

and succeeded in bulding a small church. Father Richards withdrew from the work, the church building was unlawfully seized upon by a non-Catholic half-breed Indian, and the Church authorities never succeeded in regaining possession of it. It will, perhaps, be difficult for the readers of this sketch, living as they do in well regulated communities where property rights are protected, to understand an episode of this nature, but anyone not a member of a recognized Indian tribe, who resided in the Indian Territory some twelve or fifteen years ago, can easily appreciate the situation, especially the Catholic priest whose life was rendered miserable by the daily prospect which then confronted him of being ejected from house and church. In most of the tribes Catholic Indians were a small, insignificant minority, and consequently unable to secure for their missionaries the rights that Protestant ministers enjoyed. And while the majority of Quapaws were Catholics, they had unfortunately, by marriage adoption, admitted into the tribe a large number of whites and Indians of other tribes who had no love for the religion of the Black Robe.

When Bishop Meerschaert came to the Indian Territory, in 1891, as its chief pastor, one of the first petitions for a priest which he received was from the Quapaws. "If a man does not cultivate his garden," so ran the letter, "it will grow up in weeds and briars. But if he takes care of it, it will be full of blossoms and fruits. If you will send us a priest, the Quapaw reservation will become a beautiful garden of the Church." But the good Bishop had no priest to send. In 1892, however, he ordained his first candidate for the priesthood, the Rev. Father Ketcham (the present Director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions), stationed him at Muskegee, in the Creek Nation, and in addition to other missions, confided to him the Quapaws. Father Ketcham visited the mission at regular intervals, saying Mass in the homes of the Indians, and when the congregation outgrew the capacity of these humble dwellings, he sought the shelter of the forest