A considerable portion of Assamese Romantic Poetry, comprises of the study and eulogy of nature. Prior to the coming of the Romantic poets, the representation of nature in Assamese poetry was scanty. The poets had only occasionally touched nature and hence nature got little chance to emerge out with a proper form and philosophy. It was only Śri Śaṅkaradeva who showed some respect to nature; in his long-devotional poems he often drifted into the delineation of nature wherever he could pick up any chance. Thus, we have the description of the celestial flower garden in the ¹ Haramohana and the beautiful love garden in the Ṛṣa-śilā (sections of the Kīrtana). Apart from Śri Śaṅkaradeva's attempts there was no direct endeavour to portray nature in poetry. Vaisnavite poetry, being mainly religious, often liked to link man and God and hence there was no positive attempt to link man and nature, nor there was any attempt
at describing different aspects of nature. The Assamese folk-poets, however, tried to link man and nature in their poetry. But the proper growth of nature poetry with its distinctive form and philosophy was not possible till the advent of the Romantic poets. It was Chandrakumar Agarwalla who initiated nature into Assamese poetry in his beautiful nature-lyric Ban-Kuwarî (The princess of Wilderness). Ban-Kuwarî was published in the very first issue of Jonâkî.

From historical viewpoint the publication of Ban-Kuwarî is important. It introduced newness both in form and matter and such a theme was hitherto unknown in Assamese poetry. Moreover, it was the first poem of Chandra Kumar Agarwalla. The poem was a great success which encouraged the young poet to employ his genius in singing nature-lyrics. He was one of the pioneering poets of Assamese Romanticism. Chandra Kumar as well as his two friends Hem Chandra Goswami and Lakhsmi Nath Bezbarua effected a revolution in Assamese poetry by portraying nature in a bold and entertaining manner. These three poets described the different aspects of nature, tried to evolve a philosophy of nature and were successful in linking man with nature.
Chandra Kumar Agarwalla (1867-1938) was born at Brahmajan in the Tezpur sub-division. He was the second son of the illustrious Harivilas Agarwalla. Chandra Kumar passed an uneventful childhood and from his early teens he was associated with the business activities of his father at Calcutta. In due time he passed the Entrance and the First Arts examinations (respectively) but could not obtain the Bachelor's degree. He studied at the Presidency College, Calcutta. On his return to Assam Chandrakumar took to business and tea-cultivation. He started a press at Gauhati and published some news papers from it, a fact, which had paved the way for Assamese journalism. With his initiative new vistas were opened for Assamese literature in general and poetry in particular. A poet by heart and a businessman by profession, Chandrakumar was a man of unique combination. Pratīmā (The Image, 1914) and Bin Barāgī (The Minstrel, 1923) are the books of poetry that we have from his facile pen.

As a poet of nature Chandrakumar felt a strong longing to be amidst nature. He enjoyed passionately the loves and beauties of nature. In the poem Phulā Sariyā Darā (The blossoming mustards) the poet feels an intense
urge to see the beautiful flowers:

Pray, spare me
I go to have a look
At the blooming mustards,
Which have captivated me
up to this day;
The mustard flowers,
Full of the wings of the
3 Butterflies.

Every object of nature — the flowers, the birds, the trees, the beautiful mermaids, the blue sky and the clouds gave an extraordinary pleasure to the poet. And whatever pleasure he derived from his intimate association with Nature, Chandra Kumar immediately communicated to his readers. Like Wordsworth he discovered a spirit, a soul of nature and was very much impressed by the mightiness of it. In the poem Бин-Барғі the poet has felt the affectionate warmth of nature which became a source of unfailing inspiration for him. Chandra Kumar felt that nature is more affectionate and kinder to the human beings. Тенімалă, the poor and tortured girl of Agarwalia's baladic poem Тенімалă was given rescue and solace by nature. The girl Тенімалă (the
Assamese Cinderella) who was driven out of home (and hence of the human society) by her cruel step-mother was nicely accommodated by nature. For, escaping the torture of the step-mother she assumed the form of a creeper and a tree successively, and finally took the form of a lovely lotus in the waters of a river. Woven in a background of folk-story the poem *Tesîmalâ* has received eloquent appreciation. The Wordsworthian idea, "nature never doth betray the soul that loves her", is nicely reflected in this poem. Observing the closeness of *Tesîmalâ* to nature the poet remarks:

Mānūh kūṭum dāliyāi pelāle
Kakāne kūṭum pālī,
Maraṃ beṭhāre ājali kuṭari
Eśāike ūjā karilī.

— The human friends
Have deserted you!
Alas, whom did you find a friend?
With the wrath of your heart,
O the innocent lass,
you have now befriended all.
Chandrakumar perhaps like Shakespeare believed, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin". Another popular aspect of Chandrakumar's nature poems is the inclusion of the supernatural witch-girls, the mermaids and the fictitious forest damsels. The lovely descriptions of the Benuwaris (the princesses of wilderness) and the Jalmwaris (the mermaids) make his poems lovely and enchanting. The extension of Chandrakumar's romantic imagination is very much vivid in these supernatural poems. In the midst of nature, in a calm but moon-lit dawn the mermaids are making water-sports in a beautiful river as we have it very nicely described in his Jalmwar:

Through the waves, the swans ply
The boat made of flowers;
The river-princess as beautiful as the lotus
Dances with the flowers
And on her head glitters
A pearl of dew.
Their hands and feet are red
Their faces too (are red)
And their hairs are brighter than the Kāleśvar.

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And on her head glitters
A pearl of dew.
Their hands and feet are red
Their faces too (are red)
And their hairs are brighter than the Kāleśvar.
All of them are dancing
And singing in praise of the morning.
Some of them are swaying
The lotus petals on their bodies,
And the red-one is collecting
The lotus beads in handfuls.

The special kind of perception of the existence of supernatural elements within nature has made his poems more attractive and much more romantic. Delineation of the supernatural was one of the chief characteristics of the English Romantic poetry. The occult and heavy description of the [Jakhini] (\textit{Sanskrit. Yak\'ini}) \textit{ahov\'ali} (the forest witch) - her clapping of hands beneath the wild bushes of [p\'u\'t\'uka] trees (\textit{p\'u\'t\'uka talate yak\'ini ahov\'ali \textit{tuk \textit{tuk c\'apari v\'ay}}) remind us of the denizens of the English witch-world like Geraldine of Coleridge's \textit{Christabel}. Chandrakumar Agarwalla like the English Romantic poets could discover an avenue of beauty within nature. The pursuit of beauty was indeed a strong passion with Chandrakumar as he himself said —

"The pursuit of beauty is my life's sport." He had found beauty in every object of nature and this world full of beauty gives immense delight to the poet:
Sundarare sundar i dudiniya des
Yatanar amandar suvami des.

= This world though temporary is the most beautiful,
A lovely abode of strife and pleasure.

