



MAULMAIN RIVER BOAT.

lily that are placed upon his shrine are an offering, not of propitiation, but of veneration. But behind the intellectual cynicism of the Burman there lies a half-conscious suspicion that, after all, there may exist in the universe of the unseen potent beings whose anger it were well to appease. Out of this lingering superstition, born in the blood, inherited from a forgotten past, arose some of the more loathsome scenes in the career of the later monarchs. Thibaw himself slew three hundred men and women as a sacrifice when his first-born son was stricken by disease.

It is among the animistic races that the Christian evangel has hitherto won its larger triumphs. In the early years of the century Marsden, Chater, and the Careys crossed from Serampur, and were followed by Judson and Rice, who toiled for a dozen years among the Buddhist peoples near the coast, buoyed up by their unflinching faith in the certainty of a harvest. Thrown into prison at Ava, these

intrepid pioneers of civilization found release at the close of the first war with Britain, and thereafter spent the remainder of their days in devotion to the more responsive temperament of the Karens. At this day there are hundreds of Karen villages which are more truly Christian in faith and conduct than many a European hamlet, and the converts support their own pastors and schools.

The survey which Dr. Nisbet makes of the missionary attack upon the Buddhist stronghold is presented in no optimist vein. "It is impossible," he says, "to say in what direction the religious belief of the Burmese will tend—if they should happen to remain as a distinct nationality, which seems extremely doubtful." Yet, he adds:

"The fact is clear that missionary enterprise is already making itself felt in the towns which form the centres of mission work; and year by year this influence is gradually, along with other causes, producing vast changes in the whole social