many inaccuracies which a deeper study of the Assamese language on the part of the compiler and the kindness of various friendly critics, have helped to bring to light. Certain faults in transliteration also which appeared in the first edition have been rectified, the method of transliteration laid down by the Royal Asiatic Society being followed as far as practicable. A large number of the proverbs which appear in this collection are said to be the utterances of Dák, who according to some was a man of humble extraction, being a member of the Kumar caste, who was born in the village of Lehi-Dangárá situated near the now ruined village of Mandiá in the Barpeta mauza. For this fact there is the authority of the "Dák Charitra," in which occurs the line লেহি ডঙ্গৰা ডাকৰগাওঁ. On the other hand, a writer in the "Assam Banti" claims that Dák was a Brahmin by caste who was born in a village near Kaliabar in the Nowgong district, and that Dák and his family migrated to Jorhat during the reign of Raja Rudra Singh. This writer adds that the descendants of Dák are to be found to this day at Rangdai in Jorhat, where the family is known under the name of ডাক বামুণৰ ঘৰ. If the sayings of Dák are examined by any one who is acquainted with the Barpeta *patois*, I think he will be of the same opinion as myself that Dák's language has a distinct Barpeta ring about it. It is, however, not of much moment Dák's birth place, but it is a matter for congratulation that so many of Dák's sayings

which are brimful of worldly wisdom, as well as practical knowledge of agriculture, have been unearthed. Dák's agricultural sayings and the prohibitions concerning not building and not even cutting bamboos on certain days of the month, are well known to the Assamese cultivators throughout the province, and it is believed that the former are much respected and the latter often strictly observed by Assamese Hindus. It will probably surprise the non-Assamese reader to hear that mustard cannot be sown on the four lunar days of the month ending in the suffix শী, or that pulse cannot be sown on the five lunar days ending with the suffix শী, and that cane or bamboos cannot be cut during the six days of the *Sharan.* Then, again, there is the prohibition regarding ploughing on the day of the full moon, or during the *Ambubachi*, when the earth is considered to be in a state of impurity. The proverbs to which I have referred above, as also the greater number of the other agricultural sayings, are ascribed to Dák.

It is to be hoped that the inaccuracies in the rendering of some of the proverbs that appeared in the first edition and in the translation have now been rectified, but it should be stated that in the work of revision I am specially indebted to Rai Madhav Chandra Bardalai Bahadur, Messrs. Parsu Ram Khaund, Hem Chandra Gossain, Rajani Kanta Bardalai, Jagat Chandra Gossain, and Upendra Nath Barua. The names, however, of Mr. Abdul Majid, who helped me so much with the first edition, and of Guru Prasad Kakati, who assisted me in collecting in the district of Sibsagar, must on no account be omitted.

In conclusion, it is to be hoped that the present attempt to render into English some of the sayings of the people of the Brahmaputra Valley may help to save the former from oblivion, and the agricultural sayings, which it is believed

are published now for the first time in English, may be of some practical value to agriculturalists. It is intended, hereafter, with the approval of the Hon'ble the Chief Commissioner, and if time and opportunity permit, to publish some of the proverbs of the Surma Valley.

SHILLONG, P. R. T. GURDON.
The 25th September 1903.

SOME ASSAMESE PROVERBS.

Class I.

PROVERBS RELATING TO HUMAN FAILINGS, FOIBLES, AND VICES.

1. *Anger, affectation, boasting, conceit, etc.*

কি নো ভমকৰ তালি, ভাল খন থৈ ফটা খন পালি।

Ki no bhamakar táli, bhál khan thai phatá khan páli.

What a repetition of anger, you have put down the good one and picked up the torn one.

This is addressed to a person who is in a great rage, and who is so angry that he puts down the good cloth he has in his hand, and takes up a torn one instead.

ভমক (*bhamak*) signifies the sudden rising of anger. It is also applied to a fire which suddenly blazes up.

2. *Boasting.*

ফোপ দাঙ্গ ধান নাইকিয়া সুদা চাঙ্গ্।

Phop dáng dhán náikiyá sudá cháng.

You boaster—you have no paddy and your *chang* is empty.

The term ফোপ্ দাঙ্গ is applied to a man who boasts about nothing. নাইকিয়া (*náikiyá*) literally is not. চাঙ্গ (*cháng*) is the platform inside the ভৰাল (*bharál*) or granary.

3. *Forgetfulness.*

পাহৰি আছিলো পৰিল মনত,
পাঁচ বৰণীয়া পটা আছে ৰাৱনৰ ঘৰত।

Páhari áchhilo paril manat,
Pánch baraniyá patá áchhe Ráwanar gharat.

I had forgotten it, and then I remembered,
It was a five-coloured stone in the house of Ráwan.

The word পটা signifies a flat stone upon which spices, etc., are pounded. When Lakshman, the younger brother of Ram, was wounded in battle with Rávana, the mountain Gandhamadan was brought by Hunuman. The physician in attendance selected certain requisite medicinal herbs therefrom, and, when asking for a flat stone and pestle for grinding the herbs in question, gave vent to the proverb.

---

4. *Affection.*

ৰহাৰ ৰহদৈ, তিপামৰ ভাদৈ, সলগুৰিৰ আঘনি বাই,
তিনিওৰ ডিঙ্গিত ধৰি তিনিয়ে কান্দিছে, সমন্ধৰ বাল গছ্ নাই।

Rahár Rahdai Tipámar Bhádai, Salagurir Ághani bái,
Tinior dingit dhari tiniye kándichhe, samandar bál gachh nái.

Rahdai from Rahá, Bhádai from Tipám, sister Aghani from Salaguri,
Are all three weeping on each other's necks and embracing,
although there is not the least relationship amongst them.

Rahá is in the Nowgong district. Tipám, or Namti, is close to Sibságar. Salaguri is also in Sibságar.

---

5. *Boasting.*

নগই গড়গাওঁৰ বতৰা কয়।

Nagai Garga(n)or batará kay.

He tells the news of Gargaon without having gone there.

A man tells the news of the court without ever having been to it. Gargaon was formerly the capital of the Ahom kings, or rather was one of their capitals.

---

6. *Boasting.*

সাগৰত আছিল পাঞ্চ জন্য শঙ্খ,
নেগুৰিয়া শামুকে কলে ময়ো তাৰে বংশ।

Ságarat áchhil pánchajanya shankha,
Neguriá shámuke kale mayo táre bangsha.

In the ocean there was the conch shell with five openings,
But the shámuk with a tail said "I am related to it."

The shámuk is a shell-fish, which is found in almost every marsh or "*bil*." Its shell is in appearance very like a snail shell. It is useless as an article of food, except to the শামুক ভঙ্গা (*shámuk bhangá*), which is a species of heron that cracks the shells with its strong beak. Lime is, however, made from the shells in considerable quantities, and is sold and bought by the poor to eat with "*tamul*" (betelnut). The পাঞ্চ জন্য শঙ্খ was the mythical conch which was blown by Sri Krishna during the battle of the Mahabharat.

---

7. *Boasting.*

জহলৈ ন মৰো মহলৈ মৰো,
ফটা আঠুৱা খন টিঙালি কৈ তৰো।

Jahalai na maro mahalai maro,
Phatá áthuwá khan tingáli kai taro.

I do not care for the heat, but I die from the mosquitoes,
Since I have hung my torn mosquito curtain too high.

Probably the meaning of this proverb is "penny wise and pound foolish." Another reading যহলৈ ন মৰো, in which case যহ (Sanskrit যশ) means fame.

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8. *Blaming others for one's own fault.*

নকলেও নোৱাৰো ফটা মুখ,
কলেও লাগে ভকতৰ দোষ।

Nakaleo nowáro phatá mukh,
Kaleo láge bhakatar dosh.

There is an opening in the mouth, and I can't help speaking,
If I do speak, the blame will fall on the "*bhakat*."

Here the man is between the horns of a dilemma; he can't help speaking, but if he does he will get a *bhakat* into trouble. ভকত (*bhakat*) means a disciple of a gosain or priest.

9. *Conceit.*

যুজিবলৈ আহিলে মাল,
দুই হাতে চিঙ্গিলে বাল।

Jujibalai áhile mál,
Dui háte chingile bál.

A wrestler came to fight, but he only broke a hair.

বালচিঙা is a vulgar expression signifying inability to do anything.

This proverb applies to the man who is over-conceited about his capabilities. The word মাল (mál) more properly means a boxer or wrestler.

---

10. *Counting one's chickens before they are hatched—Discontent and exaggeration.*

গছত কঠাল ওঠত তেল,
নৌ খাওতেই সেল্ বেল্।

Gachhat kathál othat tel.
Nó kháotei sel bel.

Rubbing the lips with oil,
While the jack fruit is still on the tree.

ওঠত তেল (*othat tel*) means on the lips oil. The jack fruit, if eaten without putting oil on the lips, causes sores. There is a Hindi proverb exactly similar to the Assamese. It is (*gáchh par kathál hónth men tél*). Clearly this is an instance of counting one's chickens before they are hatched.

---

11. *Discontent.*

লও বাকলী চাল,
সাতোটা সুখৰ এটাও
নেপালো, ঢেকি টোও
নেপালো ভাল।

Lo bákali chál,
Sátotá sukhar etáo
Nepálo, dheki to o
Nepálo bhál.

I take off the covering, I did not obtain even one of the seven happinesses, and I did not find even the dheki nice.

A complaint of a woman who is discontented with her lot. She did not find even the "*dheki*" any comfort. To work the "*dheki*" is one of the hardest household duties.

---

12. *Exaggeration.*

একে কাঠি কাৰে সাতোটা সিংহক মাৰিলোঁ,
লোকক নকলোঁ লাজে,
ছমাহ খাপ দি নিগনি এটা মাৰিলে তাতে,
ধনজয় ঢোল বাজে।

Eke káthi káre sátotá sínghok márilo(n),
Lokak nakalo(n) láje,
Chhamáh kháp di nigani etá márile táte,
Dhanjay dhol báje.

With one arrow I killed seven lions,
I was too shy to tell any one;
But he, after lying in wait for six months, killed a mouse,
At that I see the drum of victory beaten.

The ধনজয় (*dhanjay*) was a large drum which was beaten by the Ahoms when they gained a victory. The "*dhanjay*" was of a particular shape and of large size. An illustration of it is given by Montgomery Martin in his book.

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13. *Exaggeration.*

কথা কলেই লাগিল পাক,
বাৰে জনী গৈছিল পানী আনিবলৈ,
তের জনীৰ কাটিলে নাক।

Kathá kalei lágil pák,
Báre jani gaichhil páni ánibalai,
Tera janir kátile nák.

If I say, a fault is found with my story,
Twelve girls went to fetch water,
The noses of thirteen were slit.

লাগিল পাক (*lágil pák*), literally a turn or twist has occurred. Here পাক means offence. কাটিলে নাক (*kátile nák*) they cut the noses. It was a common punishment to slit the nose in the days of the Rájas. The proverb points to the growth of a story, or probably, in this case, scandal, by being repeated.

---

14. *Exaggeration.*

জাপ মাৰি দেইছিলো ঢাপলিকা পৰ্ব্বত।
টিলিকিত মাৰিছিলো বগ।
খেদা মাৰি ধৰিছিলো মতা হৰিনা।
এতিয়া নেপাও মতা হাঁহৰ লগ।

Jáp mári deichhilo Dhápaliká parbat.
Tilikit márichhilo bag.
Khedá mári dharichhilo matá hariná.
Etiyá nepáo matá há(n)har lag.

I used to be able to jump over the Dhápaliká hill.
I killed the paddy-bird in an instant.
I chased a stag and caught him.
Now I can't even catch up a drake.

ঢাপলিকা পৰ্ব্বত is hillock. ঢাপলিকা also is used to express a screen usually made of thatching-grass. This screen, which is sometimes called পাৰলি (*párali*), is used for watching crops and for guarding them from wild animals. বগ is short for বগলি (*bagali*), the common paddy-bird. টিলিকিত, literally, at a snap of the fingers, and so it comes to mean instantly.

---

15. *Exaggeration.*

তিলকে তাল কৰিলে।

Tilake tál karile.

He made a palm tree out of a sesamum seed.

The Assamese version of "to make a mountain out of a molehill." তিল is the sesamum. তাল is the fan-palm or palmyra tree.

16. *Exaggeration.*

ধনৰ নৰিয়া টান,
ভাত খাইছে উধানৰ মান।

Dhanar nariyá tán,
Bhát kháichhe udhánar mán.

Dhan's illness is very serious,
But he eats a pile of rice as big as an *udhán.*

"*Dhan*" is a term of endearment sometimes applied by wives to their husband; it may be translated "darling."

উধান is a large clod of earth. Three such clods are used to support the cooking pot.

---

17. *Exaggeration.*

নুছুই ডুমুনি তুলি দিলে বোজা,
নপঢ়ি নুশুনি হল ওজা।

Nuchhui dumuni tuli dile bojá,
Naparí nushuni hal ojá.

He lifted the load on to the head of the fish-wife without being polluted by her.
Without study he became a magician.

This proverb is meant ironically. According to Assamese ideas, it would be impossible for a man to place a load on the head of a Dumni without being polluted by her. The "Dom" caste in Assam appears to be considered of equally low status as in Bengal. ওজা (*ojá*) means a teacher of arts, magician, exorcist. It is in its last sense that ওজা is most frequently used, particularly amongst the semi-civilised and more ignorant people. Brian Hodgson gives an interesting account of "*ojás*" on page 138 of his Collection of Essays.

---

18. *Exaggeration.*

নকটা খেৰৰ ন শ।

Nakaṭá kherár na sha.

Of uncut grass there are nine hundred bundles.

This is a case of counting one's chickens before they are hatched, as well as of exaggeration.

---

19. *Exaggeration.*

বাল ছিঙ্গোতে মোহা মৰিল,
মই বোলো মোহা ৰণত হে পৰিল।

Bál chhingote mohá maril,
Mai bolo mohá ranat he paril.

My uncle died in scratching himself (literally in breaking a hair),
But I thought he fell in an engagement.

মোহা is mother's younger sister's husband.

---

20. *Exaggeration.*

সজৰ লগত সজ সঙ্গতি
মধুক কৰিলো পান,
বিক্ৰমাদিত্যৰ মুৰত উঠি
গঙ্গাত কৰিলো স্নান।

Sajar lagat saj sangati
Madhuk karilo pán,
Bikramáditya murat uthi
Gangát karilo snán.

By associating with the good I drank honey,
And by mounting on the head of Bikramaditya I bathed in the Ganges.

সজ is pure, good, excellent. মধু is honey. Bikramáditya was the name of a Hindu king. The meaning of the third line of the proverb is obscure.

---

21. *False excuses.*

হাৰ নাইকিয়া জিবা,
কয় কিবা কিবা।

Hár náikiyá jibá,
Kay kibá kibá.

The tongue because it has no bone,
Says various things.

A poor excuse made by a man when he says more than he ought. He does not admit the blame, but throws it on his tongue, which, he says, is easily pliable, because it is unsupported by bone.

cf.—The modern Greek proverb (*translation*).—" The tongue has no bones, yet it breaks bones," and also the Turkish proverb (*translation*)—" The tongue has no bone, yet it crushes."

---

22. *False pride and over-sensitiveness.*

কাৰ আগত কম কোনে পতিয়াব,
যাৰ আগত কম সেইয়ে লথিয়াব ।

Kár ágat kam kone patiába,
Jár ágat kam seiyé lathiyába.

Before whom shall I speak, who will believe ?
To whoever I say it he will kick me.

---

23. *Greediness.*

খকুৱা গল পাত কাটিবলৈ,
নিখকুৱাই মাটিতে খালে ।

Khakuá gal pát kátibalai,
Nikhakuái mátite khále.

The greedy went to cut a plantain-leaf,
He who was not greedy eat on the ground.

This is ironically meant.

---

24. *Greediness.*

খাবলৈ দমা দম্ বনলৈ গৰীয়া,
পিন্ধিবলৈ লাগে তাক আচুৱালি চুৰিয়া ।

Khábalai damá dam banalai gariyá,
Pindhiba ai láge ták áchuáli churiyá.

He is a great hand at eating, but he is like a lazy bullock as regards work,
And he requires an embroidered "*dhuti*" to wear.

গৰীয়া means lazy. আচুৱালি (*áchuwáli*) means a cloth embroidered with আচু (áchu) or red thread. The colour is obtained from the root of a tree called আচুকৰি (*áchukari*).

---

25. *Greediness.*

তিনি মোল্লা থাকিলে চাই,
খোদাই টো ওলাল হি ভোৰোকাই ।

Tini molla thákile chái,
Khodái to olál hi bhorokái.

Whilst the three mollás were watching,
Their god suddenly appeared.

I am told that this means that the three mollás were watching the feast being prepared, when their god appeared; but this proverb might mean anything. The Assamese Muhammadan has a feast on every possible occasion, the feast being prepared in a house adjoining the house of prayer. খোদা is, of course, not an Assamese word, but the Arabic *Khuda* for God.

---

26. *Greediness.*

ভাতৰ ভতুৱা মেখেলা ভাৰি,
ভাত বাঢ়ি ঠৈছো খোৱাহি আহি ।

Bhátar bhatuá mekhelá bhári,
Bhát bári thaichho khoáhi áhi.

Greedy rice-eater and mekhelá-bearer,
I have prepared and served up the rice, come and eat it.

This is addressed by some one to a greedy dependent. ভতুৱা and মেখেলা ভাৰি are both terms of reproach. The first means one who is fond of ভাত (rice), and the second means one who carries a মেখেলা (*mekhelá*), a garment worn by women and is therefore equivalent to calling a man a woman.

27. *Hitting a man when he is down.*

দুখৰ উপৰি দুখ,
কুকুৰে কামোৰে,
ছৱালে দলিয়াই,
ক'তো নিমিলে সুখ ।

Dukhar upari dukh,
Kukure kámore,
Chhawále daliái,
Kato nimile sukh.

Misery upon misery,
The dogs bite me,
The (boys) pelt me,
Nowhere have I found rest.

This is the cry of a beggar who is thus treated.

---

28. *Hypocrisy, impatience, inattention, ignorance.*

হাতি চুৰ কৰি নেই বাটে বাটে,
বেঙেনা চোৰক ধৰে,
নাকটো কাটিলে লাজ নেলাগে,
নখটো কাটিলে মৰে ।

Háti chur kari nei báte báte,
Bengená chorak dhare,
Nákto kátile láj neláge,
Nakhto kátile mare.

The elephant is stolen on the roadside,
He catches a man who has stolen brinjals,
If his nose is cut off, he is not ashamed,
But if you pare his nails, he dies (of grief).

A man steals an elephant from the roadside, but the thief of a *brinjal* is caught. If his nose is slit he is not ashamed, but if you pare his nails he dies (of grief).

29. *Impatience,*

আৰৈতকৈ উখুৱাৰ
খচ্ খচনি টান ।
Áraitkai ukhuwár
Khach khachani tán.

Ukhuwá is more importunate than arai.

Ukhuwá is equivalent to the Bengali উষ্ণা, *usna*, which is rice obtained by boiling paddy before husking; this rice is coarser than that obtained by sun-drying paddy and then husking it. The meaning of the proverb is that inferior persons are more importunate than their superiors.

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30. *Selfishness.*

আলহিয়ে বিছাৰে শাকত লোন;
ধান কিনাই বিছাৰে ডাঙ্গৰ দোন ।
Álahiye bichhére shákat lon,
Dhán kinái bichhére dángar don.

The guest looks out for salt in his vegetables;
The paddy-buyer searches for a large "*don.*"

In the old days salt was a luxury, and was therefore much appreciated. The "*don*" is a measure of capacity, and varies in size according to locality. It is supposed to contain five seers weight.

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31. *The impatient husband.*

কিনো পৈ হুতাই তাই
লোন খৰিচা
দিবৰ তত নাই ।
Ki no pai hutái tái
Lon kharichá
Dibar tat nái.

What an impatient husband!
He cannot even wait to be served with salt and pickle.

হুতাই তাই is impatient ; হুতাহ্ is derived from the Sanskrit হুতাশন, fire ; the word তাই is added for the sake of rhyme. This is the complaint of a troubled house wife. খৰিচা is a pickle made from the young shoots of the bamboo, and is eaten with boiled rice. It is much esteemed.

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32. *Inattention.*

কওঁতেই কলা, জতৰতে শলা ।

Ko (n) tai kalá, jatarate shalá.

If I tell him he is deaf, the spindle is in the spinning wheel.

"There are none so deaf as those who wo'nt hear."

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33. *Inattention.*

মই কও ৰাজ ভগনৰ কথা,
সি কয় কল থোকা বাদুলিয়ে খালে ।

Mai ko ráj bhaganar kathá,
Si kai kal thoká báduliye khále.

I talk about a revolution ;
He interrupts me, saying, a bat has eaten the bunch of plantains.

ৰাজভগন literally means the breaking up of a kingdom.

