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EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF MRS.  
BRONSON.

We give below, some extracts from a journal kept by Mrs. **Bronson**, during her brief residence among the Nagas of the hill country. The uncertainty which now rests upon the prospects of that station,\*—from the failure of Mr. **Bronson's** health, the removal by death of his sister, Miss B., and the want of other laborers prepared to enter the field—will cause this journal to be read with a deep and painful interest. The incidents, many of which are of a touching character, are narrated in a simple manner; and after its perusal, we doubt not our readers will feel, with us, a deeper regret that circumstances should render it necessary to relinquish, even for a time, a station so happily commenced, and with so favorable prospects of success. The journal commences with the removal of Mr. B.'s family to their new station among the hills in March, 1840.

*Laborers commenced—Character of the school—Kindness of the natives.*

March 22. Having become somewhat settled in our new home, and our school room being finished, we to-day opened our doors for scholars. The young men, sons and relatives of the chiefs who had been learning to read during Mr. **Bronson's** former visit among them, came in, and manifested an interest in their books. I never spent a happier day than this has been. The youths appear very intelligent, and would, I am sure, have excited a deep interest in the minds of our friends at home, could they have seen them during school hours to-day. They

came armed with their *dá* (sword) and spear, and with their gay ornaments. In this respect they reminded me of the Aborigines of high rank in our own country. The most of them could read easy words, and spell a little. Mr. **Bronson** told them at the close of the school, that as the female teacher had come, the school would now be taught by her, while his time would be occupied in preparing books for them, and in telling the people about the great truths of the bible. We could plainly see that the idea of being taught by a female was not entirely agreeable to these proud young warriors, but we doubt not they will soon forget prejudices like this. Before closing the school I told them I wished to take their names, as it was the custom in schools to do so, in order to notice who were regular in their attendance, and who were not. On inquiring of them individually what name I should write, they very seriously said, "it is contrary to our custom to disclose our names to foreigners—we never can do it."

Well aware that the surest way of overcoming their little prejudices is not to take much notice of them, I waived the question, and contented myself with writing their several titles as they pass among the Asamese.

26. Our little school slowly increases in number, and we think in interest. We have succeeded in collecting a class of ten little boys, who are as wild and untamed as the part-ridge on the mountains. The noise of a deer, or the baying of their hounds, frequently calls their attention from their books, and they are off instantly, without waiting to signify their wish to go, or to ask permission.

I feel great delight in this first feeble attempt, and anticipate by the blessing

\* See letters from the Asam mission published in the last number of the Magazine.



of God, seeing a great and happy change take place ere long, among these wild children of nature. Our school now numbers twenty scholars, some of whom possess minds of the highest order. We ardently desire to see them properly instructed, and above all, to see them made wise unto salvation. We may then hope they will prove the most efficient laborers in spreading the truth among these mountain tribes.

28. We feel more and more at home among our dear people. Their kindness and hospitality remind us more of the sweet charities of life in our dear native land, than any thing we have before witnessed among the heathen. From the first day of our arrival they seemed to vie with each other in expressions of kind feeling and hospitality. Our little daughter is a great favorite with them, and nearly all their little presents are brought expressly for her. She has plenty of sour buffalo's milk, meat, &c., from her kind hearted friends. She returns their friendship warmly, and utters exclamations of joy when she sees any of them entering the house. We often see her seated on the floor with several of the chiefs around her, while she is showing and explaining to them the pictures in her little books.

*Beautiful scenery—A band of warriors—Visit from the chief—A storm.*

April 6. Never since we have been on heathen ground, have I passed a more pleasant day than this has been. Our school this morning was interesting. The chief and many of the principal men of the village came in, and seemed very much interested in all they saw and heard. After school I sat down in the verandah, which commands a prospect of hill and dale, lovely beyond description. Just in front is the village, embowered in fruit trees. Only a few houses are visible, the rest being hid by the trees and a slight elevation. Beyond the village rises a lofty peak, whose rounded summit is crowned with a village of perhaps 200 houses. Beyond this peak rise others more lofty, which lose themselves in the clouds. To the southeast and south, is a lofty range of mountains covered with forests. The highest of these is said to be the height of land between this and Burmah. Looking to the south and south-west, several villages are visible on different peaks—all pleasant and rural in their