Beauty and joy for him were the essential principles of this universe. The poet naturally interlinked man and nature as the participant of the same sport namely the pursuit of beauty. As one of the pioneering poets of Assamese Romanticism, Chandrakumar had to invent a new diction for his poetry. He preferred easy and homely diction and his art of narration was less rhetorical. In a sense, his poems are full of the Alākāra, named Svabhāvekti, which according to certain theorists like Bhamaha is not an Alākāra. (Vide, Dr. V. Baghavan, Some Concepts of Alākāra Sāstra, pp.95-116).

He did not like to submit to the orthodox convention as regards diction and so he himself innovated a diction which was more nearer the common man. He preferred simplicity as an instrument of communication to his readers who were up-to that time not at all familiar with the Romantic tradition. An additional gain from this device was that his poems became endowed with the quality of Prasāda (perspicuity).

Though simplicity is the life and breath of his descriptions,
yet, Chandrakumar could make very beautiful images with conviction and economy. The poem *Midhuri* (Loveliness) is the unique example of his image making skill. In matters of metre Chandrakumar practised a metrical sequence very much closer to the old Assamese metres.

Chandra Kumar's friend Hem Chandra Goswami too was an ardent worshipper of nature. The Romantic-trio consisting of Chandra Kumar, Hem Chandra and Lakhisminath welcomed the Romantic imagination into Assamese poetry. These three poets were genuinely inspired by English Romantic poets — Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Byron; and as a result of that they inherited the all-pervading warmth of Nature from Wordsworth; the supreme flight of imagination from Shelley, the lyrical and passionate sentimentality of Keats and the heroic vivacity of Byron. In his nature poems Hem Chandra Goswami tried his best to bestow life and actuality to all the resources that Nature held in her bosom. Moreover, he tried to deduce a philosophy of existence for Nature. In searching for such a philosophy, he ran after the Upanishadic truths and Biblical references. There is a splendour of description and a realization of the fine spirit of nature in his poems. With his characteristic
excitement and inflamed imagination the poet kindles a ray of love for nature in the hearts of his readers. The most famous of his nature poems is Prakriti (Nature). In this poem Hem Chandra develops a great passion for nature and at the same time he discovers a philosophy of existence for nature. His vision of nature is wide; it is not limited to the beauties of rippling rivers, high mountains, green fields, panoramic hills and dales, lakes and rivulets, trees and flowers, birds and beasts and the sky and the planets; but his range of Nature covers the whole cosmic existence. Like the sages of the Upanisadic culture, he envisions Nature as a great goddess who gave birth to Bhulok, Svarlok and Bhmvahloka the three different phases of the cosmic order. Hem Chandra in discovering Nature as the life-giving Mother Goddess for all the creatures was inspired by the Upanisadic faith of Godliness in every goodliness. He declares nature as a shadow of the Mighty Lord, "Isvarar chayä tum martya bmbarat." The poet sincerely believes that it is Nature (Rather the Goddess of Nature) that makes the Sun, the Moon and the other planets to travel unhesitatingly in their appointed paths, makes the seasons come with variety and colour, enriches the gardens with the blossoming "Golap, Tagar, MIlati, Jai and
Bakula's flowers. It is Nature who inspires the birds to sing sweetly and makes the lily and the lotus happy with the radiant love of the moon and the sun respectively. The vast empires of the mighty kings come and go at the instance of Nature. The poet was conscious of the vast expanse of nature and he eulogised the mightiness of nature. Hem Chandra was quite alive to both the kind and the cruel aspects of Nature. He wondered at the devastating aspect of the otherwise kind Nature. The poet says:

Kṣanē hovā dayāvatī,  
Kṣanēvā nirday ati,  
Hiyā dhani marilec ubhaṭi noocā,  
Nubujo tomār āie iki bhāv koḥ  

== Sometimes you appear an embodiment of kindness,  
(But) sometimes you surpass  
the cruelty of the most cruel;  
You show compassion to none;  
If even somebody breaks his heart out of grief.  
I cannot understand, mother nature,  
Your peculiar sentiments.  

It is a matter of common disaccomodation with the Romantic nature poets that out of their passionate love for nature
they were often indifferent to the cruel aspects of nature. It is alleged, that even Wordsworth the great nature poet was blind to the cruel aspects of nature. But Hem Chandra could well apprehend the disastrous side of nature. In this respect Hemchandra had a similarity with the Sanskrit dramatist Bhavabhuti, who was an exception in portraying the hoary and ugly aspects too, of Nature. (Vide, A.B.Keith; Sanskrit Drama, chapter viii). In the same poem Prakriti Hem Chandra like Wordsworth visualizes that we live nearer Nature in our boyhood days. Wordsworth remarked that in his boyhood days nature was too intimate with him and as such he could hear the whispers of the objects of nature. In our boyhood years the horizon of our minds keeps wide and all-embracing, so, it is natural that we can appreciate the charms of Nature and can cultivate a familiarity with the objects of Nature. Hem Chandra points out:

Tane kuva lara kal,
Vi kale sakal bhul,
Vi kale cāriophāle lagariyā mor
gash, latā, ban phul, nadi giribor.
yār mukhalake ehe,
Tarei maram pāo;
Tākei epon buli kata Omā khaō
Yāke pāo tāke kyudra hyday vilāō,
Tene larā kāl hāī
Smari hiyā phāṭi yāy,
Prakṛti prāṇīr prāṇ pradāyinī āie,
Pāmki, pāmki hāy, pāmki dunāī ?
= In that glorious boyhood,
When everything turns good,
When the friends are all around,
Trees and creepers, weeds and flowers
Mountains and rivers happily bound,
Whomever I see
He gives his love to me
Him I kiss relentlessly as my most dear,
From my little heart, I give my love to each,
Alas these fateful boyhood years,
The memory of which brings tears;
Nature is the soul and existence of all creation,
Shall I meet her again, Shall I, oh shall I ?

For a Romantic poet (who generally bears a deep gratitude
and love for the past) this lamentation over his boyhood
days is natural. Wordsworth too, made identical expression
of his boyish appreciation of Nature in the poem "Lines
Written A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey." Hem Chandra's
lamentation over the loss of the charms of nature and the
bliss of boyhood has become strongly vivid in the bewail-
ing utterance 'Pāmki, pāmki hāti, Pāmki dūnāi' (shall I
meet her again, shall I, oh shall I ?). His nature poems
are not a product of mere enthusiasm and tenderness but
they are endowed with a lively sensibility backed by clear
perception and intent introspection.

Hem Chandra's another beautiful nature-lyric is
Prakriti Stuti (A Hymn to Nature). In this poem the poet
has fully adopted the Biblical introspection on nature as
revealed in the PSALM - 19, ( To The Chief Musician, A
Psalm of David). Hem Chandra found commonness of his ideas
about nature with this Psalm and that is why he had adop-
ted the sentiments into his own poem. In his poem Prakriti
Stuti the poet declares that Nature is the shadow of the
Lord. And in the David's Psalm it is said :

1. The Heavens declare the Glory of god;
    and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.
2. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night
    sheweth knowledge .
3. There is no speech nor language, where there voice is not heard.