---

34. *Ignorance.*

যার নাই তর্জু তুল,
সি কি জানে বানিজৰ মোল ।

Jár nái tarju tul,
Si ki jáne bánijar mol.

He who has not a pair of scales,
What does he know of the worth of trade?

মোল is value, worth.

35. *An unskilful workman quarrels with his tools.*

নাচিব নাজানে চোঁতাল
খন হেৰেম গৰিয়া ।

Náchiba nájáne cho(n)tál
Khan herem gariyá.

He who does not know how to dance,
(Finds) the floor of the courtyard sloping.

হেৰেম গৰিয়া is usually applied only to land which is not level. It is interesting to compare Christian's Bihar proverb, which is almost identical (*náche na jánin ánganwen terh*). The meaning is the same.

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36. *Ignorance.*

বেজৰ নাকত খৰে খালে ।

Bejar nákat khare khále.

The doctor has ringworm on his nose.

খৱ is the common word for ringworm. The meaning of the proverb is that doctors suffer from the same ills as their patients. *c.f.* "physician, heal thyself."

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37. *Improvidence.*

আগেই আছিলে যেন তেন,
ভকতক ভুঞ্জাবৰ পৰা হল পেন পেন ।

Ágai áchhile jen ten,
Bhakatak bhunjábar pará hal pen pen.

You used to live before after a fashion,
But since you have taken to entertaining "bhakats,"
you have become very poor.

পেন পেন generally refers to the fact of a man being involved in debt and difficulty, the usual phrase being ধাৰেৰে পেন পেনিয়া হল (dhárere pen peniyá hal), became involved in debt. Perhaps the proverb explodes the idea of the good effects of entertaining "*bhakats.*" The latter have very considerable appetites, as the saying কনি পাড়ে হাহে খাই ভকত দাহে (*kani páre háhe khái bhakat dáhe*) shows. The above means that, as soon as the ducks lay eggs, the "bhakats" eat them up.

38. *Improvidence.*

গাঁত নাই চাল বাকলি,
মদ খাই তিন টেকেলি ।

Gát nái chál bákali,
Mad kháí tin tekeli.

He has nothing to cover himself with,
But he drinks three pots of rice-beer.

চাল literally skin, মদ is লাও পানি (láo páni) or the Bengali "*pachwai,*" which is a liquor fermented from boiled rice. মদ is largely drunk by the aboriginal people of Assam—Kacharis, Miris, and Deoris are particularly fond of it. It is not an unpleasant drink when fresh, its taste being a bitterish sub-acid. Hodgson gives the following description of how the Bodo (Kachiri) brews it :—"The grain is boiled; the root of a plant called, আগেচিতা, '*ágechitá,*' is mixed with it; it is left to ferment for two days in a nearly dry state; water is then added *quantum sufficit*; the whole stands for three or four days, and the liquor is ready. In Goalpara the 'borá mad,' which is the 'mad' of the Rabhas, is a fermented liquor made from 'borá dhán.' The following ingredients also are added :—leaves of the jack tree, leaves of a plant called '*bhatai tita,*' and long pepper. The Assamese '*mad*' is very similar in taste to the Nága 'zu,' although the former is perhaps preferable."

The proverb applies to an extravagant drunkard. Christian gives a Bihar saying, which it is interesting to quote, because it expresses the same idea, *i.e.* (*máur na jure tári*) = "He cannot afford rice gruel, yet he drinks toddy !"

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39. *Improvidence.*

মনে মুখে আছে মহৰ গাখিৰে কাঁহৰ বাটিয়ে নাই ।

Mane mukhe áchhe mahar gákhire ká(n)har bátiye nái.
He has the mind and mouth, but has not the vessel or the buffallo milk.

40. *Improvidence.*

সচি গৃহস্থৰ লোন তেল বয়,
মিচাৰ বাকলি নেযায় ক্ষয়।

Sachi grihashtar lon tel bay,
Michár bákali ne jái khai.

Although the host spends much oil and salt,
He cannot prepare a good prawn curry.
But the skin or the prawn is not rubbed off.

সচি literally is truly. মিচা is the fresh-water prawn or "ching-ari," in Kamrup নিছলা *nichhala*. ক্ষয় means decay, waste, loss, or destruction, but when used in Assamese, as here, with the verb যাবলৈ, it means to wear off.

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41. *Improvidence.*

হাতত নাই বিৎ
মনে কৰে পিত্ পিত্।

Hátat nái bit,
Mane kare pit pit.

He has no money in hand,
But his cravings are great.

পিত্ literally gall, bile. বিৎ literally wealth, substance.

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42. *Ingratitude.*

টান পালে ৰাম বোলে।

Tán pále Rám bole.

When in distress, a man calls on Ráma.

This proverb is not confined to Assam. There is a similar one in Bengali, and probably in Hindi. The proverb means that in times of prosperity, there is a want of gratitude to Ráma; it is only in times of distress that a man calls on his god.

43. *Laying pitfalls for others.*

কোটাৰ ঘৰৰ কুটি,
লোকলৈ বুলি হুল পাতি,
আপুনি মৰে ফুটি ।

Kotár gharar kuti,
Lokalai buli hul páti,
Apuni mare phuti.

He who lays thorns for others,
Dies amongst them himself.

The first line means nothing, and is merely inserted for purposes of ryhme. ফুটি (*phuti*) literally means pierced, or rather burst asunder.

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44. *Love of false display.*

পালিব নোৱৰা ৰুদ্ৰাখৰ জোটাজোট ।

Páliba noaura rudrákhyar jotájot.

There are many rosaries, the beads of which are not told in devotion.

The proverb means that rosaries are as often as not worn for show as for devotional purposos. ৰুদ্ৰাক্ষ is the seed of the *elœocarpus ganitrus* (Gamble), the hard tubercled nuts of which are polished and made into rosaries and bracelets. জোটাজোট literally great many from জোটোৱা, to join together.

---

45. *Love of false display.*

পোকৰত নাই মুৰত পাগ,
সি হয় দেহতৰ আগ ।

Pokarat nái murat pág,
Si hai dehatar ág.

With a *pagri* on his head,
And with nothing on the lower part of his body,
he wishes to take the lead

The Assamese thinks if he puts on a turban, this is a mark of respectability, and he will be thought a ভাল মানুহ (*bhál mánuh*) or respectable person. পাগ is short for পাগুৰি ।

46. *Love of false display.*

বাটত চোৱা যদি বৰ চুৰিয়াৰ ফেৰ,
ঘৰত যোৱা যদি ঢকুৱাৰ বেৰ ।

Bátat chowá jadi bar churiyár pher,
Gharat jowá jadi dhakuár ber.

If you meet him on the road, see the folds of his dhuti.
If you go to his house, (see) the walls are made of the bark of the támul tree.

Another proverb with a meaning very similar to the last—"The man puts on fine clothes to go out walking, but his house is toppling down." The "dhuti" worn by the ভাল মানুহ (*bhál mánuh*) has as many yards of stuff in it as it is possible to walk in. ঢকুৱা is the sheath or bark of the areca nut tree.

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47. *Love of false display.*

মুখলৈ চালে বৰ ডেকা,
পোকৰলৈ চালে কন্দাকটা ।

Mukhalai chále bar deka,
Pokaralai chále kandákatá.

The front view shows a fine young man,
But the back is a sight for tears.

Another proverb conveying the same meaning as 44 and 45. Also *cf.* the proverb—বাহিৰে ৰং চং ভিতৰে কোৱা ভাতুৰি, outside it is fair to see, but inside it is *kowá bháturi.* The latter is the fruit of a creeper (*momordica monodelpha*), of which the outside is a brilliant scarlet, but the inside is empty.

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48. *Love of false display.*

সাত পুৰুষত নাই গাই,
কৰিয়া লৈ খিৰাবলৈ যাই ।

Sát purushat nái gái,
Kariyá lai khirábalai jái.

His family had no cow for seven generations,
But he takes a "*kariyá*" and goes a milking.

The proverb means that the man's forefathers were too poor to be able to keep any cows; but when he gets one cow, he makes a great show of going to milk with a "*kariyá*" or milkpan. কৰিয়া is really a bamboo *chungá*. The bamboo is cut about a foot above a joint, and the hollow portion inside serves to hold the liquid. Milk is generally carried in such *chungás*, and they are generally used for milking.

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49. *Love of false display.*

সাত সেৰিয়া কাহি খুদ চাউলৰ ভাত,
খোৱাৰ যে ধিক্ ধিক্ শুনাৰো লাজ।

Sát seriyá káhi khud cháular bhát,
Khowár je dhik dhik shunáro láj.

The dish is of seven seers weight, but the meal is of broken rice.
Fie on him who eats it. It is a shame even to hear about it.

A কাহি is a metal dish; such dishes are sold according to weight of metal. A seven-seer dish would be an expensive one. খুদ is the refuse of rice or broken grains, left in the winnowing fan after the rice has been winnowed.

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50. *Lying and exaggeration.*

গাত নাই কানি, ছুটিয়া শালিকায় নিলে টানি।

Gát nái káni, chhutiá shálikái nile táni.

Although he had not a rag on his body, the chhutiá shálika pulled off his clothes.

There are two kinds of শালিকা, the ঘৰ শালিকা and the ছুটিয়া শালিকা, the latter being the bird that talks; both are of the *maina* species. The meaning of the proverb is that a man who is reduced to extreme poverty is subjected to ill-treatment even by inferiors.

51. *Meddling.*

কুৱৰৰ পাই নাম কুৱৰৰ ৰহি,
এজনৰ পানি [illegible] ঘটি ঘটি বহি।

Egharor pai nal egharor hari,
Egharor pani nok ghatang ghatang bahi.

The well belongs to one house, the rope to another,
A third house has drawn the water making a great clatter.

A busy-body interfering in other people's affairs. পাই নাম is a bricked-up well, or a well with its sides earthed-up and plastered. ঘটি ঘটি is a word derived from the sound of two things, dashing one up against the other. The Assamese are fond of using such onomatopoeic words.

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52. *Oppression of others.*

যি জনে পৰলু, পাব যি ন ৰহলু।

Ji kane parala, tar nahe ghanta.
Do as you would be done by.

Literally, whatever he gives to others he gets the same at home. "Do as you would be done by."

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53. *Out of sight, out of mind.*

[illegible] পৰা আছৰ হয় যি [illegible]।
Lokar para antar hoi si nor purohit.

When we are away from others, he is my "*purohit*."

That is to say, when a man is in company, he forgets all about his "*purohit*." A "*purohit*" is a family priest, who performs the [illegible] (*dahaki*), funeral ceremony, as well as other offices for the Assamese Hindu. The "*purohit*" is, as a rule, a Brahmin.

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54. *Swimming at a pool, etc.*

[illegible] [illegible], [illegible] [illegible]।
Bajar jakhe mana, hatikhar jakhe na mana.
He can see through the eye of a needle,
but not through that of an ass-head.

55. *Penny wise pound foolish.*

শাকত না খাই নুন পিটিকাত যাই তিনি গুণ।

Shakat ná khái kn, pitikát jái tini gun.

He does not use salt in cooking vegetables,
but three times the amount (of salt) goes in making salad.

The ordinary Assamese meal consists of—

i. "*Bhat*" (cooked rice).

ii. (*a*) fish or *máh* (dál) cooked, or

(*b*) fish and vegetable cooked together.

iii. In addition to the second, or as a substitute for it, a kind of salad is made; this is called "*pitika*" by the Assamese. This is made from potatoes, vegetables, and chillies.

The proverb is a warning against false economy, because it costs far less to use common salt in cooking than to make "*pitiká*."

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56. *Penny wise pound foolish.*

সেৰে সেৰে যাই পোৱালৈ কান্দে।

Sere sere jái powálai kánde.

Seers go away, but he cries after the quarter-seers.

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57. *Peevishness.*

নাই হে নেখাও, লঘোনেও নেযাও,
গাটো নিদিও দুখ।

Nái he nekháo, loghoneo nejáo,
Gáto nidio dukh.

If there is nothing to eat I won't eat, at the same time I won't fast.
I won't give my body any trouble.

This should be more properly laziness. The last line of the proverb should be, I think, the motto of the Assamese, for he hates, above all things, giving himself the least trouble.

58. *Presumption.*

কি নহবৰ হল, পোকলাগি হাটলৈ গল ।
Ki nahabar hal, poklági hátalai gal.

What a "*contre temps*" has occurred,
the woman covered with sores has gone to the market.

পোক লাগি literally, full of maggots.

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59. *Presumption.*

খচ খচ কৈ কাটা গুৱা,
তুমি যেন আমাৰ কিবা হোৱা ।
Khach khach kai kátá guá,
Tumi jena ámár kibá howá.

(I see) you are cutting the betelnut quickly. Are you in some way related to me?

Assamese women are supposed to give betelnut only to their husbands. The proverb illustrates a phase of a rustic "*affaire-du-cœur.*" গুৱা is the same as তামোল (*támol*), betelnut.

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60. *The pot calling the kettle black.*

নিজৰ পোকৰ তেকৃতেকীয়া,
লোকৰ পোকৰলৈ পানী চটিয়া ।
Nijar pokar tektekiyá,
Lokar pokaralai páni chatiyá.

Throwing water at the buttocks of others,
When one's own are wet.

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61. *Pride of family.*

নোম নেগুৰ বৰ্জ্জিত,
মাকৰ নাম বৰ পোহাৰি,
বাপেকৰ নাম ৰঞ্জিৎ ।
Nom negur barjit,
Mákar nám bar pohári,
Bápekar nám Ranjit.

Although it has no hair on its body and no tail,
It says its mother's name is Barpohári,
And its father's Ranjit.

The first line describes a mangy cur. Notwithstanding its miserable condition, the animal is proud of its lineage, বৰ পোহাৰি. Assamese women who sell odds and ends, are called "*pohári.*" বৰ is here used ironically. ৰঞ্জিত is a high-sounding name, only met with in good families.

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62. *Restlessness.*

ভাঙ্গি আন মুচৰি খাও,
পুৱা হলে নাও মেলি যাও ।
Bhángi án muchari kháo,
Puá hale náo meli jáo.

Break and bring everything (that we have) and let us eat it today.
Let us start in the boat tomorrow morning.

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63. *Selfishness.*

আনৰ আন চিন্তা, বুঢ়ী বামুনীৰ দুখন কানৰ চিন্তা ।
Ánar án chintá, buri bámunir dukhan kánar chintá.
Others have other thoughts, but the old Brahmin
woman thinks only of her two ears (*i.e.*, her earrings).

Christian, in his Bihar proverb, gives a Hindi proverb, which is very similar in meaning :—

Áno ke án chintá, ráni ke rájawe ke chintá.
Others have other thoughts, but the Ráni
has thoughts of the Rája only.

Christian says the proverb is applied to one who is intent on his own thoughts only, regardless of others.

64. *Hyprocrisy.*

আই গৈছিল গোঁসাই ঘৰলৈ,
ময় গৈছিলো লগত,
আখৈ কলা খাবলৈ পাই,
তাতে হলো ভকত ।

Ái gaichhil gosain gharalai,
Mai goichhilo lagat,
Ákhai kalá khábalai pái,
Táte halo bhakat.

My mother went to the house of the gosain,
I accompanied her.
When I got "*ákhai*" and plantains to eat,
I became a "*bhakat.*"

Perhaps this is a hit at the "*bhakats.*" Apparently, the qualification for admission to the "*sattra*" as a "*bhakat*" is to be able to appreciate fried paddy (*ákhai*) and plantains.

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65. *Egotism.*

আপোনাৰ মন যেনে,
আতাইকে দেখে তেনে,
জানো মন অতাইৰে একে ।

Áponár man jene,
Átáike dekhe tene,
Jáno man atáire eke.

He thinks that every body else's mind is like his own,
As if the minds of all are alike.

The proverb is interesting as illustrating the use of জানো । This literally means, I know. In conversation, however, জানো often means, I doubt, almost I do'nt believe you.

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66. *Stinginess.*

খাইছে আখৈয়া গোমে ধান দিছে এদোন ।
Kháichhe ákhaiyá gome dhán dicche edon.

He is bitten by a poisonous snake (*ákhaiyá gom*) and he gives one *don* of Indian corn, that is to say, to the *ojha* or quack doctor.

67. *Selfishness.*

মুধে মুধে একে ঘৰ সোধো সোধো বুলি
হল দেড় বছৰ সখি হেনো তোমাৰ জ্বৰ ।

Mudhe mudhe eke ghar sodho sodho buli
Hal der bachhar sakhi heno tomár jar.

We live alongside one another
For the last year and a half I have been intending
to ask you, dear friend, how is your fever.

মুধ is the ridgepole of the house. The expression মুধে মুধে is used when two houses are so close that their roofs touch one another. হেনো means I think.

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68. *Sponging on others.*

পৰৰ মুৰত খাওঁ, ভটিয়া পানীত যাওঁ ।

Parar murat kháo(n), bhatiyá pánit jáo(n).

I live upon others, and go with the tide.

The proverb probably means that he who lives on others, has to go along with the tide and sink all individuality of character.

ভটিয়া literally is down-stream as opposed to উজান (uján) up-stream.

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69. *Peculiarities.*

যি দেশৰ যি ধাৰা, যি পোকৰৰ যি নেৰা ।

Ji deshar ji dhárá, ji pokarar ji nerá.

Every country has its own customs,

* * * *

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70. *Stinginess.*

দিওঁতে দিয়ে ধান খেৰৰ চাই,
তাকে দিওতেই মুচ্ কচ্ যাই ।

Dio(n)te diye dhán kherar cháí,
Táke diotei much kach jái.

When he gives (at all), he gives the ashes of paddy straw,
And even in giving this he feels faint.

71. *Stinginess.*

লোকৰ সভালৈ যাবা,
আমাৰ দিয়ন থোৱন চাবা ।

Lokar shabhálai jábá.
Ámár diyan thoan chábá.

Go to a gathering at some one else's house,
(And then) see my liberality.

---

72. *Toadying.*

কাকো দেখি ৰান্ধে বাঢ়ে,
কাকো দেখি দুৱাৰ বান্ধে ।

Káko dekhi ráandhe báre,
Káko dekhi duwár bándhe.

When (the host) sees some people, he cooks and serves them (a meal),
And when he sees others, he bars the door.

---

73. *Trickery.*

তেলিয়াই কান্দে তেল পেলাই,
কপহুৱাই কান্দে লেট পেতাই ।

Teliyái kánde tel pelái,
Kapahuwái kánde let petái.

The oil-seller weeps for the oil that is spilt.
The cotton-dealer weeps and soaks (his cotton in the tears).

The cotton-dealer is not a man like the oilman, who "cries over split milk," but finds a way out of the difficulty. The latter part of the proverb, perhaps, refers to a practice which came under my personal observation when in the Golághát subdivision. The cotton is brought down from the hills by Nágas or other hillmen, who almost invariably soak it in water, or even sometimes

put stones inside the bundle, to make the cotton weigh heavier. The cotton-dealer, who is not to be outdone, soaks the salt, which is generally bartered for the cotton, in water for the same reason. The translation I have given for লেট পেতাই, although not strictly literal, conveys the meaning, which is meant to be a sarcasm on dealings of these cotton merchants. লেট পেতাই more correctly means having plastered.

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74. *Double advantage.*

একেই বুঢ়ী নাচনিয়াৰ, তাতে নাতিনিয়েকৰ বিয়া ।

Ekei buri náchaniyár, táte nátiniekar biyá.

The old woman is a capital dancer herself,
And now is the occasion of her granddaughter's marriage.

---

75. *Want of feeling.*

কলিয়াবৰত পৈয়েক মৰিল,

ঢেকি দিওঁতে মনত পৰিল ।

Kaliyábarat paiyek maril,

Dheki dio(n)te manat paril.

Her husband died at Kaliabar but
She remembers (his death) when working the *dheki.*

কলিয়াবৰ is in the Nowgong district, where there is a temple dedicated to Kámákhyá, used to be regarded as a holy place. The proverb means that, although the husband was a man of some piety, the widow only thought of him after his death when she was working the *dheki* (paddy-husker), *i.e.*, she did not remember any of his good qualities.

Class II.

PROVERBS RELATING TO WORLDLY WISDOM AND MAXIMS, EXPEDIENCY AND CUNNING, AND WARNINGS AND ADVICE.

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76. *A small income and much feasting.*

অলপ আৰ্জ্জন বিস্তৰ ভোজন,
সেই পুৰুষৰ দৰিদ্ৰৰ লক্ষণ।

Alap árjan bistar bhojan,
Sei purushar daridrar lakhyan.

A small income and much feasting,
Are the signs of a man becoming poor.

আৰ্জ্জন= gain, income ; লক্ষণ= a mark or token.

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77. *On trying to teach fools.*

অজ্ঞানিক জ্ঞান দি মনত পালো কষ্ট,
কনিবোৰ ভাঙ্গি পেলাই বাহো কৰিলো নষ্ট।

Ajnánik jnán di manat pálo kashta,
Kanibor bhángi peláí báho karilo nashta.

