

LUDWIG INGWER NOMMENSEN AND THE BATAK CHURCH IN SUMATRA.

From the translation by William Nommensen

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Introduction: Sumatra

In the Indian Ocean, south of the Malay Peninsula, we find the large island of Sumatra, next to Borneo, the largest in the Eastern seas. It is of an elongated shape, about 1050 miles in length, with an area of about 125,000 square miles and an estimated population of 2,500,000. A range of lofty mountains, 1500 feet in height, traverses the island on the western side, while vast plains, watered by immense rivers, stretch to the eastward.

The native Sumatrans largely have been driven by the Malays into the interior, while the coastal regions are inhabited by a mixed Malay stock. Among these latter there are many Mohammedans. The original inhabitants, called Batak, about a century ago were uncivilized savages, cannibals, with idolatry and worship of ancestors, to whom they frequently brought human sacrifices. They were divided into many petty tribes, or villages, each of which had its own rajah, or chief. These petty rulers constantly sought quarrels with their neighbors, and in the wars which ensued they took captives, who then could be used as sacrifices in the ancestor worship festivals, and their flesh eaten.

Sumatra was first visited by the Portuguese in 1509, by the Dutch in 1600, and by the English in 1602. The English settlements were ceded to the Dutch in 1825 in exchange for Malacca. The Dutch maintained a colonial government on the island until 1942, when the Japanese occupation began. Today the island is a part of the new Indonesian Republic.

The first Protestant missionaries, Pastors Burt and Watt, were sent out to Sumatra from England about 1830. Unfortunately in their first approach to the Batak the emphasis was on the necessity to become "as little children", if one was to become a member of the kingdom of God. The Batak found such a message unpalatable, for they were very ambitious and dreamed of leadership and becoming a great people. And so Burt and Watt were driven out from the borders of Batakland.

Soon after an Arab band of marauders invaded the valley where the Batak lived, pillaging and killing. Somehow, the Batak associated this invasion with their treatment of Burt and Watt. This disposed their thinking against white men and missionaries.

The next Evangelical missionaries to reach the Batak country in Sumatra were Henry Lyman and Samuel Munson, who sailed from Boston under the auspices of the Congregational Church of America. Being zealous to bring the Gospel to the Batak, they hastened from the coast without permission or protection by the Dutch government, climbed over mountain passes and through jungle swamps to the remote north central plateau, where Batak tribes still kept their tribal ways intact (1834). Convinced that the foreigners were enemies, the natives attacked them with spears and knives and ate them in a cannibal feast.

Almost thirty years passed before another attempt was made to bring the Gospel to the land of the Batak. Then the German Rhenish Mission made the next venture into this hazardous area. The Batak had remained as savage as before. The "welcome sign" to any foreigner was still the open kettle. The man whom God used to uproot paganism among the Batak was missionary Ludwig Nommensen, a Dane, sent out by the Rhenish mission in 1861, who lived and worked on Sumatra for 57 years until his death in 1918. It should be of interest to all Christians to learn a little about the life and work of this man.

Chapter 1: THE PREPARATION

"He is a chosen vessel unto Me." Acts 9:15.

Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen was born on February 6, 1843 on the island of Nordstrand, which belonged to Denmark. His father, Peter, was a guard at the dike and locks. His mother, Anna, was a pious woman, who had much trouble with the vivacious boy, but seemed to know how to guide him. In his school days he had the good fortune to have a very capable and pious man, named Callsen, as teacher. His parents were poor and in his later life he remembered how they ate only dry bread and salt, soy beans and pea soup, dry potatoes and rye porridge; on Sundays they had as a delicacy horse meat with their potatoes and green winter cabbage soup. Very early he was obliged to go to work and help support the family. He recalled how as a boy of seven years he tended geese, at the age of eight years tended sheep, at nine was apprentice to a roofer, and after that started to work on farms.

At the age of twelve years he met with a very serious accident. While at play he fell under the wheels of a wagon which ran over both his legs, badly crushing them. As there was no physician in the vicinity, his condition became worse, until an uncle took him to a doctor in Bredstedt. But his remedies did not help. Now the boy was confined to his bed for more than a year with little hope that he would ever be able to walk again. During this time he often read in the Bible. At Christmas, 1847, he found the promise of the Savior, John 14:14: "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." He called his mother and asked: Is this true? Do miracles still happen today? Somewhat hesitatingly she replied: Of course, that is God's Word. The lad clung to the word he had read and began to pray for healing, and also vowed that, when his foot was healed, he would go to the heathen. Some time later a doctor, who occasionally visited him, prescribed a new remedy, and this took effect. After a few days the wound was improved, and after several weeks he was able to walk and go to school. His foot never again caused him any trouble. Gratefully the recovered boy acknowledged God's gracious hand, and his determination to become a missionary was strengthened.

One year later his father died, and now the burden of supporting the family rested on his shoulders. He made the agreement with his mother that he would remain at home and provide for the family until the oldest sister could support her, but then go to the heathen. Faithfully he now worked, mainly with farmers. When he was twenty years old, and his sister, who later married a laborer, was cared for, his mother gave his permission now to journey out to the heathen as a missionary. He bade farewell to his mother and sisters, purchased a Bible, a hymn book, and a catechism, and, on the advice of an uncle, went to the island of Foehr. The young man was totally inexperienced and had very vague conceptions of the calling of a missionary. He thought the matter quite simple: He would take a position as a sailor on a ship, and then, somewhere overseas, go to a land and preach to the heathen. In the harbor of Foehr he found many ships, but all were supplied with men, and he could find no place. So he found himself obliged again to seek a position with a farmer, to make a living. Fortunately he found work with a farmer who had quite an extensive library, which challenged his ambition to learn more. He made use of every free moment to study; a catechism with explanations was his constant companion and he committed it to memory.

Frequently he went to the harbor, but always in vain. He found no opportunity for passage or for work on a ship. So he was again obliged to

look for work. At that time village teachers often engaged a young man as an assistant for the winter months and, realizing that he still needed to learn a great deal, Nommensen sought to find such a position, and did obtain one in Nisum for a teacher, named Nahnsen. After a brief examination he began his work. Indeed, it was not a glamorous position: In the morning he had to care for the cows, and clean out the barn; then sweep and dust the schoolroom, wash the blackboards, cut and sharpen goose quills for pens, ring the bell, and then help in the instruction of the smallest pupils. But it gave him an opportunity to study on. When the winter was over his work stopped, but after only ten days he was fortunate to find a similar position in a private school in Gotteskoog, where six landowners sent their children. His meals he received in the different farm houses in rotation.

One day Pastor Haustedt of Niebuell came to visit and inspect the school. After the examination he asked Nommensen which seminary he expected to attend. Nommensen told him that he did not intend to remain a teacher, but that he had made a vow to become a missionary and go to the heathen. Astonished the pastor told him: "Then you will have to go to a mission house." Nommensen replied: "Mission house, what is that? I have never heard of such a place." The kind superior, who began to take an interest in the ambitious young man, explained matters to him and offered to give him several lessons each week in Latin and ask other teachers to help him along farther in English and German. Gratefully Nommensen accepted this offer. Haustedt mentioned him to Probst Versmann in Itzehoe and advised him to go to Barmen. By these men Inspector Wallmann of Barmen heard about the young man and asked for his life's history. Nommensen sent it and was told that he would have to wait awhile. He remained in Gotteskoog for one year and then went home for the confirmation of his sister. Then, with a letter of recommendation from Probst Versmann he went to Barmen, although he had not yet been summoned. Arriving at Barmen, he walked up and down before the mission house until finally, with a pounding heart, he rang the doorbell. Inspector Wallmann received him rather unfriendly because of his audacity to come before he had been called. Admitting him into the room, he let him stand at the door for two hours, without taking any notice of him. Patiently the young man waited, and that won the inspector's heart, who, as he later said, thought: "Who can wait patiently for two hours without being offended, can surely do more". But, as there still was no opening, he was sent to Elberfelde, as assistant to teacher Kamphausen, and there he worked for 1 1/2 years. During this time, together with other aspirants, he received instruction from other Elberfelde teachers, and Inspector Wallmann helped him along in Latin. Finally, in August of 1857 he was admitted to the mission house. His board, lodging, and tuition were free, but he had to supply the books he needed himself. This did not worry him. He wrote later: "That was not worth mentioning; for we have a rich Father." And this Father did help him, who was almost entirely without means, often in a wonderful way. We know very little about the years he spent in the mission house, but that he did his work faithfully, although he does not seem to have been an exceptionally brilliant student. With other students he took an interest in the work among young people in the vicinity, assisting them to organize young people's societies and guiding them. While he was here his mother passed away in January, 1858.

In the following year Nommensen induced his younger sister, Lucie, to come to the Wupper Valley, where she found a position in a Christian home, intending later to go to Kaiserswerth to be trained as a teacher, in order to follow her brother into the mission fields. But a year later she took sick and died. Another sister, Marie, passed away in 1864. She had become a deaconess, and her brother was anxious to have her come to Silindung as his helper.

While he was still pursuing his studies, in 1859, the message came of the bloody massacre on the island of Borneo. The Rhenish Mission Society had begun mission work there some years before, and it seemed to prosper. But suddenly the natives revolted, attacked the missionaries; seven persons were slain while the others were driven out. This made a deep impression of Nommensen, as well as on wider Christian circles. He wrote at the time: "Before this I have had little ambition to go to Borneo, but now all the more. The blood of the brethren is crying over to us, to you, to all Christendom. This blood is the seed for Borneo, which will bring forth fruit an hundredfold." Two of the missionaries who had fled, Klammer and Heine, searching for a new mission field, had been led to Sumatra, where a door seemed to open for them. They settled in the southwest coastal region, working in Barus and Angkola. Two Dutch missionaries, van Asselt and Betz, joined them there. Their reports sounded so favorable that the mission society decided to comply with their requests and send them help at once. After completing his studies, Nommensen was chosen and called for this work, and in October, 1861 was ordained in the church at Barmen, as missionary to the Batak. He then made farwell visits in his homeland and other places, and was called upon frequently to preach and give addresses. This journey proved to be a great encouragement to him and a blessing to many who met with him.

Before sailing to Sumatra he was ordered to spend two months in Holland where he was to learn the fundamentals of the Batak and the Malayan languages from the linguist, Dr. van der Tuuk. Sent out by the Dutch Bible Society, this man had spent seven years in the interior of Sumatra, studying the language of the Batak, who at that time were almost entirely unknown. This period of study proved to be extremely valuable for the young missionary.

On December 24th, 1861 Nommensen began his journey, together with the bride of missionary van Asselt. As customary in those times he traveled on a sailing ship, called the *Pertinax*. The journey, which today can be made comfortably in two, at most three weeks, lasted 142 days, during which no land was sighted. They were fortunate not to encounter any severe storms, but, especially after crossing the equator, were often becalmed and could make little headway. Nommensen later wrote about this journey: "We have enjoyed a slow, but happy trip. Before us and behind us the most furious hurricanes raged, but we sailed right between them, calmly and securely, even though very slowly. For my person I was not in a hurry, as I had enough to do learning the languages. But conditions were not so pleasant among other passengers. Up to the equator the ship sailed along splendidly, but then it seemed as if we could not move from the spot. Then a bitter enmity developed against us, especially after my last sermon. We were the Jonahs and were blamed for everything, but the Lord was with us. However, you can imagine that we breathed much more freely when our school was over and, after 142 days, we could again set our feet on solid ground."

On May 14th they landed in Padang, where they found missionary Denninger (who later started the Nisa mission) and his wife in distressed circumstances, living in a miserable bamboo hut. Nommensen at once looked up the colonial officials and they refused permission to settle in Sipirok, but would allow him to live in any of the coastal towns. Since October 7th, 1861 the Rhenish missionaries Klammer and Heine had united with the Dutch brethren van Asselt and Metz in a conference. They worked in the province of Angkola and had made contacts in Spirok and Bungabondar and, farther to the north, in the valley of the river Batangtoru, Aek Sarulla, and Sigumpulon.

From the beginning Nommensen's aims pointed much farther. Mainly from his language instructor, Dr. van der Tuuk, and from the writings of the Dutch explorer, Dr. Junghuhn, he knew that in the interior, far to the

north, on the shores of Lake Toba, was the bulwark of paganism, and he considered it the most effective mission policy to attack this bulwark. Indeed, he was well aware of the fact that it would cost a bitter battle and that hardships, privations, and dangers awaited him. But that did not in the least discourage him. He decided to go to the Port of Barus, some distance to the north, there thoroughly to study the language, and from there, as soon as possible, to press into the interior of the island. He said: "Of course, I will not wantonly expose myself to danger and, especially as long as I have not yet fully mastered the language, be very careful, and go out only together with such people as are well known there." Courage, paired with prudence and discretion have always been characteristic with him.

Chapter 2: BARUS AND ANGKOLA

"Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord, thy God, is with thee, whithersoever thou goest."

After a brief stop-over in the harbor town of Siboga, where he met missionary van Asselt, who called for his bride, Nommensen landed in the coastal town of Barus on June 25th. This place at that time was the most northerly outpost of the Dutch on the west coast of Sumatra. It was a wretched place, scantily fortified, with a small garrison, two Europeans, one controller, and one officer, both Jews. Outside of them, only Chinese and Indian dealers lived there, and Malayans, the latter all fanatical Mohammedans. There were very few Batak in the place, but they often came there to bring their products to market, especially incense resin, which was highly valued by the Chinese. From a Chinese he rented a small hut, which he was obliged to put into condition himself. He did not put much value in a comfortable dwelling, because it was his plan, as soon as possible to press forward into the interior to Toba. There was not much opportunity to do mission work in Barus; all the more eagerly he, therefore, applied himself to the study of the Batak and Malay languages. "I am happy", he writes, "that for a time I have come to a quiet place; there is no one here to oppose me, but the devil, and against him the faithful Lord has given me the necessary weapons. When I am able to go out, I take my medicine case under the arm and walk with one of my boys, and then I have opportunity to speak." To his homeopathic treatments God gave a special blessing. Two ransomed Batak boys and a young Dajak from Borneo, whom he had rescued at Padang, provided him with companionship and help in his household duties. To make them willing to work, he did not talk a great deal, nor use coercion, but silently took his place at the work table and himself worked diligently and lo! before long the boys asked for an axe and a plane and worked faithfully. "A good example has great power with the heathen." One boy who came to him was extremely lazy and sleepy; for several days he only let him eat and sleep, until he tired of that and then gladly went to work.

During this first period of time Nommensen lived altogether with the natives, just like one of their own number. His house was a lodging place open to everyone. Everybody was welcome and could stay as long as he wanted; but he had to take part in the daily devotions. Besides, he took in young people who wished to learn from him. These had to work hard and share the frugal manner of living with him. Three times each day there was rice with dried fish, sometimes also with vegetables. Nommensen shared these meals with the young people. This Spartan simplicity did not suit some, and they quietly left. As beverage Nommensen used only water. This certainly was well meant, but in the long run a European could not remain healthy in the tropics with such scanty meals. Later Nommensen changed his opinions in this matter, but he always remained very simple in his manner of living. We must bear in mind that at the time he had not yet become acquainted with any missionary family out there; and so he thought that complete living-together with the dark people was a part of the necessary self denial of a missionary.

Already at that time Nommensen was thinking of the idea of training natives for mission work, as they would be more likely to find willing ears and faith, than the foreign missionary whom the natives would always treat with distrust. In all these deliberations it was quite clear to him that the way would lead through tribulations. "Concerning our mission here I have never harbored any illusions. Here, too, it will be the way of the cross, as in all places. Here, too, the Lord will lead us through many

trials."

In his intercourse with Mohammedans he avoided all offensive polemics. He tried to make the truths of the Christian religion clear to them, but did not touch the question about Mohammed. To all he put the questions: "Who pays your debt of sin?" He writes: "There they are baffled; for it is not difficult to make it clear to them from their own habits of life that the debt must be paid, or it remains. They will also readily admit that they themselves by sins daily increase the debt, instead of paying it off. From their Koran it is not difficult to prove to them that Mohammed cannot pay their debt, since at the end of his life he felt himself in debt. A guilty man cannot make amends for another; that is a clear picture for them, because daily they have it before their eyes." Again he writes: "Before my house at the seashore daily hundreds come to perform their washings, kneel, at sundown cast themselves down to the earth, their faces turned toward Mecca, and pray. How this pains my soul I cannot describe, especially if I think of our Christians, who almost seem to be ashamed of their God. Oh, that our brethren in faith had such a zeal for the truth, as these poor misled Mohammedans for the lie of their prophet! From Mecca the deluded souls return full of zeal, and inspire others to make a similar pilgrimage. Just today such a pilgrim left with his wife, after he had sold his land and possessions. It pained my heart to see how the whole population accompanied them out into the sea, how they waded in the water up to their necks, and every one presented a gift of 10 or 20 Gulden with a last farewell; women and children waded along into the water and would not turn back as long as they could still see the ship."

But it was not Nommensen's intention to stay on the rocky soul of Barus. His opinion was: "Fishing along the shore does not amount to much. Launch out into the deep (i.e. to the center), and cast out your nets." He wrote at the time: "Europeans are a hindrance to the mission, and I shall endeavor to get away as far as possible from them. Comforts of all kinds one can, indeed, enjoy among them, but I am of the opinion that one can live just as well as a heathen from the foods which grow in the interior, if he will but give up his European taste and not act as if a person lives in order to eat. As a European a person, indeed, at first must pass through a crisis, but, if the place is not too unhealthy, it will be over at least in a few months." It is remarkable that even at this early period some original mission ideas arise in the young missionary, not all of which he was able to carry out later. Thus he wished to introduce in Sumatra the practice of the Moravians, namely, small mission colonies, with missionaries and lay brethren, who had a common table and treasury. Such a colony needs no help from its surroundings and presents a power, more than the individual missionary. "They (the colonists) must adopt as their first principle: We are only pilgrims, and what we need, the Lord gives us. We eat in order to live, and clothe as necessity demands, and we are called, or rather, out of love to Jesus and His kingdom, we want to proclaim the Gospel of peace, because it has brought us peace. Their necessities of life they must find at the place where they are working, so that they do not regard their goods and the tools of labor as their own, but as mission property. Such a station would soon be able to exist entirely without the help of the heathen, and subsidies from the mission house in a very short time would no longer be necessary, or, at least, very small. Members coming from the heathen would have to be induced to take part in the work and also receive the needs from the common treasury." Such ideas could not always be put into practice. But already here we see how independently and originally the young missionary goes his way.

As soon as possible Nommensen started out on his first journey of exploration into the interior. Indeed, the desire, first to look up the other mission families in the south and enjoy companionship with them, had

strongly taken hold on him in his solitude. "But", he wrote, " at the thought of going away from here (Barus) only because here I found so many difficulties and was alone and for this reason wished for the companionship of the brethren, I could not feel easy; for I had not come to Barus of my own accord, but only because there was no other door open for me. I felt a powerful drive in me to ascertain for myself what was beyond these lofty hills, whose summits are enveloped with clouds." On October 15th he started out with several young people. In intermittent heavy rains, through marshes and brushland, and up the steep hills, the way was laborious. In the evening they halted in a village, Djukang, where they were kindly permitted to spend the night. Surrounded by many inquisitive people, Nommensen played for them on his accordion, and this greatly amused them. The night's lodging, indeed, was far from comfortable; it was the first of many thousands which he was still to spend in Batak villages. Vermin, uncomfortable coolness, hard boards, at 2 O'clock the noise of the women trampling on the rice, these were the discomforts of this night. He says: "I comforted myself with the early days of the Lord, when He had not where to lay down his head." On the following day they went on up the hills, through primeval forests, and jungles. At places in the highlands the way led along steep abysses, not free from danger. The journey then went to Rambe, up in the hills, and to Tuka Dolok. At all places Nommensen was welcomed very friendly by the chiefs, and several of them declared their willingness if he desired to dwell among them. At Tuka Dolok he saw a house decorated with a human skull (the flesh had been eaten), and he heard someone say: " The legs of this 'White eye' (European) should taste good." Rambe to him appeared most favorable for a settlement; for from there he hoped to go on to Toba. He counted 50 to 60 villages, and a fine place was found for a settlement. The people, indeed, made a savage impression but Nommensen was confident, and the chieftains, on whom all depended, were quite polite. Thus it seemed that here he had found an open door, and he asked from Barmen for a brother as helper, because two stations must be founded, one in Tuka or Rambe, the other between there and the coast as a connecting link. "If this succeeds, the whole country up to the lake is open for the mission, and hosts of brethren can enter to proclaim the Word of redemption."

It did not succeed. The Resident of Siboga was displeased already that Nommensen had ventured far beyond the Dutch territory; he would never consent to a settlement of the missionary in the free territory of Barus; he did not want to experience another massacre as in Borneo. All objections were in vain; this door remained closed. But Nommensen would not be discouraged. At once he formed another resolution, namely, to look up the interior of the Batak lands from Siporok. In haste he returned to Barus, to pack his belongings and travel to Siporok; in the meantime the permission of the authorities had been granted for this. With regret the Batak chiefs saw him depart. In bold courage of faith Nommensen promised them that later, with the help of God, he would take care of them and their children from Toba. But many years passed before this could be done. However, in his old age he yet experienced that these regions were supplied with missionaries, and personally visited them once more. Not before 1911, after the greater part of Toba had been filled with the Gospel, could Barus be supplied with a missionary. Only five months Nommensen's activity in the coastal town of Barus had lasted. In the year 1915, for the first and last time since those early days, he visited Barus again.

On November 30th, 1862 he started out with his boys. An extremely hazardous voyage in a frail sailing vessel finally brought them to Siboga. To get an idea of how difficult and dangerous traveling at that time was, we shall let Nommensen relate: "We had a hard journey and, if God had not helped us, we would never again have set foot on dry ground. When it had

grown dark, the wind suddenly turned and blew from the other side into the large sail, so that the open boat leaned almost completely to the side and filled with water. The Malayans cried: 'Haram, haram!' and only clung to the side of the boat. As I sat in the rear end at the rudder, where the ropes are fastened, I loosened these to bring the sail around, but pulled a little too hard, and the sail with the yards fell down. The latter were broken in the middle; now there would be no more sailing. We tried again to fasten the thing up above, but it was a dangerous matter, for a man had to climb up to fasten the sail there. Since the boat was so small, it would not be possible to hang up on the mast, and yet, it had to be done. A small man climbed up, and we had to try and keep the boat straight by bending to the other side, when the boat leaned one way. Fortunately we succeeded and tried to go forward with but one little sail. All night long we were in danger, for the waves were so high that on both sides the water ran in, and we had to keep on bailing, if we did not want to sink. Besides, almost all the sailors had become sea-sick from the terrible rocking, also my two lads; I was spared that. The next morning we had been driven out far to sea, but had not realized it. It was a lucky thing that we were not far from a little island, where we found ground to anchor. Here we remained half a day, because wind and waves were so strong. We repaired the sail, and I finally persuaded them to leave the place and steer for land. It was successful, and, when we were still a half mile from land, it became calm." How often did Nommensen after that experience perils on land and sea voyages! For since the days of the experiences of the apostle Paul journeys are a part of the trials of a missionary and, indeed, not the least. Nommensen had to taste a goodly share of this, but never made much fuss about it.

From Siboga Nommensen first started out to visit missionary Heine in Sigompulon, who was not at home, but soon arrived and with great joy greeted his colleague, with whom he had not yet become acquainted. In Aek Sarula missionary van Asselt and his wife were visited. Here it became clear to him that Silindung was the field whither he must journey next. This broad, well-populated valley was only a day's journey from Sigompulon.

He wrote to Barmen: "The conference, indeed, has decided that I should go to Betz (Bungabondar), but already Paul does not wish to step into the territory of another. Although I am not even half a Paul, yet I have the same desire. I could mention many other reasons, but I do not consider it necessary, because I have the confidence in my respected mission society, that it does not intend to go backward, but forward; therefore, even in advance I venture the request, not to send me to Sapirok, but forward, to the dear Toba land." The governor had already issued the necessary permit. In Sarula Nommensen received the first mail from Barmen; for a whole year he had had no connection with home.

Returning to Sapirok, he was obliged for a time to abandon his plan to start for Silindung. The brethren wished to keep him there, and sent him to Prau Sorat to enter into the battle against Islam which strove with all might to attract the heathen to it. The young missionary could not refuse that. "Here duty and God's clear will seem to bid me pluck out my eye, which was squinting toward Silindung. Here on land a person is rocked about almost as much as on the wide-open sea." He also hoped in Sapirok to penetrate deeper into the secrets of the Batak language than it had been possible in Barus. There he had little opportunity to speak anything but Malay. "In Barus, among the Malayans I practically thought Malayan, so that, when I came in contact with the officers, I had to be on the alert, not to bring Malayan words into my talk." But by many detours God nevertheless led him to the goal which, from the beginning, he had recognized as the correct one. The brethren wished that he gather a congregation in Prau Sorat and do school work. Here he was obliged again

to learn a new dialect, the Mandayling. He, indeed, writes: "Otherwise I am not a great friend of linguistic work; writing books I would rather leave to others." Nevertheless, Nommensen has accomplished noteworthy things, also in this respect. As many fellow-workers, who later came into the country, he remained the popular leader in the mastery of the Batak language, and what he accomplished in the course of the years in written works (especially his translation of the New Testament and of Old Testament Bible stories) is so excellent, that we must deeply regret his reserve in this respect. With zeal he took hold of the school work in Prau at once. He tried to gather the children of surrounding settlements into a school. In the beginning everything seemed to go on nicely; but then the Dutch government erected non-religious schools for the children of the natives, and Mohammedan teachers taught there. Heathen and Mohammedan parents rather sent their children to these schools than to the missionary, where they were in danger of becoming alienated from the religion of the fathers. Thus this mission means, poven successful in other places, was taken out of the hands of the missionaries. In order to gain the confidence of the people, Nommensen devoted himself to the care and healing of the sick, and God permitted him to accomplish some things, among others, the healing of a leperous man. "If in this manner I serve the people with my medicines and salves, the Lord gives me ample opportunity to scatter the seed of eternal life into their hearts. Now is the time of plowing and sowing in hope; and we cannot close our eyes to the fact, that after much toil and labor the soil will bring forth nothing but thorns."

But at all times his aim was directed to the north. If the mission really was to go forward, it must get out of the cramped conditions in the south into pure heathen regions. In the south Islam already was a power and offered a strong attraction, also to the heathen, to whom it boasted of being a bearer of culture. In the heathen regions the battle, indeed, would be hard, but the victory later on all the more profitable, and would exert its influence also on the border regions, where Christian and Mohammedan powers were competing for heathen souls.

The two missionaries, van Asselt and Heine, had already pressed farther north into the valleys of the Batangtoru river. There they had heard about the densely populated region of Silindung, where the Batak still lived entirely untouched by the rest of the world in the religion of their fathers. In 1862 they had ventured to make the first visit to the Silindung valley. They had gained vivid impressions, both of the beauty of the Highland valleys, as well as of the barbarism of their unhabitants and the unbroken power of their heathenism. Accompanied by friendly chiefs, they traveled through the valley lengthwise, and even looked up the notorious Sopoholon in the northwest, and were not threatened or molested, although crowds of inquisitive people swarmed and noised about them. Rajah Pontas, a young chief, about thirty years of age, wide awake and open to new impressions, "a bold, free, and happy Batak", accompanied and protected them because of his influential position. From Sopoholon they sent gifts to the Singamanga-rajah, the political and religious supreme leader of the Batak in Toba, with a message that they intended to visit him later. After several days they departed from the valley with the best impressions. They believed that the work there would be extremely difficult, but offered good prospects of success. Even of the tough Sipoholon they hoped that it might at any time be visited with the Word of God. But they had only seen the inhabitants in a festive mood and underrated the work among them. Their joint opinion read: "The people of Silindung are a lively and happy people, living together closely, with every village a kingdom, yet united appearing almost as a republic, they exhibit a sprightliness and an intimacy in their social life, that one feels good, almost at home with them. Of course, we must not overlook that the crudest heathenism is there, enveloped in

blackest night. Should it not be possible at once to begin work with missionaries in this Silindung? It may well at some time become the headquarters for our mission work among the Batak, but for a few years a permanent settlement would not be advisable for several reasons. If today we had native workers at our disposal, nothing in the meantime would be more desirable than to carry the Word of Life by such men into the richly populated Silindung (together with Sopoholon we estimated 20,000) from one village to another. Here we clearly see the necessity of such help."