Hem Chandra has rendered eloquently this into Assamese.

Svargaye keval Prabhū ān nahaleo,
Prakāsīche puṃraupe mahimā tomār,
Ananta ākāś āru tarā sakaleo
Bakhāniche kārī kari Viśva Vidhatār.

Ghuri ahā divisar pratyek puvāī
Jnānar pohar āni lokat vilāī,
Ghuri ahā rajanīr sandhiyār bāī
Svaragar upadeś sulalit gay.

Gentle in spirit, highly emotional in feelings the poem Puvā (The Dawn) is the most appreciated nature poem. The poem carries remarkable force and eloquence and it is built on a national and local background. The poet has portrayed an intimate picture of the beauties of the dawn associating it with some divine creativity. The rays of the dawn are peeping through the fading darkness of the late night. The night is still lingering and the morning is yet to come. A cold and soothing breeze is blowing to welcome the morning. Gradually the darkness is vanishing
and the morning is fast approaching. The beautiful rays coming and showering blessings on the lotus lakes are superbly portrayed in the following stanza.

Jilini ami ahi padum banat
Svaragar rahan dhāliche,
Akaliariya duṭi padum kaliye
Gumā khāi hāliche jāliche.

= The beautiful rays of the morning sun
Pour heavenly bliss on the lotus lakes,
Two sweet lonely lotus buds
Are dancing and prating
Kissing each other.

The poet had a clear gift of image making. The poet is sincere and his attempts are spontaneous. The poem Puva carries some symbolic meaning too. Hem Chandra has narrated of a cold war between Darkness and Light. Darkness is ignorance and Light is knowledge. As Light dispels darkness, so, knowledge too drives out ignorance. The symbol of the lotus lake indicates the loveliness of the world and the Swan is the man with a clear aptitude to enjoy the beauties and the pleasures of this lovely world. There is some Vedic intuition in the background of this poem; in the concluding
lines of the poem Hem Chandra invokes the Jonākī Savitā (i.e., the luminous Sun) to bestow knowledge and grace for all time to come. This invocation has a correspondence to the contents of the Gayatri mantra, which is also an invocation to Savitā, the Sun God.

Lakhsminath Bezbarua, whose association with Chandra Kumar and Hem Chandra was immensely profitable for Romantic poetry, wrote a few beautiful nature-lyrics full of perceptive spontaneity and symbolic effect. Lakhsminath considered man and nature usually adapted to each other. The opening of Bhram (Error) with its extraordinary rhetoric and gift of observation illustrates the poet's realization of the beauties of nature. Detailed with a conscious craftsmanship the poem makes clear innovations on the beauties of nature. He links the beautiful objects of nature with an inner spirit of nature.

Who dares to say it a tune of the flute,
No, it is the deep melody of Banadevi's song;
This garland is never made of Sevāli flowers
It is simply a garland of stars.

*** Who says it a deer-calf,
Who is so much devoid of senses,
It is the beauty of wilderness,
Grazing on the Durva-grass
in the shape of the deer.

The poet's novel observation has made the tune of the flute as much soothing as the song of the Banadevi (the goddess of Wilderness), the deer-calf an epitome of the beauties of wilderness. The use of the *Apahnuti Alamkāra* in this poem is really worth-enjoying. But the truth behind the *Apahnutis* (i.e., negations) is the realisation of a correspondence, between various objects of Nature and it seems to be very much in consonance with the theory of correspondence of Baudelaire (*Vide, A short History of Literary Criticism*). Bezbarua could realise the subtle influence of Nature on the human mind. *Malatī* (The Jasmine) is a fine poem wherein the poet has established also a personal touch with Nature.

But Bezbarua's nature poems like those of Chandra Kumar Agarwalla had little scope for any philosophic interpretation of nature. Of the romantic trio only Hem Chandra Goswami had discovered a deeper philosophy for nature. According to him 'Nature is the life-giving mother of all the worldly beings' (*Prakriti Prānīr prān-pradāyinī āi*).
Hem Chandra perceived an affectionate motherly touch of nature everywhere. This personification of nature in the garb of a mother can be compared with the deification of nature in Greek mythology.

All these three poets opened a vista for nature poetry in Assamese and their portrayal of nature was a thing of interest and inspiration for all the later poets of the age. Though the Romantic-trio began by receiving the influences of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and others, yet, very soon they developed an extensive imagination and a vision of their own which could be discerned as peculiar to the Assamese poetry alone.

Jonāki and other contemporary magazines were the avenues where the nature poets utilized their poetic genius. Jonāki and Bāhī gave birth to a large number of nature poets. For want of space we have to limit our discussions to only the most celebrated few of them. A poet of nature with certain rare distinctions was Padma Nath Johain Barua. But his poetic genius and his skill in the treatment of nature are best exhibited in his kavya Iīlā. Hence we have discussed in detail the treatment of nature in Iīlā in the chapter on the Assamese kāvyas.
Mafizuddin Ahmed Hazarika (1870-1958) discovered an utterly new strain in nature poetry. The nature lyrics of Jnān-Mālinī reflects the poet's deep intuition and affectionate understanding of nature. Nature to him was a teacher and a guide. In the portrayal of nature he often showed instincts of fundamentally classical nature. He was deeply influenced by the ancient belief of the two-fold path of Virtue and Vice. The poet saw an easy reflection of virtue and vice in the nature kingdom.

II. RAGHUNATH CHOWDHURY

Raghunath Chowdhury (1890-1968), who began his poetic career in the pages of the Jonāki, had developed the strain of nature in Assamese poetry to a considerable merit. Born in a remote village in the Kamrup district, Raghunath had his early education at Gauhati. He read up-to class VIII in the Cotton Collegiate High School and discontinuing his education he became a teacher in a Gauhati L.P. school. Later on he took to cultivation and left teaching. He had joined the Indian struggle for independence and in 1922 Raghunath had to suffer imprisonment for one year. He was elected President of the Asam Sahitya Sabha in 1935. Raghunath was also the
President of the World Peace council (Assam Branch) for a few years. Journalism was a favourite hobby of the poet. He edited three magazines, Mainā (1923); Jayanti (1936-38) and Surabhi (1940-44). Sādāri (1910), Ketaki (1918) and Dahikatāra (1931) are the three collections of his poems which reflect the spirit of nature.