In teaching an ignorant person I became troubled in mind, for he broke the nest and destroyed our eggs.

This proverb refers to a folk tale related in the *Hitopadesh* which is as follows : There was a large *simul* tree frequented by a colony of parrots who laid their eggs in the hollow of the tree. An old parrot used to keep guard over the eggs of the other parrots in their absence. One day a wild cat tried to climb the tree, but the old parrot objected. The former, however, by dint of flattery and fair speeches caused the parrot to be off his guard and succeeded in climbing the tree and eating the eggs. The old parrot, when he saw what had happened, spoke the saying above.

78. *Have nothing to do with three things.*

অসতীৰ সদ্ জ্ঞান,
গৰু চোৰৰ গঙ্গা স্নান,
বেশ্যা তিৰীৰ একাদশী,
তিনিওৰো মুৰত মুতা বহি।

Asatír sad jnán,
Garu chorar Gangá snán,
Beshyá tírir ekádasí,
Tinioro murat mutá bahi.

Have nothing to do with these three things:
Honesty in an unchaste woman,
A cattle-thief bathing in the Ganges,
A harlot fasting on an *ekádasí* day.

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79. *The importunate's answer.*

আপুনি আনিছো মাগি,
তোক দিম কৰ পৰা হাগি।

Apuni ánichho mági,
Tok dim kar pará hági.

I myself have got by begging,
.....

---

80. *Anticipating.*

আগেই পাখি কাটে,
কেই দিনৰ নোমল।

Agei pákhi káte,
Kei dinar nomal.

He cuts the wings of the unfledged nestling beforehand.
literally the youngest of all.

81. *Times of affliction.*

আপদত ঔএও গল খজুৱাই ।

Ápadat óeo gal khajuwái.

In times of affliction even the *owtenga* tickles the throat.

The *owtenga Dillenia indica* (Watt) is an acid fruit surrounded by fleshy accrescent calyces, which, when the fruit is full grown (in March), have an agreeably acid taste, and are eaten by the Assamese, either raw or cooked, chiefly in curries. The acid juice sweetened with sugar forms a cooling drink. The Bengali name of the fruit is *chalta.* A portion of the fruit is also used pounded with *kharani* by Assamese women and used by them as hair wash.

cf.—আপদত গাৰ নোমেই শত্ৰু হই (*ápadat gár nomei shatru hai.*) In times of affliction, even the hair of one's body is an enemy.

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82. *Give a polite answer.*

আছে দান নাই সমিধান ।

Áchhe dán nái samídhán.

Give if you can; at any rate, say something polite.

সমিধান literally giving an answer.

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83. *When all scruples must be thrown to the winds.*

আপদত অযুগুত কৰিবলৈ যুয়াই ।

Ápadat ajugut karibalai juyái.

In times of adversity, all scruples must be thrown to the winds.

অযুগত=Bengali অযোগ্য (unbefitting.)

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84. *On aiming too high.*

উঠুৱাই মাৰিলে কাঠি,
জালোৱা ডোমৰ সাতজনি তিৰুতা
শুবলৈ নাতিলে পাটি ।

Uthuwái márile káthi,
Jálowá domar sátjani tirutá
Shubalai nátile páti.

This proverb contains a *double entendre*, but it may be translated as follows :

He rose up and threw the net,
The Jalowa Dom has seven wives,
But his bed is not large enough to contain them.

কাঠি is a thin piece of bamboo used in making bamboo or wicker work. কাঠি জাল is a kind of fishing net. পাটি is literally mat. The Jalowa Dom is the Dom who fishes in contradistinction to the Halowá Dom, the Dom who ploughs.

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85. *The petty shop-keeper.*

এদা বেপাৰীক জাহাজৰ বাতৰি কিয় ।

Edá bepárík jáhájar bátari kiya.

Why does a petty shop-keeper want with news of the steamer ?

এদা বেপাৰী literally a shop-keeper who sells ginger (এদা).

---

86. *Do one thing at a time.*

ওৰোকতে পোৰোক,
কেৰেলাটো সুমুয়াই দিয়া
বেঙ্গোনাটো পোৰোক ।

Orokate porok,
Kerelá to sumuái diyá
Bengená to porok.

Do one thing at a time,
Put the *kerelá* into the boiling rice,
And then roast the *bengená*.

কেৰেলা is the Bengali করলা, Hindi *koraila*.

The kerelá is the *momordica charantia*, a very bitter kind of vegetable of the gourd family. It is a creeping plant.

---

87. *Learning.*

ওজা লগা বিদ্যা,
পাখি লগা কাৰ ।

Ojá lagá bidyá,
Pákhi lagá kár.

Learning under a teacher,
An arrow with feathers,
(Are both effective).

ওজা is a magician, or more frequently an exorcist. *Vide* note to Proverb No. 17.

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88. *Circumstantial evidence.*

হাঁহ চোৰৰ মুৰত পাখি,
কঠাল চোৰৰ এঠাই সাখী ।

Há(n)h chorar murat pákhi,
Kathál chorar ethái sákhi.

The feathers stick to the head of the duck-stealer,
And the gum is evidence against the jack fruit-stealer.

কঠাল is the jack tree and its fruit. Sanskrit কণ্টক (*kantak*); both the bark of the tree and the fruit are covered with a sticky juice or gum.

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89. *A person with a great idea of his own importance.*

কৰ পৰা আহিলা কত দিলা ভৰি,
চোতাল খান ফাটি গল চেত্ চেত্ কৰি ।

Kar pará áhilá kat dilá bhari,
Chotál khán pháti gal chet chet kari.

Whence do you come ?
Wherever you trod on the courtyard, it split in pieces.

Literally, whence comest thou ? This is said ironically to somebody who gives himself airs. চেত চেত is one of the many Assamese expressions for conveying the sense of sound. Another such onomatopœic expression is ঘতং মতং, also গৃঙ্গ (*gring*). চেত্ চেত্ কৰি convey the idea of noise in splitting or tearing asunder.

90. *On appearing on the* "Chatai" *Hill.*

কিহৰ জগৰত মৰো
চটাই পৰ্ব্বতত গাটো
দেখাদি আঁধলি
পাচোটা ভৰো ।

Kihar jagarat maro
Chatái parbatat gáto
Dekhádi ádhali
Páchotá bharo.

What fault have I committed ?
I have appeared on the Chatái hill,
And have to pay five eight-anna pieces.

The চতাই পৰ্ব্বত is a mythical hill, which was supposed to be situated somewhere in the Sibságar district. The proverb applies to the case of a person who has to pay a fine for some imaginary fault.

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91. *Carelessness.*

ককালত কাচি
বুঢ়ী ফুৰে নাচি ।

Kakálat káchi
Buṛi phure náchi.

The sickle is on the waist of the old woman,
Who impatiently looks for it elsewhere.

---

92. *Quarrelling for no reason.*

কথা বা কত ভেকুৰি তলত ।

Kathá bá kat bhekuri talat.

Where is your reason (for quarrelling), it is underneath the *bhekuri* bush.

ভেকুৰি is a kind of scrub jungle.

This proverb applies to cases of quarrels about nothing.

93. *Selfishness.*

কাৰ জৰত কোনে পিয়ে পানী ।
কাৰ ভাগিনা মৰে কাৰ হয় হানী ।

Kár jarat kone piye páni,
Kár bháginá mare kár hai háni.

Who drinks water when another is thirsty.
Whose nephew dies it is his loss.

The proverb aptly illustrates the way of the world in such cases. ভাগিনা or ভাগিন is a sister's son.

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94. *The reward of merit.*

কেনে তোৰ কেনে জনি ফপৰিয়া তোৰ তিনি জনি,
ভাল তোৰ এজনীও নাই ।

Kene tor kene jani phapariyá tor tini jani,
Bhál tor ejanío nái.

What a wife for such a man,
The worthless has three wives, the worthy none !

As a rule, Assamese have but one wife, or two at the most, but occasionally, amongst well-to-do people of the old-fashioned class, the luxury of three wives is indulged in. ফপৰিয়া, literally scurfy.

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95. *Don't be too discriminating.*

কাকো নুবুলিবা ককা
এতাইৰে দাড়ি চুলি পকা ।

Káko nubulibá kaká,
Etáire dári chuli paká.

Don't call anyone (of them) grandfather;
They have all of them got white hair and beards.

The proverb means that all are equally cunning, and that one must not single out any particular person and call him ককা,

a clever old fellow. পকা literally means ripe, as a fruit it so comes to mean mature.

It is interesting to compare a Bihar proverb given by Christian in his "Bihar Proverbs," which means very much the same as the Assam proverb above.

Kekar kekar lihi (*n*) *nao* (*n*) *kamra orhle sagare gáo* (*n*). which Christian translates—"Whom am I to name? All the villages are similarly circumstanced! (Literally, all are alike, covered with blankets, *i.e.*, poor, in the same boat.)"

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96. *Assamese recipe for managing a wife.*

কটাৰি ধৰাবা শিলে, তিৰোতা বাবা কিলে ।
Katári dharábá shile, tirotá bábá kile.

Whet your knife on the grindstone.
Sway your wife with blows.

This is the Assamese recipe for managing a wife. কিল is a blow given with the elbow, and represents the pommelling given to a person when he is lying prostrate. This is one of Dák's proverbs.

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97. *The one-eyed, the lame, and the crooked.*

কণা, খোড়া, ভেঙ্গুৰ,
এই তিনি হাৰামৰ লেঙ্গুৰ ।
Kaná, khora, bhengur,
Ei tini hárámar lengur.

The one-eyed, the lame, and the crooked,
These three are a tail of ill.

There are various Indian proverbs regarding one-eyed, squint-eyed, and grey-eyed people being untrustworthy, so that the Assamese are not alone in their idea.

Christian gives the following proverbs, amongst others, in his Bihar Proverbs:—

"(*Birle kán bhal bhal manukh*), *i.e.*, Rarely do you meet with a one-eyed man who is a gentleman."

Also the following Urdu saying on the same subject, where a forced pun is made on the Arabic word *kan* = is :

"Káne ki badzátiyá(n) hain mere dil yaqin,
Áyá hai Qorán me (n) kán me (n) alkáfrin."

Of the wickedness of the one-eyed I am thoroughly convinced,
Because even in the Qorán it is said that the one-eyed is among the unbelievers."

---

98. *Useless cravings.*

খাবলৈ নাই কনটো,
বৰ হবলৈ মনটো ।

Khábaloi nái kanto,
Bar habalai manto.

He who has not a grain (of rice) to eat,
Has a mind to become great.

কন is the eye or germ of a seed, that which germinates or reproduces an atom.—(*Bronson*). So it comes to mean anything small. Young children are often called কন or কন লৰা, কন ছোৱালী ।

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99. *Exaggeration.*

গছত গৰু উঠা,
হোলোঙ্গাৰে কান বিন্ধা ।

Gachhat garu uthá,
Holongáre kán bindhá.

As wonderful as a bullock climbing a tree,
Or the lobe of the ear being pierced with a *holongá.*

Men as well as women bore their ears in Assam. When an earring is not worn, a piece of wood is inserted to keep the hole from closing up. Sometimes paper or cotton is used, but generally a cylindrically-shaped piece of wood. A হোলোঙ্গা is a bamboo, used for carrying bundles of paddy, when reaping and carrying is going on. The bundles of dhán (paddy) are slung on to each end of the *holongá* in equal proportions, so that the

holongá balances on the shoulder. In this way all burdens are carried in Assam, but the word হোলোঙ্গা, I believe in Upper Assam is only applied to the pole used for carrying *dhán.* কানমাৰি to the word for the bamboo that is used for carrying other burdens.

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100. *Laughing at others, misfortunes.*

ঘোক বাই ঘোক, সাপে খালে তোক,
মাছটি পালে মোক।

Ghok bái ghok, sápe khále tok,
Máchhti pále mok.

Thrust your hand, sister, thrust your hand into the hole,
If there be a snake it will bite you, but if there be a fish let me have it.

This is said in chaff by one girl fishing to another likewise engaged.

---

101. *Useless cravings.*

ঘৰত নাই কনটো, বৰ সভালৈ মনটো।

Gharat nái kanto, bar sabhálai manto.

He has not a grain of rice in his house, but he wishes to hold a big feast.

This is almost similar to No. 97, except that সভা is substituted for the verb হবলৈ। Also compare the Kámrup proverb "উৰালত নাই কনটো বৰ সভালৈ মনটো (*urálat nái kanto, bar sabhálai manto*). The উড়াল or উৰাল is a wooden mortar used for pounding rice in.

---

102. *How things are tested.*

ঘোৰাক চিনি কাণত,
তিৰিক চিনি টানত,
খুৰক চিনি শানত।

Ghorák chini kánat,
Tirik chini tánat,
Khurak chini shánat.

A horse is known by his ears,
A woman in times of adversity,
And a razor on a whetstone.

The idea here is that a good horse keeps his ears erect; a virtuous wife will be faithful in adversity; and a good razor does not break on the whetstone. As to the faithfulness of women, horses, etc., *cf.* the Persian proverb:—

"Asp o zan o shamsher-i-tez wafádár ke did."
What man ever saw a horse, a woman, or a sword faithful!

খুৰ (khur) (or khyur) is the usual word for razor. শান is a grindstone or whetstone. This is one of Dák's sayings.

---

103. *The irony of fate.*

চোৰে নিয়ে লফা দায়,
গিৰিহত মৰে খৰলি খায়।

Chore niye laphá dái,
Girihat mare kharali khái.

When the thief steals the "*laphá,*"
The householder consoles himself with *kharali.*

An amusing comment on the irony of fate, perhaps. The লফা শাক is a common Assamese vegetable. খৰলি=leaves and stalks of vegetables cooked dry. দায় literally reaps.

খৰলি খাই means suffers inconvenience.

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104. *Sudden misfortunes.*

চোৰক মোৰে পালে,
তাঁতীক বৰলে খালে।

Chorak more pále,
Tá(n) tik barale khále.

The thief was seized with colic,
And a wasp stung the weaver.

Both of these are intended to be instances of sudden and unexpected mishap.

105. *Inevitable.*

চাপৰিলে মেঘ এৰাব নে ?

Cháparile megh erába ne.

Can a rain cloud be avoided by bending down ?

---

106. *Never waste a moment.*

যাৰ খাবৰ জীবৰ মন,

বহোতেও আজোৰে বন ।

Jár kháb̄ar jibar man,

Bahoteo ájore ban.

He who has a mind to thrive,

Scratches up grass, even when sitting down.

খাবৰ জীবৰ মন literally, the mind for eating and living. The proverb means that people who wish to succeed, should never waste a moment, which may be devoted to work. The grass referred to is that growing in a man's garden or field.

---

107. *Working in amity.*

জেঠেৰি বৈনায় হাল,

কিহৰ পাল এ পাল ।

Jetheri bainái hál,

Kihar pál e pál.

What turns are there in the ploughings of brothers-in-law.

জেঠেৰি= a wife's elder brother. বৈনাই= a younger sister's husband.

পাল is the word usually applied to a turn of any kind of duty.

হাল, literally, plough.

---

108. *On being taken to task for a trifling fault.*

জগৰ বা লগালো কি,

মাতো হাঁহ কনি দি ।

Jagar bá lagálo ki,

Máto há(n)h kani di.

What fault have I committed ?
I beg pardon and present you with a duck's egg.

মাতো is an idiomatic term for "I beg your pardon."

The proverb refers to the case of a person who thinks he is taken to task for a trifling fault.

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109. *The light of a lamp amid the glare of a torch.*

জোৰৰ আগত বাতিৰ পোহৰ ।

Jorar ágat bátir pohar.

The light of a lamp amid the glare of a torch.

The proverb means that the feeble light of a lamp would not be noticed in the strong light given by a torch.

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110. *Sleep is pleasant.*

টোপনিৰ চিকণ পুৱা ।
কটাৰিৰ চিকণ গুৱা ।

Topanir chikan puá.
Katárir chikan guá.

To sleep in the early morning is pleasant.
A good knife is required to cut betelnut.

This proverb is characteristic of the Assamese.

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111. *The punishment of sin, though tardy, perhaps is sure.*

তাহা নিয়ে খালে টেঙ্গা,
এতিয়া পালেহি জেঙ্গা ।

Táhá niye khále tengá,
Etiyá pálehi jengá.

He ate the "*tengá*" a long time ago,
And he is blamed now !

The proverb refers to the case of a man whose sin has found him out. He stole the orange and eat it long ago, and he gets into hot water about it now !

জেঙ্গা means an offence, anything at which exception is taken.

112. *Meum and tuum.*

তোৰ হলে মোৰ, মোৰ হলে বাপেৰেও নে পায় তোৰ ।

Tor hale mor, mor hale bápereo ne pái tor.

What is yours is mine, but what is mine cannot be got even by your father.

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113. *Ingratitude.*

ঠাই দিবৰ গুণ, তপ্ তপনি শুন ।

Thái dibar gun, tap tapani shun.

The result of giving a person a place, is to hear him grumble.

The proverb means that, if you give a person a place at a feast, in all probability he will not thank you for your courtesy, but will only grumble.

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114. *False pride.*

দোলাৰ নামেৰে শিকিয়াতে যাবা,
গাখিৰৰ নামেৰে পানীকে খাবা ।
Dolár námere shikiyáte jábá,
Gákhirar námere pánike khábá.

In the name of a dooly you are carried slung on a pole.
In the name of milk you drink water.

দোলা is the Bengali ডুলি, a litter for carrying people in. শিকিয়া is a contrivance of ropes for slinging burdens on to a bamboo.

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115. *The use of the thumb.*

দহো আঙ্গুলিৰে খাই,
বুঢ়াই হেঁচুকিলেহে যাই ।
Daho ángulire khái,
Burái he(n)chukilehe jái.

All the ten fingers are used in eating,
But it is the thumb that has to push the eatables into the mouth

The Assamese takes up the rice in the hollow of his hand and then crams it into his mouth, using the thumb to push it in—not a very elegant way of eating. বুঢ়া আঙ্গুলি (the chief finger).

116. *Many hands make light work.*

দহোটাৰ লাখুটি এটাৰ বোজা ।

Dahotár lákhuti etár bojá.

The staves of ten men are a load to one man.

cf.—The Bihar proverb given by Christian—

" (*Das ka láthi ek ka bojh*). The idea conveyed is the same as in our proverb " Many hands make light work."

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117. " *Evils never come singly.*"

দুৰ কপলীয়া হাবিলৈ যাই, দা চিগে বৰলে খাই ।

Dur kapaliyá hábilái jái, dá chige barale khái.

The unfortunate one goes to the wood,
and his " dá " breaks, and a wasp stings him.

This is a case of "Evils never come singly." বৰল is the Bengali বোল্‌তা (a wasp). The use of খাই is noteworthy; it means (literally) eats. The Assamese has no regular word for sting. *cf.*—সাপে খালে (shápe khále) a snake bit him— literally eat him.

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118. *How the poor are despised.*

দুখিয়া হলে লেটেৰা ভাৰ্য্যাই নেদেখে হিত,

বাটত লগ পাই মিতিৰে নোসোধে দিব লাগে বুলি কিবা বিত ।

Dukhiyá hale leterá bhárjyái nedekhe hit,

Bátat lag pái mitire nosodhe diba láge buli kibá bit.

When leterá (the sloven) becomes poor,
his wife does not esteem him ;

When his friends meet him by the way, they take no notice
of him, fearing they will have to help him with money.

The first proverb is an illustration of our own saying that "When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window." The second part shows the way of the world in such cases. লেটেৰা, the man's name in this proveb, literally means a sloven. ভাৰ্য্যা is a Sanskrit word for wife. The common Assemese word is ঘৈনি (ghaini). হিত literally means advantageous, profitable. নোসোধে (literally) do not ask after him. বিত is a synonym for ধন (dhan).

119. *When everything has gone wrong.*

ঢেকিটো লৰক ফৰক কটৰাটো ভগা,

কোন কলৈ গল তাৰহে লগা ।

Dhekito larak pharak kataráto bhagá,
Kon kalai gal tárahe lagá.

The dheki has become unsteady, the post is broken,
How can I say who has gone where.

কটৰা is the stand on which the *dheki* works.

---

120. *Idiosyncrasies.*

ধানটোয়ে পতি কনটো,

মানুহটোয়ে পতি মনটো ।

Dhántoye pati kanto,
Mánuhtoye pati manto.

Each grain of paddy has its grain of rice ;
Each person has his idiosyncrasy.

The first line is put in with the idea of throwing additional emphasis on the second line. As a matter of fact, it is incorrect that each grain of paddy contains a grain of rice, as any Assamese peasant will tell you, or you can see for yourself. A certain number of grains in each ear contain nothing. The Assamese call such পতান (*patán*).

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121. *A good piece of advice.*

ধন লবা লেখি, বাট বুলিবা দেখি ।

Dhan labá lekhi, bát bulibá dekhi.

