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SOME ASSAMESE PROVERBS.

COMPiled AND ANNOTATED

By

CAPTAIN P. R. GURDON, I.S.C.,
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, GOALPARA.

SHILLONG:
PRINTED AT THE ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.
1896.

Price Rs 2, inclusive of Postage.
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SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.
INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE but few remarks to make by way of introduction; the proverbs, which have in many cases been picked up from the mouths of the people, will speak for themselves. I do not wish to advance that the proverbs in themselves are specially interesting, but trust to those who are acquainted with Assamese, or are interested in the Assamese, they may not be altogether without interest. The translations have been considerably revised since they were first made, and, in the revision, I am specially indebted to Mr. Abdul Majid, B.A., LL.B., Barrister-at-law, who is a native of Jorhát, for his very valuable help and suggestions. This collection does not pretend to be a collection from all the Assamese-speaking districts of the province; it consists of only proverbs from Sibságar, Nowgong, and Gauhati; hence the title "Some Assamese Proverbs."

I have a few remarks to make about the method of transliteration. Throughout ḍ (long ā) has been represented by an accented á; (short a) is unaccented. I should, however, have preferred to have written the Assamese ḍ phonetically as "o", and in this I am supported by Mr. Melitus, although the latter remarks that it is usual to transliterate the Assamese ḍ as "a" on the analogy of Benga 'Hindi, and other languages derived from Sanskrit. If it had been transliterated "o," there would have been a difficulty about the transliteration of the letters ḍ and ḍ, although, perhaps, this might have been got over by transliterating the last two letters by "d." This, however, would not have been strictly correct. It has been thought necessary to distinguish ḍ from ḍ, the letter "i" being sufficient to represent both sounds. The long ī, moreover, being seldom met with in Assamese writing. In the same way the letters "u" and "o" have been used to denote ḍ—ḍ a—ḍ, respectively. In the above I have been guided by Sir Hunter's "Practical Guide to Transliteration." The proverbs have been classified, as far as possible, according to objects, not subject this being thought the best method after consideration.

Dhubri,
The 4th July 1895.

P. R. GURDON.
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## Class I.

**Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>What an exhibition of anger, you have put down the good one and have picked up the torn one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Put aside your anger; the dhán is expended and the châng is empty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety about trifles.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I had forgotten it, and then I remembered. It was a five-coloured leaf in the palace of Rawan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rahdoi from Roha, Bhadoi from Tipam, Aghanibai from Solaguri; all three are weeping and embracing one another, although they are none of them related.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>He tells the news of Gargaon without ever having gone there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boasting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>There were five shells in the ocean; the snail with a tail said &quot;I am related to them.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nothing causes my death but fire. I hang my torn mosquito curtain in an irregular manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming others for one's own faults.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>There is an opening for my mouth, and I cannot help speaking, but if I speak, it is the fault of the bhakat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceit</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>He came (a strong man wishing to fight), but he pulled out one hair with his two hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting one's chickens before they are hatched.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rubbing the lips with oil whilst the jack fruit is still on the tree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CONTENTS.

**Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices—continued.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discontent</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>A covering of blood and skin. I did not realise one of the seven happinesses, and I did not even find the &quot;dheki&quot; nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>With a single arrow I slew seven lions, but I did not tell any one through modesty. After six months lying in wait, he killed a mouse, and at that I see the drum of victory is beaten!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>If I tell, a fault will be found in my story. Twelve women went to fetch water, and the noses of thirteen have been cut!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>I used to be able to jump over the &quot;Dhapolika&quot; hill. I killed paddy birds before you could snap your fingers. I caught up a stag when I chased him. Now I can't even catch a drake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggeration</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>He made a palm tree out of a freckle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dhon's illness is very serious, but he eat a pile of rice as big as an &quot;udhan.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>The fish-wife lifted up the load without polluting it. Without study he became a magician.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Uncut grass has nine bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Whilst scratching the body, a mosquito was killed, but I tell people it fell in a severe engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Good associates with good. I have drunk on the roof of the house; have sat on the head of Bikramaditya and have bathed in the Ganges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False excuses</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>The tongue, because it has not any bone, talks at random.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False pride</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>To whom shall I speak, who will believe me? Whoever I tell, will spurn me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices—continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greediness</td>
<td></td>
<td>He who was greedy, went to fetch a plantain leaf ; he who was not greedy, took his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>rice on the bare ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>He wants to eat much ; as regards work, he is lazy, but he wants an embroidered “dhoti.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>“Khoda” suddenly appeared whilst the three <em>mullahs</em> were watching the prize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Greedy rice-taker and mekela-bearer! I have kept the cooked rice ready ; take it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitting a man</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Misery upon misery : the dog bites me, the boys pelt me ; nowhere can happiness be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when he is down.</td>
<td></td>
<td>got.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>He stole an elephant, but on the road he detects some one stealing brinjals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypocrisy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>People are becoming more impatient to get “akhoya” than “aroi.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>The guest wants salt with his vegetables, and the man who buys paddy looks out for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a large “dun.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>What an impatient husband ! He cannot even wait to be served with salt and pickle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>If I tell him he is deaf, the spindle is in the spinning wheel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inattention</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>I talk about a revolution. He interrupts me, saying a bat has eaten the plantains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>He has not even got a pair of scales ; how does he know the essence of trade?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignorance</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>He who does not know how to dance, finds the courtyard sloping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>The disease has eaten at the nose of the doctor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CONTENTS.

**Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices—continued.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>You lived in a way (before), but since you have taken to regally entertaining religious strangers, you have become much embarrassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>One who has nothing to cover his body with, drinks 3 &quot;tekelis&quot; of liquor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>He has the mind and the mouth, but not the milk or the vessel to drink it from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>The host expends his salt and oil, and is not able to cook the &quot;micha&quot; fish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>He has no money in hand, yet his cravings are great.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>He cries &quot;Ram&quot; when in distress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingratitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laying traps for others.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>He who lays thorns in the way of others, falls amongst them himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>There are many rosaries, the beads of which are not counted in devotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>He wishes, by all means, to take the lead having a turban on his head, although the lower part of his body is naked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of false display.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>If you meet him in the way, you see the folds of his large &quot;dhoti.&quot; If you go to his house, you see the walls are worn out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>The front shows a young man, but the back makes one weep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>One having no cow—for seven generations past, goes to milk with a &quot;kariya.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>The dish is seven seers in weight, but the rice is of the day before. Fie on him who eats it. It is a shame to hear about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>He had not a rag to cover himself with, and yet the little &quot;maina&quot; pulled off his clothes!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Proverbs relating to human failings, foibles, and vices—continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meddling</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>The well belongs to one, the rope to another, but a third person comes and draws water making a clatter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppression of others</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>He who injures others, is injured in his own home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of sight, out of mind</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>When we are away from other people, he is my &quot;porohit.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straining at a gnat, etc.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>He is able to see through the eye of a needle, but he cannot see through that of the axe-head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny wise pound foolish</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>He does not take a pinch of salt with his curry, but three times that amount he uses in making the sauce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Sees go away, but he cries after the quarter-seers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peevishness</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>No, I won't eat. I won't go there even if a Brahmin is present. I won't give myself any trouble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presumption</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>What an unexpected thing has happened? The woman, covered with sores, has gone to the &quot;hat.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Quickly cut the betelnut, don't you know we are related?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot calling the kettle black</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>To throw water to clean the backs of others when one's own is covered with mire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride of family</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Although he has no hair on his body or tail, he says his father's name is &quot;Ranjit&quot; and his mother's &quot;Barpahari.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Bring the adze, I am itching to be off. Tomorrow morning I shall start in the boat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-class</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Subject of proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfishness</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Each has his own cares, but the old Brahmin woman only thinks of her ear ornaments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>My mother went to the house of the Gossain and I went with her. When I got rice and plantains there, I became a bhakat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egotism</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>His own disposition is of one description, and he thinks that every one else's will be the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>He eats himself sweetmeats, but to others he gives a measure of maize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>The eaves of our houses touch. I have been thinking of asking you for a year and a half, dear friend, how your fever is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>I leave upon others and go along with the stream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponging on others</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Every country has its own customs, and every one has a hanger-on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>He gives away ashes of paddy straw, and it is a long time before he gives that even.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Come to a feast at another's house and see my liberality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stinginess</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>For some the host cooks and serves a meal, but he bolts the door in the face of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toadying</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>The oil-seller weeps, because his oil is spilt. The cotton-dealer weeps and soaks his cotton in it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trickery</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>The old woman is very fond of dancing, and now is the occasion of her grandchild's marriage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsobriety in old age</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>The husband died at Koliabar. The wife remembered this when she was husking the paddy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Class II.**

**PROVERBS RELATING TO WORLDMY WISDOM AND MAXIMS, EXPEDITIOUS AND CUNNING, AND WARNINGS AND ADVICE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Little work and much eating are the signs of a man becoming poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>I got weary of teaching a fool. I threw down the eggs and destroyed the nest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Have nothing whatever to do with these three things—the honesty of the wicked, the bathing of a cattle-thief in the Ganges, the fasting of a wanton on the eleventh day of the moon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>I have obtained it by begging, how can I give it to you—from my bowels?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>You wish to cut the wings of the unfledged nestling?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>In times of need, even an “owtenga” is welcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Give according to the best of your ability. At any rate, say something nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>You can do what is unacceptable in evil times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>He shot an arrow to a great height. The fisherman has seven wives, but only for one wife has he a bed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>What does a ginger-seller want with news of the arrival of the vessel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Do one thing at a time; first of all cook the “kerela,” then fry the brinjal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
<td>What the feathers are to the arrow, his art is to the wizard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class.</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>The gum is the evidence against the stealer of jack fruit, and the feathers of the duck betray him who has stolen that bird.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Whence comest thou? With thy footstep the courtyard is shattered to pieces.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>What fault have I committed? I have appeared on the Sotai Hill and I have to pay five eight-anna pieces.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>With the sickle in her waist-band, the old woman dances along the road.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Where is your advice? Underneath the “Bhekuri” bush?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Whose nephew dies, and whose loss is it? Who drinks water at whose attack of fever.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>What a wife for such a man! The worthless has three wives and the worthy none.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Don’t call any one grandfather. All have grey hair and beards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Whet your knife on a stone. Rule your wife by blows.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>The one-eyed, the lame, and the hunch-backed, these three are a tail of ill.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>He who has not a grain to eat, wishes to become great.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>As wonderful as cattle climbing trees, or the lobe of the ear being bored with a “holonga.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>“Ghok” “Ghok” O! sister, a snake has bitten you, and I have caught a fish.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>He has not a single grain of rice in his own house, yet he wants to go to a big feast.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-class.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Subject of proverbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>A good horse can be recognized by its ears, a woman is tested in times of adversity, and a razor is tried on the whet-stone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>When the &quot;lopha&quot; (a kind of vegetable) is stolen, the householder eats &quot;chutney.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>The thief was attacked with colic, and the weaver was stung by a wasp.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Can clouds be avoided by bending down?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>He who wishes to thrive roots up the weeds, even when sitting down.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>What herds and herds of brothers-in-law he has!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>What fault have I committed? I admit I am in the wrong, and give you a duck's egg.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>The light of a lamp before a torch!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>To sleep in the early morning is pleasant. A sharp knife is required to cut betelnut.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>He ate the &quot;tenga&quot; a long time ago, but he is blamed now.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>What is yours is mine, but what is mine can't be taken even by your father.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>The result of giving a place, is to hear grumbling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Instead of riding in a &quot;dhooly,&quot; you will be carried slung on a pole—instead of milk you will drink water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>All ten fingers are used in eating, but it is the thumb that pushes the food into the mouth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>The sticks of ten men are a load to one person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-class.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Subject of proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>The unlucky man goes to the wood, his knife breaks in two, and he is stung by a wasp.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>When the sloven becomes poor, his wife does not esteem him; when his friends meet him, they take no notice, fearing that they may have to lend him money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>The &quot;dheki&quot; has become unsteady, the cup is broken. Has the drum gone away with the violin string?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Each grain of paddy has its grain of rice; every person has his own character.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Count money when you receive it, and tell the way only if you have seen the road.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>A bride of hell has rescued me from perdition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>They cut off the tiger's tail, and let him loose in his haunt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>From mentioning his name even, comes ill-luck; go and bolt the door.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Laugh not at me, it will scratch you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>Money got by unfair means, goes in expiations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>When you have caught a bird, break its wings. Don't place on one side rice which is cooked.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>He who reads, he who teaches, he who sows pán, he who causes to sow pán; these four should not think of anything else.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>He learnt it by heart, and then a thief stole it away.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>They met the blacksmith by the wayside, and said to him make a dao for us.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### CONTENTS.

*Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—continued.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>Thirteen scrapes in twelve months, I can’t help getting into hot water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>What passage-of-arms can there be between the strong and the weak? What amity can there be between the rich and the poor?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>&quot;Bhogobanto&quot; even flies through fear, and &quot;Basudev&quot; is alarmed lest he be beaten.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>It is good to eat bitter rice, but it is hard to hear bitter words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>Good comes from good for all time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>Which is sweeter—sweet words, or sweet food?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Go to battle if you are summoned, but don’t go to a feast if you are not invited.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>My son will have a daughter-in-law. He will catch me by the hair and throw me on the path.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>The uncle cuts wood, which his wife thinks as easy a task as drawing water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>,If I put my mind to it, I can find a way out of the difficulty.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>The shorter it is the more it tears.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>The Lohit knows how deep the oar is dipped.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>It is all the same whether you kick him or call him father.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>In company one can go as far as Lanka even.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>When you are in a hurry, you can’t get in a &quot;jāpi&quot; into the knapsack.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>Children make up the house, sundries also serve the same purpose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class.</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Deal fairly with your equals, then you won't be ashamed whether you gain or lose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>If a fly even falls into a toothless mouth, it is a gain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>The kiss of love breaks the nose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>If you find even fourteen annas of lost money, it is well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>The hawk has taken the duckling, now we are equal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>He who carries no jhápi, stick, or tanga, is blind even in the daytime.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>Look out as you move, for there are many holes in your own body, and you might slip into one of them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>If you don't take pains, you won't fill your mouth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>Labour alone fills the mouth, so the old folk say. Every one has heard this and seen it. It is not false.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>Two words in speaking, and two rounds in a fastening.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>It is the same whether you strike with the blunt or sharp edge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td>By weeping a debt is not paid.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>Like father, like son.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>Even with washing, charcoal does not become white.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td>He who has no money is anxious in mind.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>Wherever there are kingdoms, there are duties to perform.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proverbs relating to worldly wisdom and maxims, etc.—concluded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>163</td>
<td>In a temporary residence, there is no rule, or in a foreign country, you need not regard the rules of society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>164</td>
<td>A blind uncle is better than no uncle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>Pick up the wood with care, so that you can find your stick (for carrying the bundle on), as well as something to tie the wood up with.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class III.