Eight months later Nommensen started out from Prau Sorat to visit Silindung. On the way over the mountains he spent a night in a large cave, whereby he was reminded of the many faithful who, in times of persecution "Dwelt in holes in the earth". On he went over Panguribuan, where war was raging, and Sigotom, until at the Onan (marketplace) Sipinggan he entered the Valley of Silindung. Hardly had he come down from the hills, when he was surrounded by crowds of people, who were inquisitive and wanted to know what had brought him here. Nommensen told them that he intended to live among them and instruct all who wished to become wise and happy. But they wanted to hear nothing of this. They answered that they were wise enough themselves, and the children would be afraid and not come to school. When he assured them that no child would be compelled to come to school, a smart young boy of eleven years said: "Yes, first you say, as YOU want it; but then, as the TUAN wants." They did not at all receive Nommensen as friendly as before him van Asselt and Heine. There were even threats that they would cut off his head and eat him; but that did not make the least impression on the missionary, so that the people remarked to one another: "He is not afraid; he must have an evil spirit." Finally they became impatient and asked him: "Really, now, when are you going to leave?" Nommensen only smiled and said: "MY GOD TOLD ME TO STAY HERE", took down his violin and played until his arm ached, showed them his watch, and related stories to them about Europe until they forgot their displeasure and left him. So it went on for days and days, a hard trial of patience, for always other people came with whom the same conversation was repeated. In their century-long seclusion the Batak had grown suspicious of all strangers. They feared that after the missionaries the Dutch officials would come and deprive them of their freedom, which they valued above all things; but through the influence of the missionaries they and their children would be estranged from the customs of the fathers. Nommensen found occasion to admire the ready wit of the men, who seemed to find pleasure to put the knowledge of the white man to a test with shrewd questions. Some prominent men appeared friendly toward Nommensen, but, fearing the others, did not dare to take his part openly. At all places the children ran after him and would not let the adults keep them back. After much talking back and froth, Nommensen, by much prudence and unshaken patience, finally persuaded the doubtful chiefs, so that they declared their willingness to let him live in the valley. Glad to have accomplished this much, he then returned to Angkola.

Now a little more patience was required. Neither the school, nor other missionary work seemed to make any headway in Prau Sorat, and so Nommensen, for the time being, remained with Betz in Bungobondar, where he baptized the first two Batak. Betz took sick; and so Nommensen had to help out, and the brethren would not yet set him free for the work in the north.

Finally, on the occasion of the annual conference in October, 1865, he obtained permission to go to Silindung. After a second preparatory visit he moved in during the month of May, with the firm determination in his heart to hold out there in spite of all dangers and trials of patience.

Chapter 3: PIONEERING IN SILINDUNG

"Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

Bedded between the high mountain ridges of Sumatra lie fertile valleys, abounding in rivers, where perhaps the most people are found. The largest, and also most beautiful of these valleys is Silindung. Traversed by two large streams, the Sigeaon and the Situmandi, with its verdant rice fields and villages hidden between groups of trees, it presents an exceedingly beautiful view. The surrounding hills form a frame for the attractive picture, so that a person is vividly reminded of an Alpine landscape. A blessed portion of earth! Unfortunately the picture loses much of its beauty if we enter the dirty villages, protected against enemies by walls and bamboo hedges. At that time wars were widely being waged and no one dared leave his village without armed companions. Every one of these small villages resembled a fortress. In the inside it looked anything but beautiful; the village street was a wallowing place for hogs and cattle, marshy, filled with foul odors, the houses dark and gloomy, the inhabitants suspicious and insolent. At first Nommensen had to be content to live in such a village until they would allow him to build a small house on his own. He was entirely dependent on the favor of the whimsical Rajahs, who at any time could force him to leave. But for him the useful thing was that here he had many people together, to whom he could bring his messages. There the annoyances must be borne. He felt like Abraham, when God showed him the land where he was to live. This certainty gave him strength, cheerfully and confident of victory to endure in the battles which ensued.

Indeed, it required more than an ordinary measure of unshakable faith, courage, and willpower to endure what Nommensen had to experience, he, the first and alone among a barbarous, cruel generation, by no means willing to receive him, who delighted to vex the defenseless white man and to torture him to the utmost. They were not at all pleased that he should remain among them. When he declared that he wanted to live with them, in order to teach them how to become good and happy, they answered that they had no desire for that. Others threatened that the cannibals from the north (Toba) would come, cut off his head and eat him; but Nommensen smiled, although the threat was surely not a jest. One said in a comparison: "If a man throws a kernel of rice on the street, will not the chickens pick it up?" Calmly the missionary answered: "If the man who threw the rice, chases the chicken away, they will not eat it." When he wanted to open a school, the people kept their children away, and whispered to another: The white man would dope them with a drink of magic and then deliver them to the Dutch. "We know enough ourselves, and need no instruction; we have a good custom; our children are afraid of you", etc. With unshaken calmness Nommensen replied: "That will all come out; at present I am staying with you." And when, again and again, they insisted: "When are you leaving?", he took his violin and played for them, or showed them his watch, his magnifying glass, told stories, and knew how to keep them in good humor. God had given him a wonderful power over the hearts of men. With the sincere look of his blue eyes he disarmed even the opponents. They called to him: "We will chop off your feet and throw you into the river." Calmly Nommensen replied: "Ah, my friend, you do not mean that at all." "If you try to build a house, we will burn it down." "Then I will build it again." This was continued one day after another, and even vulgar invectives were called out to him; "But his", he wrote, "was not so hard to bear, remembering my King. He was near to me and, sure of my calling, I enjoyed his blessed peace, and it did not get too hard for me to endure all untoward events patiently and to meet my

opponents with meekness."

Trouble came when Nommensen asked for a building place. At first everything was denied, but finally they offered him a damp place at the river in the region of Sait ne Huta. Now he needed wood; but no one would provide it. When Nommensen sent several young people, who had come with him from Barus, into the woods to fell trees, this, too, was forbidden. Finally he succeeded in purchasing an old house, the timbers and bamboo of which he could utilize for his modest dwelling. Every day people came to hinder the progress of the building and took the spades out of the hands of his servants. This caused long negotiations usually with the result that the missionary had to pay something. The the modest station building became quite expensive. Whenever new difficulties arose, he considered it time to take a firm stand. He stepped before the assembled chiefs with the largest book in his possession, once more spoke to them kindly, and then opened the book and told them, that in this book he would write the names of all those who positively would not tolerate him to remain with them. But to have their names written in his large book, filled them with a superstitious fear. For the heathen Batak, indeed, have their own script, and the more educated among them are able to read and write a little, but every script was avoided as something like witchcraft, and they were convinced that everyone whose name was written in the book of the white man, was now in his power. So finally no one dared to register his protest and Nommensen could, at last, proceed with the erection of his small house. Indeed, it was only a modest hut, but Nommensen was happy finally to have a place for himself. For until then he had lived in a Sopo, i.e., a wooden building, open to all sides, on posts, which was used as a meeting place, and as a lodging for guests, while under the steep roof the rice was stored. The abode in such a Sopo for any long duration is quite uncomfortable for an European; it is drafty from all sides and one is uninterruptedly exposed to the observation and molestation of the natives, to whom the entrance is open without any hindrance. The new house was soon completed; several timbers were raised up, boards and bamboos tied to them, the walls partly filled in with clay, and all fastened as well as possible with ropes, as they had no nails at the time. On the 12th of June, 1864, Nommensen could move into the plain hut, which for several years offered him a place of refuge. In the beginning he had no furniture and got along with a few boxes; then he made a rough table, so that, at least, he was no longer obliged to use a rice bag as a desk for writing. All his life Nommensen has mastered the art of being satisfied in the most frugal conditions. For himself he needed very little. At noon and suppertime a little bowl of rice, which his boys boiled for him, perhaps some vegetables and a little salt; that was his nourishment, with which he got along all his lifetime. Later he often laughed at his fellow-workers that they ate too much. One cannot imagine a person who required less than Nommensen.

At the time conditions in Silindung were still very uncivilized. The tribes living in the valley were constantly at war. The battles which they fought were quite harmless, as everyone seemed afraid of being wounded; but passions ran high, and the art of warring consisted in stealthily hunting down the people of the opponents, women and children, murdering them, or driving them away as captives. With devilish cruelty they tortured the poor victims that had been taken. In a letter Nommensen describes the conditions then existing in Silindung: "The Rajahs, or chiefs, rule unrestrained among and beside each other. Right and justice are unknown. Matters of contention are decided in favor of him who pays most. Under a constant drain they are often dragged out for years, so that the people are kept in constant excitement. Cruelties of all kinds are committed, and cannibalism is prticed, a horror for us! Last year, e.g., a man came to me whose intelligent manner pleased me. His features had something friendly

and good-natured. He drank a cup of coffee with me during a pleasant conversation. Ten days later I found him as the leader of a bloody band, beside a human head, propped up on a bamboo pole, and a fried arm, with the fingers chopped off. The victim had recently been slain and already partly devoured. When he noticed me, he let his head hang a little, but the bloodthirsty shrieks of his companions soon again kindled his courage, and he could not be convinced that he had committed an atrocity. A few days ago I healed a young man who in the previous year had gone to Sopoholon to get some rice. Not conscious of any guilt, he was there suddenly taken captive and held. Only now he was released after paying a heavy ransom. And his brother? He was struck down in that attack and devoured." Many a time Nommensen saw people bring a piece of human flesh from the market, to eat it calmly at home. It belongs to the sufferings of a missionary that he must witness such horrible misery and not be able to help. "It is pitiable to see the naked little children sold at the market like cattle." How gladly would he have purchased many of these poor creatures, if he had only possessed the means! He wrote in the early times in Silindung: "It is God who supplies me with ever new courage and strength, that I have not yet let my hands sink exhausted. Not only the physical labors, like building and such, nor the obstinacy and stubbornness of a nation which feels free, and their begging which knows no bounds, nor their thievery and impudence, and other sins, like lying, deceiving, and cursing, which are the order of the day, and must deeply hurt the heart of him who fears and loves the Lord, at the sight of such atrocities, but also the outward things and one's own faithless heart, cause much trouble to a person. But the Lord knows everything, and he will bring it to pass."

Surrounded by such savage neighbors, the lonesome man was not safe of his life for a moment. In his modesty Nommensen has written little about the dangers to his life and divine protection that he experienced so abundantly. But some things have been recorded: One of his enemies secretly cut through the ropes by which his house was held together, in the expectation that during the evening winds the timbers would crash down and kill him. But at the right time God sent one of the earthquakes which frequently occur in Sumatra; Nommensen rushed out of the house and hardly was out in the open when everything crumbled. Twice during the first six months poison was administered to him, but he escaped with a slight indisposition. Still more remarkable was the following occurrence: A sorcerer stole into his kitchen, where the rice was being boiled for the missionary. There, as it often occurred, he asked for a light for his cigar and, when he knew that he was unobserved, poured poison into the pot, and that was one of the deadliest poisons. From a safe distance he observed how the missionary ate his porridge and also gave some of it to his dog. The dog died at once, but nothing happened to the white man. A few days later the poisoner, who previously had heard the preaching of the Gospel, when Nommensen had spoken of the love of God and love for the brethren, looked him up and asked him whether he really meant what he said about love for his fellowmen, and whether he would forgive even an enemy. Then he confessed all that he had done; how first he had hired another man to poison him, but, when this man did not dare to do it, he himself had put the poison in his food. When Nommensen then with all his heart assured him of his forgiveness, the man changed his mind, began to learn, and later was baptized, receiving the name Nicodemus. But Nommensen, who had had no inkling of the danger, from which God had preserved him, wrote in his diary: "If we could but lift the veil which covers all the dangers, from which He has saved me, what would we think?" The word of the Lord to his disciples: "If they drink deadly things, it shall not hurt them", here was literally fulfilled.

At one other time Nommensen had been given poison without suffering

any harm. Years later the poisoner repented and confessed his guilt. It was a strange experience. One day a man came to Nommensen complaining of severe stomach ache, and asked for medicine. Nommensen gave him some so-called Bansit drops. At first the sick man thought that this illness was aggravated thereby and cried out: "Now you are taking revenge for what I once did to you. For I have once poisoned you." With that he ran away in long leaps and was brought back only with difficulty. In the meantime his stomach pains had improved and, after kind persuasion, he confessed that some years ago he accepted a bribe to work for Nommensen as a house servant and, at a favorable opportunity, to poison him. After he had become familiar with Nommensen's home life, he actually mixed poison with the food he had prepared. The poison did not harm the missionary. The poisoner now regarded him as a great sorcerer and from fear soon left his employ. But now the remembrance of his sin troubled him. When he received forgiveness of his sin from Nommensen and, at the same time, heard that also Nicodemus, who about at the same time, had made an attempt at poisoning, and had since been converted, he repented and found rest and peace.

In September, 1864, a great ancestor festival was to be held in honor of Siatras Banita, who resided on a hill near Simorangkir. At the solemn sacrifice which was offered at the festival, according to reports, the white man was to be slain. By friends Nommensen had been warned of the danger, but decided personally to appear at the festival. He wrote: "I thought a great deal about Moses among the stubborn people; how he must have been tormented! I cannot exactly say that I was afraid, because I could not get it into my head that the Lord, who from my youth to this hour had so wonderfully guided me and borne me over the great sea on His hands, so that the big iron box could not sink into the deep until I had set my foot on the hills of Sumatra (The Pertinax, on which Nommensen had made the voyage, sank soon after), to proclaim the message of peace to the nations for the light and salvation of their souls, should now, after I had just come so far that I could proclaim the glad message and had overcome the outward difficulties, in His wise designs should call me out of the field of labor. Although I know that the Lord's ways are often strange and singular, and inscrutable to us short-sighted men, and that He, the Exalted, does not have need of a child of man to fight for His honor and to spread His kingdom, and that often He has called His servants out of the vineyard in the middle of the day, according to human calculations, yet I could not believe it. Yet, the situation often called to me: Set thine house in order, for thou must die, so that the days passed by in fear and hope. The days of my life I could possibly number and keep myself prepared. I also gave my boys advice for possible emergencies. To flee before I was persecuted, I did not dare for the sake of my calling and of my brethren, because I had not come a way of my own choosing, and the Lord would here build His kingdom, and the sprouting seed of life encourages me.

I could not give the heathen the impression that I was fearful. As soon as they notice that, you have lost out with them." God openly approved his courage of faith. Even before this time Nommensen had delivered letters to the 15 most prominent chiefs, and by accepting these, they obliged themselves to allow no tumult and themselves to keep quiet during the coming festival, for he regarded it his Christian duty to protect his life with all permissible means. This offered a little protection, but in a serious outbreak would not be able to stem the raging torrent of popular agitation.

September 25th, 1864, was the day of the festival, awaited by friend and foe with utmost tension. Thousands of excited people, most of them armed, filled the market place at Sitaharu. Then Nommensen calmly stepped among them and succeeded in persuading them to lay down their arms. After

the animal for the sacrifice had been slaughtered, the spirit of the ancestors, as was customary at such celebrations, expressed himself by the mouth of one, supposedly possessed of of him; he had him tell the breathlessly listening multitude that he would not accept their sacrifice, if his descendents would not observe the custom of the festival, namely if they would not kill a man, who would bring the sacrifice to him in the lower world. Without naming the white man, he thereby clearly had alluded to him and demanded his death. Usually, after the sacrifice, a tumult had arisen, in which finally a man had been slain, who was regarded as the bearer of the official animal to the ancestors. But before further rioting took place, Nommensen arose and said: The spirit who demanded that they murder could not be their grandfather, for a grandfather does not desire the death of his grandchild. The sacrifice rather is a plot of the devil who delights in having men tear each other to pieces. But God loves them and would have them all delivered from their misery. That obviously made an impression and on that day there were no further riots. On the following morning, when the festival was to be continued, other enemies from the mountains arrived and stirred up the mob again. The agitation increased until a scuffle between natives occurred, and one of Nommensen's bitterest enemies was wounded. In the tense moments that followed, a storm suddenly rose in the sky and swept through the village with such violent thunderings and lightnings that the Batak knew that the God of the white man was against them. Thus the plot of the enemies had to serve in strengthening Nommensen's position. Full of confidence he now wrote home: "Silindung is open; the Batak desire that more teachers may come." "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all they ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Such experiences confirmed the conviction in the courageous messenger, that God's hour of grace had now arrived for the Batak nation. For soon after this severe trial of faith the first applicants for baptism came.

It required an extraordinary measure of patience, not to become irritated and unfriendly in the intercourse with the uncouth heathen. Only patience and meekness could gain the victory. A man with a fiery temperament would have lost and worn himself out. Nommensen's great calmness gained entrance for him in all places. If he had become impatient, he would have lost. Whoever came to him found an open ear for his requests. Nommensen always had time for his visitors, however much work crowded. Not a moment of the day was his own, and no matter how disagreeable people about him were, he never let them feel it. About his friendliness and patience several chiefs from Silindung later related this occurrence: Five or six came together one day to Nommensen's hut to try out how far his patience would reach. They demanded that the sorely troubled man uninterruptedly occupy himself with them, entertain them, play for them, show them pictures, answer all their silly questions, and even give them meals. They spat in his rooms, laid down on the floor for an afternoon nap, and did not leave until after midnight, when Nommensen finally told them that he must go to sleep. Toward morning when the air became quite chilly, one of the fellows awoke and was surprised to find himself covered with a blanket. His companions were likewise covered. Of course, only the missionary could have done that, he, whom they had tormented so rudely. Embarrassed beyond words, the visitors folded up the blankets, placed them on a table, and slipped quietly away. The incident made such an impression on them that one of them later told Nommensen in his old age about it.

The Batak loved legal wranglings. They were always quarreling with each other and love to fight out their cause in endless argumentations. These court proceedings are their most important and pleasant occupation.

If, in spite of oral arguments, the matter is not settled, there is war. With their arguments they liked to go to the missionary, so that he, with his astute wisdom, decided them, of course, so that he hurt neither party; for no one wanted to lose, and there was no governmental power to exercise authority. Countless hours during his life Nommensen spent quietly listening to such complaints, sometimes solving the tangled knot, but often only listening, so that the heated minds found time to cool off. This seemed to be lost time, for then he could not preach, often not even bring in a word, because the minds were much too excited. But he knew that thereby he gained their confidence, patiently listening to that which agitated their hearts. "They are like little children, and we must bear with their childish thoughts", he used to say when the younger missionaries resented it that the people overran us with their quarrels. Nommensen himself in the course of time had become so accustomed to the Batak feeling that he even found pleasure in these argumentations and, also in later times, when there were Dutch officials in the country, and the missionaries were no longer obliged to listen to all these endless quarrels, he permitted such people to visit him often, and more than necessary. More than anyone else he was able to see through the tricks of the wily natives and in their quite often tangled up debates find the real reason of the quarrel, and with a prudent word bring about solution. Thereby in those years of unrest he averted many an evil war and with a careful hand removed many bitter root of hatred. Here again his calmness stood in good stead. While the parties for and against worked themselves into a frenzy, he remained calm and unperturbed, and never lost his patience, even if the arguments, as often was the case lasted from morning into the evening hours. That time is money, the missionary among the Batak must forget; else he will grow unhappy and discouraged.

One of the chiefs at one time placed a question before Nommensen, to see whether he would be able to find a way out: "There were two men, one a shepherd, the other a farmer, both dependent of the yield of their work. One day both were sleeping, and the sheep of the one ate the siri plants of the other. How would a judge decide the matter?" Nommensen replied: "Each must pay one half of the loss, because both had slept." But this solution did not satisfy them; one said that both should live on the shepherd's milk until the siri of the farmer had grown enough to supply his living. Solomon's judgment pleased them very much. One chief would have decided this matter thus: He would make a very large box and put a man in it. This box the women must carry alternately until the man in the box would have learned from the words of the groaning women, which of the two was the mother. For the real mother of the child would be able to bear longer than the other.

About these lawsuits Nommensen wrote in the beginning: "I would gladly have kept away from all quarrels, and often I told myself the word of the Lord: 'Who hath made me a judge or divider over you?' But, because might here stands for right, and usually is the greatest injustice, and my school was much disturbed thereby, I could not avoid the matter; for it looked as if everything would be ruined, and that because of envy." But in this he found comfort in the word of promise: "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."

Daily, from early until late, the missionary was surrounded by people who came to him with their requests. He once wrote: "My house is like a small marketplace and my home an inn, where water of life is distributed. Often I must stand in the bedroom with my plate in my hand and eat, since everything is full of people." In crowds they came to him to have their sick treated. Immediately after he had settled, more than one hundred sick came. By his treatments he made many friends. Also in this respect he was blessed by God with rare gifts. The very touch of his hand seemed to be

quieting to the sick; this also many of the missionaries and their wives experienced. The old Batak treated their sick entirely wrong. They believed that evil spirits were the cause of sicknesses and sought to drive them away with noise, offensive odors, and smoke, only tormenting to the poor patients. Silindung is not a very healthy region. "We might say that here we must pass through spring, summer, and fall every day; i. e., after a cool, foggy morning, we have an oppressingly hot noonday, and toward evening suddenly a cold wind. Therefore the rate of mortality is high, especially among children." Soon those afflicted by ills noticed how skillfully the missionary was able to help them in their sicknesses, and so they brought their afflicted to obtain help. Nommensen was a convinced adherent of homeopathy, and with its drops and pellets helped many. Even some operations he performed with skill. In the choice of his means he was sometimes very original. Thus he once was told that two men had been struck by lightning. He hastened to the place, had two big holes dug into the earth, and ordered that the unconscious men be placed in them, and covered up to the neck with earth. In the case of the one stricken man his people would not consent, and he died; the other was covered up and came to life again. Countless wounded men Nommensen bandaged and saved. At that, the medical training he had received was quite limited. It was a gift born into him. But we must also consider that God graciously grants success to the missionaries in their solitude, where others are unable to help, and for this they give thanks to God alone. After a small pox epidemic he writes: "We cannot thank God enough for homeopathy; it is as if it were made for the missionaries, because it is easily carried and is cheap, and therefore should be highly recommended to beginners in mission work. It is a blessing to have a small apothecary and offer help to the poor people who come with their little children and ask for medicine. The people at such times are most willing to accept the Word of God and, because of the help experienced, favorably inclined toward Christianity." Against small pox, which often broke out in the valley, he introduced vaccination with great success. Everywhere he was expected to help. A leper once came to the station, and would not leave. "Rather cut off my head, or throw me into the water", he cried out. So they had to let him remain, although he was most unpleasant and thievish. Nommensen erected a humble hut for him. Again, a blind man came, for whom nobody cared. Also widows asked to be received. "Can we see such poor Lazaruses lying before our door, and yet ourselves eat to our heart's content?"

As a faithful shepherd Nommensen cared for his flock in Hutadame. They began to plant new gardens, but first Nommensen had to share his meals with them. Still more he was concerned about their soul's welfare. Diligently he worked on translation, first of Bible stories of the the Old Testament, and the catechism; he wrote hymns, began with the translation of the New Testament, compiled a primer for reading, later also arithmetic books, and thus laid the first ground for a valuable spiritual treasure. Untiringly he instructed, admonished, comforted them, and strengthened them in the manifold tribulations and temptations of those days. He introduced a regulated day's schedule, which began and closed with meditation. Every day they had to study a Bible passage. In the evening the prayer bell was rung. After that they sat together cozily and listened to the words of the missionary, who, as a good householder, brought forth old things and new out of his treasury. The Sundays now already became more solemn; they sang a great deal. Four times during the year the little congregation celebrated holy communion, and at this time the first four elders were installed, as well as a deacon, whose duty it was to look after the sick and poor. Truly a Hutadame, a haven of peace in the midst of fierce enemies round about!

Nommensen describes his daily work at the time: "With the school we

do not have much success, so that teaching has become a work of secondary importance. In the morning, after all are out of bed, a short word of Scripture is explained, and the main passage of the same is assigned for consideration during the day, then breakfast, which is begun and concluded with prayer. Then everyone goes about his work until toward evening. My customary work is, first to take care of the sick, after that working at translations, and at the same time I instruct in writing and arithmetic. As the day goes on, usually some people come with whom we can speak about the Word of God. Often, too, there are quarrels to settle and we cannot entirely avoid these since there is no established authority in the land. In the evening after supper we again assemble in the school, where frequently many people from neighboring villages gather. The conversation is conducted to suit the people assembled; if there are baptized or catechumens present, Bible stories, catechism, and hymns are practiced, closing with prayer. Besides, I am often called to sick, or must serve as witness here and there, so that my work of translating makes little headway. On Sunday we assemble soon after our meal and together consider a passage from the Bible, and do that until we are disturbed by other people. There is no sermon, but rather an hour of devotion, where everyone is permitted to speak. We begin and close with a hymn and prayer. Then the baptized and catechumens go into some village to speak with their former companions about their soul's welfare. With other people who drop in during the day I speak in an arguing manner, but do not pray with them. I believe that it does more harm than good, if we stand and pray before the heathen; for they have no conception about prayer and later will mock about it. On Sunday evening we again assemble for contemplation of the Word, and this often lasts until after eleven o'clock."

Even before Nommensen was permanently settled in Silindung, he had promised the heathen that he would train their children to become wise and good people. But when he began to try to gather the children, he met with opposition. For the evil minded claimed that the white man would alienate the children from them and bewitch them. Nevertheless, a group of boys, who were eager to learn, gathered and with diligence and aptitude learned hymns, Bible stories, reading, writing and some arithmetic. They became faithful friends of the missionary, who were always around him and ready to help him, and became instrumental in bringing their parents. A Rajah in Silindung would not come to the mission himself, but his young son attended the school. One day Nommensen, teaching the first commandment, explained the passage: "But our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. But their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands", etc., Psalm 115:3. Intently the young lad listened. When he reached his home after school, he saw an idol statue on a post. An epidemic of small pox was raging, and the idol was supposed to protect them from the sickness. The young boy went up to it and stuck out his tongue, but the idol did not stir. He asked: "Don't you see what I am doing? What are your eyes for?" No answer. "Can't you hear what I am saying? You have ears." Still no answer. "Why don't you speak? You have a mouth." He then cut his face and thumbed his nose, saying: "Why don't you come after me and grab me? What are your feet and hands for?" Still no answer. Then he took a stick and with the words: "What good are you, if you cannot see, hear, speak, walk or grasp?", knocked the idol down, breaking him. The father was shocked, believing that now the whole family was doomed. But the family was spared. The Rajah then began to think and soon also appeared at the mission, was converted and became a faithful member of the congregation.

Preaching was very plain and simple. Nommensen understood better than any other one to find the way into the hearts of the hearers. Preferably he did this by telling them Bible stories, which he knew to present to them

in a masterful way. He loved to portray the work of Christ under the picture of a battle with the devil, and this they understood. The devil to him was definitely a reality, and he believed distinctly to feel his opposition in his work. In a short time the Bible stories, especially those of the Old Testament, were known and loved far and wide. Nommensen in his message successfully employed the Batak way of thinking. When a stranger comes into a village, they usually ask him: "Have you a medicine against yearning (a present)?" Then he would begin, that he had come to bring them a medicine against yearning; but this is not something earthly, as they might expect, for all things that they desire so much, do not satisfy. The yearning of our heart is appeased only, if death is abolished, and we are free from toil and tribulation and death. To this end we must first be made free from sin, and for this we need a Savior, and then he entered upon the divine plan of salvation. He told them that God was deeply grieved to see that men, whom He had created unto salvation, now walked the way of perdition, because they had departed from God and served the devil. But now God has sent His Son to prove His love, that He might redeem us.

Of his heathen hearers he once wrote thus: "In the beginning, before they have heard much of the Word of God, it seems strange to the people, that we should go to so much trouble, speaking so much about future things, which they cannot see. They always think: There must be a catch to it somewhere. Their hearts are so completely earthbound, and all their thinking and planning directed toward earthly things, that we are astonished. Such earthly minded hearts are not attentive hearers for long.

All kind of things buzz around in their heads, they race from one thing to another, and again and again cut off our thread, in order to change the subject. They ask, e.g.: Where is your land? Do they make the dollars there? Did the king really cut off the legs of the goldsmith and put a chain around his body, so that he cannot get away? Where do heaven and earth meet? Where does the water run to? Does not the sea become filled up? Where does the rain fall when the clouds pass by us?

Of his preaching activity Nommensen said at another time: "Preaching to the heathen in the markets and at public festivals is not appropriate, for they tell us openly: "Do not disturb us in our celebration; if you celebrate the festival, we do not disturb you; rather come and visit us in our homes." And there is no lack of opportunity to preach, for they are continually coming to us, so that we could well preach thirty to forty sermons every day, if we would only faithfully grasp the opportunity. Of course, these cannot be sermons according to European standards. The introduction usually offers itself in the request of Him who comes to us. If it is a relative of a sick person, who is asking for medicine, we soon arrive at the One Thing Needful, for, according to Batak conceptions, it is the 'Begu', spirits, to whom they pray, which make people sick. Then it easily becomes clear to them that the spirits are not our friends, and that one must seek protection and help against them from a Better and Higher. Another comes and complains about his poverty; with him, too we are soon in the proper channel by pointing out sin as the cause of poverty, and then connect with it the glad message of the salvation from sin. A third comes and starts with all sorts of high praises to flatter us, and tells us, how far we are ahead of them, Then we answer that this is not at all surprising, namely, because we serve a so much better and richer and more merciful God than they, who faithfully provides for His own; this gives us occasion to remark that he himself serves a very evil and miserable lord, with whom he cannot find true happiness in time or eternity. The main thing is, always to stand in the might of the Lord, clothed with the armor from the Word of God, ready to carry on the Gospel of Peace, and look upon everyone who comes to us as sent by the Lord and endeavor to show to every

individual the way to life briefly and clearly.