Though a romantic poet by spirit and sentiment, yet Raghunath had very little scope to come to the direct influence of the English Romantic poets. The poet did not receive collegiate education and as such he did not come to the all-pervading influence of the English nature poets. Perhaps, for this fact Raghunath’s nature poems are more original in sentiment and colour. Raghunath was well-versed in Sanskrit literature and hence his poetry shows a clear manifestation of the warm influence of the Sanskrit nature poets. He has derived a lot of similes, allusions and poetic conventions from the Sanskrit poets, especially from Kālidāsa. The vast panorama of nature, its beautiful flowers and melodious birds, the gliding streams and rivers have made the poet an earnest admirer of nature. With beautiful images and lovely descriptions, imbued with a keen rhetorical device, the poet has made nature a source of unfailing loveliness and permanency.
Raghunath's poetic excellence, however, stands unparallel-
ed in describing the two major aspects of nature, viz.,
the birds and the flowers. It is Raghunath who could dis-
cover for the first time the sweet melody of the songs of
the common Assamese birds, like the Dahikatarā and the
Ketekī. And at the same time he delineated the common Assa-
mesine flowers, like the Golāp (the rose) and the Girima-
likā with an unprecedented beauty and colour. The poet's
understanding of nature is sincere and direct. He has seen
enough of nature in his boyhood days; and had spent many
long hours in running after the birds' songs. Like Words-
worth he made an intimate contact with nature in his teens.
From the adolescent days the poet had made keen and clear
observations of nature and he has enjoyed sufficiently the
warmth of nature's unfailing affection. In the poem Dah-
katarā the bird Dahikatarā has become a source of perma-
nent inspiration for the poet. The melodious song of the
bird has enraptured the poet's heart. The bird carries a
message of permanence for nature. Dahikatarā is a fount
of all-joy. The poet believes that it is the Dahikatarā's
song which thrills and inspires all nature and only in
response to the sweet bird's melody the objects of nature
turn to loveliness.
You have poured the nectar of your sweet voice,
The rainbow has appeared
In the blue sky;
(out of your inspiration).
The heavenly damselfly
Koteki bird, too
Left the sky and came
to sing on earth.

You have bestowed grace
and beauty;
To the leaves, the trees and the creepers;
I know not, how could you spell
The whole world,  O little darling;
Playing your fiddle in
enormous raptures.

You are the delighter of the heaven
You are an epitome of love,
You have no parallel;
You are the dearest lover,
You are the very spirit of autumn,
You have taught everybody,
The power and glory of love.
And this all-powerful bird’s song has adorned the beautiful field with green grass, made the lotus and the lily to bloom in the lakes and invited the spring to come with the luxury and grace of a bride-groom. The sweet melody of the Dahikatara’s song has inspired the rivers to flow adorning through the valley and the Kahu and the Sojuru flowers to bloom with their beautiful flowers. The poet is deeply charmed by the beauty and grace of this lovely little bird. For him, the bird Dahikatara is a veritable treasure-house of loveliness, purity, beauty and affection. The poet is inclined to swim permanently in the sea of warmth of Dahikatara’s song.

Komalatā pavitratā saundaryya mādhuri,
Prem Pravāhinī hai
ācha cīrakāl vai
Shīgda sailita yena thākam nāduri
Purāvine vānchā mor kaeem sādāri.

= An epitome of softness, purity, beauty and loveliness;
You are flowing eternally carrying the ripples of love.
Let me bathe (eternally)
in the holy waters (of your love)
Pray my little bird, my darling
Would you quench my thirst?

This sweet benediction, this powerful gift of imagination is really the very soul of romantic poetry. In the moods of his exalted feelings the poet's intensity springs like some fast growing weed from a single emotional root. The nouns as softness, beauty, purity and loveliness tend to extend the qualities of the bird. With such words the reader is magically caught up in the excited samadhi of the speaker's emotions.

Couched in a beautiful rhetorical album his Govinda Kārṇār or Priya Bhīmigī is by far the most sensitive of his nature lyrics. The poem is an eulogy of the bird. Like an apt admirer the poet has requested his loving bird to sing once and only once the melodious raptures, which he had a chance to listen earlier. The melodious raptures of the bird's songs has elevated the poet Raghu Math to the height of Keatsian sensibility. And like Keats the poet had perceived beauty in all the spheres of nature. Keats had appreciated the immortality of the bird: 'Thou wast not
born for death, Immortal Bird.' Poet Chowdhary too, has often times hinted at the immortality of the bird in his poem Keteki. But Raghnath was never influenced by Keats, nor he had any serious study of the English Romantic poets. He had little western education and as such he had no privilege to come into direct contact with the English Romantic poets. But it is amazing to note that sometimes Chowdhury climbs to the height of Wordsworthian or Keatsian (Romantic) sentimentality. 'The spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' is abundant in him and in the delineation of the flowers in poetry Raghnath has shone an extraordinary animation of his poetic sensibility. Gélāp and Girimallikā are his two important flower-poems. The poet has compared the Gélāp with a beautiful bride who has just unveiled her face to greet her beloved with a warm and affectionate smile. The poet takes note of the fact that the Rose was originally a non-Indian flower belonging to Arab countries. The poet very artistically describes how the flower travelled from the near east to India during the fashionable days of the Mughals. In Girimallikā too, the poet has conceived her as a woman discarding her veil. The poet's love for the flowers knows no bounds.
With his superior craftsmanship these flowers have gained
colour and beauty. Girimallikā is an epitome of love and
beauty. Like a lover the flower Girimallikā is distribu-
ting her stolen glances to the trees and creepers around.
In his other poems the poet Chevāmarine has aptly used the
flowers and the floral beauty to enhance the beauty of his
poems. The picturesque representation of the autumn and
spring flowers are deeply interesting. In the poem Bahāgīr
Biya (Marriage of Bahāgī, the presiding deity of the month
of Bahāg) the poet has arranged an array of beautiful flow-
er like the śimilu, palās, asok, mandār, kāminī, kāncan,
campā, nagesvar and the like. Apart from the beauty the
flowers have certain philosophic commitment for their exis-
tence. The poet has understood that the flowers inspire the
human heart to subdue its low passions and to bloom like
the flowers with colour and beauty to add grace to this
majestic world of ours. Similarly the birds have inspired
in the poet a romantic yearning for the unknown. The flight
of the beloved bird tempts the poet to fly to the unknown
land where the river of love originates.

'Nomār lagate uri yāe vihaṅginī
Sadāi vaiche yat prem mandākini.
= Let me fly with thee, 0 dear bird,
To the land where the river of love
flows eternally.

Beyond the birds and flowers, the poet Baghunath has depicted the rivers, the trees and the creepers, the sun and the moon, the black-bee and the butterfly in his poems.
The poem Jonalai (To the moon) speaks of a love-drama between the moon and the river. The river had once a fair chance (in a full-moon night) to get the moon in her bosom. And now on the reminiscences of that night the river entices the moon to come to her side. She has travelled far and wide in search of her lover: the moon.

Baghunath Chowdhury is an expert craftsman. His poems exhibit a fine rhetorical pattern and the structure of each poem is accurately balanced. His poems are ablaze with Anuprāsa, Upamā, Rupaka, Aṭisayokti and Virodha Alaṁkāras. We cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following alliterative verse from Dahikatarā.