PROVERBS RELATING TO PECULIARITIES AND TRAITS CHARACTERISTIC OF CERTAIN CASTES AND CLASSES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahoms</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>For the “Ahoms” is the “choklong,” for the Hindus “biya.” Deal with me as you like, now that I am in your power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>167</td>
<td>The ducks lay eggs and “Bhakats” eat them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>Is a paddy-husking machine greater than a “bhakat”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>169</td>
<td>When the “bhakats” clap their hands at the temple, cover your head with your cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhakats</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>“Bhakats” don’t cook plantains even.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>171</td>
<td>An unexpected thing has happened: a fault has been found with the head of the “bhakats.” Whom shall I make a “medhi”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>172</td>
<td>The Kamalabari “bhakats” of former days used to wash firewood before they cooked with it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proverbs relating to peculiarities and traits, etc.—continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhot</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>The rent-collector is the owner of the king's wealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhuiya</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>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 &quot;Bhuiya.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bora</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>In a Bora's house the walls are fastened with &quot;tora&quot;; how many nights will he live in it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>176</td>
<td>Brahmins and vultures look out for corpses, but gonoks watch from the time a person is taken ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmins</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>Is the ridge-pole of the Brahmin's house made out of a bamboo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>178</td>
<td>I was combing my beard. He brought me here calling me Brahmin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahang</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>His wealth has gone to the Mahang, so he threw down his load of salt and brought one of earth, and began to plaster his house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miri</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>When the Miri meets his wife, he beats her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohant</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>The traces of the Mohant are to be found in the &quot;matikolai&quot; field; those of the old bullock in the meadow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moria</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>Why should a Moria have paddy or a Musselman (Goria) ears?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nágas</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>The Nágas's wife is brought to bed, but the Nágá drinks the medicine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>184</td>
<td>The stock in trade of a thief is his appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>My father was a thief; I also am of the same persuasion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>A couple, a good couple. One has cropped ears, the other is a thief.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Class IV.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class.</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betelnut</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>Cut it small and eat it thick, and enjoy the betelnut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>188</td>
<td>A sharp knife for betelnut. To sleep in the early morning is pleasant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihu</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>An egg which has passed through seven Bihus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahminical thread</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Don't touch anything stale, and don't delay giving your children the Brahminical thread, and give always cooked rice in the evening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy-bodies</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>Without a fire-brand the fire won't light. Without the aid of a busy-body, the village won't settle down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childless woman</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>Let her make her old man dance, who has not got a baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>193</td>
<td>She cut off her own nose, so as to prevent her husband's second wife from starting on a journey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting off the nose.</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>If the nose is cut off, it will come back again, with treatment. If the hair is cut off, when will it come again?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>One argument begets another. A bit of straw makes the hole in the ear larger. The daughter grows up best at her mother's house. Paddy grows best on the &quot;pathar.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>A good bullock comes when it is called. If the mother is good, the daughter is the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-class</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Subject of proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>The daughter is more skilful in work than the mother; but the dheki is an obstacle in the way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>198</td>
<td>You are your mother’s daughter, and I am a daughter of some one. You must know that I make hot rice cool by pressing against it and squeezing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dheki</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>The “dheki” has gone out for a walk—what a misfortune for the rice refuse!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>The broom has touched father’s body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>A fisherman became rich, and he placed in the corner of his house a basket for storing paddy. Then he threw the basket away, saying he feels his body itching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>Out of respect they play the guitar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>203</td>
<td>Now has come the worthy husband; he comes to beat me with a knife made of straw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>204</td>
<td>What I am to say, what I am not to say, my husband’s name is “Botáli.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>205</td>
<td>What have I done? I have bought a husband for a “dun” of a paddy, and he always beats me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>206</td>
<td>If eaten in a spirit of thankfulness, common rice is “chira.” To the man who knows how to sit down, the ground is the stool. To the person who knows how to walk, the cooking place is one and a half prohar’s journey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>Hunger, hunger, cries the husband. The wife says let both morning and evening meals be taken together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>208</td>
<td>In the dark, the net was mistaken for a “jokai,” and the elder brother for the husband.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CONTENTS.**

*Proverbs relating to social and moral subjects, etc.—continued.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learned</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>What is fish and cooked rice to the learned, is an insurmountable difficulty to the uneducated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low birth</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>I know your lineage. You live in the seedling bed. If I say a little more, you will bolt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lover</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>He came only to have a look, but he was captured and tied up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal uncle</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>Let the uncle die, I will afterwards find the evil spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>The slip-knot of marriage is the strongest slip-knot of all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-in-law</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>If the mother-in-law gets a chance, she comes three times a day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>215</td>
<td>The mother-in-law is at her daughter-in-law’s, who is going to drink the cream?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>Having fallen in battle, I have become black; and without oil I have become scurvy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old men</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>He looks old to you, but in reality he is a flame of fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pohári</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>The Pohári has for a witness her husband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>The burden does not leave the porter, nor does potash forsake the vegetables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>The victory of religion is the destruction of wickedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-mother</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>What shall I say of my step-mother’s character? In the one hand she has acid, and in the other salt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-class</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Subject of proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-son</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>You are not my son, but a son of my fellow-wife. I have no dhari (rug) and no pati (bed); you must sleep on the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen cattle</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>Stolen cattle find grass along the road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>What sort of a teacher is he, for when he finds a companion he sings hymns and lights a grass-fire?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbashi</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>The temple of Urbashi has but one door and passage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village conversation</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>Bits of fern—he drinks water when he eats rice: these are the subjects of conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water-sprite</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>The digging of the ditch has brought the water-sprite nearer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>228</td>
<td>A king reigns on land, but in the tank the water-sprite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>The torch burnt down to the widower’s hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>230</td>
<td>He is all by himself a &quot;Madangopal,&quot; a widower; he possesses nine courtyards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>231</td>
<td>To look for turtle’s eggs in the hills, or to set a fish-trap in the plains, are as difficult things as for a widower to get dry paddy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>I ask for acid and she gives me salt, who will remain under such provocation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-class</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Subject of proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>233</td>
<td>A hasty cook, a hasty broom, and the husband goes fasting. A slow cook, a slow broom, and the husband takes three meals a day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>234</td>
<td>In every house the wife is mistress. In each ditch reigns the water-sprite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>She has been weaving at the loom for three evenings, but by mistake she has broken her husband's tooth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>236</td>
<td>Cross me over, stupid, says the wife. I am so tired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>The maid servant broke a cocoanut shell, and the news spread to Gargao. The wife broke a brass plate, and the result was only a smile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>238</td>
<td>Through the elder wife's fault he slips down. When the younger one makes a mistake, he investigates the matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>239</td>
<td>The wife does not give even when Bidhata does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>240</td>
<td>The wife is bald in the middle of her head, but her husband calls her Rupahi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>241</td>
<td>A paragon of a wife! She spoils the bed and eats from the cooking pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>Women that are short, and worn-out brooms, are alike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>243</td>
<td>Women, Miris, parrots, and crows: the minds of these four you cannot know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>244</td>
<td>Being married to a worthless woman, a cart-covering that has a hole in it, the journeyman who lives by doing piece-work: these three are the agony of death.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Class V.

**Proverbs relating to agriculture and seasons.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>245</td>
<td>The &quot;brinjal&quot; that is out of season, cries out &quot;pluck me, pluck me.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>246</td>
<td>The bégori plum is found amongst the álá grass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>247</td>
<td>In one Ahin dhán, in three Hawans pán.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>248</td>
<td>It is pán from the same tree; how will it be different?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>249</td>
<td>Paddy should be under soft feet; the sharp point of the paddy pierces, and the man goes along crying out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>The kothiya is small, but it was sown in Jeth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>251</td>
<td>In the evening he has seven ploughs, in the morning he has not one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>252</td>
<td>The radish that will grow large, is known when it has spread but two leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>253</td>
<td>The largest jack-fruit was hidden under the leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>254</td>
<td>There is better wood even than nahar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>255</td>
<td>The month of Choit has arrived, where am I going to put the paddy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>256</td>
<td>Now is the time for ripe mangoes, how can you be bent double with care any longer, uncle?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-class</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Subject of proverbs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>257</td>
<td>The whole season of Māh went in sharpening the ploughshare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>258</td>
<td>Do you find a &quot;seluk&quot; at every dive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>259</td>
<td>When the bór tree was cut down, it fell with a loud noise and the juice poured out. Before people speak to him sharply, inwardly you should feel for him kindly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>260</td>
<td>The kerela is twelve hâts long, but the seeds are thirteen hâts long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>261</td>
<td>Buy land which slopes towards the centre, and marry a girl whose mother is good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>262</td>
<td>Look at your paddy cultivation in the evening, look for your cattle in the morning, look at the girl fishing with the jokai, and see what she is like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>263</td>
<td>It is harder to sow the plot that was left uncultivated before, than to sow the whole of the rest of the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>264</td>
<td>A fence always requires looking after.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>265</td>
<td>Place cowdung round the black pepper bush, and earth round the pán, and cut the plantain three times before you plant it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>266</td>
<td>When you plant sâli, you must make the sâlis as near to one another as possible. If the sâli does not grow well, then abuse the rake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>267</td>
<td>A house with a tamarind tree in front, and an owtenga behind; has not the owner of that house gone away from here yet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>268</td>
<td>Seeing the matikalai beaten out, the sesamum opened its cane-fastening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>269</td>
<td>The best crops are on the fields of others. The best sons are those at home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Class VI.

**PROVERBS RELATING TO CATTLE AND ANIMALS AND INSECTS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-class.</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject of proverbs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>270</td>
<td>When fish are too plentiful, the paddy-bird is blind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>271</td>
<td>The jackal fell into the dye-pot and got coloured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>272</td>
<td>In a bad place the foot of even the elephant slips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>273</td>
<td>The mosquito under the mosquito net is crushed to death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>274</td>
<td>The mosquito. It has a trunk, but it is not an elephant. It bites men and cattle, but it is not a tiger. Whatever it eats, it eats on the spot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>275</td>
<td>The little dove has flown away, the fish-eagle has chased it away; with one arrow it has been pierced in seven places, this thing also is like that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>276</td>
<td>A mouse has seven paws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>277</td>
<td>A man who has once been bitten by a snake, is afraid of every piece of rope on the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>278</td>
<td>Near us we have the púthi and the khalihona, but the “ro” and the “borali” are far away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-class.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Subject of proverbs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>279</td>
<td>The duck that has been bought has flesh right up to the beak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>280</td>
<td>What a time! A time for the contrary to happen: the deer licks the tiger's cheek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>281</td>
<td>You need not see a tiger look for a tomcat. If you want to see gentlemen, go to the road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>282</td>
<td>I laid a good bait for the tiger, for I killed a deer and placed it in front of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>283</td>
<td>Having got nothing, he found a bhadoi and squeezed it into the fish basket.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>284</td>
<td>The karsalu having eaten, climbed up on to the bough. The person who licked the wood, died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>285</td>
<td>The dog is the enemy of the man who begs for scraps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>286</td>
<td>To the ant a few drops of rain is a flood; a single slap is too much for a toothless mouth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>287</td>
<td>The bird is small, but it builds its nest in the húluñg tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>288</td>
<td>Obviously a situl, see the bones in its back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>289</td>
<td>The monkey also looks handsome when it is full-grown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-class.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Subject of proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>290</td>
<td>The squirrel eats the widow's betelnut. If she gives me the tree, I know it will grow crooked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>291</td>
<td>In the hand of the old man is the sengeli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>292</td>
<td>Good horses even are not getting grass, but inferior ones are looking out for máh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>293</td>
<td>On the horns of the buffalo is the snout of the &quot;kokila.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>294</td>
<td>A game-cock dies in battle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>295</td>
<td>You will be able to recognise a king by his liberality, an elephant when it is another's, a horse by its ears.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>296</td>
<td>The house sparrow in trying to imitate the gait of the goose, has forgotten its own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>297</td>
<td>Why does a tadpole require warm water?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>298</td>
<td>The sál laughs at the singí. I am a girl and you are a girl, but no good husband comes for either of us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>299</td>
<td>Whether a man was bitten by a snake or eaten by a tiger, it is the same thing—he has met his fate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Don't give a dog a place, and don't spoil children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>301</td>
<td>What does a dog know of the value of copper vessels or of the tulsi?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOME ASSAMESE PROVERBS.

Class I.

PROVERBS RELATING TO HUMAN FAILINGS, FOIBLES, AND VICES.

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

कि नो भोकल तालि, ताल खन धे कट। खन पालि।

Ki no bhakar tāli, bhāl khan thoī phatā khan pāli.

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.

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

2. कोप धान धान नाइ किया हुव। चांग।

Kop dāṅg dhān nāi kiya huva chāng.

Don't be angry, the paddy is spent and the "chāng" is empty.

कोप (kop) is equivalent to खं (anger). धान (dāṅg) literally means lift up. नाइ किया (nāi kiya) literally is not. चांग (chāng) is the platform inside the भाँग (bharāl) or granary.

3. Over-anxiety about trifles.

पाहबी अचिलो पाबिल मनत,
पौंच बनिता पौंता आंहे बाबनब दबत।

Pāhari āchilo parīl manat,
Pānceh baraniyā patē ache rāwnar gharat.

I had forgotten it, and then I remembered,
It was a five-coloured leaf in the house of Bāwan.
The word  পতা (patá) is sometimes used to indicate gold leaf. Apparently, this is the sense intended here.  বাথন (Báwan) was the mythical king of Ceylon.

4.

_Affectation._

বহব বহহতিী, তিপামত ভাটী, সলগুষ্ঠ আহনি বাই,
তিনিতে তিনিতে কাব্ধিতে, সমধন বল গচ নাই।

Rahar Rahdoi, Tipámar Bhádoi, Salaguir Ághani bái,
Tinior dingit dhami tiniye kándiche, shamandhar bál gach nai.

Rahdoi from Raha, Bhádoi from Tipám, sister Ághani from Salaguri,
Are all three weeping on each other's necks and embracing,
although there is not the least relationship amongst them.

Raha is in the Nowgong district, Tipam, or Namti, is close to Sibságar. Salaguri is also in Sibságar.

5.

_Boasting._

নগৈ গড়গাজিব বতবা কয়।

Nagoi Garga(n)or batará koy.

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._

সাগরত আড়াল পঞ্চ জলা সংখ্যা,
নেঘেবিয়া গামুকে ফলে ময়ে তাবে বংস।

Shágarat áchil pancha jalá shangkha,
Neguriá shámuke kale maio tāre bangaha.

There were five sacred shells in the ocean.
The shámuk with a tail said “I am related to them.”

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 ভাঙ্গা (shámúk bhanga), 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 बला संग्न्ध (jalá shangkha) are the large conch shells which are blown by the priests at festivals, and are also used by them for pouring out libations to the gods. The बला संग्न्ध (jalá shangkha), which are of considerable size, are marine shells; they are considered by Hindus to be sacred. The meaning of the proverb is obvious.

7.

Boasting.

एको लै नम्नो, जहाँलै नम्नो,
कता आठुवा खान तिलालि तैनो।

Eko loï namaro, jahaloï maro,
Pható áthuwa khán tingái koi taro.

Nothing causes my death except fire.
I hang my mosquito curtain in an irregular manner.

This means I risk my life to win fame, and not for anything else. I go so far as to hang up a torn mosquito curtain above my bed, rather than that people should think I am too poor to buy one.

8.

Blaming others for one's own fault.

नकलेनो नौरांबो कटा युथ,
कलेन लाणे भक्तव बोब।

Nakale noáwro pható 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.”

A very lame excuse. भक्त (bhakat) means a disciple of a gosain or priest.

9.

Conceit.

हुबिबलै आहिले मान,
हाँ हाते चिपिले राग।

Juhihaloi şiile mal,
Dui háte singile bál.
He came to fight in all his strength,
But he only broke one hair (of his adversary).

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

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

ဗိုထက်ကိုန်း ဗိုထက် ကြီး,
နွေ ခေါ်သော ကြီး လေး।

Gaech kathál othat tel,
No kháotei mel bel.

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

ဗိုထက် ကြီး (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 (gach pur kothál hónth mën tel). Clearly this is an instance of counting one's chickens before they are hatched.

11. Discontent.

လှုံ ဗွေနာများ ရှုံ,
ဗွေနား ငြင်း ရှုံက ကြာ,
နေပြီး, ထွက် ထွက်
နေပြီးက ကြာ။

Lahu bákálir chál,
Shátátá shukhar étá,
Nepál, dheki to o
Nepál bhál.