About the time Nommensen decided to look up the murderers of the missionaries Munson and Lyman. With several companions he found the village in the dense forest and cautiously approached. He walked straight forward to the house, where he found the man, Panggalamei, the ringleader of the murderers, a man with but one eye, about 50 or 60 years old. "My companions sat down on the earth, while I climbed into the house, sat down close to the old murderer and began to speak to him friendly. But he sat, as if he had been struck by lightning, stared at me, and moved no member, neither gave any answer to what I said. To him it seemed horrible, to behold a white man before him and to hear him speak kindly in his own language. For certainly, since those two had in a strange language implored him for mercy, he had not had an European so close to him. He was in great fear; this we could see, for it seemed that he was being tortured by the remembrance of those days. But even so, he would go and call his wife, that she might prepare a meal. But as soon as he was out of the door, he ran into the dense brush and left two crying children behind him. In vain I sent my men to look for him. At evening two of his sons came home, but denied their father and said that they had but recently moved into the village. We calmly remained in the house over night, and when, on the following morning, I sent his sons after him, they also hastily ran away. My feelings during the night I need not write down. The brethren had been murdered in the year of my birth. Of their possessions I found nothing but one of the guns. A little boy from Silindung sat in the stocks, and I bought him free and told the people in the vicinity that they could collect the debt of the boy from me in Silindung. In this way I hoped to learn more about the brethren." Later Panggalamei actually came to Silindung to demand his claim. Nommensen tried to offer him the Gospel, but found no response. The old man claimed to know nothing about the murder of the two missionaries. He was later struck by lightning and died a miserable death. Most of his descendents are now baptized. At the place where the martyrs fell, the Batak church has erected a memorial.

Chapter 4: THE FIRST RESULTS

"A great door is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." 1 Cor. 16:9.

In spite of all enmity and storms the first fruits of the labor of patience ripened in comparatively short time. On August 27, 1865, the first were baptized, four men and their wives, and five children. In troublous times they turned to Christianity and were prepared also to suffer for their faith. They gave Nommensen great pleasure. To his relatives, who stormed them with pleas and threats, one of them declared: "If you cut off my head, I will gladly bear it, for that will not last ten days, but to serve the devil according to your wish during this life, and then languish in hell eternally: be it far from me! I am going ahead on the way of life, and I hope that you will soon follow." The women of Silindung made a good impression of Nommensen, "as, on the whole, women, with few exceptions, soon yield to Christianity, after they have been properly informed about the matter." With baptizing Nommensen was very careful. He baptized only small groups at a time, even if more tried to crowd in. Usually there were about twenty or thirty, whom he instructed for a long time and carefully observed, before he baptized them. The hatred of the heathen soon burnt loose over those who had been first baptized. They could not forgive them that they had forsaken the religion of the fathers. For materialistic heathen, as the Batak were, there was no greater crime than to forsake the way of old custom. Their religion was built on the tradition of centuries; to depart from this tradition meant treason against the nation. Furthermore the heathen feared that the revenge of the ancestors and spirits would fall on them because of the apostasy of the deserters. They could not harm the missionary, because his powerful God protected him; but the heathen were now exposed to the wrath of their gods, if there were deserters in their own midst. The baptized were driven out of their villages, their rice fields, gardens, and fruit trees taken from them. The mission reports of that time applied to them the word of the Epistle of the Hebrews: "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Thus Nommensen contrary to his own wishes, found himself obliged to gather the young Christians about him, offer them lodging, and, for the first, also to give them their sustenance. The mission station was fortified with a wall and ditches against attacks by robber bands and was remodded into a Christian village, which was called Huta Dame, i. e., place of peace. Nommensen, indeed, also had misgivings about such dwelling together of the Christians, separate from the heathen. He wrote to the missions board: "I hope to erect a Christian village at my place, where all who have been baptized, can dwell to avoid temptations to some degree. I doubt whether you will approve of this, and myself also have misgivings, since because of it hatred and envy may rise with the heathen, because they must tell themselves: 'These are no longer our companions in battle.' One would also think that those who accept Christ and continue to live in the villages, would enjoy equal rights with the rest and, with their families, under the protection of their chief against enemies, would have nothing to fear. But actually it only seems so, because the family cannot and will not keep back its hatred against Christianity, and would rather see the members of their family dead when they listen to the Word of God, because then they will no longer take part in things, and also will no longer give their contributions for the idol festivals. Then, too, the members of the congregation would be compelled, as citizens of their village, to take part in every quarrel and battle, and thus would be prevented from attending the

services." So the missionaries during that time from dire necessity occupied a special village, next to Nommensen's place. When their number and their influence increased, they no longer were compelled thus to segregate themselves.

The heathen delighted in mocking the baptized Christians. If the Christians prayed, they would come, take them by the head and shake them, to disturb them in their devotion. Some said: "Hey! what are you pinching there in your hands?". Others acted as if they could rouse the Christians from sleep. Still more strange it was for the heathen, when Christians, in the evening, at the sound of the vesper bell, stood still, took off their headcloth, and quietly spoke their prayer by themselves. For Nommensen had introduced the custom of the vesper bell in his young congregation. For the time being they used a brass drum as bell, such as the Batak used it in their festivals. As church they used a plain shed, which also served as a school, and at times as a hospital.

It called for profound wisdom to guide the little flock of Christians, beset by persecution, through all difficulties and dangers. The question arose, whether the Christians, when attacked by heathen, dared to defend themselves. Nommensen could not avoid permitting that, if it was necessary to protect the existence of the congregation. Thus at one time, Musa, the chief of a Christian village, went out with twenty Christian men against enemies, to protect himself and his people, and succeeded in defeating the enemies. But when the Christians, following the heathen custom, celebrated their victory in the marketplace with parades, shouting and shooting for joy, they were disciplined. In general, the Christians deported themselves with dignity, willingly bore the scorn, and defended themselves only in extreme danger. By many visitations, both for Christians and heathen, God supported the endeavors of the missionary and preserved the congregation from pollution. The number of Christians increased very rapidly; after but a few years there were 220. The heathen now and then celebrated some festival, and on such days it was not permitted to work in the rice fields.

The Christians ignored this prohibition. Angered thereby, the heathen tried to attack the men and women working the the fields. This caused a great deal of unrest and excitement. Nommensen was wise to interfere in these quarrels as little as possible, much as they concerned him as pastor of the Christians. In such cases he usually sent friendly chiefs to deal with the opposing party. This they did very nicely. The most clever among them, who also enjoyed the greatest respect, was the widely known Rajah Pontas.

During the early time of his work in Silindung Nommensen had gained a friend in this clever and sincere man. As was learned later, he was a nephew of the man, who, when the first missionaries, Ward and Burton, entered Silindung, opposed them because he did not want to depart from the old customs, and they were compelled to leave. Nommensen said about Rajah Pontas: "He is the most intelligent Batak I have learned to know until now; a real lawyer, who without any interference can travel through all of Toba, from where very few return unharmed, and yet no one dares trouble him." In order to assist the missionary more effectively, in the beginning he kept in the background, but performed many valuable services for him, of which few knew anything. He was intelligent enough to realize that the message which Nommensen proclaimed meant good things for his people, and that a new era was dawning, which one dare not resist. As the time passed by, he stepped to the side of the missionary, more determinedly, and became his personal friend. After several years he was baptized, and as a Christian was given the name Obadiah. His influence and example contributed much to the fact that Silindung became Christian in so short a time.

An example to show how cleverly Rajah Pontas answered the people of

his nation, and defended Christianity. So often the Christians were accused of disturbing the unity of the people by changing the sacred customs of the fathers, and no longer honoring the ancestors. Rajah Pontas then spoke about it in this manner: "Yes, much has been changed since we became Christians. But even before that there were people who violated the custom, and you said nothing against them. Now you see us Christians. We harm no one, are diligent, faithful, truthful, merciful, and practice love.

Visibly the blessing of the elders rests upon us. So you love the unjust, and hate us who do good. Actually, then, you are the ones who forsake the custom of the fathers, not we. For if our ancestors still were living, they would gladly take part in the good that we possess, for we are establishing a good custom." They answered him: "If we no longer bring sacrifices, as before, the rats will come and eat the rice from our fields, and we will starve to death." Rajah Pontas: "This is not correct; my father told me that formerly, when a rat plague came, the order was given to kill the rats. That is what we would do, exterminate the rats, but not bring sacrifices for that purpose, for that would not help." "That is what you say because you are a Christian; your father would not have spoken thus." "Yes," Rajah Pontas said, "my father did sacrifice, and, according to the instruction of the sorcerer, held a rat above his head and then cast it into the river. But the rat swam across the river and on the other side continued to multiply. Judge yourselves: If he had first killed the rat and then thrown it into the river, there would have been at least one rat less." Then all began to laugh and agreed with him. Nommensen and Johannsen were prudent enough, to permit such word battles to be fought out by the native Christians; they are far more cleaver at it than a European. Over against such shrewd answers the opponents are helpless and become a laughing stock.

Almost four years Nommensen endured the trials and tribulations of the beginning in complete solitude, alone. He was engaged to Miss Karoline Gutbrod, who was a member of the Scotch Church in Hamburg. From Silindung the groom wrote her the full truth about the situation, and concealed nothing. But she was certain of her way. Finally, in the year 1866, she was sent out together with the young missionary Johannsen, who, also of Danish descent, was to remain at Nommensen's side in Silindung. On March 16th the marriage was solemnized in Siboga, and then the travelers started out for the interior; a difficult way for the young bride. Since it was impossible to make the journey on foot over the pathless hills with their dense forests, marshes, ravines, and raging streams, like the men, nothing remained to do, but to tie a cloth like a hammock on a long pole and let a few strong Batak carry the woman, "like the cluster of grapes in Eschol." There was much worry and fear when the bearers began to slip and were in danger of plunging down the precipice, or if they went through a swollen stream, and she had to form a chain with her travelling companions, and wade through the river. On the march of several days, spending the nights in the dirty huts of the natives, she at once learned to know something of what was awaiting her. In Silindung the Njonja (white woman) was welcomed with gunshots and jubilant curiosity. When the travelers were near Hute Dame, Nommensen ran ahead and chivalrously presented to his young wife the first rose from his garden. There everything was full of people, and they would have broken down the doors and walls, if the three had retired into the house, and we can understand that they would have desired to do this. So they sat outside the door, before them a semicircle of chairs, on which the chiefs had taken place, to hold back the surging crowd. Fully six hours they were obliged thus to parade, because the people could not see enough of them, so that Johannsen remarked that they had become a spectacle of the people. Thus it went on for several day. Special interest all of them exhibited in the large cases, in which they suspected great treasures. The

friendly chiefs, one after another, invited the young married couple for meals, as it is their custom, and the invitation had to be accepted, or their friendship would have been lost. After all, these visits in the villages offered an opportunity carefully to study the language and the customs of the people of Silindung, as well as to speak a good word to them.

One day, soon after, Nommensen was called into the village, where a woman was possessed of spirits and acted insane. No one dared come near her. Arriving in the village, he saw the poor woman lying in the stocks, her feet bleeding and swollen. Friendly he drew near and tried to speak to her: "Are you thirsty? Do you want to eat?" He received no answer. No one was willing to free her from the stocks, when the missionary requested that. Then he himself took a hatchet and freed the poor woman from the torturous wood and gave her water which she drank greedily. To further addresses she gave filthy answers. Nommensen then said: "In the name of the Lord Jesus, I forbid you to speak." The woman said: "Is He my Lord?" "Yes, you must obey Him." Thereupon she became silent, quietly ate, let them put her to bed, and recovered.

In Nommensen's little hut everything was cramped and very modest. He, at the time, complained that writing a report was a chore for him, as he had to do it in the presence of many chatting and often quarreling Batak. He had no place where he might sit alone and work quietly. His wife mostly remained in the bedroom, which, however, was so small that there was no place for a table and two chairs. The third little room they had fixed up for Johannsen. But in the center room the Batak made themselves at home. There even Batak who came from a distance were permitted to spend the night, certainly not to the delight of the cleanly housewife. This, too, is a part of the trials of a missionary, that he has no room where he can retire, where he can study undisturbed, and live with his family. Later conditions were improved, but during the first time they had to be content, and that without murmuring.

Nommensen did not simply submit to every injustice; he showed this to his slowly growing congregation. Off and on he took a firm stand, and gained respect. One night a box of goods was stolen from missionary Johannsen out of the house. Fortunately Nommensen, who otherwise slept very lightly, did not awake; one of the thieves stood at the door with an open knife, ready to stab the missionary, if he should surprise them. When in the morning he noticed the theft, he called the village people together, told them of the incident, bound them to complete silence, and then sent them out in all directions to start investigations. After a short time the message came to him that the box was hidden in the village of a notorious chief in Hutebarat. Nommensen asked several friendly chiefs to come to this place, and at once himself hastened thither. Frightened the chief (the father of the thief) asked him what he wanted of him. Nommensen accused him to his face of the theft, but he denied, although the box was brought out of its hiding place. Now according to Batak custom the chief was responsible for the theft. But when he made further difficulties, Nommensen declared that he would turn the matter over to the assembled chiefs, whose duty it was to pronounce judgment and protect him, and the thief had to confess. After several days the missionaries not only had the box back, but also most of the stolen things. The people, however, put their heads together and whispered: "There is no use stealing from the 'white-eye'; he knows at once who is the thief, and we have nothing but trouble and disgrace."

Living in Huta Dame at times was quite scant. Johannsen once wrote: "In our station there are at present about 75 persons, 50 of them baptized. The rest are old, forsaken widows, women whose husbands have deserted them, sick who are receiving treatment from us, gamblers whom their parents

have placed with us, almost as in a reformatory, and abandoned children, all eating from our table. Until now some of the baptized have a little rice of their own, but later we will have to supply them too. Only with difficulty we managed to procure a few parcels of land in our overpopulated valley, to grow rice. A few days ago they began to work these rice fields, which takes three months, and then we must wait seven more months until the harvest." There often an anxious care crept into the hearts. Where shall we take bread, that these can eat?" "Fortunately", the mission reports say, "our Nommensen and his dear wife and his fellow workers have long since become Batak to the Batak and, denying themselves almost all the luxuries of an European, live as Batak, sharing even the last bite with them. But in spite of the utmost frugality, at times it would not suffice for the most necessary." Besides this, Nommensen had to help some of the baptized out of previous debts. There was, e.g., the Christian Zacharias, who had six daughters, none of them over 14 years old, but, according to Batak custom, already engaged, i.e., the fathers had already received the customary dowry. Now the parents of four bridegrooms came and demanded the return of the money already paid, because they wanted no Christian daughter-in-laws. If this was refused, war and bloodshed followed. At one time, war was declared against the missionary by 14 different parties, because the newly baptized had incurred such debts. What was Nommensen to do in such cases? He did not consider long, but sacrificed a portion of his own scant annual salary. Such things happened frequently. So we can easily understand that in Huta Dame there were times of bitter needs. Nommensen did not like to write home about these things, people learned of them only round-about. Later friends at home opened their hands and helped. In this manner the missionaries were able to help many a poor debt-slave to liberty, and otherwise also alleviate all sorts of crying needs. Self evidently such support could be granted only in the worst cases; they did not want to have Christians who came because of material advantages. It was painful for Nommensen that the mission authorities could not grant sufficient means, as he asked for his hard pressed little flock. He once wrote that he felt like Hagar in the wilderness, who did not want to see her son die. The worst distress came to an end after a few years, when the number of Christians increased, and also some chiefs assumed the protection of the hard pressed flock.

At times the enmity of the heathen against the Christians flared up seriously. One night one of the most faithful Christians, Mika, was shot. The result was a military expedition of the Christians against the murderers, which ended in their victory. Nommensen could not hold them back. No help could be expected from the forces of the Dutch Colonial Government for this region which was still independant. Thus the Christians had to depend on their own resources and, above all, on their God. There was no end of war cries. It required good nerves and a confident faith to endure it. In one night Nommensen counted more than 1000 gun shots. In the mission house boxes and mattresses had to be placed around the beds as protection against flying bullets. Serious conflicts arose when festivals were observed in Batak custom, in which the Christians no longer would or dared take part. Thus, every year the so called Robu was observed, when no work was done, in order that, under the blessing of the ancestors, the field might bring its fruits. The Christians ignored the order; courageously the women went into the fields to do the hoeing. Threatened by the heathen they quietly did their work. As they did not resist, they were not molested. On the next day again a crowd of people gathered to molest the women, until these finally said: "If the ancestors really make the fields fruitful and drive away the rats, then tell them to chase the rats into our fields. But if our God is the true God, our field will bear, and we will also pray for your fields." Then the enemies were

silent and let the Christians have their way.

In 1867, he wrote: "There is much confusion here. The heathen try in every way to pick quarrels with us, in order to extort money. In the past months five different parties declared war against us, either orally or in writing. Until then the heathen, according to their custom, regarded me as a Rajah, because I had built a village and, in their opinion, I would be responsible for everything, which they thought had been committed by those connected with me, or had been inflicted on my people. Relatives of a baptized man declared war on me, if the latter had been wronged. A man, who had applied for baptism, returned with a companion from Pangaloan. As, late in the evening they walked along the river, they found two caribou horns and took them along to make a knife handle from them. Now these horns were from a buffalo, which the heathen had sacrificed at the command of the Singamangarajah, to secure a good harvest. The people claimed that this was theft and, as reparation demanded a whole buffalo, although the two immediately offered to return the horns. They figured, as always, that we should pay and, when I called their demand unjust, threatened with war. Thereupon I proclaimed publicly that those who were connected with us, both baptized and those yet to be baptized, were not under the government, that I was only their teacher, but not their Rajah. No one, who is a Christian or intends to become one, for this reason changes his tribe; his former Rajah remains such. If they had complaints to make, they should simply go to their chiefs and settle the matter with them; from me they could at most expect good advice, but not force of arms. This position is absolutely necessary for us in order to maintain my stand, both with the heathen and with the government.

In the year 1868, the governor of Padang visited Silindung. This made a strong impression, for the people feared that now the troublemakers would be taken to court and punished. But he was friendly and only imposed the obligation on the chiefs, for the present not to wage any wars until he could return and settle all matters. This did not materialize, but his visit had gratifying results for a long time.

After long and difficult negotiations missionary Johannsen settled in Pansurnapitu (seven springs), in the southeast corner of the valley, where he slowly gained ground. As Nommensen's faithful companion he courageously and patiently suffered the dangers and tribulations of the time of the beginning. As third in the alliance in the year 1870, missionary Mohri came to Silindung, who in the notorious Sopoholon boldly took up the battle against heathenism and valiantly stood firm, although the inhabitants of this corner, always known as infamous, vexed and tormented him as much as they possibly could. In the year 1874 a fourth missionary, Simoneit, came to Silindung. With that the valley of Silindung was sufficiently covered with missionaries.

The heathen Batak revered as their great high priest, endowed with supernatural powers, but who also exercised a certain measure of worldly power, the Singamangarajah, who dwelt in Toba. This man spurned all attempts of Nommensen to appeach him and became his worst enemy. When he at one time was in Silindung, Nommensen sent him an invitation to visit him; but he refused, declaring that he would have to be ashamed thus to lower himself. Rather he incited the people against the missionary, prohibited selling him food, and threatened that he would soon come down and put an end to the Christian congregation. Immediately some chiefs forsook Nommensen. Nor did the matter end with idle threats, for from Toba the Singa sent message that he would come in a short time and settle the account with the Christians. Nommensen and Johannsen prepared for their end. This was in 1866, shortly after Nommensen's marriage. They could not doubt the seriousness of the evil intentions of the Singamangarajah. Calmly and composed the missionaries expected their impending end. Nommensen

wrote to Inspector von Rohden: "May the Lord prepare us rightly, so that we may be ready to glorify His name in our death. If this letter should be the last which I am permitted to write to you, we would hereby express our most heartfelt thanks for all fatherly admonition and assistance. Avenge our blood by sending out flocks of messengers of peace, whose feet are beautiful in the mountains to proclaim peace, that the poor nation may learn to know its Savior. Tell our dear Schleswig-Holstein that the blood of its sons has been absorbed by the soil of Sumatra for Jesus' sake, to become an acre of God, for which the Lord would employ them especially as reapers, if they would acknowledge their exalted calling and not waste time with unnecessary things. Yes, picture the miserable condition of the poor Batak before their eyes, that it may move their hearts. Surely, the Lord here has a large nation, for many, without knowing it, are looking to the future with longing, and are waiting for the deliverance from the bonds of the devil. A battle for life and death will unfold here, and the despondent heart would often tremble; but faith says: 'The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.'"

But God once more delivered miraculously and simply. The chiefs of Silindung began to quarrel with each other, and their minds were so occupied, that for the first they did not concern themselves about the little flock of Christians. Then, too, a severe epidemic of small pox broke out, which claimed many victims, and so frightened the Singa that he did not dare to enter the contaminated valley. His threatened campaign of revenge had failed, and once more the Christians were saved.

During the small pox epidemic Nommensen brought several sick persons to the station in order to give them better care, so that the place resembled a hospital. Temporarily he cared for four families with eight children. Johannsen, too, had taken sick, but soon recovered. In this troublous time Nommensen performed his second baptism of heathen. This time there were twenty persons who, in spite of all danger, joined the congregation. But between the chiefs in the valley a bloody war broke out, during which the little congregation enjoyed peace. With remarkable optimism Nommensen wrote about the wars, although they did cause dangers: "Humanly speaking, wars are a great hindrance to the spreading of God's Word, because by them men become savage and cruel. But, in God's hands, they also bring blessings. For, in the first place, they make the people valiant in fighting for their own existence, and, in the second place, by warring they grow tired and mellow, so that in time they all the more willingly let themselves be led by the mild shepherd staff of Jesus. So we also hope for something good out of the wars of the Batak, and believe that we are not mistaken."

One year later the Singamangarajah did visit Nommensen in Huta Dame to make peace with him, as he said. But he did not report himself royally, was disagreeable and inquisitive, was obtrusive, and begged, wanted money and even demanded a white woman. Ever again the enmity of the heathen flared up, and the mission people were not safe of their lives. The heathen arranged idol festivals, to incite the spirits to battle against the white intruders. Several times Nommensen's house was surrounded by a furious mob, so that he thought of removing his wife from Silindung. At one time Johannsen went to the dutch resident of Siboga with the request that he intervene and suppress the wars in Silindung. But he refused, as he had no instructions to interfere with incidents in this independent region. Only God should be their Protection. Nommensen, indeed, wrote: "During the last years we, with our Sumatran mission, are, as it were, a thorn in the eyes of the enemy, for there is no end of jolting and shaking." But he could also say: "God has said: 'Take heed, that thou speak unto Jacob neither bad nor good.'"

With remarkable foresight Nommensen, when still standing alone with

Johannsen on his advanced post, knew what would serve best. He proposed that four missionaries be placed in the valley at once, and hoped that then peace and rest would prevail. "If the places proposed by me could be filled quickly with missionaries, then all war would cease, and the Gospel within the next five years would have made progress such as has been experienced in but few mission fields. Therefore I repeat my request for four or five missionaries and two mechanics. Let us not hesitate because of expenses and debts, but in faith risk and send the men, and the Lord will provide all that is needed. The gain is great and of utmost importance for all Sumatra. If it would be of a help, I would say: I will pledge myself and my wife for the good outcome of them after which I have proposed." That was a prophetic vision, for to natural man at that time it did not appear like a victory in Silindung. There was no end of wars, and the little flock of Christians was in great distress. But Nommensen looked through the clouds. It was his greatest disappointment that the mission board at Barmen did not go ahead in the measure he considered necessary.

At that time Nommensen seriously considered the idea of missionary colonies. They were to be carried on in a large scale, rent rice fields and offer them to people for one third or one fourth of the crops. They should keep horses and cows, try out wheat, barley, potatoes, corn, and other fruits, also deal in tobacco and rubber. By this, in the course of time, he hoped to support the whole mission in Silindung. Besides this, he asked for a weaver, a blacksmith, and a carpenter who could train young native and thus provide the congregation with new sources of income and wealth. Of a versatile talent, he himself trained a Batak smithy, who after a time could even repair gun locks. Yes, together with him he even cast small brass bells, shaping the forms out of clay. Again he asked for a "thinking farmer", who should establish a model colony. "If we sow only spriritual things with the heathen, we cannot expect to reap their material things." With all this it was also his intention to try to bring down the horrible rate of interest prevailing among the Batak (200% and more). Everywhere he was anxious to help and to raise the standard of living for the poor Batak. How correct he was in it all! Later some of his ideas were materialized. But at that time they were hardly considered. He received no lay brethren as helpers, not even the necessary tools and implements.

At the same time he also wrote for a deaconess, as an assistant in the congregation and house, long before the time when the idea of missionary sisters had been accepted in Germany. He thought of a relative who was willing to come, but nothing developed.

In the year 1871, Nommensen who had always enjoyed the best health, took sick with dysentery. As all remedies were of no avail, he asked for permission to come home. But first missionary Heine brought him to Padang Sidempuan in the south, where he submitted to the treatment of a physician in a Dutch hospital. Finally the doctor told him that he was sorry, but he could do nothing more for him. The patient paid 120 Gulden for one week's stay and was carried away. After all hope had been given up, his condition slowly began to improve. The permission for a furlough came, but by this time he was much improved that he decided to stay. But a weakness and tenderness of the abdomen remained during his entire life. He always lived very carefully, e.g., never ate pork, and for a time, no meat at all. Later on, when the station had been removed to the higher and more healthy Pearadja, his health improved a great deal. One year later his wife became very ill; for months she was obliged to remain in bed, and recovered very slowly, but always remained feeble. In the year 1868, the oldest daughter of the Nommensens, Anna, died, only one year old. The father could say: "Thus the Lord, also in this respect, has put us up as an example to the congregation as well as the heathen, so that we might have opportunity to

present a living picture of the Christian's hope to them. The Lord always takes away in order to give, and presents His gifts with salt added." A few years later also a son died, to whom, because of the severe suffering of the mother at the birth, they had given the name Benoni (1872).

Chapter 5: THE CARE OF THE CONGREGATION

"Feed my sheep!" John 21:16.

That the beginning would be very difficult in Silindung, Nommensen had known well when he came there. But now it became evident how correctly he had judged in moving the decision of the battle to Silindung, the center of Batak heathenism. Ten years after his arrival there a pronounced change took place. Even though the opposition of heathenism still continued, yet his position and that of his little congregation was so firmly established that the continuance of Christendom was assured. Wide circles of the population sensed that a new and better time had dawned and that the splendor of the religion of the fathers had passed away, even though the number of professing Christians still was small. In the year 1867, there were 143 baptized in Silindung, but there were many friends. In 1876, Silindung had 2000 Christians. But then the work progressed with rapid strides. After twenty years the number of baptized exceeded 7000. Heathenism had lost its power. Then, too, in the middle of the seventies the Dutch Colonial Government took possession of Silindung, annexing the valley with the adjacent region, and placed it under its jurisdiction. This the missionaries had long desired for the welfare of the population; more than once they themselves had asked for it. For a just and impartial government, which took hold with a firm hand, for the work of the mission and for the congregation meant advancement and gain, inasmuch as there was peace in the land, and the missionaries and their members no longer were dependant on the despotism and the whims of the petty chiefs.

Finally in 1869, the erection of a new church in Huta Dame could be undertaken. It was plain, with walls of clay and a thatched roof. But it held 2500 visitors, and with each Sunday was filled up more and more. Unfortunately at the completion a large debt, under the circumstances, remained on the building. Since they could not expect assistance from home, Nommensen sold his riding horse and with the proceeds paid the remainder of the debt. Still more important was the transfer of the missions station from the damp lowlands to the higher and healthier Pearadja at the edge of the valley. Obediah (Rajah Pontas) donated a fine plot of land to the mission, and built his village next to it. The place was fifty meters above the base of the valley, with a beautiful view over the villages and rice fields of Silindung. That was an impressive procession, as all helped to carry the boards and timbers of the station up the hill; several times each day school children, men, and women voluntarily dragged the loads, and these were not light. Then the construction began. Nommensen erected a long building which combined the church and his own dwelling under one roof. Soon after the church proved to be too small, and cheerfully and happy they undertook the erection of a larger house of God. Already in September, 1873, all was completed, and the church could solemnly be dedicated. Again the sidewalls were filled out with clay, for this was substantially cheaper and proved to be more resistant during the periodically occurring earthquakes. On the inside of the walls numerous Bible pictures from Schnorr's Pictorial Bible were put up. Many Christians and heathen attended the dedication services. But more vexation followed. Immediately after, the neighboring village Banuarea declared war on Nommensen, claiming that part of the land belonged to them. They demanded no less than 50 Gulden monthly as compensation, but would also be satisfied if the missionary would give them one third of all the money that would be sent to him from Europe. Endless negotiations brought no results, and Nommensen finally turned the matter over to the resident at Siboga for a decision. He disavowed the claims of the plaintiffs and

decided in favor of the missionary in all points.

