

Brown. "I ever experienced . . . we prayed and sang, and lingered from early dawn till near eleven o'clock before we spoke the final good-bye."⁴

In 1857, another disturbance of an entirely different nature came upon the mission — the Indian mutiny. "Wars and rumors of war" characterized the whole of India. For a long time it was hoped that Assam would escape the flame of insurrection which raged wildly in Bengal, since it was so remote from the center and since the people of the province on the whole were of a rather peaceful nature; but the spark of rebellion was soon fanned into a flame which also enveloped Assam. Secret messages had been sent to the province notifying the natives of the day and date when a general uprising was to take place. A plan was made to massacre every white person in Assam. The former Rajah had been chosen as the one who would lead the rebellion; but the English officer in command, Major Holeroyd, discovered the plot in time and nipped it in the bud by capturing the king and taking him to Calcutta as a prisoner.

It was a time of awful suspense for the missionaries. Threats were made on their lives. The Mohammedans threatened the native Christians that as soon as the missionaries were killed they would be the next objects of their vengeance, and Islam would be re-instated. The most atrocious deeds were reported. There was not a single European soldier in Assam except the officers in charge of native troops; hence, the protection of European life against a general insurrection was very meagre. Plans had been made for the Europeans to gather at Gauhati; but Gauhati was many miles from Sibsagar and Nowgong where the missionaries were located. Much could happen to them if they should

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venture to undertake the long tedious journey down the Brahmaputra. Bronson finally decided to avail himself of the protection at Gauhati; and under cover of night he, with his family, slipped quietly out of Nowgong in a native canoe, down the Kullung River to the Brahmaputra, and on to Gauhati. Bronson wrote from his little craft on the river.

"A general feeling of insecurity is spread all over the country. All feel that it is emphatically true now that we know not what 'a day or an hour may bring forth.' It would be utterly impossible for me to tell you the horrors of this mutiny, or the 'refinement of cruelty' practiced upon all, even unoffending and helpless women and children, that fell into the hands of the merciless savages."⁵

Upon arrival at Gauhati, Mr. Bronson found "Brother Danforth in a soldier's garb, drilling morning and evening, resolved to defend his family and the mission property" if called upon to do so. "For more than six weeks," wrote Danforth, "I have done military duty daily, and that, too, directly in front of a large company of sepoys many of whom were known to be mutinous."⁶ At many times the least occasion would have caused an outbreak. Later Mr. Danforth wrote that after six months of incessant anxiety they felt comparatively safe.

At Sibsagar, the Whitings were alone. They had been advised to leave the village, and a comfortable little boat was put at their disposal so that they could move out on the river and thus be out of the reach of the cantonment at Sibsagar. Whiting contemplated going up the stream and taking refuge among the hill tribes who had not been affected by the mutiny. He wrote, "If I escape its fury, I may be able to collect some of the remnants of the mission." The storm blew

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