A covering of blood and skin.
I did not find one of the seven happinesses,
And I did not find even the dheki (rice-husking machine) 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.**

Eke káthi káre báhatá shinghok márilo(n),
Lokok nakalo(n) láje,
Chamáh kháp di nígóni etá márile táte,
Dhanjoy 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 dhanjoy (dhanjay) was a large drum which used to be beaten by the Ahoms when they gained a victory. The "dhanjoy" was of a particular shape and of large size. An illustration of it is given by Montgomery Martin in his book. Mr. Abdul Majid gives another reading "dahojay dhol báje" (dahojay dhol báje), daho (daho) being equivalent to dha (dah) ten. The translation, therefore, would be "I see ten drums of victory beaten." A man who brags is met by this saying.

13. **Exaggeration.**

Kathá kalei lágil pák,
Báre jani goichil páni ánibaloí,
Tera janír kátile nák.

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

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

ঢাপ মাবি দেহিচিলো চাপলিকা পর্বত ।
তিলিখিত মাবি চিলো বগ ।
খেদা মাবি ধারিচিলো মতা হরিনা ।
এতিয়া নেপাও মতা ইহব লগ ।

Jáp mári dehichilo Dhápaliká parbat.
Tilikit márichilo bag.
Khédá mári dharichilo 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.

চাপলিকা পর্বত is a low range of hills. চাপলিকা also is used to express a screen usually made of thatching-grass. This screen, which is sometimes called পাবলি (párali), is used for watching crops and for guarding them from wild animals. বগ is short for বগল or বগলি (bagla or bagli), the common paddy-bird. তিলিখিত or তিলেকত literally, at a snap of the fingers, and so it comes to mean instantly.

15. *Exaggeration.*

তিলকে তাল কবিলে ।
Tilake tál karile.

He made a palm tree out of a mole.

The Assamese version of “to make a mountain out of a molehill.” তিলক is a freckle or mole. তাল is the fan-palm or palmyra tree. In this proverb apparently তাল has nothing to do with the clapping of hands together, or cymbals.


ধনর নারিয়া টান,
তাত খাইচে উধানম মান ।

Dhanar nariyá tán,
Bhát kháiche udhánar mán.
Shamming illness.
Dhan's illness is very serious,
But he eats a pile of rice as big as an udhán.

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

17. Exaggeration.

হুচুই হুশুনি তুলি দিলে বোকা,
না ভাঙ্গিয়া হল ওজাট।
Nuchui dumuni tuli dile bojha,
Napari nushuni hal ojā.

The fish-wife lifted up the load without polluting it,
Without study he became a magician.

This proverb is meant ironically. According to Assamese ideas, it would be impossible for a “Dûm” woman to touch anything without defiling it. The “Dûm” caste in Assam appears to be considered of equally low status as in Bengal. োজা (ojā) means a teacher of arts, magician, exorcist. It is in its last sense that োজা 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 খেবে ন স।
Nakata kherar na sha.
Uncut grass has nine bodies.

The longer a man puts off cutting his খেব (kher) or thatching-grass, the greater does the task appear, and the longer the grass becomes, the harder it is to cut.


বাপ চিকেরে মেহা সমিলি,
ময় বাণ্ডু মহা বনত হে পসিল।
Bal chingote mahā marīl,
Moi bolo mahā ranat he parīl.
In scratching a mosquito was killed,  
I say it fell in a severe engagement.

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20. Exaggeration.

শান্ত লভ্য শান সপ্তভি।  
মৃদু থিলো পান,  
বিক্রমাদিত্য মুক্ত উঠি  
গন্ধ থিলো পান।

Shajanan lagat shaj shangati,  
Mudhat karilo pán,  
Bikramádityar murat uthí  
Gangát karilo  snan.

Good associates with good.  
I have drunk on the ridge of the roof of the house;  
Have mounted on the head of Bikramáditya  
And have bathed in the Ganges.

শান is pure, good, excellent. পুঞ্জ is the ridge of the roof of the house. Bikramáditya was the name of a Hindu king. Apparently, the first line is inserted for purposes of rhyme. The meaning of this proverb is not very clear, but apparently it is meant to convey the idea of vain boasting.

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হার নাই কিয়া কিবা,  
কর কিবা কিবা।

Hár náí kiyá jibá,  
Koy 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.”
False pride and over-sensitiveness.

काब अगत कम कोने पजिया, ।
जाब अगत कम सेहों लजिया। ।
Kār ágat kam kone patiába. ।
Jār ágat kam sheiye lathiyába. ।

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

Greediness.

खुका गल पात कातिवैन, ।
निखुकै यातिते खाले। ।
Khukaá gal pát kátibaloí, ।
Nikhukuái máttíte khále.

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

Perhaps ironically meant.

Greediness.

खालै षम षम बनटले गरिया, ।
लिदिरैंले लागे ताक आचूबालिचुरिया। ।
Khábaloi jum jum banaloí gariyá, ।
Pindhibaloi láge ták áchuáli churiyá.

He is a great hand at eating, but he is like a bullock as regards work,

And he requires an embroidered "dhoti" to wear.

यम यम—In eating he is like "Jam" (the god of death), i.e., he has an insatiable appetite. I give the following quotation from Dowson:

"'Jom' or 'Jam' is 'Yáma,' the Pluto of the Hindus. Yáma is described as being the son of the Sun by Senjna (conscience), and brother of Vaivaswate (Manu). Mythologically, he was the father of Yudishthira. He is the god of departed spirits and judge of the dead. A soul, when it quits its mortal form, repairs to his abode in the lower regions; there the recorder, Chitra-Gupta, reads
out his account from the great register called Agra-Sandháni, and
a just sentence follows, when the soul either ascends to the abode
of the Pitris (manes), or is sent to one of the twenty-one hells
according to his guilt, or it is born again on earth in another form.
Yáma is regent of the south quarter, and, as such, is called Dakshin-
pati. He is represented as of a green colour, and is armed with
a ponderous mace, and a noose to secure his victims.”—(Dowson.)

গরিয়া may mean either like a bullock (গোড়) or a Musalman, who
are named Gariyás by the Hindus, because the former originally came
from Gaur (Bengal). Gariyá has lately been considered an
opprobrious epithet. I don’t know why. I see Bronson gives this
meaning to Gariyá, i.e., “an ox that won’t work.” Literally, Gariyá
means like an ox or one that requires driving, and so it comes to
mean lazy. আঁচুরালি (াঁchuwáli) means a cloth embroidered with
াচু (াঁchu) or red thread. The colour is obtained from the root
of a tree called আঁচুকারি (াঁchukari).

25.

Greediness.

তিনি মোলা টো থাকিলে চাই,
খোদাই টো ওলাল হি ভোঁবো কাই।
Tini mollá to thákile cháí,
Khodái to olál hi bharakái.

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. খোদাই is, of course, not an Assamese
word, but the Arabic (khodá) for God.

26.

Greediness.

ভাতের ভাতার মেকালা ভাবি,
ভাত বাড়ি ঠেচো খোঁচাহি আই।
Bhátar bhatá bhalá bhári,
Bhát bári thoicha khoáhi áhi.
Hitting a man when he is down—hypocrisy.

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

This is addressed by some one to a greedy dependent. ভূতা and মেকেলা ভাবি are both terms of reproach. The first means one who is fond of ভূত (rice), and the second means one who carries a মেকেলা (mekelá), a garment worn by women.

27. Hitting a man when he is down.

চুথ উপবত চুথ,
কুভে মানোবে,
চরালে হালাই,
কত নিমিলিলে চুথ।
Dukhar uparat dukh,
Kukure kámore,
Charále duliáí,
Kata nimilile sukh.

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

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

28. Hypocrisy, impatience, inattention, ignorance.

হাতি চুথ ভবি জাই বাতে বাতে,
বেকেন চেবক ধনে,
নাকটো কাটিলে লাজ নেলাগে,
মথটো কাটিলে মনে।
Háti chur kari jái báte báte,
Bengená chorak dhare,
Nákto kátilé láj neláge,
Nakhto kátilé 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).

The proverb describes one who is a thorough hypocrite.
29. *Hypocrisy, impatience, inattention, ignorance.*

अटिटूड़ैकै उड़बाब
खौ खचली टान।
आरौकॉय उखुवार
Khach khachani tán.

People are more impatient to get ukhuwár than àroi (now-a-days).

खौ खचली means an itching, burning sensation. आटिटूड़ै is rice obtained from new paddy. उड़बाब is rice obtained from old paddy, the husk of which has to be boiled first before the rice is separated from the shell.

30. *Hypocrisy, impatience, inattention, ignorance.*

আলাহীয়ে বিচায়ে সাক্ষত লোন,
ধান কিনাব বিচায়ে দাঙাব লোন।
Álahiye bicháre shákát lon,
Dhán kinár bicháre dángár 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.

31. *The impatient husband.*

কি পৈ হতাই তাই
লোন খরিচা
বিরশ তত নাই।
Ki poi hatáí táí
Lon kharichá
Dibar tat nái.

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

I am not quite certain about the meaning of হতাই তাই, but I am told that here it means impatient. খরিচা is a pickle made from the young shoots of the bamboo, and is eaten with boiled rice. It is much esteemed.
Inattention.

Ko(n)tei 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 won't hear."

33.

Inattention.

Moi ko ráj bhaganar kathá,
Shi koi kal thoká bánjiriye khále.

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

Bájógá literally means the breaking up of a kingdom.

43

Ignorance.

Jár nái tarja tul,
Shi ki jáne bánjirar mul.

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

Shúl literally root, origin, source.

35

Ignorance.

"An unskilful workman quarrels with his tools."

Náchiba najáne chotál
Khan herem gariyá.

He who does not know how to dance,
(Finde) the floor of the courtyard sloping.
SOME ASSAMESE PROVERBS.

The proverb is usually applied only to land which is not level; perhaps the better reading is बेक (bekā), which is the usual Assamese word for crooked. It is interesting to compare Christian's Bihar proverb, which is almost identical (nāche na jānīn ānganwen terh). The meaning is the same.

36. **Ignorance.**

बेज नाकत खे खाले।

Bejar nākat khare khāle.

The disease has eaten at the nose of the doctor.

This not very elegant proverb means that the doctor caused the disease by his ignorance. The बेज (bej) is like the kabiraj of India, a quack doctor. The “bej” makes more use of “mantras” and charms than medicines; and, although he sometimes knows a little about the medicinal qualities of certain roots and plants, his knowledge is a source of considerable danger to his patients; cases having been known of poisoning by a dose of the “bej’s” medicine. खव is dysentery, although the word ग्रहणि is perhaps more frequently used to denote this disease. खव is also a skin disease.

37. **Improvidence.**

आगे आगिले जेन तेन,

तुकतक पहाड़बें पहा हल पेन पेन।

Āgoi áchile jen ten,

Bhakataks bhujābar parā hal pen pen.

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

पेन पेन generally refers to the fact of a man being involved in debt and difficulty, the usual phrase being घाबेबो पेन पेनिया हल (dhārere pen peniyā 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 कनि पाड़े हांहे खाई तकत माँहे (kani pāre hāhe khāi bhakat
dahe) shows. The above means that, as soon as the ducks lay eggs, the "bhakats" eat them up.

38. Improvidence.

\begin{quote}
গাত নাই চাল বাকলি, ।
রম খাই তিন টেকেলি।

Gát náí chál bákali,
Mad khái tin tekeli.
\end{quote}

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

চাল literally skin. মদ is াত 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, Ahoms, 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 'agaichito' 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 Goálpára the 'borá mad,' which is the 'mad' of the Rabhas, is a fermented liquor made from 'bora 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 'zú,' 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, \textit{i.e.,} (máür na jure tári)="He cannot afford rice gruel, yet he drinks toddy!"

39. Improvidence.

\begin{quote}
মনে যুথে আচে মহব গাভিনে কাহন রাতিয়ে নাই।

Mane mukhe áche mahar gákhire káhar bátiye nái.

He has the mind and mouth, but not the vessel to drink buffalo milk from.
\end{quote}
40. 

_Improvidence._

ইচ্ছার গৃহস্থ বোন তেল বয়,  
নিচারি বাকুলি নে জাই কর।  
Shachi grihashtar lon tel boy,  
Michár bâkali ne jái khoi.

The oil and salt of the host flow like water,  
But the skin of the prawn is not rubbed off.

The proverb means that the host is an unthrifty man, who expends all his salt and oil before he commences to cook the বিচা or prawn. নিচা generally refers to water used for other than culinary purposes. নিচা is the fresh-water prawn or “chingari.” কর means decay, waste, loss, or destruction, but when used in Assamese, as here, with the verb বলং, it means to wear off.

41. 

_Improvidence._

হাতত্ত নাই নিং  
মনে করে পিত পিত।  
Hátat nái níng  
Mane kare pit pit.

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

পিত literally gall, bile. নিং literally wealth, substance.

42. 

_Ingratitude._

চান পালে বাং বোলিয়।  
Tán pâle 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.**

कोटाल शनि रूट,  
लोकस्तोल रुलि हृद रामि,  
आण्णी ध्वनि रूटी।  
कौर गहरा रूट,  
लोकलेल रुले रुले पाति,  
आणुनी मारे रूटी।

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

The first line means nothing, and is merely inserted for purposes of rhyme. रूट (phuti) literally means pierced, or rather burst aunder.

44. **Love of false display.**

पालिब नोसऱ्या रुद्राक्षया जमाज।

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 purposes. क्राङ्क is the seed of a certain tree. The seeds are bored through and strung together to make rosaries. क्राङ्का, literally telling, from क्राङ्क, to join together.

45. **Love of false display.**

पोकरत सार मुख पाग,  
सि हय सेहूष आग।  
Pokarat nai mirat pag,  
Shi hai dehatar ag.

With a pagri on his head,  
And with nothing on the lower part of his body,

he wishes take the lead.

The Assamese thinks if he puts on a turban, this is a mark of respectability, and he will be thought a भाल मानस (bhāl mānas) or respectable person. भाल is short for पाण्डविँ
46.

Love of false display.

বাটত চোরা যদি বব চুরিয়াব ফেক, ।
ববত চোরা যদি চোকাব ফেব। ।
Bátat chowá jadi bar churiyár pher, ।
Gharat jowá jadi dhokár ber. ।

If you meet him in the road, see the folds of his dhoti.
If you go to his house, (see) the walls are all propped up.

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 “dhoti” worn by the ভাল মানুষ (bhál máńush) has as many yards of stuff in it as it is possible to walk in. চোকা literally means a prop, stay, support, and so comes to mean the propping of anything. A range of hills that fronts another, and higher range of hills behind it, is called চোকা পর্বত (dhoká parbat).

47.

Love of false display.

মুখরলী চালে বব দেকা, ।
পোকরলী চালে কুন্দা কটা। ।
Mukhaloi chálé bar deká, ।
Pokaraloi chálé 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.

48.

Love of false display.

শাত পুরুষবৃন্দ নাই গাই, ।
করিয়ালী বিগর্হিতে বাই। ।
Shát purushat náí gáí, ।
Kariyá loi khirábalojá 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. 

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.

49. 

Love of false display.


The dish is of seven seers weight, but the meal of cooked rice is the
leavings of the day before.

Fie on him who eats it. It is a shame even to hear about it.

A 

is a metal dish; such dishes are sold according to weight
of metal. A seven-seer dish would be an expensive one. 

is the refuse of rice, or broken grains, left in the dish after eating, that
is to say, the leavings of the day before.

50. 

Lying and exaggeration.