Now Nommensen could devote himself to the spiritual care of the congregation. In every village two or three elders were elected, whose duty it was to look after the material and spiritual welfare of the people of that village. Each Wednesday evening they assembled in the church for a discussion and Bible study. There matters were considered that concerned the congregation. Everyone took it upon himself, on one evening in the week to go to some neighboring village and proclaim the Word of God. Every member was obliged to watch over others and be his brother's keeper. If he could not get along alone, he had to report what he had seen to his elder, so as not to become partaker of the other's sin. Among themselves the Christians sometimes imposed original punishments. E.g., a young man who for some time had not appeared at the evening devotions was sentenced, for eight days to eat his meals on the street before his house; but this was not repeated. For participation at holy communion all had to register personally with the missionary. Communion was held in high esteem and to this one practice contributed much, namely, that only such were admitted who earnestly endeavored to lead a Christian life. Before the celebration everyone went to those, with whom he had had some disagreement, and first became reconciled. At five places in the congregation small meeting houses were erected, where morning and evening devotions were regularly held by capable members. These men, together with the school teacher practiced some Bible story and discussed it with the missionary. It was deemed wise that as many men as possible take part in this work. Nommensen wrote: "When members of the congregation are active, both in- and outside the congregation, they become more and more conscious of their Christianity, their Christian duty, and of its blessings, and by the experience of the truth in their hearts, faith grows firmer in action, and the spoken word often becomes what the railing is on a bridge. It would be for me to conduct the devotions myself every morning and evening, they would take less time away from me, but I could conduct them only in one place, and now they are conducted in five places."

Home devotions and table prayer were made a duty for all baptized. Five times every day the little prayer bell rang, at which reminder everyone, wherever he was, folded his hands in prayer. Instead of the meaningless Batak "tabe", the Christians greeted each other with the beautiful "dame", i.e., "Peace". Unfortunately this thoughtful custom, which resembled biblical usage, did not endure permanently, but later on was again replaced with "tabe". Probably following the custom of the Moravians, Nommensen established so called choirs, meeting hours for the various groups in the congregation, for men, for married women, for young men and young women, where questions important to them were discussed, and some duties assigned to each. At the age of fourteen years the children were confirmed. If the parents died, the children were brought up under the supervision of the elders. Widows were given a curator to assist them.

If a widow was drawn back into heathendom, she was obliged to surrender the possessions of her husband for the children. No girl could be compelled to marry, as it had been customary, but neither was any marriage solemnized without the consent of the parents. Marriage with heathen was forbidden. Quarrels with heathen over earthly goods, as far as possible were avoided; rather they suffered losses. This latter decree, indeed, could not always be enforced. Everyone was obliged to commit to memory the Christian doctrine, Bible stories, and the catechism and confess his faith according to the measure of faith given him by the Lord. Every quarter of a year holy communion was celebrated with participation. Christians were permitted to take part in heathen festivals, but neither were they to debate publicly on such occasions, so as not to irritate the heathen. There was a breath of first love hovering over the congregation, a wonderfully fresh new life, as

later on in the growing congregation it could not be attained in the same measure.

In the course of time Nommensen succeeded in having the old heathen market custom changed. Until then a market was held at several places in Silindung every fourth day, and this often disturbed the Christian services, and the Christians were tempted to neglect them. It meant considerable progress when finally the rule of having market every seventh day was introduced and actually universally adopted. That was a victory of the new time over the old. In order to reach all Christians and heathen, Nommensen began early, and this was a most fortunate thought of his, to establish branch stations, sometimes quite close to the mother congregation. Later he was indeed criticized for this, but in the beginning it was a very wise move. It was impossible to unite people from different rivaling tribes in one church. With this Nommensen counted: in order to reach all, he gave those of other tribes an opportunity to hear the Word of God. Serving the branch stations was done by native Christians who could bear witness, especially elders. Later trained Batak teachers took up this work. In time this system vastly expanded, and in this manner it was accomplished that the Batak nation could be served with the Gospel in the remotest corners. Of late, many branches, which were too close to each other, could be discontinued. They were like a scaffold that is taken down again after the building has been complete.

In the little congregation very early four elders were appointed to be assistants to the missionary in the spiritual care, looking after the sick and the poor, and they actually became such. In this Nommensen made a most fortunate move. Thus the young Christians from the beginning became conscious of the fact that they must accomplish something for the Christian community. Their number later increased vastly. Without this voluntary, unpaid work, often by untrained helpers, the Batak mission certainly would not have enjoyed the development and expansion it experienced. Surely, these men in the beginning were quite weak, and it was to be expected that they would not accomplish all that had been hoped for. But Nommensen dared it in spite of all well meant scruples, and this venture gave his mission work its peculiar impetus. Soon after he even risked the employment of native teachers, and not much later the training and ordination of native pastors, and every time the results proved the correctness of his bold ventures. On the other hand, the employment of deaconesses, which Nommensen began, one deaconess and a lady teacher for children, proved premature. Unfortunately these valuable services have not yet been adopted in the Batak mission.

Moreover, Nommensen put such importance on native helpers because, at least in his sixties, he figured with the eventuality that the missionaries might have to leave the country. If that should happen, the Christians should be able to stand on their own feet with the help of the native leaders.

With a keen understanding of national character he examined the existing custom (adat), endeavoring to let everything remain which could be reconciled with Christian usage. It is a universal Indian custom, that the groom gives the dowry to the family of the bride, as a compensation for the labor of which the family is deprived. After several unsuccessful attempts to break with this custom, it was permitted for the Christians, in future also to accept the customary dowry for their daughters. The strict prohibition of a marriage within the same tribe, which was enforced by all Batak, was maintained in the Christian congregation. But engagements of children and marriages of Christians and heathen were forbidden. What difficult conflicts thereby arose for the Christians, we have already seen. Forbidden, of course, was also all participation in heathen witchcraft and idolatry. Often it was not easy to separate essential things from the

non-essential. Thus, after wavering at first, Nommensen permitted the custom, or bad habit, of filing the teeth, foolish and insipid as it seems; at least today, there is no heathen superstition connected with it. The loathsome chewing of Siri, because morally as indifferent as smoking or chewing tobacco, was not prohibited. But it was made a sacred duty of Christians to avoid every contact with idolatry and witchcraft, to avoid quarrels, and not attend heathen festivals. This latter prohibition was not easily enforced, because it was an old Batak custom that at all festivals the relatives contributed their share of the expenses, which sometimes ran quite high. Now it was regarded a grave violation of all tradition and politeness, if the Christians evaded this obligation. And yet it was necessary to insist on this firmly, because the feasts all were ancestor or sacrificial festivals. Also against the heathen custom of death-mourning the congregation was obliged to witness. To prevent the ugly lamentations which always began immediately after the departure of a person, Nommensen brought the school children into the house of death and let them sing all through the night, as long as their throats permitted. Later trumpet players were employed for this, after missionary Heienbrock had organized bands in Siporok and trained them. For the Christians a Christian cemetery was established, and a worthy funeral celebration was introduced. The old Batak beating of drums by many drummers, which enjoyed great popularity with the heathen, was forbidden to the Christians, because, according to their own statements, when listening, their heart was again drawn into the charm of heathen sentiments and passions.

With church discipline Nommensen was very firm from the beginning in his congregation. In the midst of heathen surroundings, beset with temptations, an energetic discipline is absolutely necessary for a congregation. Such members as were disciplined, according to an old church usage, were made to stand at the church doors during the service. Nommensen did not let his baptized get away with anything. We mentioned before that at one time the Christians of Huta Dame had been compelled to defend themselves against the Sipoholons and one of the enemies was shot to death. According to Batak conception this was a victory. The Christians had been permitted to defend themselves. But now they became arrogant and celebrated the victory in heathen fashion with shots of joy, and a parade in the market place. Nommensen did not let them get away with this; painful as it was for them, they had to stand at the church door and plead for forgiveness of their guilt, before they were again received. Several times God, by judgments and visitations, professed Himself to Nommensen's training and congregation.

Again, Nommensen displayed wisdom in assigning to the chiefs their appropriate position and work in the church. Among Malay nations the chief, or Rajah, is not primarily a political ruler, but rather head of the family and, as such, highly respected. This patriarchal position also had to be reflected in the congregation; a prominent position had to be awarded to the family heads, beside the elders and teachers. Nommensen knew how to make the best use of the material at his disposal for the young church, by including the chiefs in the meetings of the elders, the deliberations of the congregation, the solution of pending questions and difficulties, and the arbitration of quarrels within the congregation. Special council meetings were arranged, in which spiritual and political leaders deliberated jointly. Also in cases of church discipline the opinion of the leaders of the people was sought and with their vote the decision gained weight. Since formerly in the ancestor worship they, as representatives of their family, had been the priests, it complied with popular feelings if certain responsibilities were placed on these men in the congregation. Indeed, they first had to be trained for this work. Their cooperation was indispensable, when it became necessary to give the Christians, in place of

the existing heathen "adat" (custom, tradition) a corresponding Christian custom as a frame for congregational life.

It would have been proper for the Christian chiefs to introduce a new Christian justice and law and to insure its enforcement. But they were not as yet ready for that. For this reason Nommensen, as early as 1867, began to introduce civil laws for the Christians in addition to the church regulations, and according to these civil laws the Christians were to live and the chiefs to judge. For the old heathen law in no way was suitable for the congregation. In doing this, Nommensen and Johannsen did not entirely avoid the danger of intermingling the spiritual and the worldly government. Thus, e.g., in divorces it was decreed that the guilty party be excluded from the congregation, but at the same time a stiff fine was imposed on him. There very easily the misunderstanding arose that, when the fine had been paid, thereby also the permission for a divorce had been obtained, and the excommunication from the congregation nullified, since everything had been nicely settled. Then, too, the enforcement of the Christian civil laws and their acknowledgment by the Colonial government caused a great deal of trouble. The missionaries, of course, lacked all authority to enforce these fine laws. Yet, in the first decades they were an urgent necessity, for the reform of the civil congregation must move hand in hand with the spiritual edification, if the development of both were not to suffer irreparable damage. The sound principles and most of the individual directives of those civil laws have later been acknowledged. It was deplorable that the Christian chiefs did not more energetically enforce them.

Clearly and determinedly Nommensen from the beginning worked toward the goal to train his congregation for self support and independence. "If we keep the congregation dependent, and do not familiarize them with everything, they remain like stubborn children and make our rule over them quite difficult." For this reason the young Christians must learn to provide their church needs themselves. In the first years, when their number was small and they were burdened with much trouble, this was not possible. But when the congregations become stronger, the principle of self support was earnestly carried out. The missionaries erected no beautiful churches, for which they would have been obliged to ask for help from Germany, but for years were content with poor sheds until the congregations were able and willing to erect a neat chapel and themselves pay all expenses. Soon a church tax was introduced to cover the needs of the congregation. And the congregation itself was to have a share in the administration of funds. "If we would make the members fellow workers and willing to contribute, we must let them look into the accounts and let them manage the money. Then they were willing. Nor should the missionary want to do everything himself." In order to assist the congregations in attaining self support more quickly than it would otherwise have been possible for them, Nommensen conceived an original idea, which proved practical. Dutch friends, on his request, presented him with a larger sum, especially to pay the salaries of native helpers. This money was not used simply to pay salaries, but with it Nommensen made loans of 400 Gulden each to the congregations, that they might invest it in rice fields, or loan it out on interest. The prevailing rate of interest among the Batak at that time was horribly high. They demanded 100 and more percent. With these congregational capitals Nommensen accomplished two things: in the first place he thereby helped the small and feeble congregations, so that they obtained a little capital, and then, too, by the loans of the congregations the rate of interest in the whole country was brought down substantially. Nommensen had been criticized that in his congregations he at first asked for an interest of 20%, and later of 10%; but these critics did not consider that in the beginning he simply could not do otherwise, and that

his action meant a considerable reduction in the rate of interest for Batak conditions. He thereby achieved both, a comparatively early self-support of many congregations, and the reduction of the rate of interest in all of Batak land. To the interest from the congregational capital were added the contributions of rice which the Christians were required to make after the harvest, and the gifts on the collection plate, which was passed each Sunday. These funds were sufficient to pay the salaries of the teachers and to cover other local expenses. Later, when the congregations grew and other expenses arose, the colonial government granted considerable subsidies to the schools, which could be used for the erection of school buildings and for the salaries of teachers. In this manner the quickly growing Batak congregations have caused very little expense to the Barmen mission. When a congregation, after a few years, had paid back the capital loaned, the money thus returned was entrusted to other congregations, which had been organized since, and these funds kept on working and helped many a congregation. However, the collection of the interest often brought about much trouble. The Batak were always ready to borrow money, but slow in paying interest. The funds thus provided had not come from voluntary, cheerfully contributed gifts, but had comfortably fallen into the lap of the congregations. In the circle of the brethren there were voices raised against this project of loans. However, it cannot be denied that thereby in the first decades a great service was rendered to the congregations. The rapid expansion of the Batak mission, the establishment of many branch stations; the employment of many teachers, would not have been possible without his unique expedient.

From the beginning Nommensen with all diligence devoted himself to the school. He soon succeeded in gathering a sufficient number of school children who were instructed by him. He endeavored to teach the children that which would be of use to them in their later life. For this reason he wrote a primer and an arithmetic book for them. From the beginning he also regarded it important that the children learn the most essential knowledge about hygiene and care of the sick. Before long young men were engaged as teachers. He soon began also with a little more advanced school. For this, indeed, the teachers had to be trained more.

Even during his brief sojourn in Barus Nommensen had looked about for native helpers, and in Silindung he knew how to employ all available forces as elders and deacons. But this did not suffice. In 1865, he wrote to Barmen: "What is the attitude of our mission society as to native teachers?

Where there are talented men, who are inspired with the fire of the spirit of the love of Jesus, they surely accomplished more than we. It seems to me that it would not be as expensive, as if everything must be done by European missionaries. Then, too, they can penetrate into all the peculiarities of the life of their people, and thus can prepare the way for us; for the people must finally stand on their own feet, and train and support their own teachers and pastors, as it has been the case also in other lands." Soon he needed teachers for the ever increasing number of schools, and assistants in the branch stations and congregations. A seminary in Prausorat for the training of teachers, under the direction of missionary Schreiber (later inspector of missions at Barmen) all too soon again failed (1875). But even before this Nommensen was convinced that the training of Batak teachers must be carried out in Silindung, toward which place the central point of the mission clearly advanced. Since no missionary was at hand, who could be appointed expressly for this work, Nommensen conceived the original idea of starting traveling schools (1873).

He let the young men, who were to be trained, travel back and forth from him and Johannsen and Mohri, so that they were instructed alternately several days by each of them. In this there was naturally much disturbance and interruption. For if the young men had safely arrived with books,

cooking utensils, and supplies, and the instruction was to begin, it perhaps pleased several quarreling parties to appear before the missionary. These people were not accustomed to wait, but impetuously demanded to be heard, or people came asking for medicine. A calm, steady instruction under such circumstances was out of the question. But it is characteristic of Nommensen, that, in spite of all deficiencies and obstructions, causing so much labor, he held fast to this unique traveling school for four years, as long as no other method was available. He needed assistants and so they trained, difficult as the circumstance might be. In 1877, conditions had cleared, so that missionary Johannsen could venture the establishment of a seminary in Pansurnapitu, and with faithful devotion he conducted it until his death in 1898. Nommensen gladly gave this work to others. It seems that he did not especially relish the work of instructing.

But when the seminary in Silindung was opened with the hearty approval of the local chiefs and Christians, Nommensen established the principle, which in missionary circles long had been acknowledged as correct, but no one had dared to carry out, namely, that the students of the seminary themselves must bear the expense of their education. It was a bold move at that time. Would the parents, poor people, just taken away from heathendom, give up their sons for the new and strange calling of a teacher, and besides bear all the expenses for their support, tuition, and books for some years? Nommensen never spent much time with misgivings, but ventured fearlessly and joyously, where others would tremble and hold back.

God permitted him also to succeed in this. Soon enough, yes, more than enough young men crowded into the seminary, and gladly the mothers of the students born in the valley brought the necessary supplies, while those coming from a distance brought the needed money with them. By this the young Batak church from the beginning was inoculated with the consciousness, that it must provide for all its servants itself. And that was mainly Nommensen's merit. In consequence, when later the number of baptized grew rapidly beyond expectations, and the hundreds became thousands and ten thousands, the mission society was not overburdened; the expense of this, the largest of its mission fields, remained moderate and were confined to the support of the missionaries and a subsidy to the salary of helpers in those heathen and Mohammedan sections, where ground was laid and the number of Christians was still too small to bear all expenses alone.

We shall not at this time describe how the work was done in Pansurnapita, and later at Sipoholon, to which place the seminary was transferred in 1900. The number of students continually increased, since with every year more helpers were needed in school and congregation. Johannsen, in 1877, began with 12 students, but the number grew to 120. Of course, soon Johannsen was unable to do the work alone; other brethren came to his assistance. Later even a second teacher's seminary was started in Toba. It was Nommensen especially who continually pressed for an increase in Batak teachers, because his whole mission method was designed with the assistance of such men in view. As the advancing civilization and increased problems demanded a more comprehensive and deeper training of the seminary students, Nommensen with all fervor promoted this. He never succumbed to the danger of resting on gains accomplished, and to make a law binding for all time of the things which in the earlier days had been proven and necessary. He was ready to adopt all reasonable innovations, as the remarkably fast changing conditions demanded them. He never clung to the old order, because "it has always been so."

A still bolder step Nommensen dared in 1882, when on his suggestion it was decided to make an attempt to train and employ native preachers, Pandita Batak. They began with four students. Even if the need of ordained fellow workers was great in the rapidly growing congregations, it cannot be

denied that this was a daring move. No other mission society in the Dutch Indies had yet considered the ordination of native pastors. Nommensen tried it in faith, and the results fully justified his cheerful expectations: most of the Batak pastors (Pandita) have satisfactorily filled their posts as comparatively independent leaders of smaller congregations, and grew into the work. The early employment of native pastors evinced missionary prudence. An excessive feeling of authority on the one side and, on the other, prejudice of the high superiority of the white missionary over the colored, in many other mission fields prevented the practice of using ordained natives, in spite of all talk in principle about training for independence. Nommensen well knew the weakness of his Christians, even the most advanced, and knew that the Pandita Batak would not be paragons of piety and virtue and ability, but he argued, that the responsibility placed upon them and the confidence rested in them would help them win the strength, and that they would grow together with the new problem.

In the selection of Pandita Batak to be trained Nommensen employed a fine method. Among the Batak teachers who, during a lengthier period of work, had been found efficient, the most gifted were chosen for the theological course. Thus no one could apply for this calling. For entrance in the teacher's seminary willing young people could apply and submit to an examination; but for the ministry the conference of missionaries itself selected the most suitable. For two years they then were introduced into Holy Scriptures and instructed in all things necessary for their office. The course was very thorough. These men were already married and brought their wives and children along for the course, and so they also could be influenced and instructed in various ways. Nommensen himself did not take part in the instruction of Pandita students; it seems that this activity did not attract him. But the school and the further development of the Pandita enjoyed his active cooperation. After the experience with the first native pastors had shown satisfactory results, he insisted that as often as possible new courses were instituted. At his death the Batak church employed 143 Pandita Batak; today there are several hundred (1934). [In 1950-500].

The encouraging experiences with the first Pandita Batak unfortunately induced Nommensen to make too great demands of them in independence, of which they were not yet capable. Later he acknowledged his error and now promoted the custom, that the young pastors, after their ordination, at first for some time work at the side of an experienced missionary. As time went on, he judged more soberly and correctly about the Pandita Batak: "We dare not expect too much of them, or over estimate them." In no sphere of congregational life did they perform pioneer work, and in maturity and qualities of leadership are not the equal of the missionaries; some also show a lack of zeal. Yet essentially they became all that was hoped of them--fellow workers of the missionaries in the congregation and evangelization, who, at first in smaller posts, instead of the missionaries took the congregational work on their shoulders and gradually, under supervision, grew more deeply into their duties and the feeling of responsibility. With the exception of a few isolated sad experiences, they measured up to the sober picture which Nommensen had drawn of them and their work. They have contribute much to the building of the Batak church.

Thus Nommensen, without ever striving for it, became the leader and actual chief of the Batak mission in every respect. His unique, varied talents, his daring, his originality, which always prompted him to go his own ways, his accomplishments, to which God gave His approval, and, not the least his sufferings, placed him at the head, although he certainly did not seek it. If not his sincere humility had made it impossible, he could have said with St. Paul: "I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I,

but the grace of God, which was with me." In 1881, his position of leadership was formally recognized by the mission authorities, in that he was appointed as "Ephorus", president of the Batak mission and endowed with corresponding authority. He was then making his first visit at home, where he left his wife and children, to return to Sumatra alone. This sojourn in Germany, among other matters, was utilized in preparing a church ritual for the Batak church, in which task missionary Koedding and the mission inspectors Schreiber and Fabri assisted. The valuable things about this church is that it is not formed according to European models, but that it only establishes that which had already been attained under God's guidance and Nommensen's foresight. In the foreword Fabri writes: "I know of no other example in the history of missions, where a nation, which at the beginning of the mission work still practiced cannibalism, had been in so short a time so christianized that the introduction of a church ritual would have been possible." He further praises the originality of this church ritual, which in many respects surpasses that which is required in Germany: "Thus the regulation of the office of elders is so ample and, at least, in Silindung already actually introduced, that in its provisions it substantially exceeds our presbyteries and church councils. Also the office of teachers is remarkably many-sided, and has become an actual church office. The movable band of evangelists, the pioneers of mission work, forcibly reminds us of an unsatisfied need in our state churches. All in all, there a multiplicity of offices has been introduced, which reminds us of the oldest times of the Christian church, as it is pictured to us in Ephesians 4:11; they have evangelists, pastors, elders, teachers, and even apostles, and so, I believe, even prophets will not be lacking. Most happily, so it seems to me, the question of training natives for the service of the church has been solved in the Batak mission. In almost all more developed mission fields until now, only by an extensive course of from eight to ten years of training has a profession of clergymen been attained. This presents grievous disadvantages. The respective young people are estranged from the life of their people and become like Europeans, and at the same time are filled up with too much theory of learning. Then, too, the age at which these students must enter this course of training in those hot countries is an early one, and thus they reach the time of ordination still at a youthful age, and without sufficient experience in life and in the work. Over against this, the arrangement, which for years has proven effective in Silindung, offers great advantages. All first become teachers, and those, who in actual practice in years have succeeded as such, become evangelists; and the evangelists who have proven their ability in their activity, in time move up to the ordained ministry. Thus only experienced and tried men attain this office." The congregations were granted the free power of election, but this provision could not yet be carried out.

That which we have seen as characteristic in the congregational life in Silindung, was now established for the entire existing and the still developing Batak mission: the institution of church elders as coworkers in the pastoral care and in the administration of the congregation; the cooperation of the chiefs as the family heads, with their powerful influence; the office of teachers, who were not only school masters, but helpers in the congregational work, and required corresponding training; besides these, evangelists, whose duty it was to offer the Gospel to the heathen; and, finally, the Batak pastors, to whom congregations of their own could be entrusted: a qualified army of fellow workers from among the natives, without whom the Batak mission could not have developed so quickly and soundly. The congregations of every district now join in conferences, which are attended by the missionaries, as well as the native representatives of the congregations. Once annually the general conference

meets, which is the highest court of appeal and the law-making body of the entire Batak church. Here, too, there are Batak representatives beside the missionaries. Until now the native Christians have been too inactive in these conferences, perhaps not entirely without fault of the missionaries. In addition to the main conference Nommensen had instituted a synod for the Batak elders and chiefs which enjoyed great popularity, but, indeed, did not fully meet the expectations desired. The fundamental ideas of all these original and sound church forms came from Nommensen; with them only that has been established which he had devised and introduced in Silindung from the first beginnings.

At the head of the entire church is a council, consisting of three missionaries, whose chairman is the president, or Ephorus, appointed by the mission board. This man exercises supreme authority over the entire mission, supervises the missionaries, the teachers, elders, evangelists, and Pandita Batak. As president Nommensen was called upon to travel and inspect a great deal. With untiring zeal he carried out these manifold duties, rarely resting, not looking for any ease and comfort. In the beginning of the ninties missionary Schuetz was appointed as Ephorus for the south, beside Nommensen, who, however, retained supreme direction. Later the mission board divided the entire Batak mission field into five districts, over each of which a president is placed for the relief of the Ephorus, who again kept supreme direction. Even without this decree of the mission board at home, Nommensen would have kept the reins in his hands, because all the missionaries, as well as the native Christians, respected him as their superior leader and willingly submitted to his regulations. Besides, he was a very mild superior, who hardly ever showed his authority, never boasted of his rich experiences, nor referred to his age, but met everyone as a brother with equal rights, as a father and pastor, to whom everyone, who looked into his sincere blue eyes, extended full confidence. It was a unique relation based on the fact that Nommensen was the God-given Apostle of the Batak. Everything that had been accomplished in Sumatra, had come through him. To submit to such a man surely was not difficult. The natives looked up to him with complete confidence, and saw only good in him, from whom all good had come to them. Perhaps one might criticize him for not always taking such a firm and energetic stand, as conditions demanded. He hesitated to speak a hard word to others, and sometimes this was not good. But his other merits surely made up for such deficiencies.

At the close of an activity of twenty years in Silindung, there occurred the visit of Nommensen to Germany, of which we have already spoken, the first visit he asked for (1880). Mainly the poor health of his wife made this journey necessary, as well as his desire to give his growing children an opportunity to receive an education at home. In Germany there was much to do: the church ritual was prepared, many important questions were discussed with the mission board; frequently Nommensen was asked to preach at mission festivals, because at all places mission friends were anxious to hear from his own mouth about the wonderful blessings which God had bestowed in Batak lands. As soon as possible Nommensen returned to his field of labor. The parting from his children was painful to him. His wife, too, he left at home, because her health still was very poor, and he preferred to leave her with the children. So he brought the sacrifice of separation from his life's companion, which sacrifice but few appreciated in its full weight. He did not see her again, for, but a few years later she was called home (1887).

In 1881 Nommensen was on his way home again. His entry in Pearadja, where missionary Metzler had substituted for him during his absence, was a triumphal procession. He writes: "The chiefs had come to Sibolga to greet us, with several elders. The school children with the teachers had spent the night in the woods near Banuadji. Further on at Hutaradja crowds of

people, men and women, came to meet us, and the closer we came to Silindung, the larger the crowds became. In the valley of Silindung itself the roads were all lined with people. After I had greeted the families of Metzler, Mohri, and Bonn, I had to go into the church to make a short address to the people who had gathered there. I would rather have locked myself alone in the church for an hour, but this was impossible." A few hours later the Christmas celebration began. The meeting developed into a grand service of thanksgiving. What may have moved about his soul, when he compared these thousands, gathered about the Word of God with the population, as he found it on his first visit to Silindung! After the service he had to shake hands with all who had appeared. "I took a chair and sat on the porch of our house, and then the hand shaking began. I had to give my hand to the thousands, of course, a long time passed by. As much as I love the Batak, this time I thought to myself, I wish that I were through, for my hand was sore and pained me for a long time. But who could blame them, since we were all happy over God's goodness and faithfulness?" It is expressive for his heart, which embraced all lost, that at the sight of the crowded church in Pearadja he was reminded with sadness of the alienation from God in Germany. "What a difference between here and Germany! Here the full churches, and there the spacious, hollow halls without people. How difficult it was for me to speak in Europe in the churches and outside them at mission festivals, to such a small number of people. I was spoiled, but then it is a pity that there are so few who have a heart for the cause of Jesus, and thus for their own salvation! The European Christendom is like an opium addict, who lives on in his pleasant dreams until body and soul are stunted, and death inexorably steps in and uncovers the naked reality to him."

Chapter 6: TOBA

" The fields are white already to harvest." John 4:35.

For a long time already Nommensen and his coworkers had cast eyes to Toba, where, on the shores of the legendary large lake thousands of people lived and heathenism still prevailed in its unbroken power. But Nommensen, who in the occupation of Toba would have seen the fulfillment of his old dream from the days of Barus, could wait until God's hour had come. The missionaries Heine, Johannsen, and Mohri had in 1873 made a premature visit up to the brim of the mountains of Lake Toba, which had almost cost their lives. Nommensen was content from the first, to have a station established by missionary Metzler on the so called steppe, a plateau between Silindung and Toba (Bahalbatu, 1875), which, however, could hardly be held against the savage, thievish population, which had no desire for any more exalted things. In the same year Nommensen together with Johannsen made his first visit to Toba, escorted from one district to another by friendly chiefs, who secured a hospitable reception for him at all places, and guaranteed his safety. They first went to Bahalbatu on the steppe, there to await chiefs from Toba, who were to bring them to Balige. At that time no one dared travel in territory which was still free without escort of friendly chiefs, who introduced the travelers to other chiefs. There was no rest in store for them in those days, because they were continually surrounded by multitudes of people who were obtrusive and inquisitive, but still behaved better than they would have expected after the report which was current in Silindung about the Tobanese. To the chiefs the brethren sent gifts, as the custom demanded. All of the missionaries who worked in Silindung and on the steppe had divided the expenses among themselves to be able to bear the burden. In general, good impressions were gained. Nommensen wrote: "The people, though savage and cruel, still are sociable, and it will not be more difficult to dwell among them, than it was in the first years in Silindung." They had already met with some friendly souls on their first visit. "Otherwise we must say that on the entire journey the Batak treated us politely. It never happened to us that any person threatened or insulted us, or even called after us, as it still often happens in some regions here in Silindung, where we visit less frequently. We had expected to find matters worse, because the people of Pohan are known as the most brutal people, from whom even the Malaysians, the Padris, flee. (Pohan means Upper-Toba. The Padris were a fanatical Mohammedan sect, who had invaded the Batak lands some years before.)