Count money first before you take it over,
And see the road as you walk.

বুলিবা means to walk, to pass.

বাট বুলিবা দেখি, walk with your eyes open.

A very sensible piece of advice.

122. *Hypergamy.*

নৰকৰ কন্যা উদ্ধাৰিলেই শুচি ।

Narakar kanyá uddhárilei shuchi.

A girl (bride) from hell is purified when taken up.

Even girls of a lower status in society are allowed to be married by men of a higher status, in the same caste, *cf.* Manu "স্ত্রীরত্নং দুষ্কুলাদপি ।" নৰক is one of the many infernal regions enumerated in the Hindu books. Manu speaks of twenty-one hells and gives their names. Other authorities vary greatly as to the numbers and names of the hells. (See Vishnu Puran, II, 214, and Dowson's Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology.)

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123. *Cutting off the tiger's tail.*

নেগুৰ কাটি বাঘ চোঙ্গলৈ মেলিলে ।

Negur káti bágh chongalai melile.

They cut off the tiger's tail, and then let him loose in his haunt.

This refers to the inadvisability of letting off a bad character with a light punishment.

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124. *A name that bodes ill-luck.*

নামৰ পৰিছে সাং দুৱাৰত মাৰাহি দাঙ্গ ।

Námar parichhe sáng duarat márahi dáng.

The *nám* (singing of religious songs) is over, shut the door.

সাং finished, over.

It is usual to shut the door of the *namghar* when prayers are over.

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125. "*People who live in glass-houses should not throw stones.*

নাহাহিবি মোক, খুচৰিব তোক ।

Náháhibi mok, khuchariba tok.

Don't laugh at me, you will catch the contagion (if you do).

People who laugh at others' misfortunes, are thus advised.

The proverb means, do not laugh at another's misfortune lest it befalls you.

126. *Ill-gotten gains.*

পাপৰ ধন প্ৰায়শ্চিত্তত যাই ।
Pápar dhan práyshchittat jái.
Money got by unfair means, goes in expiations.

The প্ৰায়শ্চিত্ত is imposed by the "*gosain*," or spiritual guide. It consists of (*a*) money payment to the *gosain*, (*b*) penance, *c*) certain duties to be performed.

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127. *Don't lose time in partaking of a meal when it is ready.*

পালে চৰাই ভাঙ্গিবা পাখি, হোৱা ভাতক ন থবা ৰাখি ।
Pále charái bhángibá pákhi, howá bhátak na thabá rákhi.
When you have caught a bird, break its wings.
Don't delay in eating rice which is ready.

---

128. *Three people should always be intent on their work.*

পঢ়ে, পঢ়াই, ৰোয়ে পান,
এই তিনিয়ে নিচিন্তে আন ।
Parhe, parhái, roye pán,
Ei tiniye nichinte án.
He who reads, he who teaches, he who sows *pán*,
These three should not think of anything else.

The cultivation of the pan vine requires some attention. This is one of Dák's sayings.

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129. *Want of wordly wisdom.*

পঢ়ি শুনি কৰিলে বিয়া, চোৰে লৈ গল ভুৱা দিয়া ।
Parhi shuni karile biyá, chore lai gal bhuyá diyá.
A man married afer acquiring knowledge,
But he was deceived and his wife was stolen away by a thief.

---

130. *Want of tact.*

বাটত লগ পালে কমাৰ, দা গৰি দিয়া আমাৰ ।
Bátat lag pále kamár, dá gari diyá ámár.
They met the blacksmith on the road and said "Make a knife for us."

i.e., they expected the blacksmith to be able to make a "*dá*" for them when he was away from his forge.

The above saying is quoted in the case of an untimely request or invitation.

131. *One who is always in hot water.*

বাৰটা মাহৰ তেৰটা জগৰ, সদাই নুগুছে এটা লগৰ ।

Báratá máhar teratá jagar, sadái nuguchhe etá lagar.

In twelve months thirteen scrapes,
I cannot exist without getting into hot water.

This is the complaint of somebody who is always in trouble.

---

132. *Opposites.*

বলীয়ে নিৰ্ব্বলীয়ে কিহৰ হতাহতি,
ধনীয়ে নিৰ্ধনীয়ে কিহৰ মিত্ৰাৱতী ।

Baliye nirbaliye kihar hatáhati,
Dhaniye nirdhaniye kihar mitráwati.

What passage-of-arms can there be between the strong and the weak,
What friendship can there be between the rich and the poor.
বলী means a strong man.

বলি also means a sacrifice. হতাহতি means hand-to-hand conflict; also two people working together at the same task. মিত্ৰাৱতী is the same as মিতিৰালি, which means friendship.

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133. *So terrible that even Bhagbanta and Basudev are afraid.*

ভয়ত ভগৱন্ত পলাই কিললৈ বাসুদেৱ দৰাই।

Bhayat Bhagabanta paláí kilalai Básudeo darái.

Bhagabanta even flies from fear, and Basudev is afraid that he will be beaten.

ভগৱন্ত or ভগৱান is পৰমেশ্বৰ (Parmeswar), বাসুদেৱ is another name for কৃষ্ণ (Krishna).

---

134. *Bitter words are hard to hear.*

ভাতৰ তিতা খাবলৈ ভাল, মাতৰ তিতা খাবলৈ টান ।

Bhátar titá khábalai bhál, mátar titá khábalai tán.

It is possible to eat bitter rice, but it is hard to hear bitter words.

ভাতৰ তিতা, rice that is flavoured with acid to make it palatable.

135. *From good comes good.*

ভালৰ ভাল সৰ্ব্বতি কাল ।

Bhálar bhál sarbati kál.

Good comes from good for all time.

সৰ্ব্বতি কাল (literally), for ever and ever.

---

136. *Which is the sweeter—sweet words or sweet food ?*

ভোজন মিঠা নে বচন মিঠা ?

Bhojan mithá ne bachan mithá ?

Which is sweeter—sweet food or sweet words ?

বচন also means a passage from a sacred book.

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137. *Only go when you are invited.*

মাতিলে ৰনলৈকো যাবা, নে মাতিলে ভোজলৈ নাযাবা ।

Mátile ranalaiko jábá, ne mátile bhojalai nájábá.

Go to a battle even if you are summoned,
but don't go to a feast uninvited.

The proverb means that when you are invited even go to a battle at the risk of your life, but don't go uninvited to a feast.

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138. *Anticipating evil.*

মোৰ পোৰ বোৱাৰী হব, মোক চুলিত ধৰি বাটত থব ।

Mor por bowári haba, mok chulit dhari bátat thaba.

My son will have a daughter-in-law.
Who will catch me by the hair and throw me on the path.

বোৱাৰী, son's or younger brother's wife. The former is called পো বোৱাৰী and the latter is called ভাই বোৱাৰী ।

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139. *Cutting wood by no means an easy task.*

মোনাইয়ে কাঠ কাতে, মায়ে পানী হেন দেখে ।

Monáiye káth káte, máye páni hen dekhe.

The maternal uncle cuts wood ;
his wife thinks it an easy job.

পানী হেন, literally as easy as water.

140. *Where there is a will there is a way.*

মন কৰিলে চন কৰিব পাৰি ।

Man karile chan kariba pári.

If I put my mind to it, I can find a way to make it difficult for him.

---

141. *The shorter it is, the more it tears.*

যেতেকতে নাটে, তেতেকতে ফাটে ।

Jetekate náte, tetekate pháte.

The shorter it is, the more it tears.

The proverb refers to an Assamese folk tale regarding an old woman who, as fast as she sewed her *mekhela* (petticoat), the latter kept on tearing.

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142. *None but the wearer knows where the shoe pinches.*

লুইতেহে জানে বঠা কিমান লৈ বহে ।

Luitehe jáne bathá kimána lai bahe.

The Luhit knows how deep the oar dips.

The Luhit is the old name for the Brahmaputra. Now-a-days by the Luhit is understood that portion of the Brahmaputra between the mouth of the "Subansiri" river and Luhitmukh. The saying has the same meaning as our own proverb "None but the wearer knows where the shoe pinches."

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143. *A man of no consequence.*

লাথি মাৰিলেও যিটো, বোপাই বুলিলেও সিটো ।

Láthi márileo jito, bopái bulileo sito.

It is all the same whether you kick him or call him father.

The saying means that it is not worth while pleasing a certain person, for বোপাই is a friendly address. লাথি means a kick given backwards at any one following up behind. লাঠী means a stick or a club.

144. *The boon of having a travelling companion.*

লগ হলে লঙ্কালৈকো যাব পাৰি ।

Lag hale Lankálaiko jába pári.

In company one can go even as far as Lanká.

Lanka is the name given by Hindus to Ceylon.

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145. *The more haste the less speed.*

লৰা লৰি বেলিকা জোলোঙ্গাত জাপি নোসোমাই ।

Lará lari beliká jolongát jápi nosomái.

When you are in a hurry,
you can't fit in even a *jápi* into the knapsack.

This saying is meant to illustrate the idea expressed in our own proverb "The more haste the less speed."

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146. *What makes up the house.*

ল'ৰাই লুৰিয়ে ঘৰ খান,
দোখোৰাই দুখৰিয়ে জুহাল খান ।

Larái luriye ghar khán,
Dokhorái dukhariye juhál khán.

Children make up the house,
Sundries also make up the hearth.

দোখোৰা দুখৰি means odds and ends of firewood that are not burnt. জুহাল=জুইশাল=জুইধৰা ঠাই=hearth.

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147. *Do as you would be done by.*

সমানে সমানে কৰিবা কাজ,
হাৰিলে জিকিলে নাই লাজ ।

Samáne samáne karibá káj,
Hárile jikile nái láj.

Deal equally with your equals,
And then whether you succeed in life or not, you need not be ashamed.

In fact, "Do as you would be done by."

148 *Even little things are of profit.*

সোলা মুখত মাখি পৰে,
সিও লাভৰ ভিতৰ ।

Solá mukhat mákhi pare,
Sio lábhar bhitar.

Even if a fly falls into a toothless mouth,
It is a gain.

সোলা means the same as লাপুঙ্গ (*lápung*), *i.e.*, toothless.

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149. *The kiss of love.*

চেনেহৰ চুমাই নাকটি চিঙ্গে ।

Chenehar chumái nákati chinge.

The kiss of love wounds the tip of the nose.

নাকটি=literally the cartilage of the nose. চিঙ্গে=literally breaks asunder.

This is an ironical expression for false love or affection.

---

150. *Half a loaf is better than no bread.*

হেৰা পোৱা ধনৰ চৌদ্ধ অনাও ভাল ।

Herá powá dhanar chodha anáo bhál.

If you find even fourteen annas of lost money, it is well.

---

151. *When the bone of contention is removed.*

হাঁহ পোৱালী নিলে সেনে,
তুমি যেনে ময়ো তেনে ।

Ha(n)h powálí nile sene,
Tumi jene mayo tene.

The hawk has carried off the duckling,
Now we are equal.

Literally, I am the same as you are. The hawk has carried off your duckling, so you can't lord it over me any longer.

152. *The man who is blind.*

জাপি, লাঠী, টনা, ইয়াক যি নলয়,
সি দিনতে কনা ।

Jápi, láthi, taná, iyák ji nalai,
Si dinate kaná.

He who carries neither jápi, láthi, nor taná,
Is blind even in the daytime.

Jápi (জাপি) a wicker hat serving as an umbrella.

লাঠী, a walking stick ; টনা (*taná*), a napkin, small dhuti.

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153. "*People who live in glass-houses, etc.*"

চাই চাই বুলিবা বাট, দেহৰ ভিতৰত আছে খাল বাম, পিছলি পৰিবা তাত ।

Chái chái bulibá bát, dehar bhitarat áchhe khál bám,
pichhali paribá tát.

Look out as you move, for there are many uneven places within your own body, and you might slip into one of them.

This is a sort of equivalent for "People in glass-houses should not throw stones."

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154. *Nothing is attained without labour.*

দুখ নকৰিলে মুখ নভৰে ।

Dukh na karile mukh nabhate.

If you don't take trouble, you won't fill your mouth.

---

155. *Nothing is attained without labour.*

দুখতহে মুখ ভৰে বুঢ়া লোকে কয়,
সকলো গুনি চালে মিছা নহয় ।

Dukhathe mukh bhare burá loke kay,
Sakalo guni chále michhá nahay.

Labour alone fills the mouth, so the old folk say ;
Every one has heard this and seen this ; it is not false.

This is another proverb like the preceding one.

156. *Silence is golden.*

কথাৰ দুয়েষাৰ বান্ধৰ দু মেৰ ।

Kathár duyeshár bándhar du mer.

Two words in speaking, two rounds in a fastening.

This means that you should not say more than is absolutely necessary on an occasion. Two rounds in a fastening refers to the splicing together of bamboos when two rounds or more are made with the rope or cane before the knot is tied.

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157 *A person not worth conciliating.*

ধাৰে মাৰিলেও যেনে, গাদিৰে মাৰিলেও তেনে ।

Dháre márileo jene, gádire márileo tene.

It is the same whether you strike with the sharp edge or the blunt side (of the dá).

This saying refers to a person who is so weak and insignificant, that it is all the same whether he is your enemy or your friend, as he cannot injure you or benefit you. ধাৰ (*dhár*) and গাদি (*gádi*) are always used, respectively, to denote the sharp edge and blunt side of a "*dá*."

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158. *Crying over spilt milk.*

কান্দিলে ধাৰ শুজ নে যাই ।

Kándile dhár shuj ne jái.

By weeping a debt is not paid.

It is no good crying over spilt milk.
শুজ means to liquidate, to repay a debt.

---

159. *A chip of the old block.*

বাপেক যেনে পিতেক তেনে ।

Bápek jene pitek tene.

Like father, like son.

i.e., the son 's "a chip of the old block."

160. *Can a leopard change his spots.*

এঙ্গাৰ ধুলেও বগা নহয় ।

Engár dhuleo bagá nahay.

Even with washing, charcoal cannot become white.

This proverb is derived from the Sanskrit saying " অঙ্গাৰ শত ধৌতেন মলিনত্বং ন মুঞ্চতি."

Also compare the Hindi proverb কয়লাকো ময়লা ছুটে, যব আগ কবে প্রবেশ ।

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161. *Worldly wisdom.*

দিনৰ পৰ্ব্বত ৰাতিৰ জুই,
তাক নেখেদি থাকিবা শুই ।

Dinar parbat rátir jui,
Ták nekhedi thákibá shui.

A mountain by day and a fire by night,
Do not follow them, but remain resting.

They are both far away though they seem to be near.

---

162. *Responsibilities of power.*

য'ত ৰাজ ত'ত কাজ ।

Jata ráj tata káj.

Wherever there are kingdoms, there are duties to be performed.

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163. *Rules of Society.*

প্রবাসত নিয়ম নাই ।

Prabásat niyam nái.

In a temporary residence there is no rule.

The proverb means that, when you are away from home, there is no necessity for thinking about *les convenances* of society. Another reading is—

প্রদেশত নিয়ম নাই ।

Pradesat niyam nái.

In a foreign country you need not regard rules of society.

With reference to this proverb, *cf.* No. 82; also the Bihar proverb given by Christian (page 70 of his book)—

" Jaisan des, taisan bhes."

" Suit your behaviour to the country."

164. *Half a loaf is better than no bread.*

একো নোহোৱাতকৈ কনা মোমাইও ভাল ।

Eko nohowátkai kaná momáio bhál.
A blind uncle is better than no uncle.

Here কনা is used to signify a blind person, its real meaning being one-eyed.

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165. *A sound piece of advice.*

ফাঁকডেমা চাই লুৰিবা খৰী,
তাৰে কানমাৰি তাৰে জৰি ।

Phá(n)kdema cháí luribá khari,
Táre kánmári táre jari.

When you gather firewood look out for the *phankdema.*
So that you can find your stick for carrying the bundle of faggots on, as well as the fastening out of it

The *phankdema* is a tree the bark of which is useful for fastenings and which is highly combustible, as it contains much oil; hence the proverb. The branches also are straight and light, and therefore handy for use as *kánmáris* (poles for carrying burdens).

Class III.

PROVERBS RELATING TO PECULIARITIES OF CERTAIN CASTES AND CLASSES.

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166. *Ahoms.*

আহোমৰ চকলং হিন্দুৰ বেই,
তোমাৰ পাতলিত পৰিছো যেই কৰা সেই ।

Ahomar chaklang Hindur bei,
Tomár pátalit parichho jei kará sei.

For the Ahoms the "chaklang" and for the Hindus the "bei,"
Deal with me as you like, now that I am in your grip.

These lines are meant to express the feelings of a bride after marriage.

চকলং (*chaklang*) is the name of the Ahom marriage ceremony. বেই (*bei*) is a wooden square frame set up on four posts and decorated, under which the bride and the bridegroom are given a ceremonial bath.

Here বেই is put for বিয়া, a part for the whole, by synecdoche. Now-a-days, nearly all marriages, even amongst the Ahoms and Chutiás, are performed according to the Hindu custom, there being very few "*chaklang*" ceremonies. The Ahoms and Chutiás are becoming rapidly Hinduised.

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167. *Bhakats.*

কনি পাৰে হাঁহে খাই ভকত দাঁহে ।
Kani páre há(n)he khái bhakat dá(n)he.
Ducks lay eggs and the Bhakats eat them.

ভকত (*bhakat*).—This is the name given to the disciples of the gosains.

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168. *Bhakats.*

ভকততকৈ ঢেঁকি থোৰা টো ডাঙ্গৰ নে ।
Bhakatatkai dhe(n)ki thorá to dángar ne ?
Is the pestle of the "dheki" of more value than a "bhakat"?

The থোৰা (thorá) is the heavy pestle fixed on the lever of the *dheki*.

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169. *Marriage.*

যেতিয়া মাৰিব ঢোলত চাপৰ,
তেতিয়া লবা মুৰত কাপৰ ।
Jetiyá máriba dholat chápar,
Tetiyá labá murat kápar.
When the drum is beaten,
Then cover your head with a cloth.

It means that, when a marriage is finally settled and is going to be celebrated by the beating of drums, then the girl should cover her head with a cloth.

In Assam, girls before marriage do not veil themselves. It is only on the day of marriage and afterwards that the veil is donned, when the new life is said to begin.

170. *Hastiness.*

ভুকুটোত কল নপকে ।

Bhukutot kal napake.

By means of a blow the plantain does not ripen.

ভুকুটোত=with one blow.

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171. *Bhakats.*

নাকত লাগিল পাক ;
মহা ভকতৰ চিদ্ৰ লাগিল,
মেধি পাতিম কাক ।

Nákat lágil pák ;
Mahá bhakatar chidra lágil,
Medhi pátim kák.

An unexpected thing has happened ;
The head bhakat has been found fault with,
Whom shall I make a medhi ?

The saying is ironically meant. The head "*bhakat*" is next to the gosain, the most powerful person at the Sastra. He is a person who is generally supposed to be above suspicion. A মেধি is a person of much less importance, being only the gosain's agent at a village. The medhis are entitled to receive, I believe, a small portion of the offerings or of the gosain's "*kar*," or tax, as commission for collecting the same. These officers exist all over Assam, and through them the gosain and the bhakats at the *Sattra* keep touch with the people. Medhis are sometimes known by the title of "*sajtola.*" There are also ranks of medhis, *e.g.*, "bor" medhi (head medhi) and ráj medhi (the chief officer of the gosain outside the *sattra*). *Medhis* at village feasts generally receive what is called মান (*mán*), which literally means honour or obedience. The "*mán*," however, often takes a more tangible form in the way of a gift of an earthenware "charu" (vessel) and a *pátidhárá*, *i.e.*, a seat covered with a *pati* or mat, by the man who gives the feast.

172. *Bhakats (of Kamlábári).*

আগৰ কমলাবৰীয়াই ধুই খাই খৰি,
এতিয়াৰ কমলাবৰীয়াই নো ধোয়ে ভৰি ।

Agar Kamlábariyái dhui khái khari,
Etiár Kamlábaryái no dhowe bhari.

The Kamlábári "*bhakats*" of former days used to wash firewood before they cooked with it,
The Kamlábari "*bhakats*" of the present day don't even wash their feet.

This saying means that the "*bhakats*" of this *sattra* used to be so punctilious, that they washed firewood before cooking with it, for fear that it might have been defiled by the touch of some person. Now-a-days the "*bhakats*" do not even take the trouble to wash their feet before eating, washing of not only the feet, but the whole body, before eating being the strict custom of all Hindus.

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173. *Bhot.*

ৰজাৰ ধন ভোঁট গিৰিহঁত ।

Rajár dhan bho(n)t giriha(n)t.

The rent-collector is the owner of the king's wealth.

ভোঁট is the old name for rent-collector. In the days of the Rájás, the revenue was farmed out to "bhots," who paid the Rájá a certain sum annually, and made as much out of the ryots as they could.