Although he had not a rag on his body, the little maina
pulled off his clothes.

This is a proverb from Gauhati, which accounts for the word

being used a corruption of the Bengali chota. In the
Kamrup district, a mixture of Bengali and Assamese is spoken,
which is called dhekeri (dhekeri) by the Assamese of Central and
Upper Assam. In Jorhat, chota would not be used, but sharn.

, or more properly 

, is the ordinary "maina" of India.

There is, however, in Assam also the more handsome species
—the hill maina, which can be taught to talk extremely
well.
51.  
        Meddling.  
        এখন পাঁচ নাম এখন জল,  
        এখন পাই তোলে দুধ মুড় করে।  
        Egharar pat nād egharar jari,  
        Eghare pānī tole ghatang matang kari.  
        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. পাঁচ নাম is a  
        boarded-up well, or a well with its sides earthed-up and plastered.    
        দুধ 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.  

52.  
        Oppression of others.  
        স্ব কথা পারত, ডাক সিয়ে যত।  
        Ji kare parat, tāk mile gharat.  
        Do as you would be done by.  
        Literally, whatever he does to others, he gets the same at home.  

53.  
        Out of sight, out of mind.  
        লোকের পরা অভ্যন্ত হলে সি দেব পাঁজাহিত।  
        Lokar parā antar hale shi mor porohit,  
        When we are away from others, he is my “porohit.”  
        That is to say, when a man is in company, he forgets all about  
        his “porohit.” A “porohit” is a family priest, who performs the  
        দাহাকাজ (dahākāj), funeral ceremony, as well as other offices for the  
        Assamese Hindu. The “porohit” is, as a rule, a Brahmin.  

54.  
        Straining at a gnaw, etc.  
        নেবিন অলাকে মনে কৃষ্ণক অলাকও ন মনে।  
        Bejir jalāke mane kuthārar jalāo na mane.  
        He can see through the eye of a needle,  
        but not through that of an axe-head.
55. *Penny wise pound foolish.*

Penny wise pound foolish.

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 “pitiká” by the Assamese. This is made from potatoes, vegetables, and chillies. These three ingredients are mixed with “kharali” (sauce).

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

56. *Penny wise pound foolish.*

Penny wise pound foolish.

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

57. *Peevishness.*

Peevishness.

No, I won’t eat. I won’t go (to the feast),
even if a Brahmin is there.

I won’t give myself 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.

“Even if a Brahmin is present” is a free translation. The literal translation is “even if a Brahminical thread is there.” The লজন is the Bengali পোতা (poitá), or sacred thread worn by Brahmins and Khaysths.
58. Presumption.

फि नहबब हल, पोक लागि हाटैलै गल।
Ki nahabar hal, pok lági hátaloi gal.

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

पोक लागि literally, full of maggots. Another reading is भोक लागि (bhok lági) for पोक लागि, in which case the meaning of the proverb is ironical.

59. Presumption.

খচ খচ করা কাজা শুবা,
Tumi jána amár kibá howá.

Khach khach kará kátá guá,

Cut the betelnut quickly,
You know there is something between us.

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

60. The pot calling the kettle black.

নিজে পোকব তেক তেকিয়া,
Nijar pokar tek tekiyá,

লোকের পোকবলৈ পানি চটরা।
Lokar pokaraloí pání chatiýá.

Throwing water at the buttocks of others,
When one's own are covered with mire.

61. Pride of family.

নেম নেওব বর্জিং,
Nóm negur bajit,

মাকব নাম বব পোহাবি।
Mákár nám bar pohári,

বাপেকব নাম বর্জিং।
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, বর্পোহারী. Assamese women who sell odds and ends, are called "pohári." বর্পোহারী is here used ironically. খাও is a high-sounding name, only met with in good families.

62.

Restlessness.

ভাঙি আন খুচরি খাও।
পুরা হলে নাই মেলি খাও।
Bhángi án khuchari kháó.
Puá hale náño meli jáó.

Bring the adze, I am itching to be off.
To-morrow morning I shall start in the boat.

This proverb is aimed at those who work by fits and starts only. খাও is a kind of curved adze, which is used in hollowing out boats from trunks of trees. নাই মেলি খাও literally, I will loose the boat (from its moorings).

63.

Selfishness.

আনব আন চিন্তা, বুঝি বামুনীব হুঁধন কানব 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).

Chirstian, in his Bihar proverb, gives a Hindu proverb, which is very similar in meaning:

Áno ke án chítá rání ke rajawé ke chítá.

Others have other thoughts, but the rání 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. *Selfishness.*

আই গৈচিল গোসাই দরহে,  
মর গৈচিলা কলচিল,  
আরে কলা খাবলে পাই,  
তাতে হলে ভকত।

Ai goichil gosain gharaloj,  
Moi goichilo lagat,  
Ákhoi kala khábaloi pái,  
Táte halo bhakat.

My mother went to the house of the gosain,  
I accompanied her.  
When I got “ákhoi” and plantains to eat,  
I became a “bhakat.”

Perhaps this is a hit at the “bhakats.” Apparently, the qualification for admission to the “saastro” as a “bhakat,” is to be able to appreciate fried rice (ákhoi) and plantains. Bronson gives “parched corn” as the meaning of গৌণ, but there is a sweetmeat made of fried rice and gúr (molasses), which is also called জানে।

65. *Egotism.*

আপোনার মন জেনে,  
আতাইকে দেখে তেনে,  
জানে মন এতাই একে।

Áponár man jene,  
Átaike dekha tene,  
Jáno man etáire ake.

He thinks that everybody else's mind is like his own.  
I doubt if all people think alike.

The proverb is interesting, as illustrating the use of জানে। This literally means, I know. In conversation, however, জানে often means, I doubt, almost I don't believe you.

66. *Selfishness.*

খাইছে আরেকা গোমধন দিয়ে এসেন।

Kháiche akhoiyá gomdhán diye edon.

He eats akhoiyá (a sweetmeat), but to others he gives a measure of Indian corn.
SELFISHNESS—SPONGING ON OTHERS.

For the meaning of আত্মীয়, see note to No. 63. গোষ্ঠীন is the same as the Bengali ভূঁইু৷ (bhuttá).

67.

Selfishness.

মুহুৰতে মুহুৰতে একে ভয় সাধো সাধো বুলি,
হল বাড়ি বচন সত্যী হেনো তোমার জল।

Mudhe mudhe eke ghar shodho shodho buli,
Hal de rachar shakhi hero 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.

লোহী is the ridgepole of the house. The expression মুহুৰতে মুহুৰতে is used when two houses are so close that their roofs touch one another.
লেনো or এলো is a cry made to call anybody’s attention. জল is the Bengali জুল or জাগ (Indian fever).

68.

Sponging on others.

সবব সবব বাঘ, জাটারা পাচিত বাঘ।

Parar murat kháo, bhatiá pá nit jáo.

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 charac-
ter.

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

69.

Sponging on others.

বি দেশব বি ধারা, বি পোকবব বি নেবা।

Ji deshar ji dhárá ji pokarar ji nerá.

Every country has its own customs, and every one has
some hanger-on.
70. 

**Stinginess.**

Dio(n)te diye dhán kherar cháí,  
Táke dio tei khuch much khái.  

When he gives (at all), he gives the ashes of paddy straw,  
And it is a long time before he gives that even.

éłoš is an idiomatic expression, meaning to take a long time over doing nothing.

71. 

**Stinginess.**

Lókob sáthlé tháb,  
Amáb biyán thében chába!  
Lókar shabháloí jábá,  
Ámár diyan khoan chába.

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

72. 

**Toadying.**

Káko dékhi bánde bánde,  
Káko dékhi bháxb bánde!  
Káko dekhi rándhe 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.**

télíyáí kánché tél péláí,  
kápuháí kánché nó kêp sótái!  
Telíyáí kánde tel peláí.  
Kápuháí kánde let petáí.
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 says "cries over spilt 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 I was in the Golaghát 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 পেজাই, although not strictly literal, conveys the meaning, which is meant to be a sarcasm on the dealings of these cotton merchants. লেট পেজাই more correctly means having plastered.

74. Unsobriety in old age.

একে বুঝি নাচনিয়ার, তাতে নাচনিয়েকব বিয়া।
Eke buri náchaniyār, tāte nátiniekar biyā.
The old woman is a capital dancer herself,
And now is the occasion of her granddaughter's marriage.

75. Want of feeling.

কলিয়ারবত পৈ পড়িল,
ঢেঁকে ফিড়ে বনত পড়িল।
Koliyābarat poi maril,
Dheki dionte manat paril.

Koliyābar in the Nowgong district, where there is a temple dedicated to Kama (Kámá), 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.

76. A small income and much feasting.

अलप आर्जन वित्तब भोजन,
सेहु पुककब दविजब लकङ्ग ।
Alap árjan bistar bhojan,
Shei purushar daridrar lakhyan.
A small income and much feasting,
Are the signs of a man becoming poor.

आर्जन—gain, income ; लकङ्ग—a mark or token.

77. On trying to teach fools.

अज्ञानिक ज्ञान वि मनत पालो करे,
कनिबेब भांजी पेलाइ बहे कबिले नेट ।
Agiyánik giyán di mánat pálo kashtha,
Kanibor bhângi pelái bâho karilo nashta.

In trying to teach a senseless woman I was much troubled,
So I threw down the eggs and destroyed the nest.

78. Have nothing to do with three things.

असतीव सदू ज्ञान,
पंक चेतव पंडर ज्ञान,
वेश्न तीव्रिक एकार्थी,
तिनिओबा मुहत मुहत बहिः ।
Ashatír shad giyán,
Garu chorar gangá snán,
Beshyá tírir ekádasi,
Tiníro murat mutá bahi.

Have nothing to do with these three things:
Honesty in an unchaste woman,
A cattle-chief bathing in the Ganges,
A harlot fasting on an ekádasi day.
79.

The importunate's answer.

অপুনি আনিচে মাগি,
ভোক দিম কব হাগি।
Ápuni ánicho mági,
Tok dim kär hági.

I myself have got it by begging,

80.

Anticipating.

আঘেই পাধি কাতে,
কেই বিনাম নামান।
Ágei pákhi kāte,
Kei dinar nomal.

He cuts the wings of the unfledged nestling beforehand.

নোদল, literally the smallest of all.

81.

Times of affliction.

আপদত ওএও গল খাজুমাই।
Ápadat óeo gal khajuwái.

In times of affliction, even the “owtenga” tickles the throat.

The “owtenga” is an acid fruit, which is much used by the Assamese for cooking with rice to make the latter tasty.

cf.—আপদত গার নোমেই নামান হই (ápadat gár noméi dushman hoi.)
In times of affliction, even the hair of one's body is an enemy.

82.

Give a polite answer.

আচে দান নাই সম্পিদ্ধান।
Áche dáñ néi shamídhan.

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

সম্পিদ্ধান literally giving an answer.
83. *When all scruples must be thrown to the winds.*

अपदात अवृद्ध कवित्वी युजाइ।

Ápadat ajugut karibaloi juwái.

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

अवृद्ध—Bengali अबूझा (unbefitting).

84. *On aiming too high.*

उठुवाइ मारिले काठि,

आलोवा जोमब गातंजनি तिकना,

मुरैले नातं बाटी।

Uthuwái márile káthi,

Jálová domar shtjani tiritá,

Muraloi nátile patí.

He shot an arrow high (into the air).
The "jálóvá" dum has seven wives.
But he has not a bed for one wife even.

उठुवाइ literally, caused to mount up. আলোবা জোম is used in contradistinction to আলোবা জোম (the ploughing dum). বাটী is matting made from the splints of a tree called দৈ বাটী (dôi).

85. *The petty shopkeeper.*

এনা বেগানীক জাহাজ বাতনি কিয়।

Edá bapárík jáhájar bátari kiyá.

What does a petty shopkeeper want with news of the steamer?

এনা বেগানী literally a shopkeeper who sells ginger (এনা)

86. *Do one thing at a time.*

ওবোকতে পাবোক,

ফেবোকটি অবৃদ্ধই দিয়া,

বেজেনাটি গোবোক।

Orokate parok,

Kerelá to shumuá diyá,

Beugená to porok.
Do one thing at a time,
First of all cook the kerela,
And then roast the bengena.

Literally the bengena will burn if the kerela is put into the fire.
केरेला is the Bengali करेला, Hindi koraila.
The kerela is the "momordica charantia," a very bitter kind of vegetable of the gourd family. It is a creeping plant.

87. Learning.

ওজা লগা বিদা;
পাথি লগা কাশ।

Ojá lagá bidya,
Páthi lagá kár.

What the feather is to the arrow,
His art is to the magician.

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

88. Circumstantial evidence.

কথাল চোখ এটাই সাধি,
হাচ চোখ মুরত পাথি।

Kathál chorar ethái shákhi,
Há(n)h chorar murat páthi.

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

কথাল is the jack tree and its fruit. Bengali कठली (kantaki); both the bark of the tree and the fruit are covered with a sticky juice or gum.

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

কবর পবর আহিষ্ট কড় বিধ তবি,
চোলাল থানে কাটি গলচেত চেত কবি।

Kar pará áhilá kat dila bhari,
Chótál khán phátí 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 onomatopoeic expression is বর্ণ মন্ত; also গীর্জা (giring). There are others that could be mentioned. চেত চেত কথন is meant to convey the idea of noise in splitting or tearing asunder.

90. On appearing on the "Chotai" Hill.

কিছে অগ্রথ মনে ।
চতাই পর্বতত রাতো ।
দেখাও আরুনি ।
পথেরা তথে।
Kihar jagarat maro
Chatái parbatat gáto
Dekhádi ádhuli
Páchotá bhoro.

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

The চতাই পর্বত 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.

91. Finding the lost sickle.

কাকালত কাঁচি ।
বুড়ি হুবে নাচি।
Kakálat káchí
Buri phure náchi.

When the old woman has found her sickle,
She dances for joy.

92. Disregard of good advice.

কথা বা কত ভেকুরি তলত।
Kathá bá kat bhekuri talat.

Where is your advice? Underneath the "bhekuri" bush?

ভেকুরি is a kind of scrub jungle.
93. 

_Selfishness._

काब भागिना मबे काब हय हामि,
काब अबत कोिने पिओवाइ गानि।

Kár bháginá mare kár hoi háni,
Kár jarat kone piowáí páni.

Whose nephew dies it is his loss.
In whose fever does anyone give water to drink?

The proverb aptly illustrates the way of the world in such cases. पिओवाइ means पिबै दिबे (gives to drink), and is the causative form of पिबैल (to drink); भागिना or भागिन is a sister's son.

94. 

_The reward of merit._

केिने तेब केिने जनि पहविया तेब तिनि जनि
भाल तेब एजैि नाइ।

Kene tor kene jani phapariya tor tini jani
Bhal tor ejaní náí.

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. पहविया literally scurvy.

95. 

_Don't be too discriminating._

काको हुबिरा कका
এতাইব চাঁদি 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 कका, a clever old fellow. पका literally means ripe, as a fruit. It so comes to mean mature, and when applied to the hair of the head or face turned gray, or of a mature colour.
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).”

96. Assamese recipe for managing a wife.

কটাবি ধবাবা সিলে, তিন্নাতা রাবা 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.

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

কণা, খোড়া, ভেঁজব, এই তিনি হারাম লেঞ্জব।
Kaná, khořa, 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:

“(Bírlé kán bhal bhal mánukh), 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 badzátíyá(n) hain mere dil yaqín,
Áyá hái Qorán me(n) kán me(n) alkáfrin.”
Of the wickedness of the one-eyed I am thoroughly convinced,  
Because even in the Qurán it is said that the one-eyed is among the unbelivers."  

98.  