MĀDHAVI
Madhugandha gīti-chanda
Manmathar mahādān,
Maratar maru phule
Malayār pāle ghrān.
The alliteration of the above extract makes the poem dance in measured steps. The sublimity of sound as perceived in the above poem is really worth-noticing. His style of using Atisayokti Alaikâra is very much entertaining. The rivulet Bharalu has joined in the mighty Brahmaputra on the western side of the Gauhati city. It is summer time. The rain waters have overflooded the rivulet and she in her turn has paused like a new bride full of riches running majestically to join her husband. With this vision the poet has aptly constructed an Atisayokti Alaikâra:

Bharaluve ājī kainā sājī svāmī baribalai yāy' (To-day Bharalu in the garb of a bride goes to join her husband). We have also such complex Alaikâras like Nidarsanā as in the following extract:
Nimaj ghāhanidārā
Pānī piyālîre bhārā
Muktār śubhramālā śyāmāī pālīt.

This soft bed of grass,
Is full of pānī piyālis,
And they make an enchanting garland
Of pearsis on a green carpet.

The parallel presentation (vimbhamvimbatva) of the white pānīpiyālī flowers with the white pearsis supplies the base for the Nidarsanā.

The poet has successfully utilized the epic allusions in some of his poems. Raghunath's devoted study of Sanskrit poetry inspired him to run after the beautiful Sanskrit allusions. Some of the epic allusions of unfailing gift are quoted here.

(1) Deva purī eri thai ākāśī nartakī
    maratat bhāri dile urvaśī keteki. (Bahlkatarī)

This allusion refers to the Urvasī's fall from heaven as mentioned in the Āgveda, the Mahābhārata, the Vikramorvasīyam of Kālidāsa and the Vīma purāṇa. The same allusion is used in the poem Golāp also.
(11) Birahini Nagatîr
Vaigal asramir,
Samvâran rop ehabi dhari antarânt
Bhâramile katanâ din saila sikharat.

(Dahikatarâ)

The reference here is to the love story of king Samvâraña and Sûryya Kanyâ Tapatî, as we have it in the Mahâbhârata.

(iii) Uddâm Vasânâ lai Svarpamrîga Khedî
Samsârat bhramilo kimân. (Dahikatarâ)

This refers to the Râmâyânëc story of Râmâchandra’s hunting of the golden-deer.

Raghunâth Chowdhury’s poems bear a symbolic imagination also. If we approach him for a sophisticated psychological exploration of romantic idealism, we find that his Dahikatarâ is a symbol of his lost love. The frequent introduction of the ‘fall from heaven’ episode of Urvasî, speaks of the poet’s archetypal consciousness to return to heaven. The poet through his subconscious laments over the disintegration of the human soul from the soul divine.

Raghunâth Chowdhury’s choice of words is wonderfully admirable. The words are most precisely appropriate to the theme. The words themselves go a long way to depict the
proper background for the description of any thing of nature. The Rose being originally a flower of the Near East, Raghnath uses words of Arabic and Persian origin, while describing the flower in his celebrated poem Golāp. He freely uses such words as bulbul (bird), hāsmahāna (a kind of flower of the Near East region), gūl vadan (beautiful face), pāpiyā (a bird), hindustān (India), piyārā (dear), Bādshāh (king), hārem, dildariyā (the ocean of heart), dilbāhārā (a pot of heart), guljār (age with joy). The coming of the flower to India (Hindustān) is nicely described with the use of certain words of Sanskrit origin:

'Bup ras gandha paras premat jinili piyārā hindustān, Bādeč harem karī guljār dīl daryāt tulili vān.'

(Golāp)

yet, it was the India of the Mughals to which the flower came. And hence, there is the preponderance over the words of non-Sanskritic origin: Bādshāh, hārem, guljār and dildariyā. In the poem Bahāgīr viyā, there is the description of the coming of the spring season against an entirely local Assamese setting. It is the description of the Spring in Assām. Hence, the words are typically Assamese — and scarcely even of the tatsama type.
In contrast with these, we find a predominance of some Sanskrit words entirely free from any contamination with colloquial Assamese words or words of Arabic or Persian origin. The lines like 'manda manda makaranda madagandhe modita mādhavi kuñja' etc., from his facile pen attract the readers enormously. The presence of Pada-lalitya in poems like the present one, with the alliteration of conjunct consonants containing any fifth letter of the varga (i.e., with any nasal) should hardly escape our notice. (Vide, Dr. M. M. Sharma: Upamā Kālidāsasya, p 141).

III.

The change which was coming over the spirit of poetry with the exploration of nature was welcomed also by a host of other poets. Mention may be made of Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhury, Sailadhar Rajkhowa, Ratna Kanta Barkakati, Bhairab Chandra Khataniar, Nilamani Phookan (Sr.), Simhadatta Dev Adhikari, Dimbeswar Neog, Binanda Chandra Barua, Atul Chandra Hazarika, Parvati Prasad Barua, Ananda Barua, Ganesh Gagoi, Bhabananda Rajkhowa and Dulal Borpujari. They followed the same romantic strain as practised by the earlier poets of the period. But each of them could bestow certain individual characteristics which saved their poems
from being stereotyped and hackneyed.

Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhury combined his observation on nature with mysticism. He could see in nature a reflection of the Almighty Creator. At the back of all beautiful creations of nature he perceived the mystic presence of a divine being.

Salladhar Rajkhowa could sing of the beauties of nature in a warm and affectionate way. His Misar (1925) lyrics are full of the lovely descriptions of nature. Picturesque images and sonorous musicality mark his poems.

Ratnakanta Barkakati, mainly a poet of love, has depicted the warm glow of nature in a beautiful way. Pursuit of beauty had dominated most of his nature poems. The luxuriance of the power of expression makes his poetry gay and popular. Barkakati really and passionately loved nature. Impressions of sight, touch and smell crowd every line of his work; in the poem Vivasvan, the poet has recorded his intimacy with the Sun and the Moon, the stars, the Sky and the rivers. Barkakati was an ardent lover of nature and he tried to suggest the unfailing powers of nature to others. In the poem Sakiyani (The Hint) the poet has asked the people, whether they feel any impulse from nature or not.
This nature always knocks at me,
Does it not make a knock to you?
Doth not the sweet fragrant
Of vamula disturb you?
Doth not the wild-flowers smile to you?
Does not the cuckoo sing to you?
Can’t you see through the clouds,
The beautiful linings of the moon’s rays?
Doth not the streak of lightning write
messages of love in your heart?
Doth not the stars throb at your heart?
I am knocked so much by Nature?
Doth it not make any knocking at you?

In the sphere of nature he could find the happy union of
love and beauty. In most of his poems nature, love and
beauty have blended into a delightful realisation.