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174. *Bhuiyas.*

ফটা হক চিটা হক পাটৰ টঙ্গালি,
ভগা হক চিগা হক ভূঞাঁৰ পোৱালী ।

Phatá hak chita hak pátar tangáli,
Bhaga hak chigá hak Bhuiyá(n)r powáli.

Let it be torn, let it be broken, it is still a scarf of fine silk,
Let him be young, let him be old, he is still the son of a Bhuiyá(n.)

পাট (pát) is a fine kind of Assamese silk, obtained from the cocoons of a worm that feeds on the mulberry tree. The best

descriptions of this kind of silk are to be obtained in the Jorhát subdivision of the Sibsagar district.

উঙালি is either a scarf or waistcloth. These are often made of "*pát*" or "*mezankari*" silk and are embroidered with red, or even very occasionally with gold thread.

ভুঞা।—Bhuiya(n)s were, as their name implies, landholders, the word ভুঞা being derived from ভুঁই or ভূমি (land). Bronson says they were "rájbangshi," or of the royal family. They were, in addition to being landholders, entitled to certain privileges granted them in consideration for their performing certain judicial functions; apparently, they were attached to the chief courts of justice in the times of the Rájás, and they acted as umpires or arbitrators in civil suits. Robinson mentions in his "Assam" the "Báro Bhuiya," or 12 Bhuiyas. With reference to this proverb it will be interesting to compare Christian's Bihar proverb—

Báp ke put sipáhi ke ghora,
Nau to thorá thorá.

Which Christian translates—

"A chip of the old block,
like the steed of the trooper,
If he is not up to very much, still he is above the average."

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175 *Barás.*

বৰাৰ ঘৰত তৰাৰ গাঁঠি, বৰানো থাকিব কেই ৰাতি।

Barár gharat tarár gá(n)thi, baráno thákiba kei ráti.

In the Bará's house the walls are fastened with "*tará*,"
How many nights will the *Bará* live in it?

বৰা (*bará*).—A "*bará*" was an inferior officer appointed by the Assam kings over 20 peons. The bará apparently looked after road-making and other public works, and used to move from place to place; hence the saying "*thakiba kei ráti*" (how many nights will he remain).

তৰা (*tará*) or তৰাপাত is the wild cardamom, which elephants are very fond of. The walls and roofs of temporary huts are frequently made of তৰা (*tará*).

176. *Brahmins.*

বামুনে সগুনে বিছাৰে মৰা,
গণকে বিছাৰে নৰিয়া পৰা।

Bámune sagune bichhére mará,
Ganake bichhére nariyá pará.

The Brahmin and the vulture look out for corpses,
The Ganak is on the look-out from the time a person is taken ill.

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177. *Brahmins.*

বাপুৰ বাঁহ জোপায় মাৰলি।

Bápur bá(n)h jopái márali.

The whole of the Brahmin's bamboo clump consists of '*máralis,*' *i.e.*, the whole of the bamboos in the clump are good enough for '*máralis*' (ridge pole).

বাপু is the respectful address of a man to an elderly Brahmin.

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178. *Brahmins.*

ময় আছিলো ধাৰি বৈ,
মোক আনিলে বামুনটো কৈ।

Mai áchhilo dhári bai,
Mok ánile Bámunto kai.

While I was plaiting a *dhári* (mat),
They brought me in the guise of a Brahmin.

The man really is not a Brahman, but has been made out to be one. It may be of interest to mention that the *buranji* of the late Gunabhiram Barua contains an account of a number of *Sudras* having been made Brahmins by the Ahom King Chukampha *alias* Khorá Raja (1474—1533 Sak) in order to stop the advance of the victorious Silarai. The proverb may refer to the above story.

179. *Mahangs.*

ধন মহঙ্গলৈ গল, লোন ভাৰ পেলাই,
মাটি ভাৰ আনিলে ঘৰ মচিবলৈ হল।

Dhan Mahangalai gal lon bhár pe'ái,
Máti bhár anile ghar machibalai hal.

My beloved husband has gone to Mahang, returning whence he throwing aside the load of salt, has brought in a load of earth which will serve the purpose of plastering the house.

ধন lover; মহঙ্গ (Mahang) is a place on the Naga Hills boundary close to Baruasáli in the district of Sibsagar. Here there was a salt mine, and it was from that place Upper Assam used to receive its supply of salt. The proverb means that the man is such an idiot that, instead of bringing home salt, he brought earth which, however, his wife utilised in plastering the house.

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180. *Miris.*

তিৰিক কিলে, মিৰিক মিলে।

Tirik kile, Mirik mile.

A wife is to be managed by blows, and Miris by good treatment.

With reference to this Assamese recipe for managing a wife, compare No. 96, also the old English saying "a woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be."

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181. *The Mahanta.*

মহন্তৰ চিন মাহনিত, বুঢ়া গৰুৰ চিন ঘাঁহনিত।

Mahantar chin máhanit, burá garur chin ghá(n)hanit.

The Mahanta is known in a field of *máh* and an old bullock in a grass-plot.

A man's worth can be tested by only in the field of work for which he is fitted.

The story runs thus. If you want to test a man whether he is really a mahanta or not, take him to a *máhani* (or field of pulse), and if he can resist the temptation of eating the pulse, he is a real *mahanta*, conversely if an old bullock cannot graze in a grass plot, it is deemed worthless.

মাহনি (máhani) is a field of "*máh*," which is a black "*dál*" or pulse. The latter part of the proverb means that an old bullock, when it is past work, is turned out to graze.

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182. *Mariyás.*

মৰিয়াক ধান কেলেই, গৰিয়াক কান কেলেই।
Máriyák dhán kelei, Gariyák kán kelei.

What will the Mariyá do with *dhán* and what will the Gariyá do with his ears?

The meaning is that the Mariyás live by working in brass and have therefore very little to do with cultivation. The male Gariyás (Muhammadans) do not pierce their ears for earrings, and therefore there is no need to them for ears.

মৰিয়া (Mariyá).—The Mariyás are braziers. They are, as a rule, much looked down upon. They are professedly Muhammadans, but are quite ignorant of the tenets of Islam really. Possibly, they are converts from Hinduism, which may account for the contempt with which they are held by Hindus. গৰিয়া (Gariá).—This term, as stated before, is meant to be one of opprobrium, but in reality it is nothing of the sort. গৰিয়া means a man from "Gaur" (an ancient city in Bengal). The Assamese Muhammadans say they are a relict of the Muhammadan invasion. In the times of the Rájás, they were much oppressed, but their status has much improved of late years.

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183. *Nágás.*

নাগিনীয়ে লৰা পাই, নগাই জাল খাই।
Náginie lará pái, nagái jál khái.
The Nágá's wife gives birth to a child,
the Nágá drinks the medicine.

জাল (jál) is the Hindustáni *jhál*, a preparation of hot spices taken by women after delivery.

নগা (Nagá) or নাগা (Nágá) is a generic term, which includes a number of large and powerful hill tribes.

The Nágá drinking the medicine.—Here a reference is made to the custom of couvade which prevails amongst some of the Nágá tribes.

184. *Thieves.*

চোৰ পোৰ মুখ খানিহে।

Chor por mukh khánihe.

The only thing that my son, who is a thief, has is his voice, *i.e.*, he is only good at making fair speeches.

There are two kinds of thieves is Assam—the thief in the ordinary sense of the word, and the ছোৱালী চোৰ (*chhowali chor*) or the stealer of young women. Marriage by capture still exists in Assam, indeed, amongst the lower classes; this is by no means uncommon. A young man singles out a girl at the "*bihu*" festival, who is perhaps not insensible to his attentions, and, when opportunity offers, elopes with her. This is called ছোৱালী চুৰি (chhowáli churi), or the stealing of young women. In this way the bridegroom escapes the payment of money or presents to the girl's parents.

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185. *Thieves.*

বোপাই আছিল চোৰ, সেই পৰকিতি মোৰ।

Bopái áchhil chor, sei parkiti mor.

My father was a thief, I am of the same nature.

cf.—No. 158—বাপেক যেনে পিতেক তেনে (*Bápek jene pitek tene*).

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186. *Thieves.*

যোৰবো যোৰ বিপৰিত যোৰ,
এটী কানকটা এটী চোৰ।

Joraro jor biparit jor,
Eti kánkatá eti chor.

A pair, a wonderful pair;
One has cropped ears and the other is a thief.

The use of বিপৰিত is here ironical. কানকটা (kánkatá) literally with ears that have been cut off. It was the custom in the times of the rájás to cut off the ears of thieves and other offenders.

Class IV.

PROVERBS RELATING TO SOCIAL AND MORAL SUBJECTS, RELIGIOUS CUSTOMN AND POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

187. *Betelnut.*

সৰুকৈ কাটিবা, ঘনকৈ খাবা,
সেই তামোলৰ বিলাহ চাবা।

Sarukai kátibá, ghankai kháká,
Sei támolar biláh chábá.

Cut it small and chew it often,
Then you will enjoy the pleasure of betelnut (chewing).

188. *Dead Sea Fruit.*

বাহিৰে ৰংচং ভিতৰে কোৱাভাতুৰী।

Báhire rangchang bhitare kowábháturi.

Outside it is beautiful, but inside is *kowábháturi.*

The "কোৱাভাতুৰী" (Momordica Monodelpha) is a creeper which bears a beautiful fruit to look at but which contains nothing.

The text of the proverb supplied the title of a farcical play by Srijut Hem Chandra Barua, exposing the foibles of Society in Assam some time ago.

189. *Bihu.*

সাত বিহুৰ সয়া কনি।

Sát bihur sayá kani.

An egg that has survived seven Bihus.

There are three Bihus, the Chait, Kártik, and Mágh Bihus. They are held on the last days of the months just enumerated. The Chait Bihu is a very pretty festival, the Assamese women coming out in their best clothes and jewellery, and with sprays of orchid in their hair. They dance and sing under the trees of

the forest in imitation of the Gopis of the Brindában. No man is supposed to go near to them, but this festival nevertheless results in many runaway matches. Cows are bathed in the rivers, and sometimes painted at this festival. The Kártik Bihu is a much smaller festival, and has no peculiar customs that I can recall. The Mágh Bihu is an important feast, as it is the harvest-home. By the end of (Puh the middle of January) all the rice has been gathered in, and if the season has been a good one, there is much rejoicing. Large piles of wood are made, and at night a light is put to them, when they blaze up and make grand bonfires.

The Assamese play a game with eggs at these festivals. Two men each take an egg and push them point to point at one another. The egg that breaks is beaten, and the unbroken one wins. This custom is referred to in the proverb above, and is called কনিজুজা [*kanijujá*]. In the old days there used to be buffalo fights, and even elephant fights, at the Bihu.

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190. *Good advice.*

রাহিত নিদিবা হাত,
লৰা ছোৱালীক লঘোনে নথবা,
দিবা গধূলিতে ভাত।

Ráhit nidibá hát,
Lará chhowálik laghone nathabá,
Dibá gadhulite bhát.

Don't touch the stock (don't lay your hand on your savings);
Don't keep the children fasting;
But give them cooked rice in the evening.

রাহি (*ráhi*) saving, stock. লঘোন (*laghon*) fasting. গধূলি (*gadhuli*) evening.

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191. *Busy-bodies.*

লগনী নহলে জুই নজলে,
টুটকীয়া নহলে গাঁও নবহে।

Lagani nahale jui najale,
Tutakiyá hale gáo(n) nabahe.

Without kindling wood the fire won't light,
And without a backbiter no village can be established.

টুটকীয়া (*tutakiyá*) a backbiter.

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192. *Childless Woman.*

যাৰ নাই কেচুৱা বুঢ়াকে নচুৱা।

Jár nái kechuwá buráke nachhuwá.

She who has not a baby to dandle, should make her old man dance.

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193. *Cutting of the nose.*

নিজৰ নাক কাটি সতিনীৰ যাত্ৰা ভঙ্গ কৰে।

Nijar nák káti satinir jatrá bhanga kare.

She cut off her own nose, so as to prevent her husband's second wife from starting on a journey.

One wife, out of jealousy, because her husband's second wife is going out for the day, slits her own nose, so as to prevent her starting. The Assamese have a superstition that, if anything mutilated or deformed is seen when setting out on a journey, the journey will be unlucky. সতিনী (satini) or সতিয়ৈ (satiyai)= one of the several wives of one husband. Polygamy brings many evils; not the least of these evils is the jealousy that nearly always exists between the wives which results in continual squabbles. *c.f*—the following translations of Eastern sayings :

Malay—"Two wives under one roof: two tigers in one cage."

Telegu—"Two swords cannot be contained in one scabbard."

Afghan—"Who likes squabbles at home, contracts two marriages."

Tamul.—"Why fire the house of a man who has two wives?" *i.e.*, the fire of anger and jealousy is enough.

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194. *Cutting of the nose.*

নাক কাটিলে আহিব দালে পালে,
চুলি কাটিলে আহিব কোন কালে?

Nák kátile áhiba dále pále,
Chu'i kátile áhiba kon kále?

If the nose is cut off, it will regain its old size by treatment,
But if the hair is cut off, when will it come again?

195. *Daughters.*

কথাত কথা বাঢ়ে, খৰিকাত বাঢ় কান,
মাকৰ ঘৰত জীয়ৰি বাঢ়ে, পথাৰত বাঢ়ে ধান ।
Kathát kathá báre, kharikát báre kán,
Mákar gharat jiwari báre, pathárat báre dhán.

A story grows by telling, a bit of straw makes the hole in the ear larger ;
A girl grows up best at her mother's house, paddy grows best on the pathár.

খৰিকা means a grass tooth-pick, a roasting spit, or a spire of dry grass to which the eggs of "*mugá*" silkworms are attached. Here it is used in its first sense, the tooth-pick being used to make the hole, bored through the lobe of the ear, bigger. Both men and women wear earrings, called *thuriá* (থুৰিয়া), which are nearly always cylindrically-shaped bits of amber, with a gold knob at the end, which shows in front. As these "*thuriá*" are often of considerable diameter, a large hole is required in the ear. The best way to widen the hole is to put in an additional bit of straw (খৰিকা) each time this is possible. The proverb is an answer to the question—Where do things thrive best ?

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196. *Daughters and the value of land near the house.*

টিক্ বলধা ওলাই মাটি, মাক ভালে জীয়েক জাতি ।
Tik baladhá oláí máti, mák bhále jíyek játi.

That bullock is good which jumps up when its buttock is touched, that piece of land is good which is in front of a man's house ; and if a mother is good the daughter is the same.

টিক্ means buttock, টিক্ বলধা (*tik baladhá*) a bullock that jumps up or runs when its buttock is touched. ওলায় মাটি, land in front of the house, *i.e.*, the land which receives the drainage of the house which, acting as manure, renders it more fertile than other land. Dák is the author of this proverb.

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197. *Daughters.*

মাকত কৈ জীয়েক কাজী, ঢেকী ঠোৰা লৈ বাতে পাঁজি ।
Mákat kai jiyek káji, dhekí thora lai báte pá(n)ji,

The daughter is more skilful than the mother (forsooth).
For she rolls cotton with the pestle of the *dheki*.

The proverb means that the daughter in her eagerness to show herself cleaverer than her mother makes a fool of herself.

পাঁজি means a roll of raw cotton here.

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198. *Daughters.*

তই মাকৰ জী, মই মাকৰ জী,
তপত ভাতত চেঁচা কৰো,
হেঁচা পোতোকা দি ?

Tai mákar jí, mai mákar jí,
Tapat bhátat che(n)chá karo,
He(n)chá potoká di ?

You are your mother's daughter,
And I am a daughter of a mother,
Do you think that I can make hot cooked rice cool by pressing against it and squeezing it ?

The latter half of the saying is interrogative.

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199. *Dheki.*

ঢেঁকীশাল ফুৰিলে খুদৰ কি আকাল ।

Dhe(n)ki shál phurile khudar ki ákál.

There is no dearth of broken rice if one walk over the place where there is a "dheki."

ঢেঁকীশাল, a shed where the *dheki* is kept.

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200. *An offence.*

বাপুৰ গালত বাৰ্হনি লাগিল ।

Bápur gálat bárhani lágil.

The broom has touched the Brahman's cheek.

This is a saying applied when a man of no consequence takes offence at some trifling circumstances.

বাপু or দেউ is a term of address for elderly Brahman and বাপুটী for younger one.

201. *Fisherman.*

ডোম চহকী হল চুকত পাতিলে ডুলি,
উলিয়াই পেলাই দিলে গা সুঙ্গসুঙ্গাইছে বুলি ।
Dom chahaki hal chukat pátile duli,
Uliyái pelái dile gá shungshungáiechhe buli.

A Dom became rich, and he placed in the corner of his house
a basket for storing paddy,
He then pulls the basket out, saying that he feels his body itching.

A dom would not usually possess a "duli" for storing paddy, as he earns his bread by fishing. গা সুঙ্গসুঙ্গাই (*gá shungshungái*), literally to feel an itching in the body. The word is derived from সুঙ্গ=a bristle, a beard of a grain of paddy.

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202. *Guitar.*

মানতহে টোকাৰী বাজে ।
Mánathe tokári báje.

The tokári is played when respect is paid.

টোকাৰী (*tokári*) is an instrument of music played with the fingers like the guitar.

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203. *Husband.*

এতিয়াহে পালেহি ঘৰপতা পৈ,
কিলাবলৈ আহিছে খেৰদাল লৈ ।
Etiyáhe pálehi gharpatá pai,
Kilábalai áhichhe kherdál lai.

Now has come the worthy husband,
He has come to beat me with a straw.

This is an ironical proverb.

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204. *Husband.*

কি কম কি নকম পৈৰ নাম বটালী ।
Ki kam ki nakam pair nám batáli.

What to say and what not to say, my husband's name is "chisel."

A woman who has always to be corrected for making mistakes, gives vent to her wrath by saying that her husband's name is "chisel," *i.e.*, he has a tongue as sharp as a chisel.

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205. *Husband.*

কিহত কৰিলো কি, ধান এদোন দি,
পৈ তো পালো নিতৌ কিলাই সি ।
Kihat karilo ki, dhán edon di,
Pai to pálo nitò kilái si.

What have I done to have bought a husband
for a *don* of paddy,
Who always beats me.

In Assam the bridegroom, as a rule, has to make presents to the birde's parents before marriage, so that in this proverb the order of things is reversed.

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206. *Practical knowledge.*

খাব জানিলে চাউলেই চিৰা,
বহিব জানিলে মাটিয়েই পিৰা,
বুলিব জানিলে মজিয়াই দেড়পৰৰ বাট ।
Khába jánile cháulei chirá,
Bahiba jánile mátiyei pirá,
Buliba jánile mojiyái der parar bát.

If eaten knowingly (contentedly), common rice is "chirá"
(parched rice),
To one who knows how to sit the ground is the stool,
To her who knows how to walk the dining-room is
one and a half prahar's journey.

If you know how to eat, rice is as good as "*chirá.*" If you know how to sit, the ground is as good as a chair. And if you only know how to walk, it takes as long as a *prahar* and a half to cover the floor in your house. Slowness of gait in a woman is considered lady-like, as well as graceful. মজিয়া=মাজ কোথালি (*máj kotháli*), the middle room of the house, where the meals are served and eaten.

207. *Husband.*

গিৰিয়েকে বোলে ভোক ভোক,
ঘৈনিয়েকে বোলে পুৱা গধূলি
দুই সাজ একে লগে হোক ।

Giriyeke bole bhok bhok,
Ghainiyeke bole puá gadhuli,
Dui sáj eke lage hok.

The husband cries out " I am hungry," " I am hungry,"
The wife replies, " Let the morning meal and evening meal be taken together."

This is a case where the wife is too thrifty and half-starves her husband. The Assamese has, as rule, three meals a day, *i.e.*, in the early morning, midday, and evening. In the early morning he eats cooked rice, either hot or cold, according to his fancy or his means. In the middle of the day he takes what is called জলপান (jalpán) or lunch, which often consists of পিঠাগুৰি (*pithágurí*) or cakes made from rice flour. In the evening is the large meal of the day; it consists of cooked rice, fish, or vegetables. (*See* No. 55.)

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208. *Husband.*

জালকে বুলিলে জকাই,
আন্ধাৰে মুধাৰে চিনিব নোৱাৰি,
পৈয়েকক বুলিলে ককাই ।

Jálake bulile jakái,
Ándháre mudháre chiniba nowári,
Paiyekak bulile kakái.

The net was mistaken for a *jakái*,
And she called her husband " *kakái* " (elder brother) in the dark.

জাল (*jál*) is a fishing net, of which there are several kinds. The nets are made from the *riha* fibre, which is very

strong. জকাই (*jakái*) is a scoop with a handle, which is pushed along in the mud by women to catch small fish. The *jakái* is made of split bamboo with a whole bamboo for a handle, and is very light.

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209. *Learned.*

জনার ভাত মাছ নজনার কলগ্রহ।

Janár bhát máchh najanár kalagrah.

What is cooked rice and fish to the learned,
is an insurmountable difficulty to the unlearned.