*Useless cravings.*  
খাবোলৈ নাই কনটো,  
বহ হবোলৈ মনটো।  
Khâbaloi nái kanto,  
Bar habaloî 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 লেঙ, কন চোঁমালি।

99.  

*Cattle climbing trees, and the lobe of the ear being bored with a bamboo.*  
গুচাত গুর উঠা,  
ছোলোলামে কোন বিঙ্ক।  
Gachat garu utha,  
Holongâre kán bindhâ.  

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 ছোলোলা is a split bamboo, used for carrying bundles of paddy, when reaping and carrying is going on. The holongá is slightly curved in shape, so as to more readily fit on to the shoulder. 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 ছোলোলা, I believe, is only applied to the pole used for carrying dhán. কানমাণি (kânmâri) is the word for the bamboo that is used for carrying other burdens.
100. *Laughing at others' misfortunes.*

बोङ बाँट बोङ सांगँ बांले बोङ, भाटी पाले बोङ।

Ghok bai ghok shāpe khāle tok, Māchti pāle mok.

“Ghok,” sister “Ghok,” a snake has bitten you, And I have caught a fish.

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

101. *Useless cravings.*

बबत नाइ कन्टो, बब गडालै घन्टो।

Gharat nāi kanto, bar shabhāloī manto.

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

This is almost similar to No. 97, except that गड़ा is substituted for the verb गड़ालै। Also compare the Gauhāti proverb “उराल नाइ कन्टो बब गडालै घन्टो। (urālat nāi kanto bar shabhāloī manto). The उड़ाल or उड़ाल is a wooden mortar used for pounding rice in.

102. *How things are tested.*

बोङवाक चिनी काणत, भिवक चिनी ठाणत, खुशक चिनी सापत।

Ghorāk chini kānat, Tirik chini thānat, Khurak chini shālat.

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 shamsheer-i-tez wafādār ke did."

What man ever saw a horse, a woman, or a sword faithful!

ख़र (khur) (or khyur) is the usual word for razor. शाल is here used to mean a grindstone. शाल is applied to almost any machine, e.g., कुहीयार शाल (kuhiyār shāl), a sugar-mill.

103.

The irony of fate.

चोबे निया लफ़ा दाख,
गिरिहै मजे घाबली खाय।
Chore niyā laphá dái,
Giri hate mare khāli khāi.

When the thief steals the "laphā,"
The householder is ready to die of grief,
but consoles himself with chutney.

An amusing comment on the irony of fate, perhaps. The लफ़ा दाख is a common Assamese vegetable. घाबली is a kind of chutney made from mustard-seed. खाय literally reaps.

104.

Sudden misfortunes.

चोबक मोबे पाले,
उतेजिन बले खाले।
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.

Avoiding a rain cloud by bending down.

चापादले रेश एबाब ने।
Cháparile megh erába ne.
Can a rain cloud be avoided by bending down?
106. Never waste a moment.

अव माहब जीवन मन,
बहोंते आठहांबे बन।
Jār khābār jībar man,
Bahote āchore ban.

He who has a mind to thrive,
Scratches up grass, even when sitting down.

खाबेन जीवन मन 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 the man’s garden or field.

107. The man who has too many relations.

बेटेन्दे बैलाय चाल,
किलब पाल ए पाल।
Jethari boināi hāl
Kihar pāl e pāl.

He has got herds
And herds of brother-in-law.

बेटेन्दे = a wife’s elder brother. बैलाई = a younger sister’s husband.
पाल also means a sail, and a turn of duty. The proverb relates to the case of a man who has more relations by marriage than convenient.

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

अगर बा लुगालो कि
मातो हंइ कनिदि।
Jagar bā lagālo ki
Māto hā(n)h kanidi.

What fault have I committed?
I admit I am wrong, and give you a duck’s egg.

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

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

110. *Sleep is pleasant.*

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

This proverb is characteristic of the Assamese.

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

He ate the “tenga” a long time ago,
And he is blamed now!

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

*ţeş* means an offence, anything at which exception is taken.

112. “*Meum and tuum.*”

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

ঢাই দিবর গুণ, তপন তপনি জন।
Thái dibar gun, tapang 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.

114. *Pride goeth before a fall.*

ঈশ্বর নামে সিকিয়াতে জাহান,
Dolār námere shikiyāte jābā,
Gákhirar námere pāni ke khābā.

Instead of being carried in a dooly,
you will be carried slung on a pole;
And instead of milk you will drink water.

খোলা is the Bengali ভূলি, a litter for carrying people in. সিকিয়া is a contrivance of ropes for slinging burdens on to a bamboo.

115. *The use of the thumb.*

বহু অঙ্গুলিতে থাকে,
Dahā angulire khā,
Būrāi hechukilehe jāi.

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. বুঝ= বহু অঙ্গুলি (the chief finger).

116. "*Many hands make light work.*"

মনোষ্ঠ মানুষ্ট এটাবে বোঝা।
Dahotā lākhuti etār bojhā.

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."

117.

"Evils never come singly."

হৃব কপালিয়া হাবিলো খাই, দা চিঙে বংলে খাই।
Dur kapaliyá hábílo jái, dá chíge baraale 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." বংল is the Bengali বরটা (a wasp). The use of খাই is noteworthy; it means (literally) eats. The Assamese has no regular word for sting.

cf.—কামে খাল (শাপে খালে) a snake bit him—literally eat him.

118.

How the poor are despised.

চবিয়া হলে লেটেবা ভার্গা। নেপথি হিত,
বাটি গং গাই সিড়িবে লেনোবে ধিব গানে বুলি কিবা বিত।
Dukhiyá hale letérá bhárjyá nedeke hit,
Bátat lag pái mitiré noshodhe dibá láge buli kibá bit.

When letérá (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. লেটেবা,
the man's name in this proverb, literally means a sloven. ভার্গা is
a Bengali word for wife. The common Assamese word is নোবাদি
(ghoini). হিত literally means advantageous, profitable. নোবাদে
(literally) do not ask after him. বিত is a synonym for ধন (dhan).

119.

When everything has gone wrong.

চেকিও বব কবক কটাবাটা ভগ,
Dhekito larak pharak katarató bhágá,
খোল কৈল গাল তারাহে লা।
Khol kaloi gal táráhe lága.
The dheki has become unsteady, the cup is broken.
Where has the drum gone? Away with the violin string?

When the rice-husking machine is out of order, everything goes
wrong in the household. The cup is broken, the drum is missing,
and the violin has lost its string. This is the meaning of the pro-
verb. The "dheki" has been described already. ঢংঢং is a cup
made out of a cocoanut shell. ঢাল is a long cylindrically-shaped
drum, which is slung round the neck and beaten with both hands.
ঢাল must not be confounded with ঢেল (dhol) or মৃদঙ্গ (mridang),
which are drums of different shapes. বিন is the string of a kind of
violin called বিন (bin). The বিন is a single-stringed instrument,
which may be the same as the Bengali বীণা (binā).

120.

Idiosyncrasies.

ধানটোয়ে পতি কনটো,{
মাছটোয়ে পতি হুনটো।

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).

121.

A good piece of advice.

ধন লবে লেখি, বাট বুলিবা দেখি।
Dhan labā lekhi, bāt buliba dekhi.

Count money first before you take it over.
Tell the way if you have seen the road.

A very sensible piece of advice.
122. 

The husband of a shrew.

নববন্ধন বড়া উদাসিয়ে শুধু;

Narakar kanyā uddhārile shuchi.

A bride from hell has been my salvation.

These words are spoken sarcastically by a man who has a shrew of a wife. নববন্ধন 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.)

123. 

Cutting off the tiger’s tail.

৩েঁওক কাটি বাড়ো মেজুঁনে মেলিয়া;

Negur kāti bāgh shongaloī melīla.

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

This refers to an idea that if a tiger’s tail is cut off, the beast loses all its strength.

124. 

A name that bodes ill-luck.

নামবর পরিচে জং চুবরত মানাই দাঙ;

Nāmar pariche shāng duarat mārāhi dāng.

From his name even ill-luck comes, go and bolt the door.

i.e., to prevent his entering the house. It is not an uncommon idea that certain persons bring ill-luck to a house. Some people are supposed to have the "evil eye"; these are particularly shunned. In Bihar, Christian says it is considered very unlucky to pronounce the name of a miser in the morning. In Assam, it is generally considered unlucky to pronounce the names of certain low castes, such as Doms and Haris.

125. “People who live in glass-houses should not throw stone.”

নাহারিত মেষক হুচিরিত তোক;

Nāhāribi moṣ khuchariba tok.

Don’t laugh at me, it will scratch you.

People who laugh at others’ misfortunes, are thus advised.
128. *Ill-gotten gains.*

पापव धन प्रायश्चित्त बाइ ।

Pāpav dhan prāyashchit jāi.

Money got by unfair means, goes in expiations.

The प्रायश्चित्त 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.

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

पाले चबाइ भागिबा पाथि, होवा तातक न धबा बाधि ।

Pāle charāi bhāṅgibā pākhi, howā bhātak na thabā rākhī.

When you have caught a bird, break its wings.
Don't place on one side rice which is ready.

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

.पर्ये, परहाई, बोये, बोयाइ पान,

Ei tini chāriye nichertē ān.

Parhe, parhāi, boye, boyaī pān,

He who reads, he who teaches, he who sows pān,
he who causes to sow pān,

These four should not think of anything else.

129. *Learning by heart.*

.परहि शूनि करिले हिर, चोरे बै गल जान दिया ।

Parhi shuni karile hiyā, chore loyi gal bhār diyā.

He learnt it by heart, and then a thief stole it away.

This is a sarcastic allusion to a fool, who tries to commit something to memory.

130. *Want of tact.*

.बाटवस लग पाले कमाव, था गाड़ि दिया आमार ।

Bātat lag pāle kamār, dā gāri diyā āmār.

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 "da" for them when he was away from his forge.

131.

One who is always in hot water.

বারতা মাহর তেবর অগর, সদাই নগদে এটা লাগব।
Bāratā mahār teratā jagar, shadāi naguche etā 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.

বলিয়ে নির্বলিয়ে কিছু হতাহতি,
ধনীয়ে নির্ধনীয়ে কিছু বিজ্ঞাহতি।
Baliye nirbalixye kihar hatāhati,
Dhanīye nidhanīye kihar mitrāswati.

What passage-of-arms can there be between the strong and the weak.

What friendship can there be between the rich and the poor,

বলি means a strong man. Dowson writes—

"There was also in the Tretayug, or second age, a daitya king, Bali or Bolii, who had, by his devotions and austerities, acquired the dominion of the three worlds, and the gods were shorn of their power and dignity. To remedy this, Vishnu was born as a diminutive son of Kasyapa and Aditi. The dwarf appeared before Bali and begged of him as much land as he could step over in three paces. The generous monarch complied with the request. Vishnu took two strides over heaven and earth; but respecting the virtues of Bali, he then stopped, leaving the dominion of pātāla, or the infernal regions, to Bali."

বলি also means a sacrifice. হতাহতি means hand-to-hand conflict; also two people working together at the same task. বিজ্ঞাহতি is the same as বিজ্ঞাহণ, which means friendship.
133. **So terrible that even Bhagabanto and Basudev are afraid.**

ভরত ভাগবন্ত পলাই কিলালে বাহুলের দরাই।

Bhayat Bhagabanta palai kilalai Basudeo darai.

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

ভগবন্ত or ভগবান is পরমেশ্বন (Parmeswar), পরমেশ্বন is another name for কৃষ্ণ (Krishna). The above saying is quoted in the case of a person of ungovernable temper.

134. **Bitter words are hard to hear.**

ভাতর ভিতার খাবারেল ভাল, ভাতর ভিতা খাবারে ঠান।

Bhatar tita khabalo bhal, matar tita khabalo tan.

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

ভাতর ভিতা, i.e., rice cooked with tengás (acid fruits).

135. **From good comes good.**

ভালবাস ভালে সর্বত্র মাল।

Bhalbar bhal sharbat khal.

Good comes from good for all time.

সর্বত্র মাল (literally), for ever and ever.

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

ভোজন মিঠা নে বচন মিঠা?

Bhojan mitha ne bachan mitha?

Which is sweeter—sweet food or sweet words?

বচন also means a passage from a sacred book.

137. **Only go when you are invited.**

মাতিলে রণটীলা জাবা, নে মাতিলে ভোজন নাজাবা।

Matile ranaloiko jaba, ne matile bhojalo ni jababa.

Go to a battle even if you are summoned, but don't go to a feast uninvited.
This saying means that the person who would go to a feast uninvited, would not perhaps be so ready to go to battle if called upon.

138. 

On growing old.

মোল পোশ্চাদির হবে, মোল চিরিত ধরি বাটিত দর্শ।
Mor por bowari haba, mok chulit dhari batet thaba.

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

বোমাবি is a younger brother's wife. The speaker here is the old mother, who views with dismay the prospect of her new daughter-in-law.

139. 

Cutting wood by no means an easy task.

মোলাইয়ে কাঠ কাটে নাদে পানি হেন দেখে।
Momaiye kath kate maye pani hen deke.

The maternal uncle cuts wood;

his wife thinks this as easy a job as drawing water.

140. 

Where there is a will there is a way.

মন কারিলে চল করিয়ে পাইব।
Man karile chal kariba paisa.

If I put my mind to it, I can find a way out of the difficulty.

স্থায় literally stratagem, device or trick. Sometimes also it means fraud or forgery.

141. 

The shorter it is, the more it tears.

জেতং কাটে নাটে, জেতং কাটে ফাটে।
Jetekate nate, jetekate phate.

The shorter it is, the more it tears.

The meaning is rather obscure. One would have thought that a garment which was worn too long, i.e., touching the ground, would be more likely to tear than a short one, high off the ground. Possibly, the saying may have some reference to the woman's
petticoat, or मेकेला (mekela), which, in the best families, is worn as long as possible. It is considered bad form to wear a short "mekela."

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

बुईतेहे जाने बठा किमान तै बठे।
Luithe jāne batha kimāna loi bahe.
The Luhit knows how deep the ear dips.

The Luhit is another 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."

143. *A man of no consequence.*

लाखी मारिलो बिटो, बौघाई बुलिलो निटो।
Lāthī márilo jīto, bopāi bulīle o shito.
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 बौघाई is a friendly address. लाखी means a kick given backwards at any one following up behind. In the original version was लाखी. When spelt this way, the word means a stick or a club.

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

লগ হলে লংকালেকো জাব পাবি।
Lag hale langkālōko jāba pārī.
In company one can go even as far as Langkā.

Langkā is the name given by Hindus to Ceylon.
145. *The more haste the less speed.*

লবা লবি নেলিকা লোনোঙ্গাৎ বাপি নেলোমাই।
Larā lari belikā jolongāt jāpi neshomāi.

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

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

146. *What makes up the house.*

লবাই লুবিয়ে ঘব খান,
Larāi lubiye ghar khān,
লেখবাই লুবিয়ে ঘব খান।
Dokhorāi dukhariye ghar khān.

Children make up the house.

Sundries also make up the same.

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

সমানে সমানে কবিয়া কাজ,
Shamāne shamāne karibā kaj,
ছাপিলে জিকিলে নাই লাজ।
Hārile jikile nāi lāj.

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.*

滚动 মুখত মাখি পাবে
Shoolā mukhat makhi pare
সিং লাভ ভিতব।
Shio lábhar bhitar.

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

সোলা means the same as লাপুন (lāpung), i.e., toothless.
149. The kiss of love.

The kiss of love wounds the nose.

The kiss of love wounds the nose.

150. Half a loaf is better than no bread.

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

151. When the bone of contention is removed.

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.