Bhairab Chandra Khatania and his wife Yamunavari
took to nature poetry with devotion. But their poetic out-
put was small. Yamunavari had a short life. But within
her brief poetical career, she tried to discover a new
strain for nature poetry. She hinted at the divinization
of nature. Bhairav Chandra had an unique gift of percep-
tion. He had found the reflection of the Almighty Power
in all the creations of this world. Even the tiny mãnî-
mumi leaves have certain significance for him. Lakshmi-
Nath Banbarua could note the messages of heaven even in
a tiny durvâ grass. Bhairab Chandra, likewise has found
an universal message and an invitation from the Heavenly
Father in the tiny and ordinary mãnimûn sak.

IV. MILAMANI PHOOKAN (Sr.)

Milamani Phookan (Sr.), known more for his meta-
physical poems, took to nature poetry only occasionally.
But within a brief compass he has exhibited a fine gift
for nature-lyrics. He too realised the presence of a
beautiful divine soul in the body of nature. The poet
makes vigorous search for Beauty through the objects of
nature. His Sundar Tumi Kat (Beauty, where Thou Art) is
a fine and a sensational poem. The poet has made a vi­
gorous pursuit of beauty and in his pursuit he met a stream-
let. The streamlet assured him to take to Beauty. He
followed the streamlet. The sportiva stream danced from
hill to hill, passed through the fields and villages and
at last joined the sea. The over enthusiastic poet could
not meet Beauty. But standing by the sea, the poet saw:
I saw beyond the seas
Beauty making a fine panorama,
The universe is its background.
The streamlet ran,
To the confluence of the seas,
She turned her eyes towards Beauty,
And joined in Beauty's confluence.
I waited and waited for Beauty,
Lonely, I am waiting on the bank,
Alas, who will tell me?
Where is my Beauty?
Where, where he is?

This desperate search for beauty through the objects of
care nature fulfills all the promises of a romantic nature
poet. This yearning, this passion is the very soul of
Romantic intuition. According to Dr. M.M. Sharma, this
poem is a nice example of the use of symbolism in Assa-
nese poetry. Here, the streamlet is the symbol of a
sādhaka and the journey of the streamlet is the symbol
of his sādhanā, while the sea is the symbol of the
Supreme self, the all beautiful. It is symbolically told
that when a sādhaka realises the Supreme Reality, he
mingles up with the same and after this emancipation, the sadhaka cannot be expected to come back to tell in so many words as to what the Supreme Reality is. It is a thing for subjective experience, which can at best be communicated through the suggestivity of a symbol. (Vide, Upamā Kālidāsasya; p 14).

In the poem Padumani (The Lotus Lake) the poet Phookan has presented his reminiscence in a Wordsworthian style. The poet was charmed by the beautiful lotuses dancing and pratting on the breeze. The poet has enjoyed the scene of the lotuses as the poet Wordsworth enjoyed the scene of the daffodils long ago. And when the lotus lake became dry and the lotuses vanish, the poet conceives the lotuses in his mind’s lake with the same beauty and fragrance as he saw earlier.

Pukhumir Pānidara
Sukāi yeṭiṭā   tēnai udana
hay talilake tār;
Dekho phaliāche   mānas sarat
34
Padumanī jēṭiskār.
= When the waters in the lake get dry,
And its bed barren,
Then I perceive
in my mind's lake;
the beautiful lotuses
blooming gloriously.

This reflection of Phoekan on the lotuses reminds us of the similar observations made by poet Wordsworth on the beautiful Daffodils: "They flash upon the inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude".

The nature poems of Simhadatta Deva Adhikari are rich in emotional appeal. His Sandhiya (The Dusk) is charged with a tremendous significance and high pictorial effect. The serenity and the lovely beauty of the evening is well-exhibited in the poem.

DIMESWAR NEOG

But by far the most successful nature-poet after Raghunath Chowdhury is Dimbeswar Neo. Born and brought up amidst the serene and beautiful atmosphere of nature in Sibsagar, Dimbeswar Neo had a close touch with Nature. This intimacy with Nature taught him to have faith in Nature. Wordsworth had once declared: 'Nature never doth betray the soul that loves her'.

Dinbeswar Neog, too, held identical opinion on nature. He innovated some nature-myths as in the poem 'Sāpa-mukta' (Release from the Curse). Neog too had discovered a closeness between love, nature and beauty. Built on a very expert metrical sequence and rich in rhetorical beauty his Pāgāli (The Mad Dame) is an unique nature poem from the viewpoint of emotional appeal and understanding. The poet in this poem has depicted a fine picture of the natural beauties of the then Gauhati (March, 1920), which the poet had enjoyed while he was a student in the Cotton College, Gauhati. Here are a few lines, from the said poem, so rich in rhetorical device and image-making.

'Parvat mālār dūre, dūre, vakur nilim vastra ure,
      mūgdha kare udāsī;
Kṛṣṇa meghar culi tāri vay pāṇḍu gaṇḍa yuri
      herā pūmā sodāsī!
Āji udār gagan tale gāy vihag dale dale
      nāce sapon-kumārī,
Kata yugar atit smṛti, kata kālar nīlam gītī,
      uthe hṛday gumari!
Natum phyle, natun pāte, kata kālar smṛti māte
      kata āveg amārī!
Tomār prānat nava yauvan āhi pale kapāl pavan,
Dimbesvar Neog's gift of imagination and the felicity of expression are worth-imitating. No less a scholar than Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee has praised the poet's talent eloquently. Neog's diction is entertaining. He used picturesque words which in themselves have a high degree of vivacity. The expressions like, 'Kon nayanar putali nāiche aji kalpanār tāre'; 'Vatāhe vaiče vēmu'; 'Jonāki bhāvanā'; 'Kon māya mukhlīye rākhe mok dāli' suggest more than what they mean. In the matter of metrical sequence also, he has made certain lovely innovations.

**BINANDA CHANDRA BARIJA**

Binanda Chandra Barua whose reputation chiefly rests on his patriotic lyrics often showed a high inclination towards nature. The most interesting aspect in his nature poems, is his linking the historical past with nature. In some of his nature poems beauty and anguish are delineated side by side. And, in some others he has
perceived a divinisation of nature in the line of the Vedantic intuition. He has portrayed the Dubari (durvā grass), the ākāśī lata, the Cuckoo, the Brahmaputra, the advent of the Autumn and the first day of Āsāṅha and similar things in his poems. Binanda Barua often tried to deduce moral laws from nature. In the poem Tomār Puja the poet has observed: 'Nature always reminds us that man were created for work' (karmar karaṇe srajite mānay, prakṛtye sadā di āche jān). The presence of a divine author of this great nature is often reflected in his poems.

**ATUL CHANDRA HAZARIRKA**

Atul Chandra Hazarika saw nature in her own dispositions without any colour of myth or philosophy. His nature poems are more descriptive than philosophic and they betray a perfectly simple style without caring for high-sounding rhetoric or studied stylisation. Hazarika has written on a large number of natural objects. His poems are rich in vividness and clarity. The poem Naga-sānalai (A visit to the Naga Hills) speaks vividly the beautiful atmosphere of the Nagaland's hills and dales. In his another beautiful poem Sāliehar (The Sand dunes) the poet has depicted nicely and clearly a riverine
atmosphere. In this poem there is a slight hint at the transitoriness of the objects of nature.