When the chiefs from Balige arrived, the missionaries went down to Lake Toba. In Balige they were friendly received by the local chiefs and quartered in a village in a Sopo. Hardly had they arrived there, when hundreds of people gathered, who all wanted to climb up on the Sopo to see the white men. They had to leave the frail hut and settle on the street. Then came showers of questions, exclamations of surprise, and requests from all sides. They brought sick people, asked for medicine, and invited them to visit the different villages. Hardly did the two during the next few days eat; uninterruptedly the multitude surrounded them and marveled at everything they saw in the white men and heard from them. When the market day came, and countless people came down in their boats from Samosir, Sigaol, and Uluan, the crowding became almost insufferable. One man in the multitude cried out: "You are lying; there is no life after this life; there is no resurrection of the dead." Nommensen answered him: "Then why do you bring sacrifices to your ancestors, if you do not believe in a life beyond?" Answer: "Oh, that is only a custom, nothing more." Again and again he cried: "You are lying!" Nommensen: "Do you not believe what you have not yet seen?" "So it is." Then Nommensen amid the resounding

laughter of the listeners replied: "Fine! Then first show me your brain, that I may believe you have a brain." In other respects the people were polite after their fashion, and it seemed that they would gladly receive messengers of the Gospel. They also succeeded in helping several seriously ill with their medicines. Thus the first visit in Toba was exciting, but also very promising.

Looking over these beautiful and densely populated regions, Nommensen wrote: "When will this great multitude bow its knee before the Lord Jesus? In spirit I already see everywhere christian congregations, schools, and churches, and whole multitudes of Batak. Large and small I see them wend their way to church, and everywhere hear the bells, calling to the house of God. I see the great flat or plateau cultivated, see gardens and farms on now bare heights, woods in verdant green, and all over decent villages and dwellings and well dressed descendants of this nation. Even more, I see Sumatran preachers and teachers on all pulpits and at the desks, teaching the way to heaven to young and old. You will say, I am dreaming. I say, No, no! I am not! My faith beholds all this; it must, it will come true; for all kingdoms must be the kingdoms of God and His Christ; every tongue must confess that Jesus is the Lord to the glory of God, the Father. Therefore I am of good cheer, even if the people now still resist and make all sorts of plans to prevent the Word of God. They could sooner hold the ocean back from the shores, than hold the Word of God from their hearts. Already it is beginning to dawn, soon the Sun of Righteousness will appear in all its glory on the horizon of Batakland, over all, from the south to the shore of Toba." The first visit in Toba, indeed, brought no immediate results, but, as it appeared later, prepared the way for future events. Sooner than the missionaries had dared hope, the hour came, when Toba was opened.

Toward the end of the year 1877 disturbances arose in Batak lands. Reports circulated that the Singamangarajah with a band of heavily armed Atjinese was marching through the land, and would put an end to the missions. The resident of Sibolga finally regarded it his duty to intervene and make a campaign over the steppe to Toba. Wherever his troops met the enemy they routed them. When more troops had arrived they advanced to Toba and also visited Batara, the dwelling place of the Singamangarajah, who had previously fled. Over Lintongnihuta and Huta Gindjang they marched down into the bay of Meat, from there again to climb up to the height before Toba. Up there thousands of Tobanese had gathered to prevent the ascent of the soldiers, by rolling down stones and by gunfire. It was a weary climb up the hill, but, arriving at the top, the soldiers opened fire, and in a disorderly flight the enemy ran away. From there they went to Balige. Everywhere the chiefs surrendered to the government. But where they did not immediately declare their willingness to do this, the villages were burned down and a penalty imposed on the vanquished. Here and there bitter battles still were fought. But the result was that the steppe and the southern shore of Lake Toba were brought into subjection. At last there was peace, and the incessant warring came to an end.

Nommensen, together with missionary Simoneit, accompanied the expedition as interpreters and mediators; he went into the villages and tried to induce the people to voluntarily surrender. Thus he could prevent much bloodshed, and thereby the confidence of the Batak on the steppe and in Toba in him increased, for they saw that he meant well with them. He was thankful that he could take part in the expedition. He wrote: "It is a happy turn of events by the hand of God, and thus we can see that the Lord has thoughts of peace toward the people, that at the head of the campaign there is a man who for years has kept his eye on the Batak and at his side an officer who also has compassion with the people, who is exceptionally qualified to command their respect by courageous action, and yet

magnanimously will let a fugative run away. From this the Batak gain an impression of the superiority and of the generosity of the Europeans, so that they cannot hate them, especially since the Lord has brought them to the conviction that they must plead guilty. If matters continue in the present way, in a few years we shall see a vast field of labor before us. When the tempers are a little more cooled of, we can cheerfully move in, especially so because even now the missionaries are regarded as protectors over against the government. They see that those who accept our advice have nothing to suffer and nothing to fear. Those, who have had to suffer, must blame themselves, because they did not listen to us. Therefore see to it that in a few years a whole army may advance on Toba; for now the mission opportunity is come for Toba." How correctly did the far-seeing pioneer judge also here, after patiently waiting and biding his time!

It was gratifying that, after the expedition to Toba had been completed, the residents sent a letter of thanks to Nommensen with very complimentary words for his and Simoneit's assistance in the subjugation of the tribes of Toba. Nommensen received the following letter: "The governor is authorized to express the gratitude of the government to the missionaries of the Rhenish Mission Society, residing in Silindung, particularly the gentlemen L. Nommensen and A. Simoneit, for the good services which they have rendered at the occasion of the expedition against Toba. Furthermore, by this decree the sum of 1000 Gulden is allowed to them to indemnify them for the expenses which they may have incurred, and the losses, which they may have suffered. They may make requisition for this sum at any time."

With the annexation of Silindung and the subjugation of Toba very favorable conditions were created for the mission. For the mission it was better that the government at first did not completely occupy Toba. Nommensen writes: "We have not had the sufficient workers to supply everything, and then Islam, which everywhere follows the Dutch administration, would have taken the lead away from us." Now there were able to work quietly in Silindung, and this was very acceptable to the government. But to the haughty Tobanese the painful humiliation had been very wholesome; they were thereby torn out of their proud isolation. Now more frequently Tobanese came to visit in Silindung and felt quite at home.

Thus unrestrained ties were knit for new relations. When Tobanese chiefs with a large retinue visited Silindung, they were surprised to see what Christianity had made out of their people. They marveled at the blessed changes which had taken place. Finally, without any pressure on the part of the missionaries, the miracle happened--chiefs from Toba (Balige) called on Nommensen and asked for a missionary. But the Dutch Colonial Government would give its consent only if these chiefs personally would guarantee the safety of the life and property of the missionaries; yes even more, at the same time they must receive a Dutch official and a detachment of soldiers. Severe as this latter condition seemed to them, yet they submitted, so that they might receive the desired missionary.

Here it became evident, how fundamentally determining the victory of the Gospel in Silindung was for the whole Batak land. What had been attained there with hard and patient labor in years of suffering and endurance, now proved attractive and desirable for the rest of the heathen world. Toba now of itself opened the door, and, although the beginning there, too, was difficult enough, and paganism again offered serious resistance, still it was not necessary, to battle through all the difficulties and obstacles encountered in Silindung. The first two missionaries of Toba, Pilgram and Kessel, called by the supreme chief, Ompa Batutahan in Balige (1881) found willing hearers there, could open a school, and, although seriously disturbed repeatedly by pagan enmity, after about one year, could baptize the first persons, whose number then rapidly

increased.

Once more (1883) a concerted resistance of the Singamangarajah and his cohorts took place. In the meantime Balige had been occupied with a small garrison. There the troops of the Singamangarajah gathered after they had previously destroyed the station Lintongnihuta. Fortunately missionary Kessel had fled before and thus saved his life. Likewise the station Muaca was destroyed after missionary Bonn had left. There were only thirty soldiers in Balige, who hastily entrenched themselves in the village. Thousands of armed Batak had gathered to annihilate the Europeans under the command of the Controller Welsink. But he, in the early morning, unexpectedly attacked the enemy and lured him out of his fortified village, and with several well-aimed salvos brought about confusion and flight. The Singamangarajah, who was considered immune, was wounded. With this the victory in Toba was decided. But on the steppe and in Silindung the marauders set fire to several buildings. Finally the government succeeded in restoring order and quiet. With that the power of the Singamangarajah was broken. His defeat promoted the extension of the Gospel, and the zeal of the little congregation in Balige brought many under the influence of the Word of God. As early as 1884, the large annual conference was held in Balige with 16 missionaries and 600 native teachers, elders, and chiefs, and prominent members of the congregations. And thus, two years later, a second station in Toba, Laguboti, could be opened by the missionary Bonn.

In order to work the regions around Lake Toba better, Nommensen had a sailboat constructed in Hamburg, which was again assembled in Sumatra by missionary Schrey. As the site for this work a little island opposite Muara was chosen. To this place Nommensen brought the young missionary, who, for several months, together with missionary Kessel, performed the hard labor, always surrounded by countless people, who inquisitively observed the strange doings of the missionary. Later the first trial voyages were made with the boat, which performed valuable services in exploring the regions about the lake.

But now Nommensen no longer was content in Silindung, where everything went along quietly. As long as there was fighting and suffering in Silindung, and as long as there was building to be done on the foundations of the young church, it never entered his mind to move on, for he was not a person who blindly rushed on, but a solid workman who did thorough work. In no way did he have any ambition to be the pioneer on the steppe or in Toba. Personal glory was never the motive of his labors. But now everything in Silindung ran along in a quiet, safe course. There his compassionate heart drove him to bring the joyful message to the heathen of the wide Toba region who were still fettered in the bonds of death. The congregation of Pearadja with its 4000 souls was the largest and inwardly strongest in Batak lands. Now Nommensen turned it over to missionary Metzler, who for several years had worked together with him and later served the congregation for many years, and moved to Toba. With this the goal was attained which he had set for himself at Barus. There he helped at first in Laguboti, but with the intention as soon as possible to move on eastward (1885). Here he could soon establish several branch stations, even before there was a mother congregation. He also planned the employment of evangelists in eastern Toba. For the time being the colonial government did not permit the establishment of more mission stations in the still independent east. Laguboti was the present limit of the region taken under administration; settlements beyond were not permitted for fear of disagreeably complications, although several chiefs from the east had not only asked for missionaries, but also guaranteed their safety. Nevertheless, tried native helpers could there perform valuable preliminary work. Nommensen made use of this time of waiting and preparation for extensive journeys on and around Lake Toba. With his sailboat he traveled

the lake to become acquainted with the leading chiefs and thus do preliminary work for future establishments. Even then he looked up Bakara, Muara, the island Samosir, the regions on the opposite side, Sigaol, Uluan, Sitanggar, and others, where stations were established later. Although he was fifty years of age, he submitted to the hardships of the journeys with youthful vigor. For weeks he camped either in the narrow boat or in filthy native huts, spent many a stormy night on the lake, and lived entirely as a native. Once the wind blew off his hat on the lake, and somewhere it was driven to the shore. Then the report circulated, that the grandfather had been drowned. The alarming report even reached Germany. In the meantime his office as president compelled him to make journeys to Silindung and Angkola. We must remember that at that time he had no comfortable home to which he might retire; for he had left his wife with the children in Germany. During these years the aging man was always on the go. Wherever missionary families were in trouble, Nommensen appeared to help them. The spreading of the Gospel in Toba later would not have progressed so rapidly, if he had not so well prepared the ground by his untiring journeys. We others could sow and reap where he had cleared the ground and done the plowing before us.

From his journeys he always returned to Laguboti, where in the meantime several young missionaries had arrived, waiting for permission to locate in the east. Finally in 1890 it came. Nommensen had frequently already visited the region of Sigumpar several hours distant from Laguboti, where, in the midst of the heathen, a few Christians from Pearadja had settled. Of his first visit there he relates: "On January 6th, 1885, I rode to Sigumpar where several families from our congregation had settled, because it had been their former home. The chiefs there had all agreed to get us into their regions and had offered their guarantee to the controller, as the stipulation requires. In Sigumpar there are 85 villages, quite densely populated. On the first day I was the guest of the chief of the larger party, the second day with the other, smaller portion, to which the few Christians belonged. The people made good use of the time to become acquainted with the Word of God. They were attentive listeners far into the night and would not stop with questions, until I said: 'Now I cannot speak any longer; my throat is sore.' On both days there were crowds of people. For the other party a cow was slaughtered and a festive meal served. On the next day the other party did the same. We roamed through the countryside and also visited a place of sacrifice. Only with difficulty could we force our way through the brush to the small temple. On the third day I conducted services especially for the Christians, and then, at noon, went to the market place, where about ten thousand people were assembled and we could hardly hear our own words. After I had crossed the market place several times with the chiefs, we sat down at a place near the end of the market, where once more I was able to proclaim our Lord Jesus Christ as Son of God and Son of Man, our Savior and Redeemer to the audience."

In most remarkable ways Nommensen was directed to Sigumpar. Once he had had opportunity there, in the last moment, to save a girl, who had been bound, already mutilated, and condemned to die, whose relatives had appealed to him, and return her to them in Parsambilan. By this he had gained many sincere friends and his name had become known and popular. From this time on he made it a point to visit Sigumpar frequently, at least once a week. Heathen showed him a vacant house which he could occupy when he came to them. The people had gathered the money among themselves, to be able to offer the house to the missionary as a refuge. So important it was to them, that the missionary, who had become dear to them, would remain in their midst. The house to him and to the people was to be a promise that, as soon as possible, he would come to them permanently. The manner in

which Nommensen gained a firm foothold in Sigumpar, again was quite original. There two parties had quarreled for a long time about a certain parcel of land. Growing tired of the strife, they finally presented the matter to Nommensen, and, to remove the bone of contention, he proposed to the quarreling parties, that they donate the land to him, according to the proverb: "When two large dogs are fighting for a bone, a little dog comes and takes it away from them." They laughed at this and consented. Thus a fine place had been gained for a mission station even before the missionary could move in. At that, both parties regarded themselves as noble donors and from the beginning took a favorable stand toward Nommensen. How different conditions were now from 25 years earlier, when in Silindung every building place was refused.

Inspector Schreiber at the time expressed the opinion: "Nommensen in Sigumpar achieved something which no other of our missionaries has ever achieved. These savage men, whom he had with difficulty just restrained from cannibalism, now appealed to him as mediator and then not only donated the parcel of land in question to him, but also a very good house, so that he might at once settle among them, as in a fully prepared station. But the main thing was, that the same people now displayed such a longing for the Word of God that on every Sunday services must be conducted at eight different places by brother Nommensen and his assistants and, in his opinion, six more branch stations must be erected." The time of waiting in Laguboti Nommensen employed in making the chiefs willing for the building of a good road, which would make the southern regions of Toba accessible. As no real compulsion could be applied, there was much to be prepared and mediated until all were willing to cooperate, and then actually gave the necessary land and the workers. The missionaries had every reason to be happy over the beautiful road, which was completed even before the permission had been granted to occupy the eastern sections, and we can understand that Nommensen, when in 1892, at the annual festival in the church at Barmen he reported on his work, in the joy of his heart spoke almost exclusively about the beautiful roads just completed in Toba. To him they meant the preparation for the coming of the Lord; the hearers in Barmen, indeed, did not quite understand, why the well known and respected leader of the Batak mission told them so much about road building there.

Sigumpar to Nommensen seemed to be ideally located for his work as Ephorus. "I am here sitting right in the middle of our whole work at Lake Toba. In a few hours I can, on the one side, to the west, get to Balige, and in the same time east to the outlet of the lake; likewise I can very comfortably reach the great regions behind me, or in one hour sail over the lake to the large spaces of Sigaol and Uluan on the opposite side." On November 18th, 1886, he was able to begin his work there. The people willingly helped him with the erection of the building. "So with the help of God, we have again made a step forward. Until now I have three salaried teachers here, but I really ought to have seven, since on every Sunday divine services must be held at eight different places. I get along by keeping with me the four young men who left our seminary two years ago, but must still pass another examination. Probably very soon another half dozen branches will be formed, so that then I will need even more workers." He found the greatest pleasure in once more standing in the midst of practical work. "I am happy that I can again dig in with both hands into the actual mission work."

It was a marvelous dispensation of God that at the close of the eighties the doors were opened so wide in Toba. Balige and Laguboti were supplied, four further stations prepared; here and there in the pagan lands Batak evangelists and teachers preached and taught; almost everywhere the Word of God was willingly received, and, even though the deeper understanding still was lacking, and one could not speak about a universal

longing for salvation, paganism was no longer ready to do battle; all were under the impression that a new time with a new custom includes justice, custom, and religion was approaching, and that, since the old form no longer could be retained, Christianity would be the best form of life for the future. Thereby a great deal had been gained; paganism had lost its power, and to everyone the way into the Christian congregation was open. It was remarkable how readily the chiefs of the then still independent regions accepted comparatively hard stipulations. They promised not to wage wars among each other; their difficulties they would submit to the Dutch official in Laguboti; they pledged to abstain from gambling, which they had indulged in with so much passion, and to forbid it to their subjects; and finally they abolished the old market custom, according to which, just as previously in Silindung, a market was held every four days whereby the congregational life was much disturbed. Now they held their markets every seven days and so, in other words, introduced the Christian division of time. These were far-reaching promises, which were not always fully complied with; but the people showed their good will and were ready to adjust themselves to the coming new conditions. Such an opportunity of the open door the Batak mission had not yet experienced. After this, in 1890, permission was granted by the colonial government for the establishment of four further mission stations in the southeast corner of Lake Toba.

Again it was Nommensen who strongly urged that they make full use of the unusually favorable situation. He was anxious that the mission might as quickly as possible gain ground from paganism and, at all events, get ahead of the Islam. Although not all of those who had been won for Christianity were converted in the full meaning of the word, yet he counted it a great advantage that they had consciously turned their backs on paganism. Sober, as always, he viewed the Batak situation: "It now seems a foregone conclusion to the chiefs and other leaders, that they must become Christians, though still not yet quite conscious of the reason why. It is possible that the multitude may backslide." The victory in Silindung had become decisive for the whole Batak land. The influence of the existing congregations and the communication with them accomplishes more than a half dozen missionaries, who are isolated and alone, and must teach the people so much by the example."

There was actually no time to be lost, for Mohammedanism already made a strong bid for the Batak nation. From the south its representatives came, and likewise from the northeast, from Asahan and the eastern coast, and they spread their propaganda with great zeal and skill. Common experience in the Dutch East Indies shows, that at all places, with the coming of the colonial government and the establishment of order in the countries, the way was opened for Islam, even though the officers did not help in the least. Now the question was, whether the Tobanese would become Christians or Mohammedans. There it was necessary, as soon as possible, to cover the land with a net of stations, train a large number of teachers and evangelists, and open wide the door for the entrance into the Christian congregation. Nommensen did not want to do superficial work: that he had proven in fact in Silindung: but his goal was to further the spreading of Christianity in the coming years to such an extent, that in all places living congregations existed and thus formed a dam against Islam. It was to be expected that with the strong national feeling of the Batak, the multitude would follow, if first a considerable portion, the spiritual leaders of the people, the best people, offered the evidence of fact that Christianity is a good thing. God clearly and distinctly pointed to this way. By the cooperation of the mission and the colonial government the population became willing to accept the men and only waited for wise leadership. They were polite and pleasant to the missionaries, offered no

serious resistance to their activities, erected schools and churches: in short, the land was open as never before.

Among the missionaries there were several who did not share Nommensen's opinions and believed that this great opportunity presented a greater danger than the former open hostility of paganism. Here two views clashed, both of which at all times have their champions. On the one hand, the far-seeing, claiming that at favorable opportunities the work must be done with a net, to christianize wide circles; the main stress must then be laid on the subsequent care and confirmation of those accepted into the congregation. The others wanted to wait as long as possible with the admission and baptism of the willing ones, so as to have only truly converted members in the congregations; they would work only with hook and line, rather hold back, so that no unworthy persons might be admitted. Subsequent developments proved Nommensen's contention correct. The stream could no longer be stemmed. When very soon hundreds applied for instruction unto baptism, cast away their idols, and promised to lead a Christian life, as well as they could, who could finally refuse them participation in the baptismal instruction, and in the end baptism? Model congregations with nothing but believers no one has gained, not even the most careful. At all places there were the more advanced and the weak, side by side, and even the keenest judge of men was unable to distinguish between the true believers and dead wood. But this much was accomplished that in but a few years paganism had been vanquished and that in Toba a strong dam had been erected against the Islam; even more, that in the congregations back and forth, a beautiful Christian life began to blossom, that the understanding for God's Word and His gifts increased, that many led a Christian life and died as believers, and that the nation, in the majority, became different, stonger, better, healthier, more pious, more pure. Of course, there were still many deficiencies and everything now depended on this that the young Christians received the most scrupulous care. Just as he had done in Silindung, Nommensen did everything within human power to introduce Christian discipline and morals, to have the Word of God spread over everyone. In Toba, where multitudes soon became so urgent, begging to be admitted, this part of the missionary work was the more responsible. For the people became aware that the way into the congregation had been made quite easy and convenient. Many a missionary sighed at this. Of all the missionaries Nommensen was the least timid in this respect, improving the advantages of the hour, and, on the other hand, no one has better recognized the importance of true educational work in the church, and pursued it with more energy. With all his pressing forward he was by no means only a pioneer missionary, as in his 28 years of service in Silindung he proved, as well as in the 32 years following in Toba.

Conditions were bad enough in Toba when the mission started. Murder and cruelty were the order of the day, cannibalism and other abominations still occurred frequently, even though they now feared the light of day. Lake Toba was the scene of daily piracies; boldly peaceful people were dragged away and sold into slavery. The right of the stronger fully prevailed. When a poor victim complained: "What have I done to you, that you tie me up?", he recieved the answer: "What has the fish done to you that you catch him?" Prisoners of war were cruelly mutilated, often their ears, noses, and lips were cut off. At night peaceful villages were attacked and the inhabitants murdered. For this the wronged party took revenge, and there was no end of warring. Charms were prepared from the corpses of children, who had been killed by pouring hot lead into their mouths (Pangulubalang); in the almost incessant wars women and children were treacherously attacked and mowed down; girls were forcibly married to some man, even if they fought against it with all their strength. A woman in Toba voiced her complaint: "Oh! how times have changed! Now there is

only chicken and pork in the market; formerly there sometimes was meat of human arms and legs." Others craved for meat of rats. A woman whose husband had fallen in the war, had the misfortune of being unable to pay a sum of about \$1.00, and for this reason she and her four children were treated as slaves. Another woman had two daughters and a son; one daughter was sold as a slave at the age of ten to Barus, the six year old son to the island of Samosir, the mother with the smallest child to Silindung, the latter for two sheep and two geese! Another example of Batak cruelty: While missionary Steinsiek was serving the growing congregation at Laguboti, he one day saw from a distance, how people were burning a grass hut in the field. At first he thought no more of it. Later he learned that the inhabitants of the neighboring villages had surrounded the hut, in which a leperous woman lived, and set fire to it. Horror over this inhuman act haunted him day and night and became the motive that missionary Steinsiek took interest in the lepers and settled them in a village. This asylum for lepers, Huta Salem, grew in time. Today it has a deacon, brother Rittich, as leader and manager, who there cares for about 450 lepers. "With such conditions one is not surprised to see a widow lie prone on the grave of her departed protector, for hours crying into the grave to tell her beloved dead one about her plight. On a journey I saw a mother, who with a daughter and a little son for two years had lain with their feet in the stocks. They were entirely emaciated, because they had received so little to eat. Their faces and feet were terribly swollen. The oppressor was a near relative, the cousin of her husband. If we see the abominations and injustices of these people, we are not surprised that the visiting hand of God has come over them in many ways."

From Sigumpar Nommensen wrote: "After I have worked in Sigumpar about one year, I have gained insight into the great poverty of the poor and the injustice of the wealthy. The last year has brought the poor still deeper into debt, because the harvest was poor. The reason for their poverty may in the first beginnings be found in their own mistakes, but the enormous rate of interest has done the most to bring the people into such straits. If the people have nothing to eat, they do not go borrowing, for there are no loans according to our conceptions, but they take five to twenty bushels of rice on interest from a wealthy man. Usually this happens about six months before the harvest, and if they are unable to do this, the debt is doubled annually. Twenty bushels thus in six months become a debt of forty bushels, and this is doubled every year. If anyone cannot pay, his children are taken into the houses of the wealthy and become their slaves. These social conditions are abysses which at present cannot be filled up. But I believe that the Gospel will bring about a change, also in this respect." This did take place.

Ruinous in a high degree was the mania for gambling among the people. First they played with trained fighting roosters, later with playing cards, which had found their way into the country as one of the first examples of culture. The Batak were passionate gamblers and played madly on and on, until they had lost all property, fields, cattle, clothes, and finally their own liberty. This often brings about quarreling, fighting, and even bloody wars. But the gambling slave, if he was not redeemed by relatives, was traded on as a slave, or, if they could not get rid of him, was eaten. Untold social misery results from this gambling, from which the Tobanese could not desist, although they saw what destruction was caused thereby. Here only strictly enforced laws could bring about a change. The people had a vivid feeling of their misery, and hoped that the missionaries would bring relief. Who would not here think of the word of the Savior: "The poor have the Gospel preached to them"? Where there is great distress and a longing for help, there we find an opportunity for harvest for the Savior; the harvest is great where the need is great.

As previously mentioned, in 1890 the government had granted permission to the missionaries who were waiting in Laguboti, to begin work in the eastern section of the lake shore, and now four mission stations were established at once: Sigumpar (missionary Nommensen), Siantar (Pohlig), Parparean (Christiansen), Parsambilan (Jung). Simultaneously with the mission stations teachers dwellings were built in the main stations and branches, and also many schools, which temporarily were also used as places for services. Here again the development of things proved the foresight of Nommensen correct. He had always urged that many pastors and teachers be trained, although at the moment there not always seemed sufficient work for them. But he was convinced that they would very soon urgently need this flock of helpers. Now this was the case. In view of the surprising readiness of the Tobanese, around the six main stations a group of smaller side stations or branches could be established, in which Batak teachers or pastors were placed. They could not have made use of the wonderful opportunity, without these fellow workers. But now the missionaries could to some extent comply with the many requests for pastors and teachers, and soon every Tobanese had the opportunity to hear the Gospel, if he so desired. Thus an almost complete coverage of the southern and southeastern lake shore had in a short time become a reality.

During the first years of his activity in Toba, Nommensen, besides the duties as president, which increased with every year, also took the care of the congregation at Sigumpar on his shoulders. This meant a tremendous burden of work, for in this territory there were about ten to fifteen thousand people; soon twelve branches were established, which had to be visited and supervised; hundreds applied for baptismal instruction and required careful teaching; the teachers and elders of the district were in need of further advancement and often had to be instructed further. As a skillful healer Nommensen was overrun with numerous sick from all parts of Toba, and he devoted much time to them. Besides, as father of the Batak mission, widely known from Silindung, he was the most popular and respected man, called "grandfather" by all, to whom the people came with all their troubles, to seek advice and help with him. Another would have broken down under the heavy load; Nommensen, 60 years old at the time, seemingly possessed inexhaustible strength, although (or as he said: because) he ate and slept very little. Uninterruptedly visitors swarmed about on his station; sick came, poor, and persons in need of comfort; chiefs placed their tangled matters of dispute before him, and Nommensen listened to them for hours with almost superhuman patience, and then with a carefully considered word put an end to the quarrel, or, if he did not succeed in this, obtained a postponement, that the passions of the quarreling parties might cool off. One almost got the impression that this judicial activity, a dreadful thing to most missionaries, was a pleasure to Nommensen. He devoted a great deal of time to this. Often it was necessary, wholesome, and brought forth good fruits. Further, representatives of other congregations came to Sigumpar with letters of their missionaries, to obtain the advice and decision of the Ephorus on difficult questions. From heathen parts of the country chiefs came and asked for missionaries and teachers: inhabitants of still unknown regions far to the north made their first visit to the man, whose praise they had heard, in order to make friends. Pandita Batak and teachers conferred with him about their employment or transfer. Here all the threads of the widely branched out work met. And with all that the abundant work of the growing congregation!

There Nommensen could well say with the Apostle Paul: "Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" The congregation Sigumpar grew and increased like all congregations in Toba. In the year 1900 it numbered 1300 souls. Then, finally, help was

sent to the overburdened leader, and that in the person of his son, Jonathan, who then took care of the congregation, while the father devoted his time exclusively to his presidential duties.