He who carries neither jhápi, láthi or tangá,
Is blind even in the daytime.

153. “People who live in glass-houses, etc.”

Chái cháí bulibá bát dehar bhitarat áche khál bám,
pichali paribá tát.
Look out as you move, for there are many holes 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."

154. Nothing is attained without labour.

\[\text{চুখ না করিলে মুখ না ভরাই} .\]
\[\text{Dukh ná karile mukh ná bharái.}\]

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

155. Nothing is attained without labour.

\[\text{হৃদতে মুখ তবে মুখ লোকে করে} .\]
\[\text{সকলে শুনি চালে নিচা নহয়} .\]
\[\text{Dukhathe mukh bhare burá loke koy.}\]
\[\text{Shakalo shuni chále michá nahoy.}\]

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.

\[\text{কথাব ছাজাবাব বাইবে চ মেব} .\]
\[\text{Kathár dutráshár bándhar duiner.}\]

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.

157. A person not worth conciliating.

\[\text{ধাবে মাঝিলেও বেন, গাছে মাঝিলেও তেনে} .\]
\[\text{Dháre márileo jene, gádire márileo tene.}\]

It is the same whether you strike with the sharp edge or the blunt side (of the dái).
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. धार (dhár) and गड़ी (gádi) are always used to denote the sharp edge and blunt side of a “da.”

158. Crying over spilt milk.

कांदिले धार सोध ने बाही।
Kándile dhár shodh ne jái.
By weeping a debt is not paid.

It is no good crying over spilt milk.

सोधाई (shodhái), in addition to its usual meaning, i.e., to cause an enquiry to be made, means to deposit or commit to the care of another, and so to pay.

159. A chip of the old block.

बापेक जेने रितेक भेन।
Bápek jene ritek tene.
Like father, like son.

i.e., the son is “a chip of the old block.”

160. Can a leopard change his spots.

এঙার থোলে ও বগা নাহয়।
Engar dhole o bagá náhoy.
Even with washing, charcoal cannot become white.

161. The poor ever anxious.

জার নাই বিত, মান কবে পিত পিত।
Jár náí bit, mane käre pit pit.
He who has no money, is anxious in mind.

पित (pit) literally is gall or bile.
162. Responsibilities of power.

ঝত বাজ তত কাজ।
Jata ráj tata káj.
Wherever there are kingdoms, there are duties to be performed.


অবাস্ত নিয়ম নাই।
Prabáshat 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—

প্রার্থেক নিয়ম নাই।
Pradéshat 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)—

"Jaison des, taisan bhes."
"Suit your behaviour to the country."

164. Half a loaf is better than no bread.

একো নহেয়াত্তিক কনা মোমাই ও তাল।
Eko nahowatkoí kaná momái o bhál.
A blind uncle is better than no uncle.

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

165. Pick up wood with care.

কােক দামা চাই লালি বা খর্বে।
Kák dámá cháí lari bá kharf.
Táre kán mári táre jari.

Pick up the wood with care,
So that you can find your stick for carrying the bundle of faggots on, as well as the fastening.
Class III.

PROVERBS RELATING TO PECULIARITIES OF CERTAIN CASTES AND CLASSES.

166. Ahoms.

আহোমের চকলাঙ হিন্দুর বেই।
তোমার পাতলির পতিতায় বেই কবা বেই।
Áhomar chaklang Hindur bei.
Tomár pátalit paricho jei kará nel.

For the Áhoms 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.

চকলাঙ (chaklang) is the name of the Ahom marriage ceremony.
বেই (bei) or বিয়া (biyá) is the Bengali বিয়ে (biye), or বিবাহ (bibáha).
বেই (bei) is the word generally used to denote the Hindu marriage ceremony of the হোম (Hom).
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.

167. Bhakats.

কনি পাবে বাই তকত দাঁত ।
Kani päre há(n)he khái bhakat dá(n)he,
Ducks lay eggs and the Bhakats eat them.

তকত (bhakat).—This is the name given to the disciples of the gosain.

168. Bhakats.

তকতজো দেকি খোবা টো দাবও সে ?
Bhakatatkoí dheki thorá to dángar ne?
Is the pestle of the “dheki” heavier than a “bhakat”?

The খোবা(thorá) is the heavy pestle fixed on the lever of the dheki. The meaning of the proverb is that a “bhakat” is a heavier burden to support than even the weighty dheki thorá.
169. **Bhakats.**

Jetiyá máriba dholat chápar,
Jetiyá labá murat kápar.

*When they (the bhakats) clap their hands at the temple,*
*Then cover your head with your cloth.*

The proverb alludes to the evening worship at the temple, when, on account of the evening chills, it is best to cover the head. Chápar (chápar) here means the clapping of hands by a number of people all together. The “chápar” is the principal accompaniment to the singing of religious hymns (nám). The “chápar” accompaniment is varied at intervals by the clashing of “tál” (cymbals) and by the beating of large drums.

170. **Bhakats.**

Bhakathei kalo na pakái.
*Bhakats don’t even cook plantains.*

This means that, although a dainty feeder, the “bhakat” is above cooking even such delicacies as plantains.

171. **Bhakats.**

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 মেঢিস is a person of much less importance, being only the gosain's agent at a village. These 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 Sastra keep touch with the people. Medhis are sometimes known by the title of "shastola." There are also ranks of medhis, e.g., "bor" medhi (head medhi) and ráj medhi (the chief officer of the gosain outside the Sastra). 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 "kalsi" (vessel) and a páti (mat) by the man who gives the feast.

172.  
Bhakats (of Kamalábíri).
আগার কমলাবারিয়াই মূর্তি খাই খবি।
এতিয়াঁ কমলাবারিয়াই সো দোরে ভবি।
Ágar Kamalábariyáí dhui khái khari.
Etíår Kamalábariyáí no dhowe bhari.

The Kamalábári "bhakats" of former days used to wash firewood before they cooked with it.

The Kamalábári "bhakats" of the present day don't even wash their feet.

This saying means that the "bhakats" of this Sastra 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.

173.  
Bhot.
বহ্নাব ধন ভোট গিরিহত।
Rajår dhan bhot giribat.

The rent-collector is the owner of the king's wealth.
is the old name for rent-collector. In the days of the rājās, the revenue was farmed out to “bhots,” who paid the rājā a certain sum annually, and made as much out of the ryots as they could.

174.

Bhuiyas.

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 Bhuiyā.

(pāt) 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 Jorhāt subdivision of the Sibsāgar district.

is either a scarf or waistcloth. These are often made of “pāt” or “mezankuri” silk, and are embroidered with red, or even very occasionally with gold thread.

— Bhuiyas were, as their name implies, landholders, the word being derived from or (land). Bronson says they were “rājbangshi,” 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 rājās, 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 thoram 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.”
175. **Borás.**

बबाम बब ताबा गाठि, बबाट पंकिश केहै बाति।
Barār gharat tarār gāthi, barāt thākiba kei rāti.

In the Borā's house the walls are fastened with "tarā;"
How many nights will the Borā live in it.

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

तरा (tarā) or तरापति is the wild cardamom, which elephants are very fond of. The walls and roofs of temporary huts are frequently made of तरा (tarā).

176. **Brahmins.**

बायथे शुभे बिचारे बना।
Bāymune shagune bichāre marā.

The Brahmin and the vulture look out for corpses.

The ganak is on the look-out from the time a person is taken ill.

177. **Brahmins.**

बापुब राह जापर साबिल।
Bāpur bā(n)h jopāi mārali.

Is the ridge-pole of the Brahmin's house made of a bamboo?

The ridge-pole of the house is generally made of more lasting wood than bamboo. It is only the poor who have to use a bamboo for the purpose. A Brahmin is sure to have the best of every thing, and it is not likely that he will be satisfied with a bamboo. बापु is really the respectful address of a man to a Brahmin.

178. **Brahmins.**

यह आचिलो धारी बै,
Moy áchilo dhāri boi,
Mok ánile Bámunto koi.
I was combing my beard,
And he brought me here, calling me a Brahmin.

Perhaps this is intended for joke, as Brahmins in Assam don't have beards, as a rule.

179. Mahangs.

ধন মহাঙ্গৈ গল লো ন তাব পেলাই,  
মাটি তাব অলিলে পুল মাটিবল হল ।

Dhan mahangaloi gal lon bhar pelai,
Mati tab anile ghar machibalo hal.

His wealth has gone to the Mahang.
So he threw down his load of salt
and set about plastering his house.

The proverb perhaps means that the mahangs having exhausted all the supplies of the house, the master at last had time to think of something else besides feeding them, and was able to plaster his house. Possibly the proverb, however, means that the householder said that his wealth had gone in feeding the mahangs, but notwithstanding this, he was able to buy a load of salt, in which case there is an ironical meaning. মহাঙ্গ (mahang) a class of religious mendicants.

180. Miris.

তিবিক মিলে, মিনি কিলে ।
Tirik mile, Miri kile.

When the Miri meets his wife he beats her.

I should doubt if this is true of the Miri husband, as a rule, and there is no need to suppose that the Miri wife needs chastisement any more than her Assamese sister, although the Miri beats his wife when she deserves it. Miri women have, however, often plenty of muscle, and would be apt to turn the tables on their husbands if roughly handled.

181. The Maldanta.

মহাঙ্গ চিন মাহানিত, বুঝা গলে চিন বাহিনিত ।
Mahantar chin mahanit, bura garur chin gh(n)hanit.
The tracks of the Mahanta are in the “mátilkalai” field, and those of the old bullock are in the meadow.

The Mahanta, who like the gosain, is a spiritual guide, takes his tithe in kind as often as in money; this accounts for his tracks being found in the field of “mátilkalai.”

माहनि (máhani) is a field of “mah,” 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.

182. Mariyás.

मरियाक केलेई धान, गरियाक केलेई कान।
MARIYÁK KELEI DHÁN, GARIYÁK KELEI KÁN?

Why should a Mariyá have paddy, or a Gariyá be allowed to keep his ears?

मरिया (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. गरिया (gariyá).—This term, as stated before, is meant to be one of opprobrium, but in reality it is nothing of the sort. गरिया means a man from “Gaur” (a city in Bengal), that formerly existed. 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.

188. Nágas.

नागिनीये लंगा पाई, नागाय जाल पाई।
NÁGINFE LÁRA PÁI, NAGÁI JÁL KHÁI.

The Nága’s wife gives birth to a child, the Nága drinks the medicine.

जाल (jáI) is the Hindustáni jhál, a preparation of hot spices taken by women after delivery.

नागा (nagá) or नागा (nágá) is a generic term, which includes a number of large and powerful hill tribes.
184. **Thieves.**

चोब पোষ যুগ খানিহে।
Chor por mukh khānihe.

The stock in trade of a thief is his appearance.

There are two kinds of thieves is Assam—the thief in the ordinary sense of the word, and the চোয়ালি চোধ (chowáli 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 চোয়ালি চোরি (chowáli chori), or the stealing of young women. In this way the bridegroom escapes the payment of money or presents to the girl’s parents. Hence this proverb “The stock in trade of a thief is his appearance.”

185. **Thieves.**

বোপাই আচিল চোর, সেই পার্কিতি মোধ।
Bopāi áchil chor, shei parkiti mōd.

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

cf.—No. 158—বাপেক ঝনে পিতেক তেনে (Bāpek jene pitek tene).

186. **Thieves.**

জোব ও জোব বিপবিত জোব,
Jor o jor biparit jor,
এটি কানকাতা এটি চোর।
Etī kānkata etī chor.

A couple, a dissimilar couple;
One has croppped ears and the other is a thief.

The use of বিপবিত is here ironical. কানকাতা (kānkata) literally with ears that have been cut off. It was the custom in the times of the rājās to cut off the ears of thieves and other offenders.
CLASS IV.

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

187. 

Betelnut.

সহকৈ কাটিবাঙ, ঘবনক্ খাবা, ।
সেই তামোলর বিলাহ চাবা।
Sarakoi kātībā, ghankoi khābā,
Shei tāmolar bilāh chābā.
Cut it small and eat it thick,
And enjoy the betelnut.

188.

Betelnut.

কটারি চিকোন গুয়া, তোপানি চিকোন পুয়া।
Katāri chikōn guā, topāni chikōn puā.
A sharp knife for betelnut,
To sleep in the early morning is pleasant.

The Assamese is fond of sleeping as late as he can in the early morning, especially in cold or wet weather. গুয়া (guā) is another name for তামোল (tāmol), the betelnut.

189.

Bihu.

নাত বিহব সরা কনি।
Shāt bihur shayā kani.
An egg that has survived seven Bihus.

There are three Bihu, the Choit, Kārtik, and Māgh Bihu. They are held on the last days of the months just enumerated. The Choit 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 Brindāban. 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 Kártilik Bihu is a much smaller festival, and has no peculiar customs that I can recall. The Mággh Bihu is an important feast, as it is the harvest-home. By the end of Mággh (the middle of February) 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 वनिजुब् [kanijujá]. In the old days there used to be buffalo fights, and even elephant fights, at the Bihu.

190. Brahminical thread.

बाहित निदिबा तत्,
सन्या चोबालि लघोने नथाय
दिबा गुद्दिते तत्।

Ráhit níribá hát,
Lará chowáli laghóne náthábá.
Dibá gudhalíte bát.

Don't touch anything stale.

Don't delay in giving your children the sacred thread.
Give cooked rice in the evening.

राहित (ráhit) = cooked rice of the day before, which is stale and nasty. लघोन (laghon) = Bengali तैत (poitá), the sacred thread. It is the custom amongst the higher castes to invest a child with the sacred thread when it reaches a certain age.

191. Busy-bodies.

नग्नी नहले छैं नभले,
फूटकीया नहले गौ नवहे।

Laganí nahale jui najale,
Tutakiyá nahale gáo(n) nabahe.

Without kindling wood the fire won't light,
And without a busybody no village can be established.
192.

_Childless Woman._

ছাব নারী কেছুয়া। বুডাকে নাছু।

Jār nāi kechhuwa būrāke nachhuā.

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

193.

_Cutting off the nose._

নিজে নাক কাটি শতিনীব বাহু ভেঙ।

Nijar nāk kāti shatini bārā bhangā.

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. শতিনী (shatini) or শতিয়ো (shatiyoi) = 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. _cf._—the following translations of Eastern sayings:

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

_Telugu._—"Two swords cannot be contained in one scabbard."

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

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

194.

_Cutting off the nose._

নাক কাটিলে আঘাত দালে পালে,
ছুলি কাটিলে আঘাত কোন কালে?

Nāk kātīle ahibā dāle pāle,
Chuli kātīle ahibā kon kāle?

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?
Mr. Abdul Majid explains this proverb by the following little story:—Once upon a time there was an Assamese king, who sentenced a man to have his nose cut off, mutilation being a common punishment in the times of the rajas. Some one, who was a friend of the man under sentence, advised the king to cut off the man's hair instead of his nose, as the hair would not grow again, whereas the nose would soon regain its former size with treatment. The king believed the adviser, and so the prisoner got off with having his hair cropped.

195.

Daughters.

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 pathar.

שתिक 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 (पुंजिया), 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 (थिकिका) each time this is possible. The proverb is an answer to the question—
Where do things thrive best?

196.

Daughters.

टिक बलच ओलाई माटि, माक डालों जीयेक जाति।
Tik balad olai mati, mak bholeye jiyek jati.

A good bullock comes when it is called; if a mother is good
the daughter is the same.
Daughters.

Mákát koi jíyek kájí, dheki thora loi báte pát(n)ji.

The daughter is more skilful than the mother (forsooth).
There is an obstacle in the road to the "dheki"!

The proverb means that the daughter makes herself out more clever than her mother, but she excuses herself from working the "dheki" (paddy-husker), the principal work of the house.