PARVATI PRASAD BANUA

The poet who had induced a deep lyrical intensity into the nature poetry is Parvati Prasad Banua (1904 - 1966). The bright rhythmic and melodious strain of his nature poems easily captivate the readers. A tea-planter by profession and a master artist by sentiments, Parvati Prasad was a versatile genius as far as poetry and fine arts are concerned. He composed songs, wrote dramas, played on the stage and the screen and directed motion pictures too. From his boyhood days he was a close admirer of the riverine natural beauties of Sibsagar. A keen intimacy with nature marks all his poems. He had a peculiar vision of nature and he tried to deduce a philosophy of existence for nature. His playlets on nature-myths are products of unique craftsmanship. We have discussed the poetical plays of Parvati Prasad in the chapter on the Poetry of the Dramas. Parvati Prasad's Kamalā Śivar asi Kalmā Pīmul (An ode to the white clouds and the willow) records with serene sincerity the different aspects of nature. The emotional ecstasy of these poems are highly magnificent.
Ananda Barua who passes as the Vakulvanar Kavi

(Poet of the vakula garden) excels in depicting panoramic beauty of nature. He is neither philosophic nor over-emotional in the portrayal of nature in his poems. But Ananda Barua had a passion for divinization of nature. In the poem Meghesvari (The Goddess of clouds) the poet has idealised the black clouds in the form of a goddess.

Megh aru vijurīr luka-luki khela
caya aru māyāmaya vimohan veś,
Sakalo haraṇ kari visva vimohani
meghesvari mūrtimati, mūta kṛṣṇa kesa.
Meghkrṣṇa culi meli āvari tenei
meghar mājate yen lukai lukai,
Gite-gāne cande bharā māhā rahasyat
līlāmayi vahi āche kavitā susai.

= The clouds and the lightening play hide and seek,
Shadows and illusions come in beautiful forms
Taking everything to her, Meghesvari the universal charmer
Has dazzled in her beauty.
Her black hair is unlocked.
Spreading her cloud-black hair and covering all,
Hiding herself amidst the clouds,
Plunging herself in the mysterious existence
of song and dance,
Meghesvari, the queen of illusions is sitting
with a poetical grace.

Ananda Barua's poetic diction is simple but within its
simplicity the poet can catch the imagination of the rea-
ders. The words like — Saponiya poharat varisar veha;
Sarvahara hrdayar udas kathat; Kalpanar padmapahi manohar
saje are full of imagination and colour. Ananda Barua's
clouds have less similarity with that of Shelley's and
Sri Barua has not followed the beaten track of Kalidasa
and others, who have instituted the clouds with greater
responsibilities. We now like to make a search for the
psychological background of his cloud. In our considera-
tion his cloud is an archetype of the goddess Durga, who
with her beauty and mystery has evoked wonder and admiration
in the poet's heart. Moreover goddess Durga is held
as the universal mother. She, in her different manifesta-
tions, has paused like mukta-keśi (of unlocked hair),
navin megha sannibha (one resembling the newly formed
clouds), Viśva Vimohani (universal charmer), Līlāmayī (Full of illusions) and the like. The poet perceives through a consummation of bliss, the mystic presence of the mother goddess in the clouds.

GANESHER CHANDRA GAGOI

Nature received an eloquent tribute from Ganesh Chandra Gagoi. Principally a poet of love, Gagoi saw the reflection of love and beauty in nature. He felt the inspiring power of nature in all objects. His poems like Na-jon (The new moon), Sapon-Kūvari (The Dream-Girl), Basanta (The spring), Rūp-Jyoti (The Ray of Light), Nāvariya (The boat-man) and the verses of Pāpārī are full of the descriptions of nature. Sometimes he was amazed to see the shadow of his own love-lorn life in the bosom of nature. In his poem Sapon-Kūvari the poet has visualized the princess of wilderness as his lost mistress.

Ganesh Gagoi’s art of poetry was highly technical. An expert in rhetorical construction, Ganesh Gagoi matched his poems with popular rhetorical devices. His knowledge of history has contributed to the growth of another phase in the treatment of nature i.e., the glorious association of the country’s past with the beauties of nature.
Ganesh Gagoi's *Trayoda's Satikar Sonar Asam* (The golden Assam in the Thirteenth Century) is a vivid image of mother Assam presenting the picture of historical relics matched to the background of natural beauty. The diction of this poem is highly entertaining. The rhyming sequence is also plain and sonorous.

Aparūpā susobhitā sujālā suphalā
manoramā prakṛtir mādhurīmā jari,
lauhityar tire tire karile racanā
yikhani alakāpurī nirupamā kari.

***
Mandirar sire sire sonar kalaci
arun kiran pari ājio jilike,
Māmare sāmarī dhara tāmar phalit,
Katajane ājioje kata kathā sike.

In this beautiful poem Gagoi's high evocative imagination has combined mother nature with mother Assam in close embrace and intimacy.

Bhabananda Rajkhowa, Bhavaprasad Rajkhowa and Dulal Barpujari, these three late-Romantic poets tried to discover the beauties of nature even amidst the calamities of the second world war.
V. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The distinctive features of Assamese nature poetry (in the Romantic age) may be summarised as follows:

(i) An intimate affection for nature.
(ii) An aesthetic search for the elements of love and beauty in the various aspects of nature.
(iii) Respect for nature. A sincere conviction that Nature is all powerful and all-pervasive, grew by this time. The Assamese nature poets, too, believed like Wordsworth:

One impulse from a vernal wood
Can teach you more of man
Of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can.

(iv) Divinisation of nature.
(v) Innovation of a soul for nature.
(vi) Linking man and nature in closer proximity. Discovery of the mother-like affection of nature. 'Prakriti prāṇīr prāṇ pradāyinī āi. (Hem Chandra Goswami).
(vii) Affinity of history and nature discovered.
(viii) Search for a philosophy of existence for nature.
(ix) Innovation of the nature-myths in poetry.
(x) Attempt to discover new meanings in the objects of nature. The attempt at a closer interpretation, like L.N. Banbarua's:

Vātar duvāri van gacakat para
Tāro eti pāte diye svangar vatarā.

Cf. Wordsworth's:
To me the meanest flower that blows can give,
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

And as for the art of narration there grew distinctive changes. Never dictions were experimented, though there was frequent use of ancient Kavi-samayas and epic allusions, too. Poetry by this time grew more rhetorical (especially in the hands of Raghunath Chowdhury) and never verse-forms were introduced. The Assamese metrical sequence had elaborately changed on the influence of English metrical standards. The creation of beautiful poetic images with photographic vividness became a must for the nature poets.