কলগ্রহ=something very troublesome and unavoidable.

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210. *Low birth.*

তোর জনম জাতি জানো মই কঠিয়াতলিত ঘর,
এহার চেরেক কৈ দিলেই ভিরাই মারিবি লর।

Tor janam játi jáno mai kathiyátalit ghar,
Esár cherek kai dilei bhirái máribi lar.

I know your lineage, your home is in the paddy nursery,
If I were to say a little more, you would run away.

এহার (*esár*), literally এই কথা, one word; ভিরাই, to run away rapidly.

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211. *Lover.*

চাবলৈ আহি কান্দত পরিল।

Chábalai áhi phándat paril.

He came only to have a look, but he got tied up.

The saying refers to the case of a man who has been carrying on an intrigue, but has been found out.

212. *Maternal uncle.*

মোমাঁয় মৰক ভূতক পাছে পাম ।

Momái marak, bhutak páchhe pám.

Let the uncle die, I will find the devil (ভূত) afterwards.

This is rather an amusing instance of "Shutting the stable-door after the steed has been stolen." The usual exorcism of the evil spirit is here dispensed with until after the man's death.

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213. *Marriage.*

এটাই বোৰ খোৰোচাত কৈ,
বিয়াৰ খোৰোচা সকত ।

Etái bor khorochát kai,
Biyár khorochá sakat.

The slip-knot of marriage is the strongest slip-kont of all.

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214. *Mother-in-law.*

চল পাই বিয়নী নিতৌ তিনি বেলি ।

Chal pái biyani nitó tini beli.

If the son's or daughter's mother-in-law gets a chance,
she comes to the house three times a day.

বিয়নী (*biyani*) son's or daughter's mother-in-law, the father-in-law is called বিয়ৈ (*biyai*).

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215. *Mother-in-law.*

শাহু বোৱাৰীৰ ঘৰ,
কোনে খাই গাখিৰৰ সৰ ?

Sháhu bowárir ghar,
Kone kháí gakhirar sar ?

The mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law
are the only members of the house,
Who else is going to drink the cream ?

সৰ (sar) = চামনি (chámani), cream.

216. *Oil.*

বনত পৰি কলিয়া হলো,

তেল নাইকিয়াত ফপৰিয়া হলো ।

Ranat pari kaliyá halo,

Tel náikiyát phapariyá halo.

I have become black through having fallen (wounded) in battle,
And I have become scurfy through having no oil.

A coolie whose skin has been tanned through exposure to the sun, says he has become black owing to being wounded on the field of battle. Having no oil to rub on the body is given as an excuse for his skin being scurfy. The Assamese rub their hair and body with mustard oil.

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217. *Old man.*

দেখিছাহে বুঢ়া অগ্নি কুৰা ।

Dekhichháhe burá agni kurá.

He looks an old man, but in reality he is a flame of fire.
Though he looks old, he has not lost his spirit and energy.

অগ্নি কুৰা (agni kurá)=জুই কুৰা (jui kurá), a torch. অগ্নি (agni) =ignis (*Dowson*). To quote further from the same authority—"Fire is one of the most ancient and most sacred objects of Hindu worship. Agni is one of the chief deities of the Vedas. He is one of the three great deities—Agni, Váyu (Indra), and Surya—who, respectively, preside over earth, air, and sky."—(*Dowson.*)

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218. *Pohári.*

পোহাৰিৰ পৈয়েকেই সাখী ।

Pohárir paiekai sákhi.

The Pohári's witness is her husband.

The only witness a *pohári* can cite is her own husband to corroborate her false statement regarding the value of her stock in trade. Nobody else will support her in her false statement except her husband.

পোহাৰি (pohári) are petty traders.

219. *Porters.*

ভাৰিক নেৰে ভাৰে, যুৱয়াক নেৰে পচলাৰ খাৰে ।

Bhárik nere bháre, jubayák nere pachalár kháre.

The burden does not leave the porter's back,
And *pachalá khár* curry does not leave the slovenly man.

The above means that a porter cannot earn his livelihood without carrying loads, and a sloven can only get *pachala khár* (a bad kind of curry) to eat.

পচলা— the sprout of the plantain tree from which curry is prepared.

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220. *Religion.*

" ধৰ্ম্মৰ জয় অধৰ্ম্মৰ ক্ষয় । "

Dharmar jai adharmar khay.

The victory of religion is the decline of wickedness.

ধৰ্ম্ম (dharma) is moral and religious duty. Dharma was an ancient sage, sometimes classed among the prajápatis, the fathers of the human race, who were produced by Manu. Dharma married thirteen (or ten) of the daughters of Dakhsa, and had a numerous progeny, but all his children " are manifestly allegorical, being personifications of intelligences and virtues and religious rites, and being, therefore, appropriately wedded to the probable authors of the Hindu Code of religion and morals, or the equally allegorical representation of that code, Dharma."— (*Wilson.*) *cf.* "যতোধৰ্ম্ম স্ততোজয়ঃ ।"

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221. *Step-mother.*

কি কম মাহী আইৰ গুণ,
এহাতে খাৰণী এহাতে লোণ ।

Ki kom máhi áir gun,
Eháte kháranì eháte lon !

What shall I say of my step-mother's kindness,
In one hand she has solution of potash and in the other salt !

In former days salt was a luxury, and "kháranì" is much appreciated as a relish to eat with boiled rice.

খাৰণী=a solution of potash.

This proverb is ironical.

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222. *Step-son.*

মোৰ পো নহয় সতিনীৰ পো,
ধাৰি নাই পাটি নাই মাটিতোশো ।

Mor po nahoy satinir po,
Dhári nái páti nái mátite sho.

You are not my son, but a son of my fellow wife,
I have no "*dhári*" (rug) and no "*páti*" (mat) for you,
you must sleep on the ground.

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223. *Stolen cattle.*

চোৰে নিয়া গৰুৰ বাটে বাটে ঘাঁহ ।
Chore niyá garur báte báte ghá(n)h.

The stolen bullock finds grass along the road.

All roads in Assam have grass growing on the sides upon which the cattle graze as they go along.

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224. *Teacher.*

কেলেহুৱা ওজা চপনীয়া পালি,
ওৰে ৰাতি নাম গায় খেৰ জুই জালি ।

Kelehuá ojá chapaniyá páli,
Ore ráti nám gáy kher jui jáli.

You uninvited teacher! you have found another
uninvited one (chapaniyá),
And have lit a fire and have sung hymns all night.

Ojá is also an exorcist. কেলেহুৱা চপনীয়া (*kelehuá* and *chapaniyá*) are contemptuous terms applied to one who wishes to associate with others without being asked. The term "*chapaniyá*" is usually applied to a bachelor living at the house of a man who has daughters, on the understanding that he is to get one of the latter in marriage.

225. *Urbashi.*

একেই উৰ্ব্বশী দুৱাৰে পথ ।

Ekei Urbashi duwáre path.

She is an Urbashi and at the same time there is a path (straight) up to her door.

Urbashi, or Urvasi, was one of the Apsaras, the nymphs of Indra's heaven. The name "which signifies moving in the water, has some analogy to that of Aphrodite."—(*Dowson.*) The Rámáyana and the Puránas attribute the origin of these nymphs to the churning of the ocean.

There is a love story told in the Mahabhárata, which need not be reproduced here, concerning Urbashi and Puru-ravas, a mythical person, mentioned in the Vedas, connected with the sun and the dawn, and existing in the middle region of the universe. This story Maxmüller considers "one of the myths of the Vedas which expresses the correlation of the dawn and the sun. The love between the mortal and the immortal, and the identity of the morning dawn and the evening twilight, is the story of Urvasi and Puru-ravas." The word "Urvasi," Maxmüller says, "was originally an appellation and meant dawn." Dowson writes —"Dr. Goldstücker's explanation differs, but seems more apposite. According to this Puru-ravas is the sun and Urvasi is the morning mist; when Puru-ravas is visible, Urvasi vanishes, as the mist is absorbed when the sun shines forth."

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226. *Village conversation.*

ঢেকিয়া লতা পতা,
ভাত খাওতে পানি খাই
সিও এটা কথা ।

Dhekiyá latá patá,
Bhát kháote páni khái,
Sio etá kathá.

Bits of fern, creepers, and leaves,
He drinks water whilst eating rice,
Are these the subjects of conversation ?

This is a description of village talk. লতা পতা = odds and ends.

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227. *Water Sprite.*

খাল খানি যসিনী চপাই ললে ।
Khál kháni jasiní chapái lale.

By digging a drain (near your house)
you have brought the evil spirit closer.

The jashiní is one of the *dü minores* of the Assamese. Although the "*jasiní*" is supposed to be evilly disposed, apparently it does not require to be propitiated by offerings. The "*jasiní*" presides over tanks and drains. Stories are told by the villagers of men who had been pulled down into the depths of deep pools by "*jasinís*," and so drowned whilst bathing.

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228. *Water Sprite.*

থলত থল ৰজা পোতা পুখুৰিৰ বাকেঁই ৰজা ।
Thalat thal Rajá potá pukhurir *ba(n)kei* Rajá.

A king reigns on land, in half-filled-up tanks reigns the water sprite.

থল (*thal*)=Sanskrit স্থল (sthal), land, place. পোতা পুখুৰি (*potá pukhuri*), literally buried tank. What is meant generally by the expression, however, is a tank in process of being filled up. বাঁক [*ba(n)k*] is an evil spirit said to haunt swamps and marshes. The *ba(n)k*, like the 'Will-o'-the-wisp,' leads people astray at night.

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229. *Widower.*

জোঁৰ পুৰি বৰলাৰ হাত পালে হি ।
Jo(n)r puri baralár hát pále hi.

The torch burnt down to the hand of the widower that held it.

Mr. Abdul Majid notes on this—" When a man loses his wife and becomes a widower (baralá), he is so immersed in grief that, when he lights a torch, he lets it burn his hand in his absence of mind."

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230. *Widower.*

ঠন ঠন মদন গোপাল, একেটা বৰলাৰ নখন চোতাল ।

Than than Madan Gopál, eketá baralár nakhan chotál.

He is alone by himself a " Madan Gopal " (a widower),
he possesses nine courtyards (and houses to correspond).

মদন গোপাল (Madan Gopál) is either a bachelor or a widower. মদন (Madan) is one of the names of কাম (Káma), the Indian Cupid.

(Gopál), cowkeeper, a name of the youthful Krishna whilst living amongst the cowherds in Brindában.

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231. *Widower.*

পৰ্ব্বতত কাছকনি ভৈয়ামত বাণ,
বৰলাত বিচাৰিছে শুকান ধান ।

Parbatat káchhakani bhayámat bán,
Baralát bicháriehhe shukán dhán.

To look for turtle's eggs in the hills, to put up a weir
(across a stream) in the plains,
Are as difficult things to do as to obtain dry paddy at a
widower's house.

In the proverb just above, we have some of the advantages of widowerhood. In this proverb we have one of the disadvantages. বাণ (bán) is a weir thrown across a stream to prevent the fish finding their way out to the Brahmaputra. Such weirs are difficult to put up, and still more difficult to keep in place, as the streams are liable to rise suddenly and wash them away. Turtle's eggs are found on the sandhills alongside rivers. They are difficult to find unless the turtle is seen making its way off from the place where the eggs have been deposited.

232. *Wives : The contrary wife.*

খোজো খাৰনী দিয়ে লোন,
এনে উভতিত থাকিব কোন ।

Khojo kharani diye lon,
Ene ubhatit thákiba kon.

I ask for a solution of potash and she gives me salt,
Who can stand a wife who is so contrary ?

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233. *The wife who is a hasty cook.*

খৰ ৰান্ধনি খৰ বাঢ়নী পৈয়েক লঘোনে যাই,
ওদা ৰান্ধনি ওদা বাঢ়নী পৈয়েকে তিনি সাজি খাই ।

Khar rándhani khar bárani paiek laghone jái,
Odá rándhani odá bárani paieke tini sáji kháí.

She is a smart cook and a smart distributor, yet her husband goes fasting,
The other is a slow cook and a slow distributor, yet her husband gets three meals a day.

A hasty cook often spoils what she is cooking. A cook who takes time and trouble, prepares a satisfactory meal.

বাঢ়নী=is one who serves the food, a distributor.

খৰ=quick, ; ওদা =slow.

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234. *The wife supreme in her own house.*

ঘৰে পতি ঘৈনী খালে পতি যসিনী ।

Ghare pati ghaini khále pati jasini.

In the home the wife is supreme, in the ditch reigns the water sprite.

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235. *A wife who, though well-meaning, is without tact.*

তিনি গঁধুলিত তৰিচে তাঁত,
উজুতিত চিঙ্গিলে পৈয়েকৰ দাঁত ।

Tini Godhulit tariche tát,
Ujutit chingile paiekar dá(n)t.

She spread her loom at dusk,
And in her hurry she broke her husband's tooth by tripping up against him.

তিনি গধুলি=dusk.

তাত (tát) is the wooden hand-loom used by Assamese women for weaving cotton or silk.

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236. *Helplessness.*

পাৰ কৰ যুবয়া গায়.নাথাৰবে ।

Pár kar jubayá gáy náthá̆ware.

Cross me over (the stream), young man, it is out of my depth.

---

237. *The spoilt wife.*

বেটীয়ে ভাঙ্গিলে কটৰা, গড়গাঁও পালেহি বতৰা,

ঘৈনীয়ে ভাঙ্গিলে কাঁহি, থলে মুচুকাই হাঁহী ।

Betiye bhángile katará, Gargáon pálehi batará,
Ghainiye bhángile ka(n) hi, thale muchukái há(n)hi.

The maid servant broke the stand of the dheki, and the news spread to Gargáon.

The wife broke a brass plate, and the result was only a smile (from her husband).

কটৰা (katara) a stand on which the dheki works. গড়গাঁও (Gargaon) near Nazira was at one time the capital of the Ahom kings.

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238. *Inequalities.*

বৰৰ দাই পিছলি যাই,

সৰুৰ দাই খুছৰি খাই ।

Barar dái pichhali jái,
Sarur dái khuchhari khái.

The mistake of the great one passes without notice.
Whereas that of the small one is never overlooked.

239. *The stingy wife.*

বিধতায় দিলেও তিৰুতাই নিদিয়ে ।

Bidhatáy dileo tirutái nidiye.

Although Bidhatá gave, the wife does not !

বিধতা (Bidhatá) is Brahma, the creator.

---

240. *The wife always beautiful.*

মাজ মুৰত নাই চুলি, পৈয়েক মাতে ৰূপহী বুলি ।

Máj murat nái chuli, paiyek máte rupahi buli.

She has no hair on the middle of her head, but her husband calls her "*rupahi*" (the beautiful one).

---

241. *A paragon of a wife.*

সৰ্ব্ব সুলক্ষনী তাই, পাটীতো মুতে চৰুতো খাই ।

Sarba sulakhyani tái, pátito mute charuto khái.

A paragon of a wife, she spoils the bed and eats from the cooking pot.

The proverb is of course ironical.

---

242. *Women.*

তিৰীৰ চুটি বাঢ়নীৰ বুটি ।

Tirir chuti báranir buti.

Women that are short in stature and brooms that are worn out are to be avoided.

The Assamese think a great deal of a tall woman.

---

243. *Women.*

তিৰী, মিৰি, ভাটৌ, কোৱা,

এই তিনি চাৰিৰ আসৈ নো পোৱা ।

Tiri, Miri, bhátò, kowá,

Ei tini chárir ásai no powá.

Of women, Miris, the parrot, and the crow,

The minds of these four you cannot know.

244. *Agony of Death.*

থুপৰীৰ পৈ, মাজে ফুটা ছৈ, কাটি খাই কটনা,
এই তিনি চাৰি যমৰ যাতনা ।

Thuparir pai, máje phutá chai, káti khái kataná,
Ei tini chári jamar játaná.

To be the husband of a worthless woman, a boat covering with a hole in the middle of it, and to live by spinning and weaving for wages,
These three are the agony of death.

cf. the Hindi proverb—

Jhar jhar jári urukha ghar,
Nári chanchal chor nakar,
Báp satru satmán pái,
Ehí pancha báp sahan najái.

A water pot with a hole in it, a leaky house, an unsteady wife, a thief servant, a father an enemy, these five are unendurable.

In Assam, the bullock carts and boats are covered with hoods made of matting, with bamboo hoops to support it. Any one who has travelled in a bullock cart or in a boat with a hole in its hood on a wet night in the rains, will endorse the truth of this saying. কটনা (kataná)="বেচলৈ লোকৰ সুতা কটা বা কাপৰ বোআ মানুস ।"—(*Bronson.*) "(*Bechaloi lokar shutá hatá bá kápar bowá mánush*)." One who spins or weaves for others for hire. যম (jam) is the Indian Pluto.

Class V.

PROVERBS RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND SEASONS.

245. *The brinjal out of season.*

আবতৰীয়া বেঙ্গেনাই মোক তোল মোক তোল কৰে ।

Ábataríyá bengenái mok tol mok tol kare.

The egg plant that is out of season, cries out "pluck me," "pluck me."

This saying is expressive of contempt towards men who are too pushing.

146. *The "bagari" plum.*

উলুৰ লগত বগৰি পুৰিলে ।

Ulur lagat bagari purile.

The plum tree is burnt with the ulu grass.

In "*ulu*" grass jungle the "*bagari*," or wild plum, is frequently found.

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247. *"Dhán" and "pán."*

এক আহিনে ধান,
তিনি শাওনে পান ।

Ek Áhine dhán,
Tini Sháone pán.

In one Áhin dhán,
In three Sháons pán.

The transplanted rice begins to come into ear in Áhin, about 15th September to 15th October. The paddy is not ripe, however, till well on in December or beginning of January. The pán, however, takes two years to mature.

This is one of Dák's sayings.

---

248. *"Pán."*

একে গছৰ পান সি কি হব আন ।

Eke gachhar pán si ki haba án.

It is "pán" from the same tree, how will it be different.

The saying means he is a "chip of the old block," how will he differ from his father ?

---

249. *Paddy.*

কুমলীয়া ভৰি, ধান সুঙ্গে বিন্ধিলে ফুৰে আতাহ পাৰি ।

Kumaliyá bhari, dhán sunge bindhile phure átáh pári.

If the man who treads out the paddy has soft feet, the sharp beard of the ear pierces his foot and he jumps with pain.

The paddy is generally trodden out by oxen, but sometimes by men and women as well. If a person has soft feet, *i.e.*, if a man is not accustomed to such work, the sharp beard of the paddy runs into his foot.

---

250. *Paddy seedlings.*

কঠীয়া হে চুটি জেঠতে পৰা ।

Kathiyá he chuti Jethate pará.

The paddy seedlings are small, but they were sown in Jeth.

The seedlings referred to are those which are required for transplanting to the "*rua*" or paddy-field. The month Jeth corresponds to 15th May to 15th June, which is about the time when the "*kathiya-tali*" (seedling beds) are prepared and the seed sown.

---

251. *Ploughs.*

গধূলি হলে সাত হাল বাই,
পুৱা হলে এ হালো নাই ।

Gadhuli hale sát hál bái,
Puá hale e hálo nái.

In the evening he arranges for seven ploughs,
But in the morning he has not one even.

The meaning is that one who talks much performs little. It is applied to a lazy fellow who contemplates doing everything in the morning, but actually does nothing when the time comes. The Assamese never ploughs in the evening, at least not unless he can possibly help it. A ploughman's day is generally from dawn till about 11 or 12 o'clock. After that he lets his bullocks loose, and does no more that day.

252. *Radish.*

যি মুলা বাঢ়িব দুপাটতে চিন ।

Ji mulá báriba dupátate chin.

The radish that will grow large, you will know when it has spread but two leaves.

---

253. *Jack fruit.*

ধান পুৰিয়া কঠাল পাতৰ তলতে লুকাল ।

Dhán puriyá kathál pátar talate lukál.

The biggest jack fruit of all, *i.e.*, that one worth a *purá* of dhán, lay hidden underneath the leaves.

This proverb is applied to those who hide their light under a bushel.

---

254. *Náhar.*

নাহৰত কৈও সুকাঠি ?

Náharat kaio sukáthi ?

Is there any better wood than Náhar ?

নাহৰ (Náhar) the iron wood of India (*Mesua ferrea*).

---

255. *Chait.*

পালে হি চ'ত ধান ব'ম কত ।

Pále hi Chat dhán bam kat.

The month of Chait has arrived, where shall I sow the paddy ?

Here চত=চৈত্ৰ (Chaitra). The month of Chat or Chaitra is from about the 15th March to the 15th April, or about a full month before the commencement of the ploughing season. The sowing of *áhu dhán* commences from *Mágh*. The man who has spent his time in doing nothing when it is too late thus complains.

256. *Mangoes.*

পকা আমৰ বেলিকা কিহৰ কুজা মোহা ।

Paká ámar beliká kihar kujá mohá.