Pájí is a pointed bamboo stake driven into the ground with the object of wounding foot-passengers. The Nágas and other hill tribes place "panjís" round their villages to guard against sudden attack.

Daughters.

Toi mákar jí, moi jákar jí,
Tapat bhátát chechá karo,
Hechá potosh di.

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

The latter half of the saying is interrogative.

Dheki.

Dheki shál phurile khudar ki ákál.

The paddy-husker has gone away, what a dearth of broken rice (refuse) there will be!

I'ather.

Bápur gát bárhaní lágil.
The broom has touched father's body!
A dire misfortune, as the broom is always unclean. বাপু (bápu) is a respectful form of address for either a father or a Brahmin.

201. 

_Fisherman._

ভোম ছহকিহ হল চুক্ত পাতিলে হলি,
উলিয়াই পেলাই গেলাই গা শঙ্খশঙ্খাইতে বুলি।
Dom chhabaki hal chukat pátile duli,
Uliyái pelái pelái gá shungshungáiche 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 শঙ্খশঙ্খাই (gá shungshungái), literally to feel an itching in the body. The word is derived from হস্ত—a bristle, a beard of a grain of paddy.

202. 

_Guitar._

মানতে টোকারী বাজে।
Mánathe tokári baże.

Out of respect for him they play the tokári.

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

203. 

_Husband._

এতিয় পালেই ঘর পতাপেই,
কিলাবলৈ আহিতে সেই পেলাই দাললেই।
Etiyá pálébi ghar patápoi,
Kilábaloi áhičhe kher pelái dálloai.

Now has come the worthy husband;
He drops the load of straw from off his shoulders
and wants to hurt me with the knife in his hand.

ঘর পতা (ghar patá) literally, he who has established the house.
Here the wife is the speaker.
204. 

_Husband._

कि रम कि नकम ठैब स्याम बटाली।
Ki kam ki nakam poir nám batāli.

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.

205. 

_Husband._

কিহত করিলো কি, ধান এলোন দি,
Kihat karilo ki, dhān edon di,
ঠৈবো আখিলো নিতে কিলাই মাখে।
Poito ánilo nito kilái māre.

What have I done to have bought a husband

for a dun of paddy,

Who always beats me.

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

206. 

_Husband._

খাব জানিলেই চাউলেই চিবা,
Khāba jānilei chāwolei chirá,
বহীব জানিলে মাতিযেই পিবে,
Bahība jānilei màtiyei pirā,
বুলিব জানিলেই মজিরাই দেড় প্রহর বাত।
Buliба jānilei mojīyāi der prahar bāt.

If eaten knowingly (contentedly), common rice is “chirá”

(washed 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, cooked 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. মাজ কঠালি (máj katháli), the middle room of the house, where the meals are served and eaten.

207. 

Husband.

গিরিয়েকে বোলে তোঁক তোঁক,
ঈনির্যেকে বোলে পুরা গড়লি,
কুই নাঝ একে লগে হোক।

Giriyeke bole bhok bhok,
Ghoiniyake bole puá gadhuli,
Dui sháj 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 a 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 পিঠাগুরি (pitháguri) 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.)

208. 

Husband.

জালকে বুলিলে জাকাই
জালকে মূথানে চিনিব নেবাবি
গোষ্ঠেক বুলিলে কাকাই।

Jálake bulilé jakái,
Andháre mudháre chiniba noári
Poiyekak bulilé kakái.

The net was mistaken for a jakái,
And she called her husband “kakái” (elder brother)
in the dark.
A fish (jál) is a fishing net, of which there are several kinds. The nets are made from a fibre called "riha," which is very strong. Jakái (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.

Learned.

जनार्थ भात मच नजनार ठीये कलग्रह।
Janár bhát mách najanár sheiye kalgárah.
What is cooked rice and fish to the learned,
is an insurmountable difficulty to the unlearned.

Low birth.

तोर जनाम जाति मय जाने।
Tor janam játi moj jano.
Kathiá talit ghar áche
Eshar cherek dirái 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.

Eshár (esbár) literally एटिकथा (etikathá) one word; दिराइ (dirái) literally to boast.

Lover.

चाइ खबरै आहि वाहेक परिल।
Chái khábaloi áhi bandhat 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.

Maternal uncle.

बोमाच बबक, भृजक पाचे पाब।
Momáí marak, bhutak páche pám.
Let the uncle die, I will find the devil (हृज) 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.

213.

**Marriage.**

এতা বোর খোলোচাতৈক
বিয়ার খোলো সকত।

Etái bor khorochātkoi
Biyār khorochá shakat.

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

214.

**Mother-in-law.**

চল পাই বিয়নি নিতে। তিনি বেলি।
Chal pái biyani nito tini beli.

If the mother-in-law gets a chance,
she comes to the house three times a day.

These words are put into the mouth of the daughter-in-law, who has to put up with a great deal of interference from her husband's mother.

বিয়নি (biyani) = সাহ (sháhu), mother-in-law.

215.

**Mother-in-law.**

সাহ বোরারীর ঘর,
কোনে বাই গাভিবর ঘর।
Sháhu bōrārir ghar,
Kone khái gākhirar shar.

The mother-in-law is at her daughter-in-law's house,
Who is going to drink the cream?

This means that there will be a fight over it.

শব (shar) = চামনি (chámani), cream.  শব (shar) is the same word really as the Bengali শার (shár) very probably.
216. **Oil.**

बनने परि कुमीरा होना,
तेल नाइकिया फलिीरा होना।

Ranat pari kaliyā halo,
Tel näikiyāt phapariyā halo.

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

A cooly 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 seurfy. The Assamese rub their
hair and
body with नारिकल तेल (nārikal tel), cocoman oil.

217. **Old man.**

দেখিয়াহে বৃক্ষ অর কুন্ড।

Dekhichāhe būk jāgī kurā.

He looks an old man, but in reality he is a flame of fire.

অরি কুন্দ (agnik urā) = জুই কুন্দ (jui kurā), a torch. অরি (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, Vāyu (Indra), and Surya—who
respectively preside over earth, air, and sky.”—(Dowson.)

218. **Pohāri.**

পোহারি রুপোহেক সাবি।

Pohārir poiek shākhi.

The Pohāri’s witness is her husband.

This means that the only witness a Pohāri can get, is her own
husband owing to her poverty. Other people being able to pay for
witnesses, have thus an advantage over her.

পোহারি (pohāri) are petty traders.
219.

Porters.

Bhārik nere bhāre, jabarāk nere pachāla khāre.
The burden does not leave the porter's back,
and potash (salt) does not leave the vegetables.

The above means that a porter cannot earn his livelihood without carrying loads, and vegetables cannot be eaten without salt.

Pachāla khār (pachāla khār) = potash obtained by burning plantain trees. In olden days potash, so obtained, was eaten in place of salt, which was not readily procurable. Jabarā (jabarā) = greens boiled without salt.

220.

Religion.

Dharmar jay adharmar khyay.
The victory of religion is the decline of wickedness.

Dharma (dharma) is moral and religious duty. Dharma was an ancient sage, sometimes classed among the Prajāpatis, the fathers of the human race, who were produced by Manu. Dharma married thirteen (or ten) of the daughters of Daksha, 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.)

221.

Step-mother.

Ki kam máhi āi r gūn,
Ehāte khārāli ehāte lōn !
What shall I say of my step-mother's character?
In one hand she has chutney and in the other salt!

In former days salt was a luxury, and "khārali" is much appreciated as a relish to eat with boiled rice. For note on "khārali," see No. 103.
222. 

**Step-son.**

মোঃ পো নহের সন্তিনিব পো,
ধারি নাই, পাতি নাই মাতিতে পো।
Mor po nahoy shatinir po,
Dhāri nāi, pāṭi nāi márī tī sho.

You are not my son, but a son of my fellow wife,
I have no “dhāri” (rug) and no “pāṭi” (mat) for you,
you must sleep on the ground.

223. 

**Stolen cattle.**

চোথে নিয়া গর্ব বাংলা বাংলা বাংলাহ।
Chore niyā garur bāte bāte ghāh.
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.

224. 

**Teacher.**

কেলেহাফ ওজা চংপানীয়া পালি,
বে বাতি নায় গায় খেবাই জাও।
Kelehuā ojā chapaniyā pāli,
Ore ráti nám gāy kher jui jālī.

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

Ojā is also an exorcist.  কেলেহাফ (kelehuā and chapaniyā) are contemptuous terms applied to one who wishes to associate with others without being asked. The term “chapaniyā” 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 daughters in marriage.

225. 

**Urbashi.**

একে উর্ব্বশি দুবারে পথ।
Eke Urbashi dāvari path.

The temple of Urbashi has but one door, and path leading up to it.
Village Conversation.

Urbashi, or Urvasi, was one of the Apsarases, 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 Puranas attribute the origin of these nymphs to the churning of the ocean.

There is a love story told in the Mahábhárata, 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 Maxmüber 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," Maxmüber 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." I am indebted to Mr. Abdul Majid, Extra Assistant Commissioner of Gauhati, for the following note:—"It is believed that certain stones which stand between the Umanand rocks (Peacock island) and the Koromonsa rocks, are Urbashi herself transformed into a stone [near these stones are at present a white column, called the 'Light House...........']." Mr. Majid then adds that the people of Gauhati call the Umanand rocks "Urpopki," which is said to be a corruption of Urbasi. The name "Urpopki," i.e., one flying hither and thither, as applied to the courtezan, Urbashi would seem to be a fitting one.

2936.

Village conversation.

ছেকিয়া লাতা পাটা,
ভাত খাওতে পানি খাই,
নিজ এটা কথা।
Dhekiyā latā patā,
Bhát káote pāni khái,
Shio etā kathā.
Bits of fern, creepers, and leaves.  
He drinks water whilst eating rice.  
These are the subjects of conversation.

This is a description of village talk.

227.  

Water Sprite.  
খাল খানি জাহিনি চাপাই লালে।  
Khál khání jashíní chapái lalé.

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

The jashíní is one of the dü minores of the Assamese.  
Although the “jashíní” is supposed to be evilly disposed,  
apparently it does not require to be propitiated by offerings.  
The “jashíní” 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 “jashínís,” and so drowned whilst bathing.

228.  

Water Sprite.  
খলত খল বঙ্গ। পোতা পুখূরি বাঙ্কের বঙ্গ।  
Thalat thal rágá potá pukhurí bákeye rágá.

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

খল (thal) = Sanskrit হল (sthal), land, place.  
পোতা পুখূরি (potá pukhuri), literally buried tank.  
What is meant generally by the expression, however, is a tank in process of being filled up.  
বাঙ্ক [ba(n)k] is an evil spirit said to haunt swamps and marshes.  
The ba(n)k, like the will o’the whisp, leads people astray at night.

229.  

Widower.  
জোব পোতি বলাবা হাত পালে হি।  
Jor pori baralár hát pálé 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 burned his hand in his absence of mind.”
WIDOWER—WIVES: THE CONTRARY WIFE.

230. 

Widower.

Than than Madan Gopál, eketá baralár nakhan chotál.

He is alone by himself a "Madan Gopál" (a widower),

he possesses nine courtyards (and houses to correspond).

Madan Gopál (Madan Gopál) is either a bachelor or a widower.

Madan (Madan) is one of the names of Káma (Káma), the Indian cupid.

(Gopál), cowkeeper, a name of the youthful Krishna whilst

living amongst the cowherds in Brindában.

231. 

Widower.

Parbatat káchakani bhojámat bán,

Baralá bicháríche shukán dán.

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 for a widower (to obtain) dry paddy.

In the proverb just above, we have some of the advantages of

widowerhood. In this proverb we have one of the disadvantages.

bán (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.

Khojo khárali diye lon,

Ene ubhatit thákiba kon.
I ask for chutney and she gives me salt!
Who can stand a wife who is so contrary?

For note on খারালি (khárali), see No. 103.

233. **The wife who is a hasty cook.**
খব বাড়নি খব বাড়নি পোইকে লয়নে বাই,
ওদা বাড়নি ওদা বাড়নি পোইকে তিনো সাজি বাই।
Khar rándhani khar bárani poiek laghone jái,
Odá rándhani odá bárani poiek tini sájì khái.

A hasty cook and a hasty broom, and the husband goes fasting,
A slow cook and a slow broom, and the husband eats three meals a day.

A hasty cook often spoils what she is cooking. A hasty broom makes a lot of dust. A cook who takes time and trouble, prepares a satisfactory meal. A broom that does its work in a systematic manner, makes little dust. খর (khar) = literally quick, dry, parched.

ওদা (odá) = soft, not over-roasted.

234. **The wife supreme in her own house.**
ঘাড়ে পতি ইষ্টনি, খালে পতি জনিনি।
Ghare pati ghoini, khále pati jashiní.

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

235. **A wife who, though well-meaning, is without tact.**
তোঁনি গরুলিত তাবিচে বাট,
उधूँठित चिड़ियों के तैरका बाट।
Tini gadhulit tariche tát,
Ujút chingile poiekar dá(n)t.

For three evenings she has been spreading her loom,
But by mistake she has broken her husband's tooth.

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

পাব কব জুরলা গায় নাখায়ে।
Pár kar jubalá gáy nátháware.

Cross me over (the stream), stupid. I am so tired.

The spoilt wife.

বেটিয়ে ভাঙিলে কাতরা, গড়ঘাত পালেহি বতনা,
বৈনাচে ভাঙিলে কাতরা, ঠালে মুখকাই হাতি।

Betiyhe bhāngile katarā, Gargāo pālehi batarā,
Ghōinīye bhāngile ka(n)hi, thale muchukāi hā(n)hi.

The maid-servant broke a cocoanut shell, and the news spread to Gargāo.

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

কাতরা (katarā) is a half cocoanut shell used as a cup by the poor,
or as a lid for a vessel. গড়ঘাত [Gargāo(n)], Nazira, was at one
time the capital of the Ahom rājās.

The old wife and the young wife.

সরুর দায় পিচলি জাই, ববর দায় খুটি জাই।

Sarur dāy pichali jāi, barar dāy khuchari khāi.

Through the young wife's mistake he slips down,
But when the old wife makes a mistake, he stirs up the mud.

The case of a man who has two wives, an old one and a young
one, is meant.

The stingy wife.

বিক্ষায় বিলেও বিক্ষায় নিদিয়ে।
Bidhatāy dileo tirutāi nidiye.

Although Bidhatā gave, the wife does not!

বিক্ষা (Bidhatā) is Brahmā, the law-giver.

The wife always beautiful.

শাজ মূর্ত নাই চুলি, পৈয়েক মাতে কপাহি বুলি।
Máj murat nái chuli, poiyek māte 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.*

Sarb koralini ti, paito mute churero khai.

Sharba shulakhyani t'ai, paitito mute churuto khai.

A paragon of a wife, she spoils the bed and eats from the cooking pot.
The proverb is of course ironical.


Dibdi churi baichin ruti.

Tirir chuti baranir buti.

Women that are short in stature, are like brooms that are worn out.
The Assamese think a great deal of a tall woman.


Dibdi, dibdi, baoto, kora,
Ei tini chari aksi nora.

Tirir, Miri, bhato, kowro,
Ei tini chari ash no pawro.

Of women, Miris, the parrot and the crow,
The minds of these four you cannot know.

Assamese never trust women. In this they do not differ from the people of the rest of India, who have a very low idea of the sex. Miris are always supposed to be very deceitful. To me personally they have always appeared very simple, but perhaps I have been taken in. The words "bhato" and "kowro" have been inserted for purposes of rhyme.

244. *Women.*

Thupari poi, maje phutdi choi, kati khai katanai,
Ei tini chari jamar jatanai.