VI. TRANSITION IN NATURE

But things have changed from the time of the Second world war when, never and more progressive ideas came in.
The ravages of the Second world war, the destructions made by the great Earth quake of 1950 and the rapid industrialisation of the state have changed the very face of nature. Industrialisation perhaps was the greatest curse for Assam's natural loveliness. The vast and beautiful paddy fields were changed to big oil fields. Drilling Stations, Pipe-lines and the Pumping Stations have seduced the beauty of the fields. In the rivers the boats were replaced by the R.C.C., bridges; some of the sportive rivers were compelled to change the course by the installation of the cruel dykes and spurs. In the countryside, too, things have changed enormously. Newer towns with over-head tanks and electric wires came up in the country side pushing aside its rural glory and tranquility. This transition in nature was not left unnoticed. The modern poets who began their trade after the Second world war took notice of all these changes in nature and recorded them in their poems. The poets who suffered most the tremendous shock of transition in nature, in their nerves, are Hem Barua, Keshav Mahanta and Amalendu Guha. The nauseating industrial atmosphere arouse a great detestation in the hearts of these poets. The departing loveliness of nature and the coming cruelty of industrialisation reflected in their poems.
HEM BARUA

The pathetic contrast between the departing loveliness of nature and the coming cruelty of an industrial atmosphere is vividly drawn by Hem Barua in his poem Lakshmi Purnima: 1957. In the silvery moon-lit night the poet is busy in a distant village in awakening the villagers by his hot speeches to demand the establishment of an Oil-refinery in Assam. The poet has depicted a nice contrast between the moon and the microphone.

'Mai āji hāturīr āsil. Ri jōnāli niśā,
Kono ek gabhir gāor āhat talat
Microphone mor kathā kay.
Hājar janatā jōnakar pardāt
plāstic putalā hai ḍache.
Āmar kārane Lakshmi nāi. Pujā nāi.
Vedamantra súkān pāthar.
Āmi kalija kapāi matho kao ;
TEL SODHANAGAR ASAMAT HAVAI LAGIB.

= To-day I am but an anvil,
In this moon-lit night, in the shade of a banyan tree, in a distant village;
The microphone echoes my words.
The crowd on my face are but
some plastic dolls,
Camouflaged against a
moon-lit curtain.
For us, goddess Lakshmi fled away,
We know no worship,
The hymns of the Vedas are dry stones.
We simply utter in heart-rending voice:
WE DEMAND THE OIL REFINERY IN ASSAM.

KESHAV MAHANTA; ANAMINDU BURK

Keshav Mahanta, like Hem Barua could realise the transition with clear understanding. He was ready to institute realism in his poetry in the place of imaginative responses. Still, in his poems there is a great longing to return to the gentle and lovely atmosphere of the countryside. The poet wants to be free from the net-work of bricks. He is ready to fly away from the all-disturbing city roped in the electric wires, as expressed in the poem Garai hai parimad (I will fly like a bird): In the busy beautiful city Calcutta, the poet recollects with heavy pains the loveliness of his country home.
This day, you please excuse me,
Oh, the beautiful effulgent city,
Let me fly for a while, from you,
from the nights,
covered with electric wires.
Pray, you spare me, my friend, my city,
For a while I go away from thee,
From this net-work of smitten bricks.
(Let me fly there)
Where the innocent maid
lights the clay-lamp
And the rays peep feebly.
In each moment, there looms
a Bihu-song in the April Sky:
Where the dunes bless the men
With heavenly grace and loveliness.
Pray, Let me fly there.

The intense mental suffering of a man caged in an industrial city is nicely reflected here. His sorrows grow intenser with the progress of the lines of the poem. The poet recollects the serene atmosphere of his country home, forsaken long ago, and dives deep into a note of melancholy.
The looking back to nature with melancholy and sympathy was further accentuated by the lines of Amalendu Guha. He discovered more closely the gap between the lost nature and growing industry. In his book Songs from the bank of the Brahmaputra, the poet enumerates not only the deficiencies of nature in the present context of things but also speaks of the social attitudes and irresponsibilities which have enhanced the troubles of transition.

Hemanga Biswas

The peaceful atmosphere of nature has been disturbed by industrialisation and the economics of the modern age. This disturbance resulted in a change of attitude of the poet. They have ceased to remain content with the enjoyment of the serene beauty of nature. Instead they have started to be alive to the stern realities of life. If at all nature is recognised, it is recognised only in its stern form. This transition in the spirit of the poet and his poetry is poignantly depicted by the composition of Hemanga Biswas. A poet with certain leanings towards communism, Hemanga Biswas could visualise the sorrows of nature mingled with the sorrows of man. In his poem Dibagaralai (Towards Dibrugarh) the poet discards all illusions about loveliness
of man and nature and places his readers, face to face, with a stern reality, where hunger dominates all instincts, including the instinct of love for nature and beauty.

Пания сонар дешат яди
gharar caki najvalе,
numuvā-salitā numāi parhibā
lamp-postar tale,
Ration-monāt maramā āierā
gupute cakulo vay,
Kaṅbhāitir rātir ṭopani
Kāṅ-khovāi kārhi lay,
Uṭuvāi niye kār gharbārī
Kechuvāk vēchī thay
Kon bāuli udāśi āulī
chipjari vāchi lay.47

= If in the land of the liquid gold,
The house-lamp does not burn,
Put-off the fading lamp
And begin reading under lamp-posts.
In the ration-bag, the affection of mother
turns to tears.
The ear-eaters disturb the sleep of the baby;
The floods destroy the houses of persons unknown,
And they sell even the baby-in-arms.
The mad, frustrated dame
takes recourse to suicide.
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2. Ibid., pp. 141-158
4. Ibid., p 69
5. Ibid., p 55
6. Ibid., pp. 50-54
7. 'Sundarar ārādhana jīvanar khel', vide, Chandrāmrit, p 15
8. Chandrāmrit, p 20
9. 'Prakṛti prāṇir prāṇ pradāyini āi', vide, Phular cāki, 1st edition, p 7
10. Ibid., p 8
11. Ibid., p 11
12. Ibid., p 13
13. Ibid., p 14
14. Saṅcayan, p 187
15. Ibid., p 188
16. Ibid., pp. 197-198
This story of Samvarana and Tapati is very nicely retold by Subodh Ghosh in the celebrated Bengali prose work "Bharat Prem Katha". (Ananda Publishers, Calcutta, 8th edition, 1367 Sal)
36. Sañcayan, p 321
37. Vicitra, Jorhat, 1948; p 27
38. Ibid., Foreword (page 2)
39. Pratidhvani, Teok, 1938; p 4
40. Sañcayan, p 340
41. Ibid., p 356
42. Marahā Phular Karani, p 266
43. Rūpa Jyoti, Shillong, 1957; pp. 10-11
44. Satapatra, p 50
45. Balichanda, Gauhati, 1959; pp. 34-35
47. Kula Khurār Cotāl, Calcutta, 1970; p 10