

warfare; and their hopes to enter among the hill tribes were shattered. Sadness, occasioned by the death of their daughter, Sophia, had come to the Brown family. Mrs. Brown and their only remaining child were often ill with fever or dysentery; and to add to their sorrows an incident took place that cruelly jarred their peace of mind. After a long week of hard work of translating and preaching and care of the sick family, Mr. Brown, one Sunday evening, just in the shades of night, decided to walk over to see the grave of their daughter. Upon arrival, he found to his horror that the grave had been opened and the coffin exposed to full view. It was with great difficulty that he could persuade some of his coolies to help him cover the grave before nightfall.

The period of 1836 to 1840 was characterized by wars and rumors of wars. The Jorhat Raja was deposed by the English Government on account of his oppression and his failure in paying the government revenue. The hill tribes were warring between themselves and roaming the country, robbing and burning cities and villages. There were suspicion and defiance among the hill tribes; and panic among the plains people. In Sadiya the Khamtis resisted the English by attacks and massacres; and the missionaries were in constant peril.

In the early morning of January 28, 1839, the Khamtis made a surprise attack upon Sadiya, firing the houses and murdering indiscriminately all whom they met. Colonel White, the commanding officer, when first hearing the alarm, rushed out of his house making his way to the magazine; but he was met and surrounded by the enemy, who killed him on the spot.⁵ It was a terrible night for the missionaries whose houses were about one mile away. This circumstance, however,

proved to be their safety. Why the mission houses were not plundered is not known unless, as Brown said: "It might have been through personal friendship on the part of the chiefs", but it is more probable that "they intended to reserve the houses of the missionaries for plunder afterwards."⁶ Their retreat from Sadiya, however, was so sudden that the mission houses were forgotten.

There was no chance for the missionaries to rush over to the cantonments as these were too far away; hence, they slipped into a little canoe, taking a few biscuits along for food, and pushed out into the stream. Thus they spent the night "every moment expecting an attack from the savages who might be lying in wait to rush upon and massacre them, or take them as slaves." Mr. Brown wrote: "We therefore kept off upon the river till daybreak when the welcome sound of the bugle met our ears, and we immediately came in. The sight around us was truly horrible. The dead and dying were scattered in every direction. While I am writing," he observed, "the trees are clouded with flocks of vultures, which have collected from all quarters to feast upon the slain."⁷ The mangled bodies of the dead, the groans of the dying who were weltering in pools of blood, were scenes and sounds which would make even the less squeamish soldiers turn away; and which haunted Mrs. Brown for months. Mr. Brown wrote, "I cannot think that when I lie down and take my two little ones by my side, that I am acting contrary to the Gospel, by putting my sword and double-barrelled gun under my pillow; nor could I in conscience hesitate to use them, if pushed to the last extremity."⁸

Mr. and Mrs. Bronson had already gone to Jaipur, another military outpost, to try out the possibility of