To be the husband of a worthless woman, a cart-covering
with a hole in the middle of it, a hired weaver,
These three are the agony of death.
In Assam, the bullock carts are covered with hoods made of matting, with bamboo hoops to support it. Any one who has travelled in a bullock cart with a hole in its hood on a wet night in the rains, will endorse the truth of this saying. A hired weaver is very troublesome on account of her bad work. कटना (kataná)=बेचलै लोक कुख कटा वा कापन बोझा माहस —(Bronson). (Bechaloi lokar shutá katá bá kápar bowá mánuś). One who spins or weaves for others for hire. For note on बम (jam), see No. 24.

Class V.

PROVERBS RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND SEASONS.

245. The brinjal out of season.

अभावीरा बेडङनबे बोक भोल बोल भोल कबे।
अबतरियां बेगनां मोक तोल मोक तोल कारे।
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.

246. The "bagari" plum.

उलूब लगत वगती पविल।
Ulur lagat bagari paril.
The wild plum is found in the 'ulu' grass.

पविल (literally) fell. In "ulu" grass jungle the "bagari," or wild plum, is frequently found.

247. "Dhán" and "pán."

एक आहिने धान,
तिनी सागरे पान।
Ek Áhine dhán,
Tini Sáwone pán.
In one Áhin dhán,
In three Sháwon 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 three years to mature. (According to the proverb, the month of Sháwon is from about 15th July to 15th August.)

248.

"Pán."

ঢেক গচ্ছ পান গি ফি হব আন।
Eke gachar pán shi 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 be different to his father?

249.

Paddy.

কুমারিয়া ভরিত ধান,
Kumariyá bharit dhán,
ছয়ে ফুটিয়ে হবে অতিয় পারি।
Shuye phutiloi 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., a man not accustomed to such work, the sharp beard of the paddy runs into his foot.

250.

Paddy seedlings.

কঠিয়া হে চুটি জেঠতে পান।
Kathiyyá 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 "kathiyyá thalis" (seedling beds) are prepared and the seed sown.
251.

Ploughs.

Gadhuli hale sakt saag nahi,
Poora hale e haleo nahi.

Gadhuli hale shat shal bai,
Puul hale e halo nai.

In the evening he has seven ploughs going,
In the early morning he has not one.

The proverb illustrates the case of a man who, although ignorant of agriculture altogether, pretends that he is doing a great deal of it. 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.

Ji mula baaviba hapatet chin.

Ji mulá báriba dupátate chin.

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

253.

Jack fruit.

Dhan puriyá kathál patar 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. This proverb should more properly have come under Class I or Class II.

254.

Náhar.

Náharat koio shukáthi.

There is better wood than the Náhar even.
255. Choit.

पाले हि चठ धान धम कठ।
Pāle hi Chat dhān tham kat.
The month of Choit has arrived,
when am I going to store the paddy?

Here चठ=चैत (Choit). The month of Chat or Choit is from about the 15th March to the 15th April, or about a full month before the commencement of the ploughing season. This is a case of a man counting his chickens before they are hatched. Paddy is not carried, and certainly not garnered, until well on in December.

256. Mangas.

ঝকা আমা বেলিকা ফিসব কুজা বোছ।
Pakā ámar belikā kihar kujá mohá.
Now is the time for ripe mangas,
How can you be bent double with care any longer, uncle?

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

257. “Máh” or “MátiKelái.”

ঝাে কাতঙ্গই মাহ বতর গল।
Phál kātatei máhar batar gal.
Whilst he was cutting the plough-share,
the time for máh-sowing passed away.

“Máh” or “mátiKelái” is a kind of black dál, much eaten by the Assamese. Máh is sown at the end of the rains and is reaped in the cold weather. The ঝাে (phál) is the plough-share, which is very often made of wood hardened with fire, sometimes even it is only a bamboo.
253. Seluk.

বুবে 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 বুলি. The ভেট (bhet) is something similar to the "singhára."

259. The Bor tree.

বুব গাচ কাতিলে নিলিমাই কলিতে,
Chittik labor is a waste.
লোক দেখিছে কেতিহাই মানিবা,
People are watching the mangoes.
চিতিবি নেবিবা বেথা।
Chitiki parle etha.
Bar gach kátili ghitingái karile,
Bar gach sitting karile.
Chittiki parle etha,
Chitiki parle etha.
Lokak dekuwáí keterái mátibá,
Lokak dekuwái keterái matiba.
Bharitá neribá betha.
Bharita neriba betha.

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 someone, should more properly have been detailed in Class II. পিলিমাই (ghitingái) = an onomatopoeic word, signifying any sudden sound, as a clap of thunder— (Bronson). চিতিকি (Chittiki) "chitiki," literally, driving in like heavy rain through an open window. বুব গাচ (Bar gach) = বুব গাচ, the Indian fig (Ficus indica). These trees grow to an enormous size in Assam, notably the "Fesung Bor gach" near Difflu in Golaghát.

280. The kerela.

বুবে হাত কেবেলাব তেবে হাত গুট।
Bure hait kerelá tere hait guti.

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

The "kerela" is the "Momordica carantia," a well-known vegetable. (Bengali করলা, karlá). The saying is applied to a man
who draws the long bow. The proverb should more properly find place under Class I.

261. On buying land

মাটি কিনিবা মাজ খাল,
চোরালী আনিবা মাক ভাল।
Máti kínibá máj khál.
Chowálí 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."

262. Paddy cultivation.

গাক চাবা গধুলি সেয়া চাবা পুর।
জগাই বাওয়ে চোরালী চাবা লেখি কেনে কুর।
Gáka chábá gadhúli sáya chábá púr.
Jagái báote chowálí chábá dekhí kene kúr.
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.

263. On making seedling-beds.

সিঁচাতকে চেবা ধরাই কান।
Shichátkoi chéré dhará tán.
The plot that has been abandoned is harder to prepare
than that which has been sprinkled (with water).

The Assamese ryot always has a small plot of land near his house, where he makes his paddy nursery. The ground is first of all well ploughed, and then water is sprinkled all over the surface with a "lahani" (bamboo scoop) until the earth becomes liquid mud. Then the "kathiya" is sown. Naturally, a plot which has
thus been prepared, is easier to work than the चेवा धरा (cherā dharā),
the plot which has been allowed to lie fallow.

284.

A fence.

नित चारने ताति।
Nita charane tāti.

A fence always requires looking after.

The Assamese fence in their "ruwā," the paddy-fields, after the
"kathiyā" (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.

285.

Pepper, pān and plantains.

अदृश्य गोबर पानत माती।
Kalan pūnī kara tīnirā kāti.
Jālukat gobar pānāt māti.
Kalā puli rubā tinibār kātī.

Place manure round the black pepper bush
and earth round the pān tree.

And cut the plantain three times before you plant it.

The above proverb gives useful hints as to the cultivation of
black chillies, pān, and plantains.

286.

On cultivating sāli dhān.

तिनि परबत रबाशं गांवी जन धनरैक दिवा आली।
Tini parbat rubā shálī ghan ghanāko dibā álī.
Jadi nabāy shálī tene pāribā jahakak gālī.

Three hills, when you (wish) to plant "sāli,
you must make the "ális" (divisions between portions of a field)
as near to one another as possible.

If the "sāli" does not grow well, then abuse the rake.
The "álís," which are divisions in the field prepared before the "kathiya" (seedlings) is planted out, are, for the purpose of damming in the water, which is essential to this crop, and keeping it at a given level. It is a pity nothing is said about the number of times it is necessary to plough the "sálí" field, although I am aware this must depend on circumstances. Mr. Darrah writes "The ruá (i.e., the field where the seedlings are planted out), is usually ploughed some five to eight times. In Sibságar, 8 is the figure given. In Mangaldai 3 to 8. In Tezpur 5. The Barpeta estimate (19) is apparently too high."

These different reports from different districts in the Assam Valley are conflicting. Nothing is said in the proverb about using the "moi" or harrow. Probably, in the proverb the rake takes the place of the harrow. On a small piece of ground, a rake would be used instead of a harrow. Even on large fields the rake is used at the corners and other places where the harrow cannot be used. The proverb means that it is necessary to well harrow or rake the field in addition to making "álís."

267. **Tamarind and "Owtenga."

খাল মালে তেতেলী পাঁচ মালে ঋ, ।
সেই ঘর মাঞুহ উতিবেন নো। ।
Khál dálé tetélí pách dálé ó. ।
Shei gharar mánuh uthilane nó.

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

নো (ad)=নাই হোমা "nai howa," not yet.

This is a proverb from Gauháti. I know nothing of any such superstition in Sibságar.

268. **Sesamum.**

মাহর মার দেখি তিলে বেত মেলিলে ।
Máhar már dekhi tile bet melile.

Seeing the māṭikeldi beaten out, the sesamum opened its cane-fastening.
THE BEST CROPS.

The proverb is meant as a hit at people who are too officious.

The best crops.

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. The last part refers to the predilection of the mother for the son, who has not left her for a wife and a home of his own.

Class VI.

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

The paddy-bird and the fish.

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.

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

271. The jackal.

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

The above 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.

272. The elephant.

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

The proverb is too well known to need comment.

273. The mosquito.

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

The proverb applies to little people who are always subjecting the great to petty annoyances.

274. The mosquito.

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.

The dove and the fish eagle.

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 prima facie appears to be false. The proverb should more properly have been classed under Class I.

The mouse.

One mouse has seven "páms."

The word pám (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 one mouse in a granary can do an infinity of damage.

The snake.

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

The Assamese proverb ought to have appeared under Class II.


Ocharar puthí, khalihaná, nilagar, ró, baráli.
Near us we have the "puthi" and "khalihaná.
The "ró" and "baráli" are far away.

The "Puthi" and "Khalihaná" are small and very inferior fish. The "Ró" and "Baráli," especially the former, are large fish of good flavour.

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

279. The duck

Kina há(n)har tho(n)tloike 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.

280. The tiger and the deer.

Kánar kál biparit kál,
Harinar cheleke bághar gál.

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

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 भाल मानुष (bhāl mānush) being seen on the road, is ironical.

The tiger.

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

“Bhadoi.”

Having got nothing he found a “bhadoi,” And managed to squeeze it into the fish basket.

“Karsola.”
The kársalá having eaten something (on the trunk)
climbed up into the branches.
The animal that licked the tree met its death.

The “kársalá” is said to be a kind of poisonous snake.

235.

The dog.

খুড় মধ্যে রাত্রি কুকুর সাজা।
Khud maganiyár kukur shatru.
The dog is the enemy of the man who begs for scraps.

সুরি is properly rice refuse.

236.

The ant.

গুরি পাক্যান অলপ বস্তুধলেবাষ কান,
Guri paruwar alap barakhunei bān,
লোপ সাহিত এক চারী তান।
Sholā mukhar ek charei tān.

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

গুরি পাক্যান (guri parowār) is a species of tiny ant. In the original Assamese, for অলপ বস্তুধলেবাষ (alap barakhunei) read সূতনিবেই।

237.

The weaver bird.

চুনান হে সম হাই কিন্তু বছর হোলোং গচ্ছ বাব।
Charāi he sharu hay kintu bar holong gachat bāb.
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” 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.
288. The "chital."
ঢেংওতোই চিটাল পিঠতে কাউট।
Dekhotei chital pithite ka(n)it.
Obviously, a "chital" fish; it has thorns on its back.
The "chital" has peculiar thorny fins, which scratch the hand when the fish is grasped.

289. The monkey.
বোষ্ট বান্দরো সোংবৰ।
Bayashat bándaro shondar.
The monkey even looks beautiful when it is full-grown.

290. The squirrel.
বাড়িব তামাল কেবেকতুবাই খাই,
আমার দিলে জানো অঠলে খাই।
Bárir tamol kerketuwái khái,
Ámák dile jánó athale jái.
The squirrel eats the widow's betelnut.
If she gave me the tree, I know it would grow crooked.

291. The "sengeli."
বুড়া হাতত চেংরাই।
Buŗár háttat chengeli.
In the hand of the old man is the "chengeli."
The "chengeli" is a kind of small fish found in bils. The above means that when a man gets old, the only fish that he can catch is the "chengeli."

292. Horses.
বাল তাল বোড়াই না পাই বাহ,
বুড়া বোড়াই বিচারে মাহ।
Bhál bhál ghórāi ná pái ghá(n)h,
Batwá ghórāi bíchāre máh.
Whilst good horses are not getting grass,
The inferior ones are looking for mātikeldi.
वच्छ (batuwá) is a term which is applied to horses only, as far as I know. An inferior country "tat" is often called a batuwá ghora. "Mátilkái" ="máti dál," the common pulse of the country, which is often used for feeding cattle on.

293.

The "kakila."

मह शिंगत कार(न)ला दीव।
Mahar shingat ka(n)kilá dá(n)r.

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

The "kakilá" is a long thin fish with a snout, which makes it look very peculiar. The proverb means that the buffalo by habit turns up the earth and mud with its horns in swampy places, where the "kakilá" is met with.

शिंगत [da(n)r] is apparently also used to denote the teeth of fish and reptiles.

294.

The game-cock.

रणर कुकुरा रानाट मय।
Ranar kúkurá 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 purpose.

295.

Elephants and horses.

बांक चिनिबा दानत,
हातीक चिनिबा आनत,
खोबक चिनिबा कानत।
Raják chinibá dánat,
 Hátk chinibá ánat,
 Ghorák chinibá kánat.

You will be able to recognise a king by his liberality, An elephant when it belongs to another, And a horse by its ears.
The second line means that a man does not know how to appreciate a good elephant until he has sold it to some one else.

Good horses are supposed to keep their ears erect.

There is a proverb also in Bengali about being able to recognise a good horse by its ears.

The house sparrow.

বাংলা হস্তিগতি ধরেতে
ধরনিবার কাজে খেজ পাহিলে।
Rāj hangshar gati dharote,
Ghanchiri kāro khoj pāharile.

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

The tadpole.

লালুকেট কিংবদন্তি পানি লাগিয়ে।
Lālukaloit kitapat pāni lāgiche.
Why does a tadpole require warm water!

cf.—Christian’s Bihar proverb:—

“Me(n)rhak ko bhi zokānm,
Ya bengo ke sardi.”

A frog with a cold or cough!

The “sal” and the “singi.”

নালাক সিঙ্গিরে ইঠে,
তায়া এছান নয়। এছানি
ভালেই গেয়াকী নাহে।
Shālāk shingiye hā(n)he,
Tayo ejani mayo ejani
Bhālto garākī nāhe.

The “sāl” (fish) is laughing at the “singhi” (fish).
You are a girl and I am a girl,
And no good husband comes for either of us.
Both the "sál" and the "singhi" are classed as unclean fish by Hindus, so that this is a case of "The pot calling the kettle black." This proverb should have been classed under Class I.

299.

_Tigers and snakes._

গায়ে খাই বাং খাই অনি সবে হলে,
খাঁচ কি হব গায়ে নিষেধ করিয়া হলে।

Shápe khái bághe khái jadi mare jale,
Jár ji haba láge nijar kárvyan dale.

Whether a man was bitten by a snake or eaten by a tiger,
or was drowned (it is the same thing).

He has reaped the consequences of his action.

300.

_Dogs._

কুকুরক নিদিবা খাই, লা চৌঃলীক নিদিবা খাই।
Kukurak nidibá tháí, lará chowálík nidibá lái.

Don't give a dog a place and do not set a bad
eexample to children.

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

301.

_Dogs._

কুকুরে জানে কি তাম তুলসি।
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 "_Ocimum sanc-
tum_," or holy basil.

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

_Dhubri_, P. E. GURDON.

_The 14th March 1895._