

Another Apache Mission

The Indian missionary work of the women of the Reformed Church of America has been one of great success as well as of great interest. It is among the Apache prisoners, at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. The story of those Indians will be remembered by some of our readers and is of unique interest. The men were of old great hunters and the women performed the hard labor of dressing skins, cutting and carrying wood, and doing the farming. The last war of these Indians was in 1885-'80 and at its close they surrendered to Generals Miles and Lawton. Prominent among the Indian leaders were Geronimo,—now a genuine Christian,—Naiche and Chihuahua, the first of whom was a medicine man, the second being the hereditary chief and a man he is, having command like a sovereign. Upon their capture they were sent to Fort Marion, Florida, while Geronimo and sixteen others were confined at Fort Pickens on an island in the Gulf of Mexico. The next year they were sent to Mt. Vernon barracks, Alabama, where later those from Fort Pickens were sent to join them.

It was at Mt. Vernon that the missionaries of our Massachusetts auxiliary began work among them, having a school, building a cottage, a tank for bathing, and marked progress towards civilization was made. Governmental officials also began their industrial civilization in earnest, the Indians built a village under the direction of the officers stationed over them, plats of ground were given them, and agricultural training began. Suddenly in the autumn of 1894 the whole colony was removed to Ft. Still, Oklahoma, where the same civilization work was continued, and

later the Women's Board of the Reformed Church opened an efficient mission among them. They engaged the services of Rev. Frank H. Wright, himself an educated Christian Indian minister, and it has proved to be one of the whole country. The Board built a schoolhouse, in camp worker and teacher were engaged for the school and for work among the women, the need of a kindergarten was met, another teacher and another building were gained, a noon lunch was granted for the school with a matron to prepare it, a dining hall and kitchen were added, and presently an orphanage will be well established to be called The Ida Van Alst Orphanage, in a memorial building.

A church has been organized and finely housed, with a Sunday School and two good Christian Endeavor Societies, all of which is great progress indeed.

Yet even there one may still hear wild Indian songs at times and meet sullen faces, as must be expected among any people tenacious of their own religious ideals, strong-hearted, strong of will, and sturdy of character. To win such to "the gentleness of Christ" is a work of long patience and of Christly devotion, but the reward is a great, even their salvation for the present life and for to come.

—Ex.

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