At the time of eating ripe mangoes who cares for the infirm uncle.

The time for mangoes to ripen is about June; but as mangoes are always full of worms in Assam, it is difficult to understand the enthusiastic tone of the proverb.

---

257. "*Máh.*"

ফাল কাটোতেই মাহৰ বতৰ গল ।

Phál kátotei máhar batar gal.

Whilst he was cutting the plough-share,
the time for máh-sowing passed away.

"Máh" is pulse much eaten by the Assamese. *Máh* is sown at the end of the rains and is reaped in the cold weather. The ফাল (*phál*) is the plough-share.

---

258. *Seluk.*

বুৰে পতি শেলুক নে ?

Bure pati sheluk ne ?

Do you find a "*seluk*" each time you dive ?

The "*seluk*" is the edible root of ভেট (*bhet*), a kind of lotus, which grows in *bils*. The ভেট (*bhet*) is something similar to the "*singhára*," the Assamese শিঙ্গৰি (shingari).

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259. *The Bor tree.*

বৰ গছ কাতিলে ঘিটিঙ্গাই কৰিলে,
চিটিকি পৰিলে ওঠা ।
লোকক দেখুৱাই কেতেবাই মাতিবা,
ভিতৰি নেৰিবা বেথা ।

Bar gachh kátile ghitingái karile,
Chitiki parile ethá.
Lokak dekhuwái keterái mátibá,
Bhitari neribá bethá.

When the "*bor*" tree was cut down, it fell with a crash,
And its juice poured out like rain.
Before people speak to him sharply,
In private you should make much of him.

The first part of the proverb is irrelevant to the second, which, as being a piece of advice to some one, should more properly have been detailed in Class II. ঘিতিঙ্গাই (*ghitingái*)=an onomatopœic word, signifying any sudden sound, as a clap of thunder—(*Bronson*). চিতিকি (চিটিকি) "*chitiki*," literally, driving in like heavy rain through an open window. বৰ গছ (Bar gachh) =বট, the Indian fig (*Ficus indica*). These trees grow to an enormous size in Assam, notably the "Feseng Bor gachh" near Difflu in Golághát.

---

260. *The kerelá.*

বাৰে হাত কেৰেলাৰ তেৰে হাত গুটি।
Báre hát kerelár tere hát guti.

The *kerelá* is 12 cubits long, but the seeds are thirteen!

The "*kerelá*" is the "*Momordica carantia*," a well-known vegetable. (Bengali কৰলা, karalá.) The saying is applied to a man who draws the long bow.

---

261. *On buying land.*

মাটি কিনিবা মাজ খাল,
ছোৱালী আনিবা মাক ভাল।
Máti kinibá máj khál,
Chhowáli ánibá mák bhál.

Buy land which slopes towards the centre,
And marry a girl whose mother is good.

cf.—"Take a vine of a good soil and a daughter of a good mother." This is borrowed from Dák.

262. *Paddy cultivation.*

গৰু চাবা গধুলি ৰোৱা চাবা পুৱা,
জকাই বাওতে ছোৱালী চাৱা দেখি কেনে কুৱা ।

Garu chábá gadhuli rowá chábá puwá,
Jakái báote chhowáli chábá dekhi kene kuwá.

Look for your bullocks in the evening,
look at your paddy-field in the morning,
Have a peep at the girl who is fishing with the "*jakái*,"
and see what she is like.

The Assamese lets his bullocks roam about after midday, when he has finished ploughing. In the evening he ties them up so as to be ready to commence ploughing as soon as it is light. The second part of the proverb is irrelevant, although amusing. Dák is the author of this proverb.

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263. সিচাতকৈ ছেৰা বোটলা টান ।

Sichátkai chherá botalá tán.

It is easy to catch fish by ladling up water than to collect fish that have been left behind.

---

264. *A fence.*

নিত চাওনে তাতি ।

Nita cháone táti.

A fence always requires looking after.

The Assamese fence in their "*rowá*," the paddy-fields, after the "*kathiyá*" (seedlings) has been transplanted ; the fences are made of split bamboo, and are constantly either being stolen and used for firewood, or broken down by stray cattle. The author of this proverb is Dák.

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265. *Pepper, pán, and plantains.*

জালুকত গোবৰ পানত মাটি,
কলা পুলী ৰুবা তিনিবাৰ কাটি ।

Jálukat gobar pánat mati,
Kalá pulí rubá tinibár káti

Place manure round the black pepper bush
and earth round the pán tree,
And cut the plantain three times before you plant it.

The above proverb gives useful hints as to the cultivation of black chillies, pán, and plantains. This is another of Dák's sayings.

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266. *On cultivating sáli dhán.*

ঘন ঘন কৈ দিবা আলি,
পৰ্ব্বতৰ টিঙতো ৰুবা শালি ;
তেও যদি নহয় শালি,
তেহে পাৰিবা ডাকক গালি ।

Ghan ghan kai dibá áli,
Parbatar tingato rubá sáli ;
Teo jadi nahai sáli,
Tehe páriba Dákak gáli.

If you make the '*ális*' as near to one another as possible,
You can plant "*sáli*" on the tops of hills.
If then the "*sáli*" does not grow well,
You can abuse Dák.

Alis (আলি) are the divisions in the field built for the purpose of damming in the water. Dák was the originator of this saying.

---

267. *Tamarind and "Owtenga."*

আগ ফালে তেতেলি পাচ ফালে ঔ,
সেই ঘৰৰ মানুহ উঠিলনে নৌ ।
Ág phále teteli pách phále au,
Sei gharar mánuh uthilane nò.

A house with a tamarind tree in front and an "*owtengá*" behind,
Has not the owner of that house gone away from here yet?

নৌ (ad)=নাই হোৱা "*nai howa*," not yet.

Another of Dák's sayings.

268. *Sesamum.*

মাহৰ মাৰ দেখি তিলে বেত মেলিলে ।

Máhar már dekhi tile bet melile.

Seeing the "*máh*" beaten out, the sesamum has split itself (for fear of being beaten).

তিল (til) = sesamum orientale. The proverb is meant as a hit at people who are too officious.

---

269. *The best crops.*

শহ চিকুন পৰৰ, পো চিকুন ঘৰৰ ।

Shah chikun parar, po chikun gh rar.

The best crops are those growing on the fields of others, the best sons are those at home.

The above means that people are never satisfied with their own crops, but are envious of those of others.

Class VI.

PROVERBS RELATING TO CATTLE, ANIMALS, FISH, AND INSECTS.

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270. *The paddy-bird and the fish.*

অধিক মাছত বগলি কনা ।

Adhik máchhat bagali kaná.

When fish are too plentiful, the paddy-bird is blind.

i.e., the fish are so thick, that he does not know which to catch first, and so, perhaps, all escape him, hence the saying that he is blind.

cf.—অধিক মাচত যোগী আদ বাউল ।

Adhik máchat jogi ád báól.

When fish are too plentiful, a mendicant (*lit.* hermit) becomes half-mad.

যোগী, literally one who carries out the tenets of yoga philosophy, one who cultivates the faculty of attention. Yoga meaning application. Hence the term yogi or jogi is applied to one who gives up the world—a hermit.

বাউল (báól) seems to be connected with বলিয়া (baliyá), the word বাউলী (báóli) often being used as the feminine of বলিয়া (baliyá).

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271. *The jackal.*

আচু কাঠত পৰি শিয়ালটো ৰঙ্গা হল ।

Áchu káthat pari siyálto rangá hal.

The jackal has got coloured red by falling into the dye-pot.

The abve means that the jackal only by accident looked a better colour. Hence the proverb is applied to upstarts, who owe their position to some lucky accident.

আঁচুকাঠ (c. zanthorrhizon) the tree, the root of which produces a yellow dye and which is used for dying cloth or thread.

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272. *The elephant.*

আচলে পিছলে হাতিৰো পাও পিছলে ।

Áchale pichhale hátiro páo pichhale.

In a bad place the foot of the elephant even slips.

The proverb is too well known to need comment.

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273. *The mosquito.*

আঠুয়া তলৰ মহ মোহাৰিলেয় মৰে ।

Áthuwá talar mah mohariley mare.

The mosquito under the mosquito curtain is killed by being squeezed (this being the usual way of destroying this pest).

The proverb applies to the case of a person who is under the thumb of another, and who can be ruined by the latter at any moment.

274. *The mosquito.*

শুঁড় আছে হাতি নহয় মানুহ গৰু খাই,
বাঘ নহয় যাকে পাই তাকে খাই,
হৰলক ঘাতে, পানিৰ জন্মিত ।

Shu(n)r áchhe háti nahay mánuh garu kháí,
Bágh nahay jáke pái táke kháí,
Haralak gháte, pánir janmit.

It has a trunk, but it is not an elephant,
It eats men and cattle, but it is not a tiger;
Whatever it eats, it eats on the spot.
It vanishes with a blast of music, it is born from water.

It is not difficult to guess the answer to this simple Assamese riddle.

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275. *The dove and the hawk.*

উৰি গল কতিয়া কপৌ খেদি নিলে সেনে,
একে কাঁঠি কাৰেৰে সাত ঠাইত ভেদিলে,
ইও কথা হৈছে তেনে ।

Uri gal katiyá kapò khedi nile sene,
Eke káthi kárere sát thait bhedile,
Iyo kathá haichhe tene.

The little dove has flown away being chased by a hawk,
He has pierced it (the latter) in seven places with one arrow only;
This story also is like that.

The above is meant to illustrate the case of a person who tells a story which *primâ facie* appears to be false.

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276. *The mouse.*

এটা নিগনিৰ সাত খান পাম ।

Etá niganir sát khán pám.

One mouse has seven "páms."

The word পাম (*pám*) means a farm, or more commonly a piece of outlying cultivation, which is often situated in the forest or in the midst of thick grass jungle. These páms are liable to

the ravages of all sorts of animals, and have to be carefully watched. The proverb means that, although he is a small man, he has many things to do.

---

277. *The snake.*

এবাৰ সাঁপে খালে লেজুটো ভয় ।

Ebár sápe khále lejuto bhay.

A man who has once been bitten by a snake, is afraid of every piece of rope.

"Once bitten twice shy."

Also *cf.* a Bihar proverb given by Christian :

Dudhke dehal matha phuk pihi (*n*).

One scalded by (hot) milk, drinks (cold) buttermilk even after blowing into it.

---

278. *The "Puthi," "Khalihoná," "Rò," and "Baráli" fishes.*

ওচৰৰ পুঠি, খলিহনা, নিলগৰ ৰো বৰালি ।

Ocharar puthi, khalihaná, nilagar, rò, baráli.

Near us we have the "puthi" and "khalihaná"
The "rò," and baráli' are far away.

The meaning is that it is better to catch the puthi and khalihana which are small fish near at hand than to think about the *rò* and the *boráli* (large and well flavoured fish) which are far away.

The proverb is meant to illustrate the saying—"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

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279. *The duck.*

কিনা হাঁহৰ ঠোঁতলৈকে মঙহ ।

Kiná há(n)har tho(n)tlaike mangah.

The duck that has been bought, has flesh on it right up to the beak.

This means that in the buyer's estimation, such a duck has. As a matter of fact, the duck that is bought in the market, is often lean and skinny.

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280. *The tiger and the deer.*

কালৰো কাল বিপৰিত কাল,
হৰিনাই চেলেকে বাঘৰ গাল ।
Kálaro kál biparit kál,
Harinái cheleke bághar gál.

What a time! What a time for the opposite to happen!
The deer is licking the tiger's cheek.

---

281. *The tiger and the tom cat.*

বাঘ চাব নেলাগে বোন্দাকে চোৱা ।
ভাল মানুহ চাব লাগিলে আলি বাটলৈ যোৱা ।
Bágh chába neláge bondáke chowá,
Bhál mánuh chába lágile áli bátalai jowá.
You need not see a tiger, see a tom cat,
If you want to see gentlemen go to the road.

This is perhaps a cynical proverb. It means that a tom cat is quite enough to frighten you, who are talking about experiences with tigers. The allusion to ভাল মানুহ (*bhál mánuh*) being seen on the road, is ironical.

---

282. *The tiger.*

ভাল খাটিলো বাঘক,
পহু মাৰি আনি দিলোঁ আগত ।
Bhál khátilo bágbak,
Pahu mári áni dilo(n) ágat.

I have served the tiger well,
By killing a deer and placing it in front of it.

Tigers will sometimes eat animals that they have not killed themselves, but this is not usual. পহু=Beng. পশু। পহু is the common word for a deer in Assamese, not an animal as in Bengali.

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283. "*Bhadai.*"

কাকো নেপাই ভাদৈক পালে,
মুচৰি সামৰি খালৈত থলে।

Kákó nepái Bhádaik pále,
Muchari sámari khálait thale.

Having found no one better he got "*bhádai,*"
And squeezed her into the fish basket.

Bhádai—is a common name amongst girls in Assam. Here it means a small inferior fish.

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284. "*Karshala.*"

খাই কাৰ্শলা ডালত উঠিল,
কাঠি চেলেকাৰ মৰণ মিলিল।

Kháí kársalá dálat uthil,
Káthi chelekár maran milil.

The *kársalá* having eaten something (on the trunk) climbed up into the branches,
The animal that licked the *káthi* met its death.

The "*kárshalá*" is a small snake.

কাঠী is a small piece of bamboo used in making wicker work. In Kamrup কাঠী means verandah.

The meaning of the proverb is that the innocent is punished instead of the guilty.

---

285. *The dog.*

খুদ মগনীয়াৰ কুকুৰ শত্ৰু।

Khud maganiár kukur shatru.

The dog is even the enemy of the poor beggar.

খুদ is properly rice refuse.

286. *The ant.*

গুৰি পৰুৱাৰ অলপ বৰষুনেই বান,
সোলা মুখৰ এ চৰেই তান ।

Guri paruwár alap barashunei bán,
Solá mukhar e charei tán.

To the ant a few rain drops is a flood,
To the toothless mouth one slap even is hard to bear.

গুৰি পৰুৱা (*guri paruwá*) is a species of tiny ant. In the original Assamese, *for* অলপ বৰষুনেই (*alap barashunei*) *read* মুতনিয়েই ।

---

287. *The weaver bird.*

চৰাই হে সৰু কিন্তু লয় হোলোং গছত বাহ ।

Charái he saru kintu lay holong gachhat báh.

The bird indeed is a small one, but it builds its nest in the lofty *holong*.

The bird referred to is the little weaver bird, which builds its hanging nest on the highest branches of tall trees. The "*holong*" (*D. pilosus*) is a fine tree, and grows with a long straight stem to a considerable height. The "*holong*" supplies many of the tea boxes of Assam.

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288. *The "chital."*

দেখোতেই চিতল পিঠিতে কাঁইট ।

Dekhotei chital pithite ka(n)it.

Obviously, a "*chital*" fish; it has thorns on its back.

The "*chital* fish" is very bony. Only the lower portion which is called কোলঠি is fit to eat. The back or upper portion which is full of bones is called গদা ।

---

289. *The monkey.*

বয়সত বান্দৰো সোন্দৰ ।

Bayasat bándaro sondar.

The monkey even looks beautiful when it is full-grown.

সোন্দৰ is corrupted form of সুন্দৰ (beautiful).

290. *The squirrel.*

বাৰীৰ তামোল কেৰ্কেটুৱাই খাই,
আমাক দিলে জানো অথলে যাই ?
Bárir támol kerketuwái khái,
Ámák dile jáno athale jái ?

The squirrel is eating the betelnut in the garden,
Will it be thrown away if given to us ?

If the betelnut was given to us it would not have been lost, but now it is eaten by a squirrel.

---

291. *The "chengeli."*

বুঢ়াৰ হাতত চেঙ্গেলী।
Burár hátat chengeli.

In the hand of the old man is the "chengeli."

The "*chengali*" is a kind of small fish found in *bils*. The skin of the "*chengali*" fish is very slippery. It is very difficult to catch it, and if once caught it slips out of the hand, but when it is caught by an old man it cannot escape, because the hands of an old man are rough.

---

292. *Horses.*

ভাল ভাল ঘোৰাই না পাই ঘাঁহ,
বতুৱা ঘোৰাই বিহাৰে মাহ।
Bhál bhál ghorái ná pái ghá(n)h,
Batuwá ghorái bichháre máh.

Whilst good horses are not getting grass,
The inferior ones are looking for máh (pulse).

বতুৱা (*batuwá*) is a term which is applied to horses usually. An inferior country "tat" is often called a *batuwá ghorá*. "*Máh*," the pulse of the country, which is often used for feeding cattle.

293. *The "kakila."*

মহৰ সিঙ্গত কঁকিলা দাঁৰ !

Mahar singat ka(n)kilá dá(n)r !

On the horn of the buffalo is the snout of the "kakilá" fish !

The "*kakilá*" (esox caucila) is a long thin fish with a snout, which makes it look very peculiar.

---

294. *The game cock.*

ৰণৰ কুকুৰা ৰণতে মৰে ।

Ranar kukurá ranate mare.

A game-cock dies in battle.

The practice of cock-fighting prevails all over Assam amongst those who keep fowls. The tea-garden coolies are very fond of it, and often bring cocks with them from long distances for the purpese.

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295. *Elephants and horses.*

ৰজাক চিনিবা দানত,
হাতীক চিনিবা থানত,
ঘোৰাক চিনিবা কানত ।

Raják chinibá dánat,
Hátik chinibá thánat,
Ghorák chinibá kánat.

You will be able to recognise a king by his liberality,
An elephant when it is in the "*thán,*"
And a horse by its ears.

থান=স্থান is the place where elephants are kept at night ; it is also called ধুৰা by Assamese.

296. *The house sparrow.*

ৰাজ হংসৰ গতি ধৰোতে,
ঘনচিৰি কাৰো খোজ পাহৰিলে ।

Ráj hangsar gati dharote,
Ghanchiri káro khoj páharile.

The house sparrow in trying to imitate the gait of the goose,
Forgot its own.

---

297. *The tadpole.*

লালুকিলৈ কি তপত পাণী লাগিছে ।

Lálukilai ki tapat páni lágichhe.

Why does a tadpole require warm water ?

cf.—Christian's Bihar proverb :—

"Me(n)rhak ko bhi zokám,
Ya bengo ke sardi."
A frog with a cold or cough !

---

298. *The "sál" and the "singi."*

সালক শিঙ্গিয়ে হাঁহে,
তয়ো একাজী ময়ো একাজী,
ভালেটো গৰাকী নাহে ।

Sálak shingiye há(n)he,
Tayo ekájí mayo ekáji,
Bháleto garáki náhe.

The "*sál*" (fish) is laughing at the "*singhi*" (fish),
You are as worthless as I am,
Therefore there comes no suitor for either of us.

একাজী or আকাজী—a girl who is ignorant of the art of weaving and spinning.

Both *sál* and *singi* fish are unclean to Hindus. This proverb is an instance of the "pot calling the kettle black," also, *cf.*, proverb No. 60.

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299. *Tigers and snakes.*

সাপে খাই বাঘে খাই যদি মৰে জলে,
যাৰ যি হব লাগে নিজ কৰ্ম্মৰ ফলে।

Sápe kháí bághe kháí jadi mare jale,
Jár ji haba láge nij karmar phale.

Whatever happens to any man, whether he is bitten by a snake or devoured by a tiger or drowned, is the result of his own action.

---

300. *Dogs.*

কুকুৰক নিদিবা ঠাই, লৰা ছোৱালীক নিদিবা লাই।
Kukurak nidibá thái, lará chhowálik nidibá lái.

Don't give a dog a place and do not give indulgence to children.

The dog being an unclean animal, must not be allowed anywhere where there is a possibility of its defiling any of the cooking or eating or drinking vessels.

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301. *Dogs.*

কুকুৰে জানে কি তাম তুলসী ?
Kukure jáne ki tám tulsi ?

What does a dog know of the value of copper vessels or of the "*tulsi*" ?

When a Hindu worships his god, he dedicates to him leaves of "*tulsi*" in a copper vessel. The "*tulsi*" is the "*Ocymum sanctum*," or holy basil.

cf.—Bihar proverb : "Can a monkey appreciate ginger" ? also Telegu proverb : "What can a pig do with a rose bottle" ?

Class VII.

ADDITIONAL PROVERBS.

302.

জয় কালত ভয় নাই,
মৃত্যু কালত ঔষধ নাই ।
Jai kálat bhai nái,
Mrityu kálat ósadh nái.

During a time of prosperity there is no fear, (but) at the time of death there is no medicine.

জয় কালত—*Jái kálat*, literally at the time of victory.

303.

আহোঁতে নাঙ্গতা যাওতে শূইন,
লগত যাব পাপ আৰু পুইন ।
Aho(n)te nángatá jáote shuin,
Lagat jába páp aru puin.

We arrive (in this world) naked and we leave it empty,
Our vice or virtue accompany us.

শূইন is a corruption of শূন্য, zero. পুইন is a corruption of পুণ্য, virtue.

304.