Of course, in the further course of events in Toba there were still many difficulties and entanglements. Thus in the year 1885 critical disturbances took place, when rajahs were appointed by the colonial government. There were many disappointed hopes, for the government could not possibly satisfy all who came in for a little crown. "We have drifted into a whirlwind without a mission ship", Nommensen wrote at the time. "Wind and waves run high over us in these days. But they are not the winds of God, but the enemy is blowing the storm trumpet with full cheeks, jolting and shaking us in a sieve, and also breaking off many a promising flower; but we are not afraid, for we know that the Lord is with us in storm and weather, and nothing can harm us and His work. We are sitting on a mine. The whole country is in a turmoil; outrages have already been committed. A bridge between Sigumpar and Laguboti has been broken down; the schoolhouse in Simandjuntak has been damaged, the one front wall completely destroyed; the heathen forbid the Christians to attend church and school; for the enmity is directed not only against the government, but also the missionaries." To this was added a deep agitation of the minds by some political and religious false teachers, who proclaimed a singular false teaching, with a Mohammedan tint, but also incited people against the government, and caused a great deal of trouble.

After Christianity had once gained a foothold in the southern shore of the lake, it could not be expected that it would stand still there. Nommensen soon cast his eyes further to the large island of Samosir in Lake Toba, which he had already visited in 1885 for the first time, and then also to the densely populated region of Uluan, situated in the extreme east corner. He frequently had these regions visited by native evangelists and elders, at which work those from Balige excelled in zeal and skill. But he himself also traveled a great deal, "so that the people gradually grow accustomed to us." Perhaps more than one half of the time during the year Nommensen spent traveling in the days when the further coverage of Toba was being prepared. Unfortunately he has written almost nothing about these highly interesting and often also perilous journeys. In the beginning he traveled in the already mentioned sailboat, then in canoes, as the natives use them, then in a row boat made by missionary Pohlig, until some time later mission friends gave him a speedy motor boat, with which traveling became much more comfortable and safe. Probably not many missionaries have traveled as much in their lives, as Nommensen; he was able to sing a song about the dangers and discomforts of traveling. But he never made much of a fuss about it.

Before any of the new stations in Samosir, Sigaol, Muara, and Uluan were established, Nommensen made tours of investigation there and conducted the difficult preliminary negotiations. At all places he was well known. Other missionaries said: "How thankful were we young missionaries, who had been appointed for these new regions, that the aged, experienced brother spared no trouble to assist us in selecting a site for the station, in the often difficult deliberations with the leading men, and helping us in the first trials. We felt so secure when Nommensen had taken the matter into his tried and capable hands."

It did happen that he made a mistake in locating a station. When missionary Lett, after a serious illness, could not return to the island Nias, but was assigned his field of labor in Sumatra, he was to take up the neglected steppe (between Silindung and Lake Toba). There Nommensen did not select for his dwelling place one of the populated regions of the plateau, Butar, or Bahelbatu, or Lobusiragar, the earlier stations, which had temporarily been vacated by governmental order, but a very lonesome

place, Silaitlait, where at the time there was a single house. Although all missionaries advised against this, Nommensen with a stubborn tenacity, which he sometimes displayed, insisted on his decision, in the expectation that in this location, which, indeed, was centrally located, many would soon settle; Lett later suffered a great deal from the lonesomeness of the place, and finally it had to be abandoned. But as a rule Nommensen hit upon the right thing. At the establishment of stations he knew how to make use of the petty jealousies of the little and great chiefs with much shrewdness and, in general, to hitch people, even the wrong ones, before his wagon. He was later accused that he had placed many mission stations too closely together and yielded too much to the jealousies of the petty rulers. This he, indeed, did repeatedly; but in this, as with the branches already mentioned, it must be considered, that the mission in those times could hardly act differently. Only in this way was it possible to make the chiefs willing to tolerate the new religion. An offended little chief could forbid his subjects the attendance at services and the intercourse with the missionary. One had to be thankful if regions were opened, and if individual stations actually were too close to one another (e.g. in Uluan, Lumban, Tobu and Silamosik) this could be changed again later. The independent starting in new territories in the time of laying foundations, could not yet be entrusted to native helpers. Today one or the other main station may be discontinued without hesitation and turned over to capable Pandita Batak or teachers. If a chief could be persuaded only by permitting a missionary to locate near him, the price paid was not too high.

It was gratifying that with the coverage of Toba mission-mindedness was strengthened among the native Christians. For a long time already active members in the congregations had done mission work in the adjoining territory among the heathen and Mohammedans, and thereby much had been accomplished. Thus valuable preliminary work had been done in Samosir, Uluan, Sigaol, and on the steppe. In the larger congregations mission societies had been organized, and here and there mission festivals were celebrated with active participation of old and young. This gratifying cooperation was given greater directive and impetus when in 1900 a Batak Mission Society (Kongsi Batak) was organized by some zealous panditas, teachers, and elders, which intended to work with comparative independence among their fellow natives. They solicited contributions, which flowed liberally, and then began sending Batak missionaries into heathen regions. Some panditas and evangelists at first made preaching tours into heathen sections in the north and east, where they saw the horrors of pagan cruelty. Then Pandita Samuel was sent to Tigaras at the northeastern part of Lake Toba, and Daniel was stationed in Djangga in Uluan. Pandita Enoch in Pearadja for years was the leader and the soul of this collaboration, whose receipts rose to \$2300 annually. Nommensen gladly granted to it the necessary freedom of action. Of course, the Kongsi was under his supervision, as Ephorus of the Batak mission; he placed the desired pandita or teachers at their disposal, and retained control. Unfortunately the sprouting independence of the Batak Mission Society was curtailed, and their receipts not always exclusively for their own undertakings. After years the mission work of the Batak church revived again and became an active branch on its tree.

Congregational mission festivals became more and more popular. Already in the beginning of the eighties the congregation at Pearadja celebrated mission festivals, at which 3-4000 visitors gathered, and native brass bands took part. Now every congregation celebrates such a mission festival annually, at which thousands of people listen to the sermons and reports of missions near and far, and willingly contribute to the collections which often are considerable. 600 and more Gulden in

contributions are not unusual. Much is contributed in produce: rice, bananas, eggs, coffee, chickens, goats, even cattle and horses, clothes, ornaments, etc. The Batak very much enjoy it, if one of their own, who is working among heathen or Mohammedans, gets up and reports about his sphere of activity. But also from other mission fields reports are given. Between this the bands play and choirs rival in singing selections of more voices. It was always a particular pleasure if the aged president appeared and spoke about the early days in Silindung. The present generation has no idea of the cruelties which, less than a century ago, were common practice.

The churches, which in the beginning were very plain, the people naturally had to build themselves. Nommensen writes about this: "Our churches, which we are erecting here at the lake, are at first still quite unimposing structures, actually earthen walls with a thatched roof, as formerly in Silindung. But Rome was not built in one day. If the Lord grants His grace, we shall later build stately churches also in this place.

At first of wood, later perhaps of iron or zinc. Such metals are found in large quantities in Samosir. The Lord in His grace has made a place for us here." In 1904 the large, imposing church in Sigumpar was completed and dedicated. Until then, for almost twenty years, they had been satisfied with a poor building. Nommensen permitted the fruit to ripen, before he picked it.

"If on a Sunday afternoon we go out to one of our branches and there see large groups of men sitting together in happy conversation, how all observe Sunday, and nowhere in our whole parish a laborer may be found in the field, although many families are still heathen, one realizes that the Word of God here has become a power. Approaching our village, we see here and there the happy young people, as they come out to meet us, singing their Christian songs. Arriving at the church, we are immediately surrounded by men, women, and children, who want to shake our hands and welcome us. When the service begins, here, too, the little church is filled, and the same songs, which we heard in the mother congregation, are also heard here; all listen attentively to the words of the preacher. After the service is concluded, and a cheerful farewell, they return home and, when the time comes, also again out into the night of heathendom, with new courage and strengthened faith to battle against the kingdom of the devil, to break down his bulwarks, and to plant the standard of the cross, the banner of our King. By what we have seen we feel so invigorated, that in all strife and all reverses we are sure of victory, and convinced that the kingdoms of the world must become kingdoms of our God and His Christ, and that sometimes all knees must bow before our King Jesus and all tongues confess that He is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Toward the end of the eighties an incident occurred on the island of Samosir which clearly shows how familiar and highly respected the name Nommensen was, even in those regions which had not yet come into contact with the missions. A Mr. von Brenner had traveled from the east coast of Sumatra to Lake Toba to cross the whole island and scientifically explore it. On the island of Samosir he had been arrested and held by the natives there, because they suspected that he and his companion were spies and emissaries of the Dutch Colonial Government. The situation was quite critical for the two men; it seemed that the natives actually intended to kill them. In his peril Baron von Brenner remembered the name Nommensen, of whom he had heard on the east coast, without being much interested in him or his mission. Now he mentioned him as "his friend", and at once the savages declared, that, if the two really were friends of the Tuan Nommensen, they would be released. But first they were subjected to an examination to ascertain, whether they had the same religion as the missionaries. The cannibals of Samosir sat down in a circle around the Europeans and began to examine them in the Bible stories: "Who created the

earth? In how many days? What was created on the first day? What on the fourth? What were the names of the first people?" Then they further asked about Abraham, the sons of Jacob, Moses, and so on. Von Brenner, who was a Catholic, found trouble in answering the questions completely. Nevertheless, the people were calmed, so that they declared themselves willing to accompany them to Nommensen, and find out whether he would really greet them as his friends. With their captives they rode over Lake Toba and after several days arrived in Laguboti and found that Nommensen was not at home; so they rowed to Balige to missionary Pilgram. He reported: "All valuable papers of the men were still in the hands of the chiefs, and only after I had placed them into their hands before the eyes of the natives, and had declared that they were our friends and countrymen, the chiefs were happy and released them." One may be surprised that the heathen inhabitants of Samosir were so well acquainted with the Old Testament stories, since they themselves were still sitting in darkest heathendom. But before this time Christians from Balige had already come to them, and not only told them about the new religion, but had also left an Old Testament story book, which was printed in the peculiar Batak letters, and thus could be read by the educated among them. All Batak enjoy to hear stories; so they had read the interesting stories in the evening, sitting around the camp fire, and it did not take long until they were well acquainted with them. But the name Nommensen was known far and wide, and so highly respected that even the worst heathen would not expect anything evil from anyone who was Nommensen's friend. From this little incident we get some inkling of what this one man meant for paving the way and spreading the kingdom of God in Sumatra.

"Enlarge the place of thy tent!" Isaiah 54:2.

Again after about twenty years, the victory of the Gospel had been achieved in Toba, although the land by no means was fully christianized. But already the missionaries had made further contacts in the territory situated north of Lake Toba, to which Batak Christians had frequently made journeys as way-preparers and forerunners. With this, however, they stepped on entirely new soil, for these sections belonged to the east coast of Sumatra, culturally, as well as politically. The population, although still Batak, differed largely from that, among which work had been done until now. The Rhenish missionary Guillaume, a Hollander, had for several years been loaned to the Netherland mission society (Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootshap), which had its territory among the Karobatak in the north, and had made use of the time to become acquainted with the little sultans of that region of Purba (the northernmost point of Lake Toba). Nommensen's plans and those of his fellow workers long since went beyond the lake. But he waited patiently until all was ready. The results of the exploratory trips of Guillaume finally induced him to propose to the conference in 1903 the question, whether the time had not come to establish a new mission in Purba, Pane, Raja, Siantur, Tanodjawa, collectively called Simalungen or Timor lands. From traveling Christians they knew that Islam was about to grasp these regions, but that there was still a certain willingness to accept Christianity, here and there even readiness to accept a missionary. The entire conference was of the impression that God's hour had come for these tribes. The 70 year old Nommensen would have loved most to locate there himself and for the third time take upon himself the dangers and the toils of laying the foundations. But this he could not do because of his office as Ephorus. However, he could not be dissuaded from making the first journey of exploration himself, which would determine all further advances, after he had received the cablegram from Barmen with the code-word: TOLE! Forward, and thus given permission to start the new promising mission.

It was all the more necessary that Nommensen himself be fully informed about the new field, since conditions there were entirely different than at the occupation of Toba, or even Silindung. The wide stretches of land were but thinly populated, compared to those sections; in choosing locations for the new stations great care had to be exercised, and the most promising places selected. Here it no longer was required to deal with uncontrolled heathenism, rather Islam for a considerable time already at work to win leaders and subjects. They had to expect that, after the advent of the Christian mission, Islam also would double its strength. If they wanted to obtain any appreciable advantages, they had to hurry with the mission work. This situation brought about the necessity of adopting a different mission method, than the one employed previously. They could not establish one or two congregations and then calmly wait and see how from these the new religion spread its ripples into neighboring localities, and gradually, as once in Silindung, one tribe, one village after another embraced Christianity. In the meantime Mohammedanism would have doubled its efforts, and not many remnants of heathenism would be left. In this case it was necessary to cover the whole vast region almost at once with a wide, even if widely meshed, net of mission stations, sub-stations, and schools. Now it was necessary to study the land which was almost entirely unknown, with this object in view, and make the corresponding decisions.

As first pioneers the missionaries Simon, Guillaume, and Meisel were sent out to reconnoiter (March 1903). These rode across Lake Toba, visited

the province of Purba, from there traveled to Medan on the east coast, there to confer with the proper colonial officials, and finally met with Nommensen and Theis in Purba. Now successively the provinces of Purba, Raja, Pane, and Dolok Saribu were visited. Everywhere Nommensen conferred with the rulers and, in general, met with a friendly reception. Of course, the travelers also attempted to preach the Gospel, but the people did not understand the language of Toba at all places. In Purba, e.g., Nommensen preached to the local ruler and his household on John 3:16. Simon writes about this: "I am anxious to see the manner in which Nommensen would preach here, where it meant to preach something of the Gospel to heathen for the first time. It was a master stroke. Without circumvention he began with the kernel of the Gospel, the sending of Jesus. And at that everything was so truly Batak, that even a complete stranger must understand something of it. Under the picture of a Batak quarrel, he depicted the fight of God against the devil, and that certainly was clear and intelligible here in this war-torn land." The chief of Raja gladly declared himself willing to accept a missionary, and at once gave him a suitable place.

A less friendly reception the travelers met with in the wretched Pane. Arriving in a pouring rain, they begged the few inhabitants of the village permission to step into the vestibule of the chief's house, and this was quite unwillingly granted by the slaves of the absent chief. About midnight the chief, a small, skinny man, arrived, but at once began to insult them in the most offensive manner, and ordered the missionaries out of his house. It availed nothing that Nommensen friendly and politely asked him to be permitted to remain in his house during such stormy weather. "There he stood, the 70 year old missionary Nommensen, to whom we all looked up to with respect and love, before this young lad of a chief, who for all friendly words had nothing but insolent and filthy answers." "If you want us to go, then we will, of course, go, but it would be better, since it is about midnight, if you would allow us to remain. Think of this: you are turning away the servants of God, who bring life to you." It was of no use. Nommensen suggested: "I see that you are excited; now listen quietly." "If I were excited, I would take my knife", the chief said. Nothing helped; the missionaries had to leave the house and spend the rest of the night in a ramshackle stall, which served as a refuge for strangers and was on the verge of collapse. As the last one Nommensen left the house and said: "Remember that you have turned missionaries out of your house; as for the rest, I wish you God's blessing." In the morning the chief was still somewhat embarrassed, but listened to reason, and strangely enough, declared himself willing to receive a missionary. The man was later severely censured by Dutch officers for his rudeness, and was compelled to beg pardon from Nommensen in writing. His rudeness was doubly offensive, even in the eyes of the natives, because, contrary to all custom and hospitality, he had acted so boorish to the aged Tuan Nommensen. The occurrence caused a great sensation in the whole region of the east coast, and finally had to be of help in opening the ways more than ever.

On the return journey, contrary to their intentions, God led the travelers into the domain of a Tuan (Prince), who was entirely unknown to them until now, Dolok Sariba, who, an old enemy of the Tuan of Pane, received them most cordially, and immediately asked for a missionary. This led to the establishment of the first station in Timor lands, Tiga Ras, which proved a splendid starting point for further undertakings. The return trip over the Tao Silalahi, the northern, wider part of Lake Toba, still was quite dangerous, because the rowboat which, during the land journey of the brethren had lain on shore, had sprung a leak in the meantime, and there were no tools to repair the damage. Nommensen again proved himself equal to the occasion. When all sat in the boat, 19 of them,

he told them that with Europeans the ship's captain demands unconditional obedience, and has power even over life and death. With that he pointed a revolver which, of course, he would not have used, even in a case of emergency. Now they had to row by command. No one dared move and, in case of an accident, they should all jump into the water at his command and cling to the sides of the boat. After a journey of several hours, which fortunately was quiet, they safely landed on the shore of the island Samosir, from where they could finish the trip close to the shore. But the ride was still dangerous until they finally arrived in Sigumpar.

Expressive of the simple, natural way in which Nommensen approached the natives at the first meeting is the following remembrance of missionary Simon from this journey of exploration: "Perhaps many a Christian at home would expect at first a long, spiritual talk. But only in the most exceptional cases would this be possible, and also for a missionary it is a very good rule not to try taking by storm. No; we talked only about everyday matters. Why? Surely we, too, in all journeys have only one goal in view, to preach the Gospel of the Crucified Christ: but all sermons and evangelization are mere blows in the air, as long as we have not yet gained the confidence of the people. And unfortunately such blows in the air are swung all too much; it is too bad for the strength wasted, too bad for the fighter. We often seek the reason for the lack of understanding with the heathen in their earthly-mindedness. Why? Because we presuppose spiritual desires from them, which they simply do not have. We must not expect of a fish that he fly, or of a bird that he swim, and so we must expect from the heathen, that he feel comfortable in the spiritual atmosphere, in which we live and move about. Have patience with the man and step down to the heathen, walk with him in his world, let him show you everything he has; look over his house, his field, his children, let him tell you about his troubles, and understand what weighs on his soul: then you may gradually, here and there, have the pleasure that he will grasp an atom of that which fills your own heart. So, to talk about everyday matters is the best in the beginning, especially in such regions as this, where but little contact has been made with missionaries. At first the native is distrustful; and to overcome his suspicion is the first problem. We have talked about everything possible, about land and people, about his heavy golden bracelet, about our guns, etc. And the end of our conversation was that the Tuan Dolok Sariba asked for a missionary, a request with which Nommensen gladly complied."

Missionary Simon first located in Tagaras, but soon settled in the more advanced Bandar, because Islam was making great efforts there. Nommensen had looked over the situation in Bangar himself and was ready at once to throw as many Batak helpers as possible into the threatened territory; he even ordered that the course for the future pandita at Sipoholon be shortened, so that a few of them could immediately be placed at disposal for this place. But Tigara obtained the Pandita Samuel, whom the Kongsu Batak sent out and supported.

In order, men were now placed in Siantur (Simon), Purda (Guillaume), Raja (Theiss), Tagaras (Pandita Samuel). At the same time missionary Meisel came to Djangga, in the northern Uluan, and after him the teacher Daniel. Along the whole line everything went along rapidly; the demand for missionaries was so great, that the mission authorities could not supply the demands. Under the stress of the great responsibility Nommensen wrote to Barmen on December 15, 1903: "Until now it was always TOLE here, FORWARD, and numquam retrosam, never backward! And if the battle here and there wavered to and fro, there was no backward, but even when it looked like it, as here in the years 1883-1887, it was always FORWARD. The world is the Lord's, and the Gospel is the great sea, which more and more overflows the heathen world in its darkness and, even if slowly, swallows

them, as in my homeland the North Sea does away with the Halliges, so that now is being fulfilled what is written in Daniel 2:44 and Revelation 11:15: 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever'. Now the Lord is standing on the shore, looking over the work of His servants; the night is passed, in which the disciples have worked unto exhaustion, and the new day dawns; the Lord commands that we cast out the net to the right of the ship, we would obey His word and beckoning, and cast out the net, and the success will prove that our labor was not in vain. We are standing at a wide open door. All the Tamo Simalungun, i.e., Purba, Raja, Pane, Tanodjawa, besides Uluan, Djangga, Sirpangapolon, Adjibata, Sionggang, Sigaol, and one half of Samosir is open to us. We may step right in with the joyous message of the love and mercy of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior, which surpasses all understanding. Counting up the most necessary places which must be supplied with missionaries, we get the following results: 1. Parba, 2. Raja, 3. Pane, 4. Siantur, 5. Bandar, 6. Asahan, 7. Tanodjawa, 8. Adjibata, Sibanganding, Parapat, and vicinity, 9. Sirpanganbolon, with Motung, 10. Djangga, 11. Sionggang, 12. Simanindju, 13. Lontung (on Samosir), 14. Simamora, 15. Bonandolok, with Doloksanggul, 16. Parbotihan, 17. Pasaribu, 18. Barus, 19. Rambe, 20. Simanullang, 21. at least one station between Barus and Singkol. To this we must add another station in the east of Batar, on the steppe, perhaps in Lotu Siregar, and at least one or two stations in the east of Parsambilan on the plateau. In this we have not counted Muara and Bakara with all the territory opposite Palipi, and the northwestern half of Samosir, where there should be at least three more missionaries; for if the southwest half has been annexed by the government, the northwestern section will also be open for us. All these regions will demand help from us in the coming years, 1904 and 1905. (That would mean that we shall need no less than 28 missionaries in the next years.) I am writing this to you, that you may know, how many men, like the man from Macedonia with Paul, are calling to us, but not only, as with Paul, in a dream, but here they appear in reality, in flesh and blood, and ask for missionaries and teachers. From all corners deputations come with letters and requests for missionaries and teachers. However, this has not only begun just recently, but from several regions has been the case for years already. We have not made much noise about it, because we see that our society with the best intentions cannot do more than it is doing, and we, too, do not wish to precipitate matters, so as not to experience disappointments, but would rather be pushed forward in growth. When the brethren in Nias beat the alarm drum and want many missionaries when doors are opened, this is because it is something unusual for them. Here, for some time already, this is something quite common, and for this reason we have not crowded more. He adds: "We must enlarge our seminary at Sipoholon, so as to be able to instruct 120 students at the same time. The present shortage of teachers is great. From all sides the brethren are clamoring for teachers, and I cannot give them any. The new fields also again require workers. Summing up, you see, we are here occupied in a great work, highly blessed by the Lord, and we must fervently pray the Lord of the harvest: Lord, send forth laborers into Thy harvest!"

Precious words Nommensen wrote at the time concerning the qualifications of the missionaries needed for Sumatra: "They must be the most capable men we have, no hot-headed, choleric natures, but long suffering, friendly, kind men, willing to sacrifice, also no sanguine characters, who one moment shout to heaven for joy, and the next, sorrowful unto death, leave their heads hang over little unpleasanties in life. They must be men, who will take God at His Word, like Abraham, who went to Morriah to sacrifice his son, and yet said to his servants: 'We will return to you.' Men who count with the Word of God as with figures, and even at

the beginning of the battle rejoice, sure of their victory. Our 'infinitum' (unlimited field), or rather 'finitum' (our bounds) is the last chapter of Matthew. The Lord, who has issued the command, can guide the hearts of men like waterbrooks, and say: 'Mine is silver and gold; cut with it.' Period." And similarly another time: "Select brethren for us who are willing to be led by the Lord out of faith in faith, like the Old Testament judge Gideon, and are not discouraged by hardships, but are ready to leap over the wall with their God. Men of the moment, who now will shout high to heaven for joy, and then are sorrowful unto death, are less useful here. Real tough Germans, even if not overly gifted, but love our Lord Jesus above all, would be the most useful here. Reserved, indolent, overly precise, and nervous men we would rather not have here. Yet we should and will not complain if the Lord should send us such; for they, too, can become a blessing for us, and we for them by mutual love and bearing patience; this, too, is mission work." And at another time: "If you have young, healthy, faithful brethren, a little timidly conscientious, endowed with energy and long suffering patience, with sincere love to the Lord, the brethren, and the lost souls, we would prefer them." Precious words, coming from a man in whom all these desired missionary qualities are found! He indeed had a right to write thus. What unshaken confidence of victory speaks from all these words! This man possessed the faith which overcomes the world, removes mountains, and takes God's promises literally as true, and lives by them.

When Nommensen became older he, in all humility, sometimes ventured some critical remarks about the mission board's practice at home. Thus at one time he wrote to Barmen, that it is a pity that the leaders in the mission house have so little time for the brethren to get acquainted with them better. He thought it would be better if, in sending out the young brethren, their wishes and inclinations would be considered as much as possible. "Formerly, the deputations at their occasional visits asked the brethren whether they had any particular inclinations for any special land; and, if it was in any way possible, this was taken into consideration when sending them out. I believe that we could in some way consider human inclination or aversion, because it often is guided by the Spirit of God. It is not always advisable to choose the very opposite of what a person desires, because the Lord also guides the inclinations of men like the waterbrooks, if they would at all be guided, would be Christians. The old saying: If it is contrary to nature, it is straight and fine, is not always correct. The original, true nature is the normal one, which harmonizes with God, and with true Christians should prevail more and more.

If the deputation had sent me to Africa in 1861, I would probably not have gone, but dropped out; for at that time I had the idea that only a small portion would follow the Word of God and be saved. To save individual souls at that time was my watchword. How should I find them in the thinly populated Africa? That was not clear to me then." Another time he expressed the wish that the head inspector live and work among the brethren as one of them, so that the decisions might be made on the spot.

Even in his old age, when others rest, Nommensen not only prepared the placing of missions in the regions mentioned above, made journeys of exploration, assisted in the establishment of the stations with advice and help, but also as leader of the whole Batak mission untiringly visited his large field diligently, conscientiously inspected the work of the missionaries and native helpers, and pitched in wherever his help was desired and needed. The official journeys, which he had to make as president, often were not pleasant; he much preferred the congregational work, which besides he kept up for a long time. He writes about this: "You can easily picture for yourself how happy I am when, returning from my frequent journeys, I may here again with both hands take part in the full

harvest. On the missionary journeys there are often stones to be cleared out of the way, plowing and sowing under difficulties; but if I get home to our congregation, to the full church here, the large number of candidates for baptism, the many guests at communion, to the happy faces of young and old, and hear the hearty song of the congregation, together with the hundreds of school children, my heart is happy and rejoices in God, its Savior." Yet he underwent the countless journeys with an iron diligence. It seemed as if his age and his hardships could not harm him. Like a young man he sat on his horse, or drove his two-wheeled cart, or crossed the northern and southern Lake Toba in his rowboat or sailboat. A few hours of sleep during the night and a quarter hour (literally) of rest at noon sufficed to keep him fresh. The only stimulant, which at times he treasured much, was a stong, black coffee. If on his trips he could not obtain this, he would at times chew on a piece of bitter quinine, an odd habit. But few missionaries have traveled as far as Nommensen did in the second half of his life. He never complained about this strenuous work, when he arrived at his destination, the fatiguing negotiations with the natives began, which frequently required half days; that which was the most disagreeable part o their work to other missionaries, neither made him tired or nervous. Besides his official journeys Nommensen regarded it his duty to assist the brethren in their distresses. Wherever one was sick, or in straits, where a young brother met with difficulties, always the aged Ephorus was ready to help. If necessary, he, busy as he was, could help out for days, even weeks. At one time he even took over the work of a Pandita Batak, in order that he might visit his home. A brother who had taken ill he brought down from Toba to Silindung. When there was no missionary available for Laguboti, he filled the vacancy there. "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."

Chapter 8: THE LEADER

"Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed, that feareth the Lord." Ps. 128:4

Missionaries from Sumatra write: "To all of us who were permitted to work under Dr. Nommensen, he always assumed the attitude not so much of a superior, as rather a friend and father. He was ever kind and friendly, no one ever departed from him without encouragement and renewed joy for our labor. Of everyone he thought the best, even if one or the other at times caused him trouble. With all he had great patience, friendly listened to all complaints and wishes, and helped whenever it was in his power to do it. Sometimes his patience seemed to exceed the limit of the permissible. He advocated the principle that every missionary, even the younger ones, be given full freedom. He did not even insist that reports sent by them to the mission board, first pass through his hands, as the instructions were. Putting all confidence in everyone, he thought only good of him and let him follow his own methods, and never interfered with his work. We would have been only too grateful to him, if he had not so much left us to our own judgment, but rather in time would have called our attention to mistakes and developing bad habits, and occasionally would have stressed his position as superior and experienced pioneer worker. With young brethren who just came into the country he employed the rather doubtful practice to let them find their own way as much as possible, because he had gone through this himself. Often he said: "A person will best learn how to swim if he is thrown into the water." Thus not all young missionaries have profited from his experience, as they might have. Never did he advance his rich experience and his age as arguments, and sometimes that was too bad. His activity and the blessing which God had placed on it, would have given him perfect right to do it. Over against the mission board at home he in a fatherly, providing way pleaded for the wishes and complaints of his missionaries, whose trouble he knew better than others."