appearance—often reminding us of the lovely little villages that lie secluded among the hills and valleys of our own dear native land. We often see their watch fires, and hear the rude music of their drums and gongs. We often anticipate the time when the high praises of God and the Lamb shall echo from peak to peak,—instead of the rude din which summons them to meet for warlike council, or for idle amusement. Soon after I had seated myself in the verandah, a train of youths emerged from the forest just in front of the house, equipped as for war; with every variety of ornaments which their rude taste and fancy could suggest. Their beautiful and athletic forms thus arrayed, resembled very strikingly the pictures we see of the American warriors in their martial attire. They were sent by the chief to treat with a neighboring tribe concerning some difficulty that had arisen between some of their people. An aged chief, one of the most influential men of the tribe, called, and as Mr. Bronson was absent, he sat down with me in the verandah. We entered into conversation respecting the object of our coming to live among them. He expressed great surprise that a female should be contented to live among their hills, so far away from her parents and friends. As I told him of the reasons which influenced us, and the importance of our object, he became much interested, and expressed his desire that we might be able to accomplish our purpose. "But," said he, "you cannot teach our females. They are trained to bear burdens, to bring wood and water, and to make the salt by which we gain our subsistence. If they learn to read and to sew, they must give up these labors and remain at home; then who will do this work; as it is our business to watch the village, hunt deer, and fight our enemies? Our young men can learn, but not our women; it is not our custom."

This man sends all his sons to school, and seems anxious that they should improve. Our evening schools are most interesting, as I usually devote a few moments to direct conversation with them on religious subjects.

14. To-day a most fearful storm of wind and rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning, swept over the hills, and for half an hour threatened to lay our frail dwelling level with the ground. We stood near the door ready to escape should the house fall. The leafy roof



was but little protection from the rain, which fell upon us in torrents. A merciful Providence, however, preserved us amid the dangers of the storm.

*Tea cultivation—The rainy season—Interest of the scholars—Native teacher.*

18. At the request of the people, Mr. Bronson has gone with them to explore their *tea grounds*, which are distant about a day's journey. These hills abound in tea which they have never yet cultivated, though they have now some thought of doing so. Mr. B. thinks it right to encourage them to this, as it will be of great benefit to them in promoting a more free intercourse with the plains, and in enabling them to obtain more of the comforts and enjoyments of civilized life.—Though weak in body, and alone on these hills, I feel this evening cheerful and happy. If I am not deceived, I feel a pleasure in the consciousness of being in the path of duty, and of the presence of the Savior, which more than counterbalances the pain of separation from home and beloved friends.

19. Have been unable to-day to have a school from indisposition. The sympathy and attention I have received from the people have been most affecting to me.

The rains are now commencing, and the following three months will probably be most trying to health. We see the sun very seldom, except a short time early in the morning. The fogs are dense, and are thought to be very unhealthy. It is at this season, however, that we can best succeed in gathering the children and youth into school, as they are prevented by the weather from leaving their hills, or pursuing their accustomed games and sports. Our first class have commenced learning to write, and are very much interested in this new exercise. They often inquire when they shall be able to read all the books in Mr. Bronson's study, and manifest a great anxiety to learn all that is to be learned. Our hopes have been much raised of late concerning our assistant teacher, *Boliram*. He has commenced reading the New Testament by course, and has of late manifested an increasing interest in the truths he reads. He often voluntarily contrasts the purity of the maxims there enforced with the corrupt principles inculcated in their sacred books, and acknowledges that ours is plainly the true religion.

He is evidently half persuaded to give up his vain superstitions, and become a christian;—but alas! *caste*, that almost insurmountable obstacle to the spread of the gospel in this country, prevents him from coming to the important decision which his judgment evidently approves.

He often says, "How can I forsake all my kindred and friends, and become an outcast from their society? Can I not love and serve God in my heart, without exposing myself to persecution by an open profession?" Our Naga interpreter and teacher seems also at times to be inquiring after the truth. Could we see these two persons sincere, humble followers of Jesus, we should hope much good would result from their labors.

*Intelligence from the new missionaries—Departure of Mr. B. for Jaipur.*

May 4. Letters from our dear friends\* inform us of their near approach to Jaipur, and Mr. B. feels it his duty to go and meet them there.