দোষত দণ্ড, গুণত পূজা ।
Dosat danda, gunat pujá.
Punishment for an offence, reward for merit.

---

305. *Diversity of opinions.*

নানা ঋষিৰ নানা মত ।
Náná Rishir náná mat.
Different rishis have different opinions.

e.g., Manu is contradicted by Parasar and Parasar by Jajnavalka, and so on. *Quot homines tot sententiæ.*

306. *Advantage of self-help.*

সাঁতৰ সাঁতৰ বাউসিৰ বলে,
সাঁতৰিব নেজান যা ৰসাতলে।
Sá(n)tar sá(n)tar báusir bale,
Sá(n)tariba nejána já rasátale.
Swim, swim with the help of your (own) arms,
If you can't swim go to Rasátal.

বাউসী literally the upper portion of the arm. ৰসাতল is, according to the Padma Purána, the sixth hell where the Daityas and Dánavas dwell.

---

307. *Disability of weakness.*

খোড়াৰ খোজে পতি অপৰাধ।
Khorár khoje pati aparádh.
A lame man commits an offence at every step.

---

308. *Incapacity.*

শামুকে কি জানে মানিকৰ মোল ?
Shámuke ki jáne mánikar mol ?
What does a snail know of the value of pearls ?

---

309. *Might is right.*

যাৰ লাঠী তাৰ মাটি।
Jár láthi tár máti.
He who can wield the láthi, the land belongs to him.

---

310. *Obsequiousness.*

অতি ভক্তি চোৰৰ লক্ষণ।
Ati bhakti chorar lakshan.
Obsequiousness is the sign of a thief.

This proverb may be aptly applied when courtiers are over servile.

311. *Some advice.*

পানীৰ বাটত নহবা আগা,
দুখী কুটুম্বৰ নহবা লগা,
দুষ্টা ভনীৰ নহবা ভাই,
ঘন-পোৱাঁতীৰ নহবা জোৱাঁই ।

Pánir bátat nahabá ágá,
Dukhi kutumbar nahabá lagá,
Dusta bhanir nahabá bhái,
Ghan powá(n)tir nahabá jowá(n)i.

Don't take the lead on a watery path,
Don't stand security for a poor relation,
Don't be the brother of a wicked sister,
Don't be the son-in-law of one who has born many children.

This is one of Dák's proverbs, and it is full of worldly wisdom.

---

312. *Two warnings.*

পৰিহৰা শুকতি মাছৰ জোল,
পৰিহৰা অসতী নাৰীৰ কোল ।

Parihará sukati máchhar jol,
Parihará asati nárir kol.

Give up taking gravy made from dried fish,
Give up the embraces of harlots.

জোল বা ঝোল is derived from Sanskrit জল, and means the liquid portion of curry. This is another of Dák's sayings.

---

313. *Immutability of character.*

চোৰে নেৰে চোৰ পৰকিতি,
সহায় নেৰে সৰ,
যিমান কি ডোম চহকী নহক,
তেও নৈৰ কাষত ঘৰ ।

Chore nere chor parkiti,
Sahái nere sar,
Jimán ki dom chahaki nahak,
Teo nair kásat ghar.

A thief can never give up the habit of stealing,
A hare does not leave its form,
A Dom, however well-to-do he may be,
Nevertheless has his house on the river bank.

---

314. *Bullocks.*

আছে গৰু নবই হাল,
হোৱাত কৈ নোহোৱাই ভাল ।

Áchhe garu nabai hál,
Howát kai nohowái bhál.

There is a bullock but it does not plough,
No bullock at all is better than such a bullock.

One of Dák's proverbs.

---

315. *Kindness.*

আপদৰ মাত, আকালৰ ভাত ।

Ápadar mát, ákálar bhát.

A kindly word in adversity, cooked rice in a time of famine (are acceptable).

---

316. *Destiny.*

আলছা কথা নহয় সিদ্ধি,
বাটত আছে কনা বিধি ।
Álachha kathá nahai siddhi,
Bátat áchhe kaná biddhi.

Nothing can be accomplished by mere proposal,
(Because) blind fate (stands in) the way.

---

317. *Want of means.*

যাৰ নাই ধান তাৰ নাই মান ।
Jár nái dhán tár nái mán.

He who has not paddy is not respected.

318. *Want of means.*

যাৰ নাই গৰু সি সবাতকৈ সৰু ।

Jár nái garu si sabátkai saru.

He who has not cattle is the smallest of all.

---

319. *Blind to one's own faults.*

আপোনাৰ মুখ বেকা,
দাপোনাক চাৰি লাঠি ।

Áponár mukh beká,
Dáponák chári láthi.

His own face is ugly,
But he kicks the mirror four times.

দাপোন=Sanskrit দর্পণ, looking-glass.

---

320. *Empty vessels sound the loudest.*

বিষ নাইকিয়া সাপৰ
ফোঁপাউৰিয়েই সাৰ ।

Bis náikiyá sápar
Pho(n)páuriei sár.

The snake is not poisonous,
It only hisses.

This applies to the case of a man who talks much but who does little.

---

321. *The castor oil plant the banyan where there are no trees.*

নাইকিয়া দেশত এৰাই বৰগছ ।

Náikiyá desat erái bar gachh.

In a treeless country the castor oil plant is a banyan.

এৰা গছ, the castor oil plant (Palma christi). The proverb is derived from the Sanskrit sloka "যস্মিন্ দেশে দ্রুমোনাস্তি এৰণ্ডোপি দ্রুমায়তে" ।

322. *Undutifulness to parents.*

জীয়ন্তে নকৰিলে দয়া,
মৰিলে কি কৰিব গঙ্গা গয়া ?
Jiyante nakarile dayá,
Marile ki kariba Gangá Gayá ?

He was not kind to his parents in their life time,
Will he perform their *srádháas* at the Ganges and at Gaya after their death ?

---

323. *Perfection an impossibility.*

ভাত হলে পুত নাই, পুত হলে ভাত নাই ।
Bhát hale put nái, put hale bhát nái.

One has food enough but no children, another has children but no food.

---

324. *Advice regarding paddy cultivation.*

সু কৃষি নষ্ট হয় মাজে ললে বাট,
সু তিৰী নষ্ট হয় নিতৌ বেহায় হাট ।
Su krisi nasta hai máje lale bát,
Su tiri nasta hai nitau behái hát.

Good cultivation is destroyed if there is a path through the midst,
A good woman is destroyed if she continually trades at the *hât.*

Another of Dák's sayings.

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325. *Two critical periods.*

মুনিহৰ ৰণ, তিৰীৰ বিয়ন ।
Munihar ran, tirir biyan.

What war is to man, child birth is to woman.

Both war and child birth are dangerous. No one knows whether one or the other will not prove fatal.

326. *Dák's advice.*

দিবা ভাগে নলগাইবা বাতি,
নদী কাষেদি নাযাবা ৰাতি ।

Dibá bháge nalagáibá báti,
Nadi kásedi nájábá ráti.

Don't light a lamp in the day time,
Don't go near a river bank at night.

---

327. *One of Dák's sayings.*

হৰিণাৰ মাংসই বৈৰি ।

Harinár mángsai bairi.

His own flesh is the enemy of a deer.

---

328. *Self interest.*

তিৰীয়ে বিচাৰে ধনৱন্ত পৈ,
ডোম বিচাৰে মাছ থকা নৈ ।

Tiriye bicháre dhanabanta pai,
Dome bicháre máchh thaká nai.

A woman looks out for a rich husband,
A Dom for a river where there are fish.

---

329. *Advice.*

সুবাট দূৰ গমন,
তেও নেযাবা চাৰি,
সৰু ছোৱালী আনিবা,
তেও নানিবা বাঁৰী ।

Subát dur gaman,
Teo ne jábá chári,
Saru chhowáli ánibá,
Teo nanibá bá(n)ri.

On a good path walk far,
Do not leave it,
Marry a young girl,
Do not marry a widow.

---

330. *Mangoes and jack fruit.*

আমে বান কঠালে ধান।

Áme bán kathále dhán.

When there are mangoes there are floods,
When there are jack fruit there is paddy.

This is one of Dák's prophecies. Another belief is that when there is much mango blossom there will be cholera.

---

331. *Disappointment.*

ততো নাহিলো খাই,
এখেতো পাবলৈ নাই।

Tato náhilo khái,
Ekheto pábalai nái.

I came without taking anything to eat there,
but here there is nothing to eat.

---

332. *Silikha.*

ভাত খাই উঠি তিনি শিলিখা,
কি কৰিব ৰোগ তিলিকা।

Bhát khái uthi tini shilikhá,
Ki kariba rog tiliká.

If you take three *shilikhá* fruits after a meal, no disease can attack you.

শিলিখা (*shilikhá*), the tree and its fruit, *Terminalia citrena* (*Gamble*). The Assamese eat the fruit of this tree, because of its laxative properties. There is a Sanskrit proverb—

"হৰিতকী হৰেৎ ৰোগম্," which has the same meaning as the saying above.

333. *Fatality.*

যেতিয়াহে পাব কালে,
কি কৰিব বেজৰ মেলে।
Jetiyáhe pába kále,
Ki kariba bejar mele.

When the time of death arrives,
The advice of physicians is useless.

মেল literally means an assembly.

---

334. *Unchastity.*

বাৰে ভতৰাৰ নাম জানে,
বেইটা পৈৰ নাম নেজানে।
Báre bhatarár nám jáne,
Beitá pair nám nejáne.

She knows the names of her twelve paramours,
But does not know the name of her married husband.

ভতৰা, Sanskrit ভর্ত্তা, husband. The word ভতৰা in Assamese is applied to the bull also, hence the slang term used here for a paramour.

---

335. *Misery heaped upon misery.*

গেলাত টেঙ্গা দিয়া।
Gelát tengá diyá.

To pour acid on rotten fish.

---

336. *Want of thrift.*

হাতিয়ে খায় যিমান লাদেও সিমান।
Hátiye kháí jimán ládeo simán.

The elephant voids as much as it eats.

The more a man's income increases the more he spends.

337. *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.*

কোলাৰ টো এৰি পেটৰটোলৈ আশা কৰা ।

Kolár to eri petartolai áshá kará.

Hoping for something still in the womb,
While abandoning that which is in the lap.

Class VIII.

DAK'S AGRICULTURAL SAYINGS.

338.

আগে কল পিছে বাঁহ ,
সেই গিৰীৰ কিমান সাহ ।

Áge kal pichhe bá(n)h,
Sei girir kimán sáh.

Plantains in front and bamboos behind,
How independent that house-holder is.

সাহ literally means courage.

339.

এহাত এমুঠন কলৰ পোত,
তেহে চাবা কলৰ গোট ।

Ehát emuthan kalar pot,
Tehe chábá kalar got.

If you plant the plantain one cubit and one *muthan* deep,
Then you will see how large the plantain will become.

মুঠন is a measure of length from the elbow to the middle joint of the little finger.

340.

আঠিয়াত গোবৰ মনুহৰত জাবৰ,
পুৰাত খাই মালভোগত ছাই ।

Áthiyát gobar manuhrat jábar,
Purát kháí málbhogat chháí.

Cowdung for *athiyá*, sweepings for *manuhar*,
A ditch for *purá* and ashes for *málbhog*.

All of the four above are different kinds of plantains. *Athiyá* is a very large kind of plantain. *Málbhog* is the best kind of plantain known in Assam. For full information regarding plantains, see Mr. Basu's note on the cultivation of the plantain (1901).

341.

আহু ব'বা খোজত বুৰি,
শালি ৰুবা বেগেত যুৰি ।

Áhu babá khojat buri,
Sáli rubá beget juri.

Sow twenty seeds of *áhu* in a footprint's space,
Transplant *sáli* at intervals of one span each.

বুৰি=কুৰি (twenty).

342.

আঠুৰ ওপৰে থাকে পানী,
এহাতত গোছ দিবা জানি ।

Áthur opare tháke páni,
Ehátat gochh dibá jáni.

If the water is over knee deep,
Then transplant the handfulls (of sáli) at a distance of one cubit.

343.

কৃষি ৰাখিবা বেৰি যতনে,
সাফল কৃষি মানিবা মনে ।

Krishi rákhibá beri jatane,
Sáphal krishi mánibá mane.

Take care to fence your cultivation,
Then you may be sure of its success.

344.

কৃষি কৰিবা ওচৰ ভাগে,
ডাকে বোলে মোৰ মনে লাগে ।

Krishi karibá ochar bháge,
Dáke bole mor mane láge.

The nearer cultivation is to the house
The better, according to Dák.

345.

ঘন সৰিয়হ পাতল মাহ,
আবৰণ দি ৰুবা কপাহ ।

Ghan sariyah pátal máh,
Ábaran di rubá kapáh.

Sow mustard thick and pluse thin,
Place a covering over the cotton plant.

আবৰণ is a Sanskrit word meaning covering. The ordinary Assamese word for a covering of a plant is ঢাকন ।

346.

আহিন কাতিত ৰাখিবা পানী,
যেনেকৈ ৰজাই ৰাখে ৰাণী ।

Áhin Kátit rákhibá páni,
Jenekai Rajái rákhe Ráni.

Keep water (in the field) in *Áhin* and *Kártik*,
Just as the king takes care of the queen.

Áhin-Káti corresponds to from the middle of September to the middle of November.

347.

শাওনৰ কঠীয়া নহয় ধান,
আহিনৰ গোছ বিফল জান ।
Sháonar kathiyá nahay dhán,
Áhinar gochh biphal ján.

From seedlings sown in *Shrában* paddy does not thrive,
Transplanting in Áshwin is fruitless.

The month *Sráwan* or *Srában* corresponds to July-August. *Áshwin* corresponds to September-October.

348.

সাতে তনু পাঁচে ঘন,
ছয়ে তামোল নদন-বদন ।
Sáte tanu pá(n)che ghan,
Chhaye támul nadan-badan.

Seven is too far, five too close,
Six gives good areca nut.

In each case the distance is supposed to be in cubits. নদন-বদন is a corruption of নন্দনবন, the grove of Indra, where all fruits are thought to grow abundantly, including the famous *páriját*.

349.

পুবে বেনু পশ্চিমে ছাঁয়া,
সেই শস্যৰ অমৰ কায়া ।
Pube renu paschime chháyá,
Sei sasyar amar káyá.

Open to the east and to the west shady,
That cultivation never dies.

কায়া=কায়, body.

350.

যেবে জৈষ্ঠ গৈল বিনা নাঙ্গলে,
কৃষি কৰিবা কাহাৰ বলে।

Jebe Jeisth gaila biná nángale,
Krishi karibá káhár bale.

If *Jeth* has passed without ploughing,
With whose help will you cultivate ?

যেবে=যদি; গৈল=গল। From the use of these two forms it would appear that Dák was a Barpeta man.

351.

ভাদৰ চাৰি, আহিনৰ চাৰি,
মাহ ব'বা যিমান পাৰি।

Bhádar chári Áhinar chári,
Máh babá jimán pári.

In the last four days of *Bhádra* and the first four of *Áshwin*,
Sow pulse as much as you can.

This is a well known proverb.

352.

অমা পূৰ্ণিমাত বায় হাল,
তাৰ দুখ সৰ্ব্বতি কাল।

Amá purnimát báy hál,
Tár dukh sarbati kál.

He who ploughs on the day of the full moon, or of *Amábásya*,
is always in distress.

অমাবস্যা is the day of the conjunction of the sun and moon, particularly also the fifteenth day in the second halves of the months *Srávan* and *Bhádra*. পূৰ্ণিমা is the day of the full moon. Besides অমাবস্যা and পূৰ্ণিমা, there are the following days on which Assamese Hindus cannot plough—একাদশী (the eleventh day of the lunar half of the month); সংক্ৰান্তি (the last day of the month); অম্বুবাচী (the four days in *Asárh*; when the earth is supposed to be unclean.

353.

ছয় পো ছয় নাতি,
তেহে কৰিবা কুঁহিয়াৰ খেতি ।
Chhai po chhai náti,
Tehe karibá ku(n)hiyár kheti.

If you have six sons and six grandsons,
Then you can cultivate sugarcane.

This saying refers to the large amount of cultivation sugarcane requires.

354.

গৰু কিনিবা নিঘুনি বগা,
ডাকে বোলে মই হও লগা ।
Garu kinibá nighuni bagá,
Dáke bole mai hó lagá,

Purchase a white bullock without blemish,
Dák says " I will be responsible for it."

355.

শী'ত সৰিয়হ মী'ত মাহ,
শৰণত নেকাটি বেঁত বাঁহ ।
Shit sariyah mit máh,
Sharanat nekáti be(n)t bá(n)h.

Don't sow mustard on the four lunar days ending in the suffix শী,
Or pulse on the five lunar days ending with the suffix মী,
Don't cut bamboos or cane during the *sharan*.

একাদশী, দ্বাদশী, ত্ৰয়োদশী, আৰু চতুৰ্দ্দশী are the four days ending in শী, পঞ্চমী, সপ্তমী, অষ্টমী, নবমী, and দশমী are the five *tithis* ending with the suffix মী ।

শৰণ (*sharan*) begins every month at the commencement of the solar asterism *Sravaná* and ends on the *Revati*, the last of the lunar asterisms. The six days of the *Sharan* of every month are considered inauspicious, especially for building, hence the prohibition regarding the cutting of bamboos and cane on those days.

356.

গাওঁৰ বলদ ওচৰৰ ভূঁই,
তাক নেছাৰে জানন্তা হুই।
Gáo(n)r balad ochrar bhui(n),
Ták nechháre jánanta hui.

A wise man purchases a bullock from his own neighbourhood and land which lies near.

Class IX.

MISCELLANEOUS.

357

তেবেসে মাণিক যদি এন্ধাৰত জলে,
তেবেসে তৰু যদি হালিপৰে ফলে,
তেবেসে সতী যদি স্বামী সঙ্গে যাই,
তেবেসে বিদ্যা যদি ধন মৰ্ম্ম পাই।

Tebese mánik jadi endhárat jale,
Tebese taru jadi hálipare phale,
Tebese sati jadi swámi sange jái,
Tebese bidyá jadi dhan dharma pái.

That pearl is a real pearl which sparkles by night,
That tree is a real tree which bends down with the weight of its fruit,
That *Sati* is a real *Sati* who accompanies her lord,
That learning is real learning which brings riches and honour.

তেবেসে is the archaic form of তেনেহলে or তেন্তে। The reference to the *Sati* accompanying her lord is significant of the practice of immolating widows that existed throughout India before its abolition by Lord William Bentinck in December 1829 A.D.

358.

তেবে যশী যদি যশ বাখানে আনে,
তেবেসে গৃহস্থ যদি আটি খাই ধানে।
Tebe jashi jadi jash bákháne áne,
Tebese grihastha jadi áti kháí dháne.

He is a famous man if his praises are sung by others,
He is a real house-holder who has sufficient paddy to eat.

359.

লৰৰ নিষ্ফল যদি আগত আছে নৈ,
তিৰীৰ নিষ্ফল পাটিত নাই পৈ,
খেতিৰ নিষ্ফল পথাৰত নহয় ধান,
গোছৰৰ নিষ্ফল হাকিমে নকৰে কান।

Lirar nishphal jadi ágat áchhe nai,
Tirir nishphal pátit nái pai,
Khetir nishphal pathárat nahay dhán,
Gochharar nishphal hákime nakare kán.

Running is useless if there is a river in front,
A woman is useless who has no husband in her bed,
Cultivation is useless if paddy does not grow in the field,
A law suit is useless if the Judge does not listen.

360.

পিতা পুত্ৰে যদি কন্দল বাজে,
পুত্ৰক দণ্ডিব পণ্ডিত ৰাজে।

Pitá putre jadi kandal báje,
Putrak dandiba pandit ráje.

If there be a quarrel between father and son,
The *pandits* should punish the son.

361.

মৰে উৰুলিপুঙা,
মৰে পদুলি সুঙা,
মৰে অলপ পানীৰ মাছ,
মৰে নদীৰ কুলৰ গাছ।

Mare uruli-pungá,
Mare paduli-sungá,
Mare alap pánir máchh,
Mare nadir kular gáchh.

The vagrant, the man who visits others constantly, the fish in a little water, the tree on the river bank, are likely to die.

362.

সৰুদন্ত যাৰ ওঠ পাতল,
তাইক দেখিবা দ্বন্দৰ মূল।

Saru danta jár oth pátal,
Táik dekhibá dandar mul.

A woman with thin lips and small teeth,
Is the root of a quarrel.

363.

যি জনি নাৰী নুবুজে ন্যায়, স্বামীৰ নেজানে অভিপ্ৰায়,
ভাল বুলিলে কৰে খং, তাইৰ লগত নিমিলে ৰং।

Ji jani nári nubuje nyáy, swámir nejáne abhipráy,
Bhál bulile kare khang, táir lagat nimile rang.

She who does not appreciate justice, she who does not know the mind of her husband,
She who gets angry if you speak to her gently, is not pleasant company.

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