

*Ledo, Assam.*

(9-11-5-45) Bori Asmakahton. A young Mohammedan girl of approximately six years of age. She was found playing with two Hindu boys, which is, as one is led to believe, stepping out of their religious caste. Should one believe what is observed or go under the false impression of what one hears about, as explained by some foreign writer. I find that things are not strictly adhered to and those policies set up are generally by those individuals who have never had a look at India. Here is a case of a boy and a girl of two different families playing together away from home and of different religious casts! Just isn't according to the books. If however they are of the same caste it becomes a different story. Child marriage for these uneducated people is in my opinion based on a good physiological basis. In the first place it is only when the boy and girl are in that early stage of life that they can still be moulded to each others outlook. At a later stage they harden into habits and outlooks which are difficult to modify. That will probably be true in <sup>even</sup> ~~our~~ our own society. If these boys and girls must live harmoniously they must have the opportunity to mould each others thoughts and actions and ways of life. When they are married young they play together and quarrel together and are reconciled but they live as husband and wife only after they reach the age of puberty, and this is extremely early for these people. One frequently sees mothers appearing about 12 years old and carry<sup>ing</sup> babies. This early child marriage is punishable by law but am wondering how strictly these people obey, or even if they realize that a government even exists. The Hindus have a betrothal ceremony where a boy and girl are betrothed when still young but this does not involve living together nor is it to be confused with the regular or official child marriage. Another observation I have made at other places is separate schools for boys and girls. Whenever one sees a group of children returning from school they are separate groups of boys and girls-never mixed. It is a rare site to see a boy and girl walking down the street together.