Our school is suspended this evening, as the young men wish to spend the evening in conversing with Mr. B. He sits in his study surrounded with his Naga friends, who have much to say, and many questions to ask, about his going, and the object of a new teacher in coming among them. Two of the relatives of the chief have overcome their fears of visiting the plains at this season, and propose accompanying him to meet and welcome the new missionaries. We are surprised at this proposal, as they have great fears of the cholera, which usually commences its ravages on the plains at this season. These rude people certainly manifest an affection for us, of which, from what we have seen of the Asamese, we had supposed the heathen to be incapable, at least, for those not related to them by the ties of kindred. The chief and heads of the people have pledged themselves to take care of the "Ma'm Sahib" and "little Mary," assuring Mr. B. that not until every one of them is cut up, shall any harm, which they can prevent, come to us. Mr. B. left this morning, attended by many of the people. I must confess I feel sad to be thus separated from all my friends, but there is an inexpressible satisfaction in fore-

\* Mr. Barker and family, including Miss Rhoda Bronson. See Mr. B.'s journal p. 114, of the number for May.



going their society for the sake of trying to benefit this dear people. As to fears, I have none. True the Nagas are abroad reported as savages and cannibals,—thirsting only for blood and slaughter. They are indeed savage in war, but we have found them friends, and possessing those traits of character which, under the sweet influences of christianity, would make them a most amiable and interesting people. I feel perfectly safe among them, as much so as I should in the bosom of my father's family.

8. Sabbath. Though alone as to christian society, I have spent a quiet, happy Sabbath. How blessed is the christian's portion. Neither place nor circumstances can debar him from holding communion with God; and this privilege granted, place or circumstances can have little influence over his happiness.

*An incident—Alarming reports—Arrival of Miss Bronson.*

10. I was awakened last night by the screams of a servant, who said some one was breaking into the house. I immediately arose and went to the place, where I found a window open, and a small hole made in the wall. Some person had evidently been endeavoring to enter the house; but I felt sure they must be quite frightened away by the outcry of the woman who had discovered them. It was long before I could reassure them sufficiently to persuade them to sleep. In the morning my Naga friends came in to see what had happened, and expressed the greatest surprise and indignation that any person should have dared to undertake such a thing in their village. They assured me that it was none of their people, but some straggler from the Abors or Asamese. They promised to be on the look out from the adjacent watch-house—or even to send some one to sleep in the house, if I felt afraid. I told them I had not the least fear, but trusted in the great God for protection, assuring them at the same time of my sense of their kindness, and of my readiness to call on them for assistance, should it be necessary.

Reports have to-day reached me, that a difficulty has arisen between this tribe, and the Bor Duris, with whom they have long been on ill terms; and that an attack is meditated by the latter, on this village. I felt some uneasiness on hearing this report, as several bloody battles have formerly taken

place between these tribes. While I was sadly thinking over the matter this evening, one of the chiefs came in. He immediately spoke of the reports, and admitted that they might prove true, as a serious difficulty had arisen, concerning which a council was to be held on the morrow, "at which consultation," said he, "if the matter is not settled, we must fight." "But," said I, "if they attack the village, what will you do with us, who are left under your protection?" He replied, "We shall secrete you and little Mary in the jungle, and then fight to defend you; and not until every one of us is cut to pieces, shall any harm come to you and little Mary." The difficulty was afterwards settled without a resort to arms.

17. This evening our Naga friends who accompanied Mr. B. down the river, returned, bringing me letters from him, and a large package from American friends. In my lonely situation, these tokens of affectionate remembrance from absent friends, are very precious.

This morning my little group of scholars requested to be dismissed early, that they might go to meet Mr. Bronson and the new teacheress, whose arrival they have for several days been joyfully anticipating. After school they clothed themselves in their best, and set off in high spirits, to meet their friends. It was to me an interesting sight. About two o'clock their swiftest runner came with the speed of a deer, to tell me that our friends were approaching, and in a few moments I had the unspeakable pleasure of embracing my husband, and our dear sister. It was a happy, blessed meeting to us all, and I trust we all felt grateful to our heavenly Father for permitting us to meet under circumstances of such peculiar mercy. The house was filled with our Naga friends, all eager and anxious to welcome the "Sahib" and his sister, to their hills, and it was not until evening that we found ourselves alone. Our season of worship was deeply interesting; indeed this evening is one never to be forgotten.

