

## UNFOLDING REALITIES

where they prospered and bid fair to bring great wealth to the province. Brown prophesied.

"There is no doubt that in a few years the tea trade will be carried on here extensively. This will produce a great change in the country, will fill it with a dense population, and will convert these now almost impenetrable jungles into the happy abodes of industry. If the means of grace are employed, may we not also hope that it will become the garden of the Lord!"<sup>17</sup>

Brown also saw the possibility of the development of industrial training among the natives. This was particularly true regarding farming. On the suggestion of Captain Jenkins, Brown and Cutter wrote to the Board and suggested the possibility of opening an experimental farm which would serve a two-fold purpose, namely, to relieve the missionaries from embarrassment in providing the common necessities of life; and also improve the temporal condition of the natives, by teaching them the useful arts and introducing foreign plants.<sup>18</sup> The Board sanctioned the undertaking and desired to make it a component part of the organization by sending two or more pious and intelligent families of suitable qualifications whenever such families could be found. This undertaking, however, never materialized due to the insurrection of the Khamtis which will be noted in subsequent paragraphs.

## CHAPTER VII

### TRYING EXPERIENCES

The need for more missionaries was recognized, and letters setting forth the appalling situation were sent to the Board. Captain Jenkins wrote to them in September, 1838, in regard to the work done by the missionaries in Sadiya, speaking very hopefully of the schools established, and commenting on the missionaries in highest terms. He urged the Board to open a mission at North Lakhimpur; and suggested that not less than two families should be sent. "It is a promising land", he declared; and in pledging protection for the missionaries he pointed out that lower Assam was under a "native Prince, Rajah Purandar Singh, who paid tribute to the British Government and was subject to the control and interference of the British officers in political matters, and in cases of complaint of any gross mismanagement or injustice".<sup>1</sup>

In response to the various urgent requests, the Rev. and Mrs. Jakob Thomas and the Rev. and Mrs. Miles Bronson were sent out as associates to Brown and Cutter. These two families unfortunately began their long and tedious journey up the Brahmaputra Valley at the beginning of the "rains", at a time when the current of the river would come in turbulent whirlpools carrying with it trees and debris from falling banks, endangering any kind of native craft coming up the river. The first portion of their journey was, on the whole, successful and it brought them to Gauhati in