

## MISSION FIELD.

## CONSECRATION.

What is Thy will, my Father?  
How can I serve Thee best  
When now, athwart my pathway,  
The deepening shadows rest?

Just where Thou wilt, Lord, lead me;  
Thy voice I will obey.  
At every step I need Thee,  
To guide me in Thy way.

Just as Thou wilt, Lord, use me.  
Immerse my will in Thine.  
Myself, my life, my highest powers,  
I joyfully resign.

All life's bright hours; each conquest  
The duty of to-day;  
Each effort—true and earnest—  
At Jesus' feet I lay

ANNETTE AMANDA DAVIDSON.

## FIRST CHRISTMAS IN SKAGUAY.

Christmas was ushered in, not by the pealing of bells but by bang, bang of the guns. At 12 o'clock on Christmas eve some one fired a shot. Within a few minutes it seemed as if every gun in the city had shouted forth its defiance to the Angel's song "Peace on earth." The noise was soon over, and soon after came floating on the midnight air music. Strong, sweet music, in an unknown tongue, and those who heard, listened in wonder. Thoughts wandered back again to that grand anthem that the angels sang eighteen hundred years ago to the shepherds as they watched their sheep on the far off fields of Bethlehem. Then the music took shape in the joyous hymn, "Joy to the world." The mystery of the music was solved next day. It was the native Christians carrying out the good custom that their beloved missionary, Rev. Mr. Duncan, of Metakahila, had taught them, singing their Christmas carol at the Church. All honor to that great man, forty years ago he threw off the trammels of the Church, that dictated a narrow policy; he cut himself adrift from the government, and with a band of semi-civilized Indians, went away to found a new home. He has through all these years been their guide, philosopher and friend. And surely the godly lives and bright example of the dozed Indians here proclaim that his life has not been in vain.

Christmas dawned bright and clear for this country, for it must be remembered that we see little of the glorious sun, though we have more or less of his light for about six hours daily. The day was exceedingly mild and pleasant in every way. The people of Skaguay did not forget the turkey and plum-pudding. The writer had several invitations but was unable to accept them all. The United States Marshal was the man to whose lot it fell to satisfy his Alaskan appetite. No better dinner could any man desire, no pleasanter company could sit around a Christmas table. The Marshal is a splendid specimen of a man—a Canadian by birth—over six feet high. He has many hard duties to perform, being the only law officer in a town of over 2000 inhabitants. He is always the same—quiet, kindly, philosophic. But often in looking at him and his genial wife, one is forced to think they have some thoughts they share not with others. Once only was the veil lifted and we got a glimpse of their sorrow. The Marshal showed us his Xmas gift which he valued above everything he had ever received, and yet he wished he had not got it. It was a tastefully made hair chain, bound with gold. As he held it up his great hand trembled and his kindly eye was moist. All he said was, "It is our little girl's hair—she left us when she was four years old."

The great event of the day as far as the Christians were concerned was the Christmas tree. For weeks past the children had been under the careful training of Mrs. Strong, a lady of rare tact and great skill in the management of children. The ladies with the assistance of a few gentlemen decorated the Church and tree in a tasteful and creditable manner. The Star of Bethlehem hung above the platform. Underneath it a great scroll twenty-two feet long was unrolled bearing the words "Glory to God in the Highest," and underneath it a neat banner with "the King has come." There were a number of mottoes round the walls. The whole church was festooned with evergreens. The tree was the great centre of interest. It was a graceful, drooping fir-tree, hung with pop corn, candlor, cornucopias, etc., and on it was a present for every child in Skaguay, now about fifty in number. Among the presents were two Klondyke dolls dressed in fur from head to heel, one for the pastor and one for the contractor of the church, Mr. C. Broomfield. The pastor was also the recipient of a purse from the Ladies Aid Society, and three ladies presented a handsome chair and table for the platform. The church was filled to overflowing—not half of those present could find seats, though additional seats had been secured.

Many were turned away unable to get in at all. The verdict of all who had the good fortune to enjoy this first Xmas tree in Skaguay is that it was a great success. It was a strong resisting force to the attractions of evil on every side. For here as elsewhere, the devil's agents try to prostitute our great Xmas festival and make it a day of debauchery. One saloon even went so far as to give a free turkey dinner to every one who came.

R. M. DICKEY.

## HOW MANY CHRISTIANS IN CHINA?

BY THE REV. J. A. SLESBY.

Various estimates are given of the number of Christians in China; but there seems to have been no careful compilation of statistics since the publication of the "China Mission Handbook," in which statistics were gathered for the year 1893. In the table published in that work we find that the number of communicants reported were 55,093, and the number of "inquirers" were 12,495. These "inquirers" are generally understood to be men and women who have applied for baptism, but who are neither baptized nor admitted into full communion until they have stood the test of a probation lasting from six months to a year and a half, and have been instructed in such a way that they can intelligently receive the Sacraments and give a reason for the hope that is in them. They are sometimes termed "probationers," and sometimes "applicants for baptism." Many societies do not report this class, and 12,495 is far below the true number. Adding this number to the 55,093, we would have 67,588 professing Christians reported for the year 1893, whose names were enrolled by the various Protestant missions either as full members or as candidates for admission.

In the year 1890 statistics were carefully prepared for the records of the Missionary Conference at Shanghai. The number of communicants reported (for 1889) was 37,287. This gives an increase of 17,806, or more than 47 per cent. for the four years ending 1893. If the increase for the next four years was at the same rate we would have 81,263 communicants at the close of the year 1897. As the most encouraging reports have been coming in we may feel confident that the rate of increase has been even greater than in the previous four years, and the estimate of 80,000 communicant members and 20,000 applicants for baptism, or 100,000 professed believers enrolled upon the books of the various Protestant missions of China, would be in all probability below the true number.

The increase of the thirteen years which intervened between the conferences of 1877 and 1890 (or, more correctly, between the years of 1876 and 1889), was more than 175 per cent.

The following figures are given to show the rate of increase since 1807, when Robert Morrison began his work at Canton, as the first Protestant missionary to China: Communicants.

In 1807....	0
" 1842....	6
" 1853....	350
" 1857....	1,000
" 1865....	2,000
" 1876....	13,515*
" 1886....	28,000
" 1889....	37,287
" 1893....	55,093
" 1897....	80,000

These 80,000 communicants will be found scattered throughout all the provinces of China, and in Formosa, which, altho belonging now to Japan, may be reckoned as a part of the China mission field. Supplying the lack of up-to-date reports by estimates based upon a careful study of the field, I have arranged the following table to show their distribution.

	Communicants
Chekiang.....	9,000
Chili.....	7,000
Fukien.....	17,000
Hainan Id.....	80
Honan.....	300
Hunan.....	100
Hupei.....	3,500
Kansuh.....	150
Kiangsi.....	1,000
Kiangsu.....	3,000
Kwangsi.....	20
Kwangtung.....	12,700
Kweichan.....	80
Manchuria.....	7,200
Nanchowei.....	600
Shansi.....	1,500
Shantung.....	12,000
Shensi.....	550
Szechuen.....	660
Yunnan.....	60
Formosa.....	3,500

Total.....80,000

Most of the statistics which we see published in America are at least a year old before they are given to the public, and nearly every list is incomplete, important missionary organizations, with hundreds of communicants, being left out entirely. Present indications lead us to believe that a full report for 1900 will give 100,000 in full communion, connected with the Protestant Church in China.—Independent.