An account of the subsequent illness of Miss B., and also of their daughter Mary, is given in the journal and letters of Mr. Bronson, published in the May and July numbers of the Magazine. The narrative need not be repeated here, and we therefore pass over this part of the journal with very brief extracts.



*Illness of Miss B. and of Mary—Sympathy of the natives—Progress of the school.*

June 15. With a full heart, I sit down this evening to recount the dealings of our heavenly Father with us, for a few weeks past. We are called to sing of judgment and of mercy. Our dear sister Rhoda has been very ill—confined most of the time to her bed.

Our little daughter Mary was attacked with the same fever, on the day after sister R. was taken ill. The fever raged without intermission for nine days, and for a time we almost wholly despaired of her life; but God mercifully raised her up from the very borders of the grave. We receive her as one restored almost from the dead; and as a special blessing from the hand of our heavenly parent. Oh that we may feel more deeply than we have ever done before, that this "lent treasure" is the Lord's; and may we have grace to bring her up for his service!

It has been most affecting to us, to witness the interest and sympathy which this wild people have manifested during Mary's illness. The night during which we thought she was dying, the young men of our school, and many of the chiefs, came to the house and remained through the night, ready to render us every assistance in their power. Their sad looks and silent attention to our wants, showed how deeply they felt for us, and was the more highly prized as it was something we have never before witnessed among the heathen. Oh that their hearts may be truly imbued with christian principles, which would render them a most lovely and interesting people!

16. Have to-day for the first time since Mary's illness, been able to take charge of the school. I find that the scholars have progressed a little, quite as much as could be expected with only a native teacher. I felt very happy to engage in the delightful work of instructing this dear circle of youth once more, and they seemed equally pleased to see their former teacher in her place again. Their improvement in writing has been very rapid. They already write a fair easy hand, which would do credit to any learner in America who had written twice the length of time that they have. They are particularly delighted with this exercise, and are often inclined to shorten their hours of study to engage in it.

I think that hereafter they may be taught drawing with advantage—at least enough of it to enable them to execute maps, &c.

Sister R. is now better, and seems to be slowly regaining her strength. Her whole soul seems absorbed in the great work of benefitting the heathen. Our prospects are brightening. We only want more faith in the promises of God, and a more burning zeal in his service, to be as perfectly happy as we can be in this vale of tears.

*A converted seaman—Painful recollections—Renewed illness of Miss B.*

6. July. We have just received a most interesting letter from one of the converted sailors of the *Rosabella*,\* now an officer of a vessel. He relates his christian experience since he left the *Rosabella*. He has remained true to his profession amid every kind of opposition, and has fearlessly professed his attachment to the cause of Christ wherever he has been. This young man was apparently the most hardened of any of the ship's company, at the commencement of the voyage; and it was not until we were near Calcutta, that his stubborn heart yielded to the claims of the gospel. We were at the time much interested in his case. He had been the subject of much anxiety, and of many prayers during the voyage; and his conversion seemed evidently to be the work of the Holy Spirit. He came out very decidedly, and seems from his letter to have gone on his way rejoicing in Christ, and boldly advocating his cause.

7. This is with us a day of solemn and tender recollections. Three years ago this morning, our dear brother and associate, Mr. Thomas, closed his mortal career, and entered upon the employments and joys of eternity. How sudden, how blessed was the exchange! He closed his eyes upon this world of sin and sorrow, and arose in everlasting day. Could we see him as he now bows, a pure spirit before the throne—could we realize the happiness that, forever increasing, fills his soul, we should doubtless be enabled to rejoice in the dispensation, now so dark and mysterious to us.

15. Our dear sister is again reduced to a state of great weakness, and we begin to feel seriously alarmed about her. Mr. B. started for Jaipur yester-

\* The vessel in which Messrs. Bronson, Thomas and others, went out.



day, to endeavor to procure for her, suitable medicines, and a change of diet.

One of the chiefs came last night to tell us not to fear, for they would all die before any harm should come to us during Mr. B.'s absence. He said they were making prayers and offerings for our safety. Poor deluded people—when will they learn to look to the great God, instead of evil spirits!

