

It would not do to close this discussion without some mention of that large and ferocious looking domesticated animal so important to the coolie--the water-buffalo! These animals are used to help in plowing the fields. For the rest of the year they are left to the care of the smaller boys of the family, along with the cattle. These enormous brutes are completely obedient to the commands of Hindu boys anywhere from the ages of six or seven, on up! At the very scent of a white man they will charge either at him, or in some cases it would seem to be away from him in fear! As one is never quite sure what his reaction will be, one always attempts to circumvent them at a distance. Yet when the six year old is near, he has the beast under control again in short order! One may often see several small boys playing around the beasts, riding on *their* expansive backs, or even hanging on to *their* tails, yet the buffalo goes about *their* munching or wandering as unconcerned with the irritation as if it were not there!

Hinduism in Assam has not apparently brought the usual pessimism to the coolies, that is so common elsewhere. The farmers respond to a friendly approach in a like manner, and in talking to them they prove to be cheerful and even humorous. When coming upon a group, one often finds them laughing and giggling with each other at a great rate. Christianity has made little progress in this part of Assam. The Catholic priest has about a thousand members in his flock, although there seem to be no other Christian missions in the immediate vicinity. The Anglican Church has a mission at Margherita that holds services once a month, chiefly for British residents. The few Christian bearers who worked for American Army personnel had come up from Shillong and Calcutta as camp followers. Hindus, Muslims, and Indian Christians alike spoke of a Christian as a "Jesus-Christian"--perhaps with good reason, as there have been a number of Indian Christian movements in different parts of India where the "prophet" or originator of the sect has been revered as a "guru" or sort of a lesser god! These movements have not affected the more isolated farmers of Assam apparently, for they know little about anything but their own local variety of Hinduism with its many tabus.