As president much power was placed in his hands. In most cases it was he who assigned their work to the missionaries, transferred them, determined the establishment of mission stations, and allotted to them the native preachers and teachers. All this involved much work and made him the central point and the driving power of the great machinery which was expanding farther with each year. To all this was added an extensive correspondence with his missionaries, with the Dutch colonial government, the mission board, and natives. At that he had no secretary, and, even in later years, no typewriter at his disposal. Thousands of Batak letters issued from his hands to chiefs, pandita, teachers, elders and many others, who came to him with diverse requests. Indeed, it required some studying, until one had become accustomed to his letters, which were always written with a flying pen. Unwilling as otherwise he was to write, yet he zealously attended to the correspondence with the native Christians. A heaped measure of work rested on the shoulders of this remarkable man, who knew no fatigue. He always had time for everyone who came to him. Never have I from his mouth heard the statement: "I have no time."

A part of the duties of the president was the head supervision of all Pandita Batak and teachers. As long as their number was not too large, this was possible. But their number increased from year to year. In 1910 the Batak church had 29 pandita and 637 teachers. Later there were many more. To know them all personally and treat everyone correctly, had at last become almost impossible. At every clash between teacher and missionary, or between teacher and pandita and congregation, the aged president was importuned and had to mediate. It is easily understood that some blunders

occurred. In his age Nommensen occasionally permitted some smooth fellow to wheedle him, and took sides with the wrong party. In the employment and transfer of native helpers Nommensen disposed quite sovereign, as he was accustomed from the time of narrower circumstances. Actually this was a business of the large conference, but Nommensen did not like to give up these reins. Also disciplining the helpers, where it became necessary, was almost solely in his hands. But in order to be fair in this, we must bear in mind that the conditions had developed with him. That there were so many and capable teachers, that the Batak church so early had ordained native preachers available, must in a large measure be credited to Nommensen's initiative. They all revered him as their father and guide. "Though we have ten thousand instructors, yet we have not many fathers", thus a rebuked teacher told his missionary, and with the father he meant Nommensen; he would rather accept the rebuke from him than from his missionary. Nommensen regularly took part in the conferences of the teachers and those of the Pandita Batak, unless the latter was combined with the general conference. Nommensen possessed an inborn understanding of the value of native teachers for the development of the church. Frequently he mentioned in his letters that a missionary in Sumatra above all must know how to work with and by the helpers. Some brethren "do everything themselves, and consequently the helpers learn nothing. They should guide more, rather be forgers of weapons and sharpen the weapons, than do everything themselves. It is, indeed, true that they can do it better than the helpers, but then the helpers are not trained and gain no influence and respect with the people. The helpers must not forever walk on a leading string; we must let them make their attempts to walk alone, stand beside them and, watch and, if necessary, take hold if they make any false steps. Such observing is a burden and makes a person nervous, and he may say, 'I can do it twice in the same time'. That is true, but with it a person makes himself indispensable, instead of becoming dispensable. If a person would work through teachers and evangelists, he must, as with a plow, keep his hand on it. Then he will accomplish something. If he takes his hand off and lets the plow run, it will topple over." For this reason he was so deeply concerned about the training of teachers at the seminary at Pansurnapitu, later in Sipoholon, to which a second one was added in Narumonda (Toba). Very seldom did he fail to attend the final, as well as the entrance examinations.

As Ephorus Nommensen also was chairman of the synod which had charge of the whole guiding of the Batak church. Increasing hardness of hearing in his old age made the work of leadership more difficult for him. At this meeting he very seldom tried to prevail on his opinion by force. With him every opinion found a hearing. Sometimes, indeed, he paid little attention to the resolutions of the synod, but did what he considered best. What people would have taken amiss with any other, the group of brethren, as well as the mission board, bore gladly in this singular man. Precious were the devotions, drawn out of the depth of a life of faith, with which he was accustomed to open the deliberations. In earlier years a synod of the entire church was combined with the conference of the missionaries, and for this meeting the pandita, elders, as representatives of the congregations, as well as numerous chiefs, frequently with a large group of followers gathered. Leadership lay in Nommensen's hands. Reports were given from the work of the congregations and important questions were discussed. This general synod had met for the first time in Pearadja in 1881. In the report of this meeting we read: "On the following day the meeting of the elders, chiefs, and other guests, numbering more than 400, took place in the church. Previously the brethren had agreed on the subjects for discussion and determined the following points, which were taken up for deliberation one after the other: Family devotions, school attendance of

the girls, contributions for teacher's salaries, building of churches and schools, Mohammedanism, weekly meetings for the elders. To be sure, all was a little informal and simple, but for this very reason a new synodical constitution has been prepared for our Batak congregations to regulate these conditions. The matter was there already, only the correct and fitting form was missing. When the number of the congregations and branch stations continued to grow and the groups of those who wished to take part in the deliberations greatly increased, so that finally it almost resembled the confusion of an annual fair, this form of the general synod with its endless volubility could no longer be maintained. The elders and chiefs were delegated to the small district synods, and only the Pandita Batak conferred, partly among themselves, partly together with the missionaries. Later a special conference was arranged for the Pandita Batak, likewise for the Batak teachers. An ideal cooperation of the native Christians with the conferring missionaries can be developed only gradually. The transition into large proportions came so rapidly that many problems of the Batak church still are awaiting their solution.

In addition to all the other dignities of office the aged Nommensen also received the supreme management of the newly begun mission on the Mentowei islands and on the little island Enggano, where the intention was to do mission work by Batak assistants. This was in the year 1910, after the slaying of missionary Lett on Mentowai. Nommensen also gave his full interest to this branch of the work, and in his old age visited Mentowei as well as Enggano, to inspect the Batak teachers there and help the lonesome brethren. With the philanthropical endeavor of the colonial government to resettle the dying Enggano with Christian Batak he cooperated, and it was not his fault that the attempt finally failed. At the age of 76 years he visited Enggano, investigated everything carefully, so as to gain a personal impression and arrive at the correct judgment.

Chapter 9: OLD AGE

"They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be flourishing."
Ps. 92:14.

At the turn of the century Nommensen had reached old age; but he showed little of that. Not the least valuable portion of his life's work he rendered at the age when most people begin to take things easier. In the meantime the board of mission had become convinced that the time had come to give him help and that it was too much to expect of one man with the annually increasing duties of the presidency. So it was decided to change the organization of the Batak church. All of Batakland, which had been worked until then, was divided into five districts, for each of which a president was appointed. The districts were: Angkola, the territory of Mohammedan missions, which since 1895 had a special Ephorus in missionary Schuetz, Silindung, with Pahas, the steppe, southern Toba, and northeast Toba, beyond the lake. These districts have their own conferences, in which the program for the large synod is prepared. The district presidents have supervision over their sphere, also the teachers and pandita, visit the congregations, branches, and schools, but at the same time they also serve their own congregation. Nommensen, as general president, is over them all, has supreme authority, but as much as possible acts through them, who with him form the supreme court of jurisdiction of the entire church. In this manner it is possible that every congregation be supervised. It is impossible that one president could thoroughly know, much less visit or control all the preaching stations. The district presidents are in a position to do this. But with Nommensen all the threads came together, and in all difficult cases the district presidents appealed to him. As an old man of eighty years he still traveled untiringly, to look after everything and lend a helping hand everywhere.

Nommensen was privileged to reach a ripe old age in full strength of body and of mind. Up to his 85th year, when the Lord called him home, he strove to perform his manifold duties. His hearing had, indeed, failed some, and he suffered a little from loss of memory, but not on such a degree that the performance of his duties would have become impossible. After he had passed the seventies, it was kindly suggested to him that he go into a well deserved retirement; but he would hear nothing of that. In the Cape colony the mission board had decreed that no brother could remain in office after the 70th year. When Nommensen heard of that, he said: "If they take my office from me, I will carry on mission work here on my own responsibility." But no one ever thought of that. In the last years the impression gained ground that it might be better for him and his work, if he would quit; but no one would urge him to do it. Gladly he declared himself willing to resign his office as president, and had already friendly conferred about this with the possible successor. But an active missionary he wished to remain until his death. And this God graciously granted him.

On October 7, 1911, the 50th anniversary of the Batak mission was celebrated, for the first conference of the missionaries (van Asselt, Heine, Betz) on October 7, 1861, was regarded as the beginning of the Batak mission. Everywhere in the north and in the south the Christians assembled for the celebration. In Silindung about 12,000 people gathered in the market place Sitahuru, where Nommensen once was to be sacrificed. At five different places at the same time sermons were preached, and thanks returned to God for the wonderful change which He had brought about. And so it was also in other places. Thousands assembled and listened to the words of the preachers, who with deepest emotion spoke of the old times, of the extreme difficult beginnings, of the cruelty of the heathen Batak, of

the sufferings of the first Christians, and of the great blessings which God by this mission had bestowed on all sides. In Laguboti about 3,000 celebrating Christians had assembled. After this celebration the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Nommensen was celebrated, for he had been ordained in Barmen on October 13th, 1861. Very much against his own wishes this day was solemnly observed in Sumatra. Thousands of Christians had assembled in Sigumpar to celebrate. Of the missionaries, including the women, 48 had appeared. The festive day began with a serenade of the combined bands, then from all sides the crowds approached and filled the place of celebration between the church and the mission house, where under the large trees a service was held. As the first missionary Meerwaldt spoke on the words: "I am a wonder to many; but Thou art my strong Refuge.

Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth." Then followed the addresses by the delegates from the various districts, all of which were in keeping with the thought: "Give thanks to the Lord who hath done such great things unto us." Then the jubilarian spoke, fresh and youthful. The growth of the Batak church in decades was compiled: The number of Christians was 1861-0; 1871-1250; 1881-5988; 1891-21,799; 1901-47,784; 1911-117,586. (1931-330,000). What a change by the gracious dispensation of God! At that time Nommensen was 77 years old, 55 European workers were at his side, with them 28 Pandita Batak, 688 teachers, 26 evangelists, and 1500 elders. Not with one syllable did the jubilarian speak of the festival which had been arranged in his honor, but he was determined to direct the immense mass of people to the One Thing Needful: "Forget not what good things God has done for us, that is true gratitude. God has redeemed us, not we; therefore we must at all times remain in contact with Him, or we will have no strength." After the services the missionaries presented their gifts, a stately writing desk, and a book case for documents, made in the manual training school, a beautiful picture, and a Wartburg Bible. In the mission house the Dutch colonial officer greeted the jubilarian in an address, in which he emphasized, that also the colonial government and the Queen of Holland would not hold back with their appreciation of the work of Nommensen. Her majesty, for this reason had graciously conferred upon Nommensen the officers cross of the order of Orange-Nassau. When the official then proposed a toast to the aged jubilarian, not only the Europeans in the house, but also the Batak outside joined in with enthusiasm, the latter by crying: "Horas, ma Tuani!", the Batak shout of joy.

Then a delegation of the Batak preachers and teachers advanced and presented 531 Gulden with an address and the request that the "grandfather" with this sum purchase a new wagon and horse. The address was as follows: "With deep respect we step before our missionary. Gladly all would have come, jointly with the Tuan to praise the Lord on this day for all the blessings which He has bestowed on the Batak nation through him. It is a wonder in our eyes what has come to pass in the fifty years; now we too may have the Gospel, the most precious of all gifts, and have learned a great deal besides. We also would not conceal that with our conduct we have often saddened the Tuan; but he has always had patience with us, and therefore we shall endeavor to perform our work more faithfully. The Lord may give us the lips of disciples and open ears. We ask God that He may add many years to the Tuan, and in the hope that our prayer may be fulfilled we give to the Tuan these 531 Gulden, that he may purchase a new wagon and horse, which he can use when he makes his journeys. With hearty greetings and sincere gratitude, we are the Batak teachers and preachers." Even the sons of the deceased Singamangarajah had contributed to this noble gift. Then also chiefs and other people came, who presented gifts, humble sacks of rice, to which, however, a costly gold ornament was attached. Then there were also chickens, goats, and sheep. In the afternoon

missionary Metzler closed the celebration with an address. Nommensen himself is silent at such festivities; he finds no pleasure in such honors. But what singular thoughts may have come to him in those days! How much had God permitted him to achieve! In how many dangers had He protected him, what a sizeable group of white and colored fellow workers has He given him! How much had he been allowed to labor and to achieve for God's cause.

When in 1862 he stepped on Sumatra's ground, there were none, or but few Christians in Sipirok. After a futile effort in Barus he then pressed on to Silindung, among a people, where in all probability no fruit could be expected in a long time, where the most brutal abominations of darkest heathenism surrounded him, and he was in constant danger of life. Two decades later almost all of Silindung was christianized. Then he was urged on to Toba, again into the midst of a savage, untouched heathenism, where once more he was called on to battle hard and endure patiently. And then the tireless storming on to the north and northeast, into regions which until then were unknown and not opened. Here also increasing successes. At Nommensen's death the Batak mission numbered about 180,000 baptized members, in 510 schools 32,700 boys and girls were being instructed. There were 788 Batak teachers, and in the congregations 2,200 elders; also 34 Pandita Batak. The whole land from Padangbolak to Siantur and Pakpak was dotted with churches and schools. Paganism was defeated in principle, and only in distant regions still bore witness of its former power. About a half million of Batak had come under the determining power of the Gospel; many, many had died a Christian death, and thousands had been awakened to a new life.

It was gratifying on the occasion of the anniversary to observe the gratitude of many Batak. Naturally that is not a virtue of theirs. Among the well-wishers there may have been many a one who took part in the festivities only because so many companions went there and he expected all sorts of entertainment. But most of the gratitude exhibited there was genuine. Those who came had the feeling that they and their people owed a great debt of gratitude to the aged missionary. Nommensen wrote about those unwelcome honors to a friend: "I was compelled to let this come over me, so as not to spoil their joy. Otherwise I do not like to accept gifts. The government sent me the officers cross of the order of Orange-Nassau. That means little to me; it gives me no pleasure. My heart shall cling to nothing that this earth contains. I am nothing but a poor sinner, who desires to be saved by the blood of redemption."

As little as Nommensen cared about or sought public acclaim, yet the aging man received a great deal of it. On his 70th birthday, 1904, the theological faculty of the University of Bonn conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. In the letter of presentation it was stated: "that by the establishment of Christianity among the Batak he has won high and far-reaching honor; that he has rendered invaluable service by his translation of the most important writings of Christianity; and that for the church, founded among the Batak, he was not only a leader, but, as it were, a father; and that he distinguished himself by a dignified energy and far-seeing prudence; and that nevertheless in the wreath of his virtues the flower of humility was not missing." It was expressive of Nommensen's modest nature, that, after the diploma of promotion on the occasion of the large conference, which convened just at the time of his birthday, was presented to him with an address by Ephorus Schuetz from the south, the jubilarian expressed the opinion: "that it seemed that the devil would like to make him vain in his old age". But all the more did this well-deserved distinction please his fellow workers.

In the year 1905, Nommensen, on a furlough, had the honor to be received in a lengthier audience with Queen Wilhelmine of Holland. On this occasion Nommensen could acquaint her Highness with the missionary effort

among the Batak, and he found a pleasing understanding with her for the expansion of the Gospel in Sumatra. Also in the Dutch parliament Nommensen and his work were frequently honored. Thus in a meeting on November 1st, 1905, the colonial minister said: "I had the privilege to meet missionary Nommensen, and wish to express my pleasure to have made acquaintance of this noble old man, who since 1861 has lived among the Batak and who, after a brief furlough at home, again wishes to return there, and that after a life's span of 73 years. From him I was permitted to hear a very favorable report of our accomplishments there." On this occasion more was said about the work of the Rhenish mission in Sumatra, and many appreciative words spoken. Thus a member of parliament said: "I would once more refer to the Batak lands, which under the pacifying influence of the mission have become a place of order, quiet, and peace. They have made it possible there for us to find a real peaceful entry, and not with guns and bayonets, which will never bring a step forward." Mr. Canne, the former governor of Sumatra's west coast, said in a public meeting: "I have learned to esteem the missionaries highly, not only as preachers, but also as teachers, educators, and molders of the people, among whom they have settled. The missionaries, who first settled in the independent Batak lands, further deserve our highest admiration because of the perseverance and the courage which they have displayed. Notwithstanding the resistance which they met, notwithstanding the danger to their life, to which they were frequently exposed, these men have courageously stood their ground, strong in their faith and in their confidence. When, in the year 1872, as resident of Tapanuli, I visited the Batak regions of Silindung, Sigompulon, and Pangaloan, which until then had not yet been brought under regulated government, I was the guest of several missionaries residing there, and was able to observe their difficult work. Hardly had the day dawned, when from all sides sick people came to find help and advice. Those who were too sick to come, were visited in the dwellings. However, not only sick came, but all who were in need of help came to the missionaries. Manifold quarrels and dissensions were submitted to them. In all things they were asked for advice. Imparting school and baptismal instruction took up the rest of their time. From early morning until late at night they were busy. Their women gave lessons in sewing and needlework. The households of the missionaries were pioneers of civilization, and a blessing for thousands. Everyone who has observed the missionaries in their laudible work, as I have, will be convinced that the wholesome influence which they offer, cannot easily be overestimated."

In 1913, Nommensen together with the missionary physician from Pearadja, Dr. Winkler, made a trip to Singapore for one of the large conferences arranged by Dr. John Mott. From the conference itself they derived little benefit. Nommensen writes: "For our work we have gained but little, because in all things we are farther advanced than all other societies. But their patience in persevering in their difficult labors with but little success is worthy of admiration. Our views were broadened, so that we will no longer be so timid if some of our Batak go to them and enter their service." Unfortunately the Methodists in Singapore had without investigation received several Batak helpers, who had run away dissatisfied, hoping to find work in Singapore, and had placed them as assistants in their work without coming to an understanding with the Rhenish mission. That was unbrotherly, and deeply grieved us. Now it is characteristic of the good nature and friendliness of Nommensen, that he still found some good in this unbrotherly act. He consoles himself over the desertion of the helpers: "It seems that our Batak still are the best helpers, and may yet help to solve a problem among the Indian nations. Several of our people are working in Java, and one went with a Methodist bishop to the west coast of Borneo as teacher. In a seminary at Singapore

we found nine Batak young men, and in Java there are still more in the different educational institutions." Later on working together with the American Methodists on the east coast became more brotherly and profitable.

Repeatedly it has been mentioned before how much tribulation this missionary pioneer had to experience. The constant danger, especially in the first decade, the oppressive lonesomeness, much misery in sickness, the death of two beloved children, pressed heavily on him. Most of all he suffered from the separation from his children. After his first furlough he left his sickly wife at home with the children, (1881); several years she was still together with them, but died in Guetersloh in 1887. What that means, to leave wife and children at home and return alone into such trying circumstances, without a helping companion, who provides for a pleasant home life and helps bear the burdens and troubles of life, this we at home can hardly picture to ourselves. He was content to have the wife of a teacher at his station take care of his household, though insufficiently.

Nommensen never cared about comfort and care for his body; there he could have doubly needed a providing wife at his side. In the year 1887 he received the message that his wife had passed away in Guetersloh. Some time before he had become certain in a remarkable way that his wife had died. One day, when he was on a journey, he suddenly heard a voice say: "Just now Karoline has left the children". He was startled, because it was clear to him that his beloved wife had passed away in Germany. After weeks a letter arrived, which confirmed that she passed away on that day at the hour when he had heard the voice.

The separation from his wife and children was bitter and hard for him, much harder than he showed. He wrote about it to friends: "The time when every step I made and every task that I undertook reminded me of that bitter hour of saying farewell to my wife and children, was hard indeed. You can readily picture to yourself, that in those days I found it most difficult to quiet my human heart, but it was necessary, for my own sake, as well as for my loved ones. In the quiet evening hours toward midnight, when all else lay in sweet slumber, I could give way to my tears and commit my loved ones to Him, the merciful and compassionate High Priest; then I was richly comforted." At his departure from the mission house, thinking of his beloved children, he became so tender that he was hardly able to speak the few words of farewell, as it was expected of him. This was in November, 1881.

After leading a lonely life for ten years, he married a second time while on a furlough in Germany in 1892. His considerably younger second wife, Christine nee Harder, later became sickly and died in 1909, after having borne three children to her husband. Her slowly progressing sickness cast deep shadows on Nommensen's life in Sigumpar. A terrible blow struck the aged Nommensen, when in 1901 his son Christian, from the first marriage, who had acquired a large plantation which promised good results in Pinangsori, not far from Sibolga, was cruelly murdered by five Chinese coolies. The father bore also this grief with admirable composure, yes, even went so far as to visit the murderers of his son in prison at Sibolga and offer them forgiveness in the blood of Jesus Christ. In October, 1916, his youngest son Nathaniel fell as an officer on the western front in the war. The father had not approved of his entry into the army as a volunteer. (To understand this, we must consider that Nommensen's home country during his youth was Danish, and became German long after Sumatra had become his home.) He had admonished him, even as a soldier, not to hate his enemies. At the message of his death, he wrote to his daughters: "This was a hard blow for me. Although I prayed for him daily, yet I always said: 'If it be possible and good for his soul's salvation, bring him out of this war'. Now the Lord has permitted that an enemy bullet has destroyed his life, so I must assume that death is better for Nathaniel

than the life on this earth. 'His wisdom never plans in vain, Ne'er falters or mistakes; All that His counsels did ordain, A blessed ending makes.' The Lord seemed it better that our Nathaniel die. Blessed be the name of the Lord! I had placed great hopes on him. But how short-sighted are we children of men! The Lord God knows better and acts accordingly." The father had hoped that his youngest son would later come to Sumatra as medical missionary. In all these misfortunes Nommensen proved Christian patience and faith. He was convinced that everyone of his loved ones had died at the time which, according to the plan of the heavenly Father, was the right time for him. In all the afflictions of life no one has ever seen him despondent or dejected. The inner peace of his heart was never taken from the cross-bearer. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

Chapter 10: A FAITHFUL STEWARD

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13.

To Nommensen's life with its many labors we may apply the words: "As we have received mercy, we faint not." He writes significantly: "The Lord bestows cheerfulness to work, and we know that from the joy the strength arises. What a blessed work it is in the vineyard of the Lord! There we go from faith to faith, from strength to strength, with a joyful heart, with love to the Lord, in communion with brethren near and far."

With Nommensen one of the great men of modern mission history has departed. Indeed, at a casual meeting he did not make the impression of a great man. Small and plain-looking, simple and humble, he did not force himself into the foreground. The precious metal of his nature did not appear on the surface. He did not dazzle one with his intellectual manner, possessed nothing outwardly imposing, was no fluent speaker and writer, had no compelling dialects. But he was an absolutely original personality, always pursuing unique ways to any clearly recognized goal. His life's picture has clearly shown that. His decisions and undertakings were, in the majority, not the result of a systematical consideration, but flowed from an assured instinct of his mind, guided by God. Intuitively he discerned the right course, and then pursued it without wavering or uncertainty. In spirit he saw the development, as it must come, and followed that with frankness and joy. Thus already in Huta Dame with a firm grip he created the office of elders, and thereby accomplished on the one hand, that the members of the congregation were trained to help in the work, and, on the other hand that, when the number of Christians increased, every Christian and heathen could continually be reached with word and spiritual care. Thus, though they were difficult to handle, he drew the chiefs in the administrative work of the church and thus gained them for the service of the congregation. With a sane view for actual conditions he built a fine system of sub-stations besides the mother congregations, which to timid minds may have seemed too ramified, and he had the courage to entrust these daughter-congregations to native helpers, whereby he in all soberness remained fully aware of the limits of his strength. Very early he began with the training of Batak teachers in the certain expectation that they would soon be needed. Good results with these gave him courage to train and ordain native preachers, which he selected from the teachers who had shown the best results. This was done at a time in the development of the Batak mission, when no other would have dared take this bold step. From the beginning he worked toward the financial self-support of the congregations and schools, little as this appealed to the young Christians, and also planned the far-seeing church ritual. He could wait patiently where the conditions were not yet cleared, but he advanced with determination and with all strength, when he felt that the time for advancing had arrived. Missionary prudence he exhibited when, contrary to the wishes of the fellow workers in Angkola, he settled in Silindung, convinced that in the contact with Islam the gathering of larger congregations would not succeed, and that for the time it would be more important to win the heathen, who had as yet not been touched by Islam or civilization. In 1883 he clearly saw that the occupation of the then opening Toba region was more important at that time than the steppe which was situated between them, for Toba strategically was far more important; here, too, Mohammedanism threatened to enter; after covering Toba and Silindung with the mission, the steppe must needs follow of itself. Although his soul burned with impatience since his days in Barus, he made no haste, but waited until the fruit was ripe. A third time he chose the

proper moment with the beginning of mission work in Simalungun and the regions around Lake Toba, and north of that, and to the east coast. The most of that which the Batak mission has in original and vital matters and form, was instigated by Nommensen. He laid the rails on which later his fellow workers could ride. Everyone will gladly acknowledge that. In scientific qualifications, as preacher, pedagogue, writer, some of his fellow workers may have excelled him (he himself would never have denied this or envied them), that which made him so outstanding among them all was his talent for mission perspective, which looked beyond that which seemed to be opportune at the moment, and foresaw a development lying far in the future, and then arranged his method of procedure accordingly. Thus God granted that he could guide the Batak church in the right course, at a time when even the boldest faith saw nothing of this church. The guidance of this church, after it had grown to a large size, was not so much his work, as the foundation and the laborious preliminary preparations. It is highly gratifying that the board of the Rhenish mission permitted this gift of Nommensen ample freedom of action and did not by directions and orders from the board table interfere with the singular development of that which in the field grew up under Nommensen's capable hands. The church ritual, which was worked out by Nommensen and essentially only approved by Dr. Fabri, is a fine proof for this.

God had endowed this chosen vessel with manifold rich gifts. Nommensen had a rare versatility. Of all the missionaries he was the real master of the Batak language. His translation of the Old Testament Bible stories is downright classical; it speaks just as the Batak people actually speak. Missionary Johannsen, who later translated the Old Testament, with his brilliant memory possessed a deeper knowledge of words and phrases, but the spirit of the language, the relation of the language to the mind and feeling of the people Nommensen has comprehended best. He also translated the New Testament (completed 1876), compiled a primer, and a collection of edifying stories. Unfortunately the increasing amount of labor did not permit him to devote himself in greater measure to literary works, and we all regretted this. He expressed this opinion: "Working with the language is a dry occupation; I will gladly leave that to those who fancy it." Some of the most heartfelt and most popular hymns in the Batak hymnal come from the pen of Nommensen. He also found time to collect Batak fables and legends.

He further possessed the gift to exert a strong influence over people whom he met, and to win them, Even the look of his true, blue eyes did one good, and his kindness and friendliness all over found its way into the hearts. Only thus could he last in Silindung at a time, when the majority of the inhabitants of the valley were hostile to him. His influence over the hearts was almost miraculous, as he proved it with God's help at the previously mentioned sacrificial festival at the market place in Sitapura. Many former fierce enemies became his sincere friends. At that he was actually not a good judge of people. Many a Batak deceived him, especially when he was growing older, and misused his confidence. But he was not embittered, but remained cordial and friendly as before. Every person who came to him he regarded as sent to him by God that he might receive help. For this reason he always had time for the natives.

Significant of the power which he exercised over men is the following incident: On his first journey of furlough in 1880, Nommensen had to wait a long time in Padang for the steamer which was to bring him to Europe. He grew restless over this and asked why God would let him wait there so long when there was no useful work to be done. Then he heard that in a few days a young colonial soldier, who had committed a grievous wrong against his superiors, was to be executed. The young man's name was Paauw. Nommensen here saw a God-given opportunity, to serve as pastor, and asked the

commander to grant him admission to the cell of the captive. At first he laughed at him and told him that his efforts with this hardened and insolent man would do no good, but finally gave him permission. When Nommensen visited the prisoner, he would not listen to any word of admonition of correction. In the filthiest manner he insulted his superiors who had innocently condemned him and raved against God and men. Nommensen had to leave without having accomplished his aim. But he would not give up. He visited him once more on the same day. Again the prisoner spurned all advances and hardened his heart. But let us hear his report: "I found a young man of 22, a poor, deluded creature. The poor man was almost in despair. He knew that he must die in three days, and yet could not believe it, but sought some way out to save his life, for to go into eternity with such a guilt laden conscience, was a terrifying thought to him. He hated all who had accused and judged him. After I had let him pour out his whole heart, all his hatred, I asked him whether he still had parents, and if he sometimes still thought of his mother. He confessed that he had not done this for some time, formerly, yes. I then further learned from him that his father had died seven years ago, singing psalms, and that his mother, a pious, praying widow, probably was still living. I asked him whether he thought that his mother still loved him and prayed for him. 'Yes', he said, and with that began to cry bitterly; his parents had always admonished him to prayer, and he had learned many prayers, but unfortunately had forgotten them all, for, since he became a soldier, he had cast away everything, not even the Lord's Prayer did he know now. Now I told him that I had been sent to him by the Lord Jesus, because of the many prayers of his pious parents, in the name of Jesus, and for the sake of His blood to proclaim the grace of God to him, if he were willing to accept the conditions which God has set for the sinner. In short, God granted grace unto life and a joyful faith, at first still wavering, but then in the last night in such a measure, that he could not find words to express it. Forgiving all enemies, asking all for forgiveness, exhorting his comrades unto order, praising christianity and the grace of God, he spent the last hours of his life. In the midst of soldiers I marched at his side for three quarter hour to the place of the execution. He remained cheerful and greeted to all sides. Arriving at the place of execution, he asked for permission to speak to the officers and soldiers. Then, before the front, several thousand soldiers, and half of the city of Padang he prayed aloud the Lord's Prayer and a short prayer which I had written out for him, which said: 'Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins for the sake of Thy blood.' Thereupon he extended his hand to me and thanked me, then calmly bared his breast without trembling, and permitted his eyes to be blindfolded. Then he knelt down, took the open New Testament into his hands, raised them to heaven, held back his head, and looked up. In a praying posture he was struck by six bullets simultaneously, and sank down without a quiver. The passage of the New Testament to which I had opened the book for him: 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit', was stained with his blood. The dieing of this man made an extraordinary impression on the population. The captain came to me inquiring, how it had been possible that this stubborn man had acted so courageously. He thanked me, and I also received a letter of thanks from the colonel." Arriving in Holland Nommensen looked up the mother of the executed man in Harlem and told her about the conversion of her son, and how, on the place of execution, he had firmly held in his hand the New Testament, which he then gave to her, and died contentedly. The old woman said amidst tears: "O, how good is God!" The result of this incident was that Dutch friends donated the means to send a missionary to Padang, who was to serve the soldiers there. Missionary Dornsaft from Nias began this work and founded a so-called Militairtehus, i.e., a soldiers'

home, which has become a source of great blessings.