#### *State of the Asamese—Sickness of Mr. B.*

We have great occasion for gratitude to God for raising up so many friends for us in this dark land. The cholera is raging in Mattak—the country opposite Jaipur on the other side of the river. Jaipur is as yet mercifully spared. It seems as if God was about to sweep the poor degraded Asamese from the earth. They are already dwindled down very much from their former numbers. How heart-rending the thought, that they go into eternity the slaves of sin, and destitute of the precious hopes and consolations of the gospel!

Aug. 7. Tuesday Mr. B. was taken down with fever—a few days earlier than he was taken last year. We had hoped he would escape this year, altogether, as our location on the hills is considered more healthy than either Sadiya or Jaipur. But it seems to be in his system, and we fear will continue to attack him every hot season, as long as he continues in Asam. He feels deeply at being thus laid aside from his work.

Oh! could every christian in America know and realize, how plenteous is the harvest, and how few and feeble are the laborers, it seems impossible that any who can consecrate themselves to the blessed cause, should withhold the "reasonable service."

#### *A painful decision—The Naga chief—Preparations for leaving the station.*

Oct. 2. Little did I think at my last date, that a painful necessity would so soon oblige us to leave our dear people, and to relinquish, for a time at least, the labors so happily commenced. But an all wise Providence has thus ordered, and it is our part quietly to submit. Since my last date, sickness has nearly suspended all missionary work. The school has continued under the care of the native teacher, but my own time has been fully taken up with the care of my sick husband and sister.

We have at length come to the decision, that it is our duty to leave our post for a season, and to seek the blessing of health, without which we can do nothing for the heathen. Thus to leave this people, like sheep without a shepherd, is inexpressibly painful to our feelings. But the path of duty is very plain to us, and we must go forward, trusting in Him who has said, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." The Nagas appear to regret our leaving, very much—but they say, "We cannot ask you to stay and die here; go and get health, and then come to us again." The aged chief who has seen more than a hundred years, came to visit us yesterday, attended by his numerous sons. He said to Mr. B., "Before you return, I may be gone, for my hair is ripe, but these my sons will stand pledged to be friends to you." Then turning to his sons, who stood respectfully behind him, he charged them most solemnly, to listen to the instructions of the missionary, and always to be his friends. This they promised.

We are this morning in all the bustle of preparation for our tedious journey. Our Naga friends have been very kind in assisting us. Without their aid I hardly know how we should have been able to get our goods down to Jaipur. They bear no burdens for others, themselves, it being against their custom; but they have assisted us in getting forty Abors from the upper ranges, who, for a fixed price, agree to take every thing down. The chiefs brought us a man this morning, saying "here is a trusty man whom we recommend to take little Mary." We shall therefore give the child to his care, to get her down the hills the best way he can. The only way will be, I suppose, to allow him to tie her firmly to his back. In this way he will probably take the child up and down the steep precipices far more safely than in any other. An English gentleman at Jaipur, has very kindly sent an elephant, upon which sister Rhoda and myself are to perform the journey.

#### *Gloomy reflections—Departure—Arrival at Jaipur.*

All is now ready—our house is filled with Nagas, who seem to feel deeply at parting with us. The young chief, his nephew, and a number of our friends, volunteered to accompany us all the way down. Oh! that the hearts of this interesting people might be af-

fects with the truths of the gospel. They often say to Mr. B., "We understand what you say on this subject very imperfectly, but when you know our language fully, we shall be able to understand more," &c. I feel inexpressibly pained to leave my dear scholars. Nothing but a sense of duty reconciles me to it. They promise us that they will improve as fast as they can. We should have been glad to have left our native teachers behind us, but nothing would induce them to stay after we are gone. About ten o'clock in the morning, we left the assembled crowd at our house, and turned our backs upon this lovely mountain village—where we had spent nearly eight happy months, in trying to dispense the good word of the kingdom. We could not but weep as we turned from the spot—bereft of health—and leaving behind us no one to carry on the "labors of love" among this perishing people.

During the day we were all prospered in our journey, and about sundown reached the Namsang, a beautiful mountain stream. Here we found a small grass shelter, which br. Cutter had kindly erected for us, in anticipation of our coming down. Here we cooked our frugal meal, and refreshed ourselves with sleep. Early the next morning we set out, and at three in the afternoon found ourselves at our own comfortable home in Jaipur.

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