

Mr. Robinson that the Serampore mission stations were to be given up by the parent society; and that it was agreed that the Assam and Arracan regions were to be relinquished to the American Baptists.¹⁵ This left Assam entirely in the charge of the American Baptists; and strenuous efforts were made to persuade them to man the entire Brahmaputra Valley, which was under British control; and where missionaries could work without fear of molestation. The student of missionary movements is impressed with the fact that had the American Baptists sent a missionary as suggested in 1838¹⁶ to continue the work, which Krishna Pal had begun in the Khasia Hills, and at a time when the London Missionary Society was unable to supply men for that field, the story of Christianity in Assam might have been altogether different and Assam might have ranked as the outstanding Baptist mission in the world today.

CHAPTER V

UP THE BRAHMAPUTRA

Paradoxical as it may seem, Christianity has often invaded new territory hand-in-hand with military forces. This was the case in Assam. The English Baptists occupied Gauhati from 1829 and for seven succeeding years, but it was left for the American Baptists to accompany the British military forces to the threshold of the "Celestial Empire" in 1836.

It had long been the desire of the missionaries in Burma to "introduce the gospel among the Shans — an interesting family of tribes inhabiting unexplored regions to the north and east — and through them it was expected by inland route to reach to China", whose seaports were at the time sealed against foreigners.¹ Dr. Judson had dreamed of the possibility of establishing several mission stations in the territory north of Burma and south of China, and when the plans for opening the work in Sadiya were proposed, he expressed his great delight in a letter home:

"My heart leaps for joy and glows with gratitude and praise to God, when I think of brother Jones at Bangkok, in the southern extremity of the continent, and brother Brown at Sadiya in Assam, on the frontiers of China — immensely distant points, — and of all the intervening stations, Ava, Rangoon, Kyook-Phyoo, Maulmein, and Tavoy, and the churches and schools that are springing up in every station and throughout the Karen wilderness. Happy lot, to live in these days!"²

The invitation came from the British government through the English Baptists at Calcutta. Captain Jen-