Another example, how cleverly Nommensen understood to deal with people: When the station had been removed from the unhealthy Huta Dame to the higher and healthier location of Pearadja, the congregation at Christmas wished to celebrate a common meal, according to Batak custom; a buffalo was to be slaughtered and they wished to enjoy themselves together.

Nommensen had no objection to this, but made it clear to them that giving would be far more pleasant than a banquet and proposed, rather to collect a fund for the poor, which could provide joy perhaps for years to come. Feasting really was a joy only for children at Christmastime, because they did not yet understand the great gift of God; but they, the adults, remembered the gift of God and therefore would prepare joy also for others.

He passed a list around, on which not less than 61 Gulden were subscribed, quite a considerable sum for the conditions at the time, with which then a rice field was purchased, the proceeds of which were assigned for widows and orphans.

When the heathen of the province of Somalosik in Uluan caused difficulties at the placing of missionary Betz, Nommensen had the ringleaders come to Sigumpar. There he entertained them for several days; they remained over Sunday, saw and heard the Christian service with the singing and band playing, the 400 Sunday School pupils, and took part in a meeting of the elders. All this made such an impression on the rude band, that they later talked over everything with Nommensen quietly, and asked for a missionary.

Because the Batak felt his love, all had confidence in him. From near and far they came to him, submitted all their troubles to him, and asked for his advice and help. It need not be emphasized that he diligently made use of these opportunities to speak to them about those things which were most important to him. Without exaggeration it can be said that Nommensen was the most popular and influential man in the Batak lands. Missionary Hanstein relates an incident that, although insignificant in itself, bears witness, how universally respected and popular the "ompa", grandfather was:

"On the journey from Bahalbatu to Balige we once had lost our way and had strayed into the rice fields, but I did not regret this detour, because there I learned how the brother Nommensen lived in the hearts of the people. For we came to an open space between the villages and there were a few people; two tall, aged chiefs greeted us. Nommensen asked them: 'Don't you know me?' 'No, who are you?' Then first brother Schrey was introduced as a new teacher, then Hanstein as the Tuan of Sipajutar. 'But what is your name?' 'Nommensen.' 'Why, then you have become young again! Sit down here; come with us.' Well, these are only words written with the pen, but the happily sparkling eyes, the gesticulations while sitting down, in short, the joy which we could see in these people, cannot be described. I quietly looked on and found heartfelt happiness over my older companion."

Of the greatest importance for a missionary is a practical talent; Nommensen possessed that in a high degree. He knew how to take hold of anything correctly. For a Toba chief he repaired his sewing machine; for me and others he often fixed the refractory organs; a clever native he taught the rudiments of photography, so that later he became a good photographer; he could repair watches, tame unruly horses, handle sail boats, extract teeth, help women at confinement, build houses, make furniture, survey, operate a field forge, and much besides; he was always ready to help missionaries and natives with his clever hand. In Silindung yet he diligently studied Greek and English, fluently spoke Malayan, read much to increase his knowledge, and there was scarcely anything in which he was not interested. He even had a dictionary of Arabic and Sanskrit sent to him. Even the small and the smallest attracted him. This gave his official reports a peculiar complexion. He often enlarged on trivialities,

and the result was that he sometimes grew loquacious. Anyone who knows him fails to see the far-reaching judgment which distinguished him, and the stress on great and important points. His reporting is not what may be called especially intellectual, but quite plain and simple; one has a feeling as if he were for some reason concealing the best. But this impression Nommensen always gave also in his everyday intercourse, always plain, always interested in everything; he never in any way let anyone feel his superiority. Only under compulsion did he take up his pen. If we search in the reports of the Rhenish mission, we are disappointed to find so little from Nommensen's pen. He never boasted about the things he had experienced or what he had accomplished. To write about such things, while to some it might have been a great pleasure, to him seemed a waste of time, and if he did write, he spoke of matters of secondary importance with a strange dilection. He had "an aversion against trumpeting forth an accomplished work."

But Nommensen was not only practical with his hand, but he also possessed a fine practical conception of all that pertains to missions; and this is vital for missionaries. Of this his sane reasoning, his whole life bears witness. But a few instances to illustrate: In the service he introduced the reading or recitation of the commandments in the liturgical ritual, and this was very valuable for congregations just coming from paganism and in need of moral strengthening. In his Lutheran catechism the commandments were numbered in the Reformed manner; thus the prohibition of worshipping statues and pictures of idols finds its place. When in the beginning people asked for a New Testament, he made them give him a book on witchcraft in return. When a younger missionary tried selling Bibles on the markets in the English-American manner, he positively advised against it, because he knew that the spoken word must precede the written word. In Terutung in Silindung the military administration wanted to purchase a piece of ground in the midst of the Christian dwellings, to erect a soldiers canteen there; the natives were powerless to prevent it. But Nommensen promptly acquired the house for school purposes. This was taken very much amiss, but it was done, and the offense for the Christian village was prevented. In Toba the Dutch had built a very large ship from the finest materials, but after its completion it proved unserviceable. At once Nommensen purchased the large ship at an auction for a small price, and the wood was floated to Sigumpar and used in building churches and schools. Later, when the barracks in Laguboti were discontinued, Nommensen did not rest until the government donated the quite stately, well-preserved buildings to the mission with the grounds, that an industrial school might be erected there, which, as a result, cost but little. How cleverly and practical he proceeded in the establishment of missions, e.g., in Sigumpar, we have seen. At the end of the eighties a leading chief in Hutabarat threatened to turn Mohammedan if he did not get a missionary of his own. Then Nommensen said: "The valley of Silindung is of greatest importance for our mission. It is like the head of a horse, the rudder of a ship. Who has these, also has the body." For this reason he in this case yielded to the urging of the misguided man, in order to prevent the intrusion of Mohammedanism.

In his mode of procedure he could be quite whimsical at times. Thus at one time in Laguboti he made an agreement with people who applied for instruction for baptism, that anyone who later would withdraw, pay a fine of one dollar. To a stubborn man he declared that he would pray for his death, if he would not quit his obstinacy.

God had equipped this pioneer of the Batak mission with prudence and sagacity in a high measure. This made a strong impression on the clever Batak who were at home in all strategems of sophistry and lawyer's tricks. His influence on the natives, especially in the difficult years in

Silindung, must be ascribed to a great extent to his prudence and sagacity. They enjoyed to put baffling legal questions before him, and then as gourmands relish his wise decisions. One gained the impression that Nommensen could have been very successful as a diplomat. The quarrels and petty jealousies of the chiefs he employed cleverly to gain ground. Think of the incident when in Sigumpar he persuaded two quarreling parties to give the land in question for a station. Many a station and many a branch was established because the ruling chief at the place would not be outdone by his neighbor. This diplomatic way was not without hazards and he cannot simply do what he dared; it did not cause some disappointments. It has been mentioned how cleverly he went about putting the young congregations on their own feet financially by loaning them funds. In all efforts to advance, and with all his courage, he never forgot prudence and caution. He never visited a region where he was not known without taking with him, according to native custom, chiefs who had friends there, introduced, and then protected him. On his journeys he carefully observed Batak usage and politeness, so as to offend no one. In the early days he had constructed a trap door in the floor of his house, which according to Indian style was built on posts, and through this door he often crawled during the night, in order to observe the surroundings while crouching on the ground, unseen from outside. This was not fear; for he knew no fear; as he has amply shown. But he did not forget caution at any time. He knew also that life is an entrusted gift which a Christian may not treat carelessly. After his sickness in 1871 he wrote: "On my long sickbed I have learned many things, especially also working in moderation; I had thought; 'Go right ahead, as long as it lasts; if the body gives out, it is all over, the Lord no longer needs you, and so on.' This is true; but by carelessness and passion I may bring myself into a condition where I would be a burden for the mission for many years. Here, too, we must remember that the Lord requires faithfulness of His servants and, on the other side, that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." That Heine and Johannsen at the time forced their way into Toba, he disapproved. He could wait until the doors were opened. Youthful foolhardiness was foreign to him, nor did he willingly seek a martyr's death.

An example, how cleverly Nommensen knew how to disguise the denial of a request: In the year 1873 a rajah from Panggabean in Johannsen's field, came to him and Johannsen and asked for a missionary. To place a special missionary there was impossible. But Nommensen did not give the man a plain no!, which would have offended him, since he was still a heathen, but he told him that he had not come to the right address with his request for a missionary, but that he would give a good advice that his request might be fulfilled, if he were really serious about it; he must above all become reconciled through Jesus Christ with the Lord of heaven and earth, the Lord of the missionaries. After he had become a child of God, then he could pray and be heard. If then, with others of his subjects, he would surely get one, even if the missionaries at present were opposed to it, for the hearts of the missionaries also are in His hands; in due time and by the circumstances God would change their minds. With this the man was satisfied while a direct refusal would have offended him. This agreed with the Batak custom, which forbids turning away a person with a flat no!. Some might consider such an answer a little dubious.

Prudent and sane, as he was, Nommensen always accepted circumstances as they were, and did not dwell on complaints that they were so evil. When the multitude began to crowd into the Christian congregations, it was quite clear to him that many of them did not come from spiritual motives; he understood also that with many of them this could not be the case, but as a realistic man he figured with their mass advance, and arranged the

baptismal instruction and the spiritual care accordingly. Even the faults and shortcomings of the Batak teachers and pastors he included in his considerations, he never complained about it, for that would have improved nothing. At that time the opinions of the missionaries were divided on the question, whether in the printing of their books the Latin or the old Batak scripts should be employed. Many things favored the Batak letters, especially if a person held the principle of conserving all national traits. But Nommensen was not blinded by this; he saw that the Latin letters were far more simple, and that they would prevail in the future. For this reason he decided upon using them, although at the time this may have seemed narrow to some. Later developments proved the wisdom of his position. His clear perception of the prevailing situation and the problems arising from it, he retained into his old age. He never rigidly stuck to something, which formerly had been handled in this or that way, but always investigated what was necessary right now. In the last years of his long life the Batak lands had changed vastly. The irresistibly advancing civilization with its gifts and its poisons altered the picture a great deal and placed the mission before entirely different problems. None saw that more clearly than the aged Nommensen, who had experienced and understood so many changes of picture. Thus he regarded the desire of the modern Batak youth to be instructed in the Dutch language as fully justified, and, in spite of justified misgivings, he assisted it in the erection of a Dutch school. He always was, we might say, a realistic politician.

For the work of mission sisters he had a full understanding and always advocated it, in spite of some not very encouraging experiences. Sumatra was the first field of the Rhenish mission to employ women in the work of the congregations, schools, and the sick. The advancement of the sons of chiefs, as the future leaders of the nation, was ever at his heart. One of his favorite plans was the establishment and promotion of a special higher school for these young men. But this undertaking did not succeed, perhaps because Nommensen expected too much of it, and for this reason the school program was overloaded with high strung wishes and an overabundance of material. As early as 1905 the school was discontinued.

In his big-heartedness and prudence he always had a full appreciation for the cultural problems of missions. Therefore he actively advocated the establishment of an industrial school, which, he hoped, would bring blessings to the country. He wished that the missionary to be selected for this work would be many-sided and capable, even in the art of goldsmithing, and in dentistry he should be skilled; timberwork, carpentry, lathe work, the art of forge work he should thoroughly understand. How to make horns, bake bricks, make and repair clocks; he must know. He should study the building of mills for water and wind power, for the threshing of rice, so that the poor women in the land get some relief and must get up at three o'clock every morning to trample out the rice. He must visit the veterinarian, also the slaughterhouse, to watch the killing and preparing of the animals, so that the cruelty to animals ends. He should observe the building of ships with stern wheels. He should go into a print shop and look over the machines. For in time we must publish a Batak paper here, or we will be flooded with Mohammedan useless things. So he accomplished much toward the civilization of the Batak lands, little as he considered it the most important thing. The manual training school be built up into a flourishing condition.

After the Dutch colonial government had annexed at first Silindung and later also Toba, Nommensen understood to work together wisely with it and make sure of all advantages offered thereby. When the government offered the missions subsidies for its schools, Nommensen accepted them with gratitude, and thereby in a short time brought the mission's school system

an unexpected extension and success. To him it was self evident that the mighty of this world must support the works of God with their silver and gold, and he was quite willing to accept money which was not given from religious motives. For this he liked to quote the passage, Isaiah 49:23: "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." All world's history in his eye of faith was only the scaffold for the building of the kingdom of God.

His faith made him an ever happy optimist. In everything he still found something good. When during the hardest time of the beginning in Silindung so many wars were waged between the tribes, and hindered the work of mission, Nommensen expressed the opinion: "Humanly speaking, wars are a great obstacle to the spreading of the kingdom of God, because in them people become savage and cruel, but measured with God's measure, they also bring a blessing, because by the continued warring the people are not only kept strong and bold, but also grow tired and mellow, so that in time they will the more willingly be brought under the light yoke of Jesus. So we expect some good, even from the wars of the Batak." For those who love God all things must work together for good. This confident faith never forsook him even in the worst situations. He knew no worry. "It would be better if we would disregard all human laws and ordinances, and simply in faith look up to the Lord, entrusting our old days and our loved ones to Him. We would not be put to shame. Unfortunately we are still too much flesh, in faith to shatter the ungodly worrying." When a young missionary thought that there were no believing Christians in the Batak congregations, Nommensen replied: "Obviously the brother has come down from Horeb with Elijah, who also did not see the seven thousand."

The friends at home he exhorted at every opportunity to make intercession for them: "You the quiet ones in the land, are fighting the battles in the mission fields, not we, who are here. We are really only the criers who proclaim the victory, and are in great danger to be regarded more than we are, while we are nothing but poor, miserable, sinful men, who are even in great danger of being deceived by the enemy and losing our souls. For this cause we repent our plea: Pray for us, that we may not preach unto others, and ourselves become castaways! The danger is great, and the foe strong and full of guile, our hearts are desparately wicked and deceitful above all things. The one he tries to fell from the right side, the other from the left, the one by flattery, the other by criticism, he tries it by successes and by failures, by victory and defeat. He has a labyrinth of snares, by which no one remains untouched, who leaves his fortress. Only in Jesus are we protected on all sides." He was convinced that God does not need us. "God goes His own way, and shows us that He does not need us at all, and that it is pure grace, if He employs us." From his sincere humility flowed his modesty, which went so far, that on a journey to Batavia he did not travel first class on the steamer, as all Europeans did, but together with the natives as a deck passanger, who had to provide his own bedding and meals. His fellow workers were not pleased with this, but he would not listen to any objections. When he was on fulough in Germany, he preferred to travel fourth class.

With his unshaken faith Nommensen also had a strong willpower, which would not be diverted from his fixed goal, tenacity in the persecution of his plans, self denial and self control, which had become part of his nature. Thus equipped, he became the pioneer and builder of churches by the grace of God. He was always sure of victory. At the age of 70 he wrote home: "The Lord has a kingdom, and rules among the heathen. In the name of this Lord, our Savior Jesus Christ, we hold up our banner and courageously and joyfully stand in the battle which is ordained for us. Victory is entirely on our side; for Jesus is the Victor. He is our King, and our Batak will also become His people. It is a blessed thing to serve such a

King. He Himself is by our side upon the plain, and the new year will bring new victories. Hallelujah!"

In the last years of his life Nommensen had to observe that superficiality, insubordination, and opposition spread in the constantly growing congregations. A political party came into existence, which posed as a religious movement, the so-called Batak Christian Alliance (HKB), which tried to obtain power over the church, in order to use that for political purposes. With sinister suspicions they worked against the missionaries, and even the aged grandfather was not spared. They proclaimed church independence and secession from the European missionaries. That brought dangerous disturbances into the congregations. There were those who willingly followed the enticing voice of the party leaders and sowed strife in the congregations. This caused the father of the Batak mission intense suffering. After his death bitter battles ensued with this movement, which at the bottom was hostile to the church, and these, among other things, led to deplorable divisions and separations in the Batak church, which until then had been united, and they still have their repercussions today.

Three years more Nommensen led the Batak church in the world war. Although the Dutch colonies were not immediately involved in the war, yet manifold disagreeable effects resulted in Sumatra, especially among the Mohammedans. But on the whole everything went along in its usual quiet way. It was somewhat annoying that few medicines came to Sumatra. That in the end they were almost completely cut off from communication with the home board, caused little trouble for this mission, which had always enjoyed great freedom of action. Foreseeing a lack of missionaries, they had increased their efforts in training native preachers. The bloodshed among the great civilized nations weighed heavily on the soul of the aged Nommensen, who himself lost one son. His prayer was: "that man might find man again, and that God's commandment: Love thy God above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself, might again be in force." He did not live to see the end of the terrible war.

Meanwhile he had become 84 years old and, on the whole had remained healthy and robust. His fervent zeal in traveling, visiting, inspecting, helping, and governing, continued unabated. Confidently he hoped to serve his Lord in the beloved mission work a number of years longer. But then the Lord calmly and peacefully called His faithful servant out of time into eternity. In the midst of full activity he went home in a cheerful faith in his Savior on May 23rd, 1918.

In the memories which Nommensen's son, Jonathan (died February, 1950) has written about his father's life, it is impressive to read about his last days. It was on May 18th, 1918 when the congregation Pangaruran, the youngest among the Batak congregations, wished to celebrate mission festival, and had invited the grandfather to attend. Gladly he accepted the invitation. Early in the morning the pupils of the Manual Training School in Laguboti assembled with their band instruments in Balige, that together with the grandfather they might cross over to Samosir on the motor boat "Tole". The lake was calm as a mirror, and in exalted spirits the participants rode along, by turns singing, blowing the trumpets, or listening to the old Batak rowing songs in the accompanying row boats. First they landed at the station Palipi, where they took a little rest. Later the motor boat of the controller from Pangururan came to meet them, carrying him and a number of companions, and there was a cheerful greeting back and forth. Arriving at Pangururan they walked in solemn procession with band music to the station of missionary Eigenbrod. In the evening Nommensen with his companions went to the house of the controller, where with an extraordinary vivacity he related about the time of the beginning of his work in Silindung. During the night he suddenly took ill.

Suffering severe heart spasms he called missionary Eigenbrod to his side and said to him: "I believe that the Lord will take me now," but accepted the camphor bottle to smell of that, and himself ordered that a homeopathic mixture of arsenic be prepared. He also conversed with his old friend, the former pandita Enoch. On the following morning the mission festival was celebrated, in which he could not take part. Amidst deep agitation of the listeners several of the panditas reported about his illness, others related about that which the grandfather had experienced, suffered, and accomplished. Then the festival congregation prayed for the beloved patient. Meanwhile messages had been sent to his son at Sigumpar and to Dr. Weckler at Pearadja, who arrived on the evening of May 20th. At first the patient seemed to improve, so that they could venture to bring him back to Sigumpar. In Palipi Nommensen made a visit at the local mission station. When they arrived at Sigumpar, a rainbow appeared above the house, a sign of the peace into which the Lord would soon take his servant. At first he felt refreshed, walking to the station without help. On the following day he felt better. He spoke to several missionaries who had come to inquire about his condition. Many people came to hear how the beloved grandfather was getting along and returned comforted. He drank a little but could not retain it. Now it became clear that the end was approaching. He asked to have his back massaged, but it pained too much. At times he arose and walked up and down in the room, and for a time sat down at the table. With sorrow he thought of his two daughters who attended school in Germany, and said: "Now they will have no father and no mother any longer", whereupon his daughter-in-law comforted him, that she would take care of them. In detail the dying man now gave orders as to what must be done; showed a number of papers to his son, which must be dispatched, also some money which had been entrusted to him, and also ordered greetings to be sent to different people. When his son said to him: "We wish that you could remain with us for a long time yet", he replied: "Yes, I would like that too, but this time God'S will is another". Then he sat upright and prayed: "My God, for Jesus sake I pray, Thy peace may bless my dying day". Then he arose, went to his desk, and gave a number of instructions, looked up the hymn: "And did my Savior bleed and die?" and asked that his grandchildren learn it, saying that he himself had lately begun to memorize it, but had not finished. Then he took more medicine, to do everything possible to save his life. With the words: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me", he put himself into the hands of his heavenly Father, felt of his pulse, remarking that it was already gone. His body then sharply quivered three times, his eyes opened wide, his glance wandered around the ceiling of the room, then he closed his eyes and after a few light breaths his soul departed into the eternal home at sunrise, six o'clock in the morning. He son, Jonathan, wrote: "Thus the father was permitted to behold the glory of God, which left the peaceful and restful impression on his face, and showed no sign of suffering."

As if borne by the wind the message of the death of the universally respected and beloved "father" was spread throughout Batakland. Thousands of Batak came from Toba, the steppe, Silindung, and from beyond the lake, once more to see the beloved departed. As far as possible, they were permitted to pass through the room to look at the father. On the following day, May 24th, his mortal remains were committed to the earth. Owing to good transportation facilities in modern times, most of the missionaries could be present for the funeral, also several Dutch officers from Toba and Silindung. In seven autos the Europeans had come. Thousands of people were present, so that the balconies of the church had to be closed to prevent any disaster. At first a devotion was held in the mission house in German, at which missionary Kessel spoke II. Tim. 4:5-8. Brethren carried

the casket from the house to the church, where missionary Metzler held the funeral sermon in Batak. He spoke on Hebrews 13:7-8. After him the assistant resident spoke as the representative of the government to set forth the meritorious services of Nommensen for the soul welfare and the material advancement of the population. At last pandita Friedrich spoke in the name of the Batak Christians. Between these there were hymns and band music. The pandita carried the casket from the church to the grave which had been prepared near the church at the side of the grave of his wife, who had preceded him. It is not a mere figure of speech, if the brethren from there wrote that the entire Batak Christendom mourned over the departed. For he was not only the most popular, but still more, the most beloved person in the whole country, respected and revered far and wide, like a father among his children. They regarded him as one of their own number. Little wonder, after that which he had experienced in their midst and that which he had accomplished for them!

In 1932 a monument, carved by a sculptor in Duesseldorf was unveiled in Silindung. For years the Christians had collected for a fund, in order to erect a worthy monument to their revered grandfather. This monument is an eloquent testimonial, not only of the gratitude of a christianized people, but also an exhortation to remember those who laid the foundation for their renewal, and to abide with this foundation.

"I have ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

Chapter 11: CONCLUSION

When Dr. Nommensen passed away, the Batak church numbered more than 250,000 members. Since then some conditions have changed. The number of Christians has increased considerably. New territories have been opened for Christianity. The second World War and the following hard years have not been able to hold back the victorious course of the Gospel. But with the growth of the church, also the dangers have grown, which threaten larger churches; many, who are only outward members, threaten the inner life of the congregations; the broad stream of modern civilization with its temptations and poisons has flooded into the lands; Islam is making frantic efforts to gain territories; a powerful counter mission of the Roman Catholic church has begun; the unbelief of the west forces its way through the land; sinister efforts to get rid of the rule of the Europeans, even the missionaries, stir up the minds; the increasing national feeling also causes the old heathenism again to raise its head, gilded and idealized by the modern generation. After the time of rapid growth a time of sifting, of cleaning out, and of deepening followed. But by the grace of God these difficulties were overcome. We shall mention but a few of the more important events and developments that followed.

In 1923 an asylum for the blind was erected, Ephatha. Four years later a Christian college was founded in Taputung, and in the same year a constitution for the Batak church was formulated. In 1934 the Batak church began a mission among the Mohammedans and sent a pastor to Kuterbani. In 1935 a training school for women teachers was erected.

In 1940 the Rhenish mission society was compelled to end its work in Sumatra, because of World War II, and the Dutch government returned the missionaries to Germany. From May 10th, 1942 until 1945 the island was occupied by the Japanese, and naturally the church suffered greatly. A book entitled "Under the banner of the Victor", published in 1948, relates the experiences of one of the missionaries, who had been left in Sumatra, during this trying time. On August 17th, 1945, the freedom of Indonesia was proclaimed, and the work again progressed well. In 1946, the seminary in Sipoholon was reopened with 26 students.

Today the Batak church consists of more than 550,000 baptized members, and is an independent and self-supporting church body. In 1950 negotiations took place with the Lutheran World Federation, with the thought of the Batak church joining the federation as an independent body.

ADDENDUM

The following are just a few notes to discuss what wasn't covered in the paper, or what has happened to the Church in Sumatra since the time of the writing. The material and figures included here are taken from the material found in the bibliography of this paper.

The Rhenish Mission Society: The Rhenish Mission Society was mentioned often in this paper, but it was never discussed in detail. It can trace its roots back to the Basil Mission Society, and was an auxiliary of that society that eventually became independent of it. In about 1828, the Society was founded, and was headquartered in the Ruhr, in Wuppertal-Barmen. Most of the support for this mission society came from two of the "united" churches in Germany, but was not a confessionally Lutheran mission. As a matter of fact, because of the Prussian Union, the mission society, like the churches, was a mixture of Lutheran and Reformed. However, most of the missionaries were good Lutheran missionaries. The missionaries were also classified as pietists, highly disciplined, and, as we can see from the church at Sumatra, they were intensely committed to the people they served. They arrived in Sumatra in about 1860 with their first missionaries, although they were not the first ones there. Several Americans were among the first, but they were killed and eaten by the cannibalistic natives, which made the work of the Rhenish missionaries all the more remarkable. Although the society itself was Reformed and Lutheran, we can see from the works of the missionaries that they were Lutheran. Luther's catechism was used to instruct the people, and the Gospel was preached to all, not as if it were only to the elect. The Church in Sumatra owes its very existence to the Rhenish Missionary Society, which had to abandon work there during the time of World War II. In 1930, the Church there became independent, owing this to the fact that the missionaries, and especially Ludwig Nommensen, had started the practice of training the natives to eventually take over the church themselves, which they did in time.

Schooling: Another very important part of the mission in Sumatra and Batakland was the use of schools. The typical government primary school ran for only about three years, while the mission school ran for five or six years. This gave the students at the mission school a great head start. In 1952 it was estimated that the mission schools provided about 40% of the teachers in the nation, although the Bataks made up only about 2% of the population. Many schools were opened, as was pointed out in the paper, both for teachers and for seminary students, to train the Pandita Batak, the native preachers on the island. The crowning point of the entire school system was Nommensen University, built in 1954. It was created in a response to a need felt for higher education in the country. Its main purpose was to train seminary students for the Batak Church. However, since other higher education was needed, it also includes courses to train students for health, agricultural and community services in the land. The school is located at Pematang Siantar and is still very active today.

The State of the Church Today: In 1951, in preparation of joining the Lutheran World Federation, the Batak Church adopted a Confession so that it could be admitted. Before this, the church had not committed itself to any Confession, including the usual Confessions of the Lutheran Church. Nommensen had not felt this necessary, and it would have proved impractical in his attempt to keep as much of the Batak's customs as possible. However, now the need arose for this Confession, and to show that they were indeed Lutheran, the Confession was based mainly on the Bible, Luther's Catechism, and the Augsburg Confession. They are now an official member of

the Lutheran World Federation, who set precedent by accepting a church body that did not adhere to all the Lutheran Confessions. The congregations in Batak are rather large, averaging about 1,000 members. The actual size of the Church itself is hard to pinpoint, since there have been several offshoots of this Church. One source lists 3,000,000 as the size of the Church. This would appear to be a little high, with the actual size actually closer to 1,000,000 to 1,500,000. The official name of the Church today is the Protestant Christian Batak Church. The Batak name for the Church is the Huria Kristen Batak Protestant or HKBP for short.

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