KATERI TEKAKWITHA

Lily of the Mohawks

New Edition of Her Life
Blessings obtained through her intercession

by

JOHN J. WYNNE, S.J.

TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE
226 EAST FORDHAM ROAD, NEW YORK CITY
The writer takes occasion of the appearance of this new edition of the Life of Tekakwitha to thank the large number of her clients who are helping him as V. Postulator for her Beatification and Canonization; and to thank God also that they are growing in number and fervor.

For the sources of this Life and the list of Lives and other Tekakwitha documents, see page 63.

In accordance with the Decree of Urban VIII, the words Confessor, Virgin, Miracle in these pages are used without any thought of anticipating the decisions of the Church in regard to the holiness of the Servant of God herein mentioned.

Permissu Superiorum

Nihil Obstat, Arthur J. Scanlan, D.D., Censor
Imprimatur, + Patrick Card. Hayes,
Archbishop of New York

Copyright, 1938
Tekakwitha League
All Rights Reserved
KATERI TEKAKWITHA

Catherine
Lily of the Mohawks

"Fairest Flower
That ever bloomed
Among true men"
—her tribesmen

NEW EDITION BY
JOHN J. WYNNE, S.J.

V. Postulator of the Cause for the Beatification and Canonization of Catherine

TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE
226 EAST FORDHAM ROAD, NEW YORK CITY
Kateri Tekakwitha

struction. It was the second Bishop of Quebec, Saint-Vallier, who had visited her tomb and thus styled her, eight years after her death.

“Iroquois Virgin” was the name given by her first biographer, who had also been her director. Though each of the Indian Nations, like her people, the Mohawks, had its special name, all together they were known as Iroquois.

She is also known as the “Indian Maiden.”

Romance in Indian History

The Indian had an eye for pleasant scenery. His choice, when free to make one, was landscape blending valley, hill and lake or river, which he could view from a site fertile, secure and near to his trading highways, or war-paths.

The Iroquois three centuries ago was free to determine his choice. His Five Nations, Mohawks to the East and Senecas to the West, with the Oneidas, Cayugas and Onondagas in between, chose the centre of New York State long before the white man came to admire, cultivate and discover it as the main artery of travel to regions now densely populated but then unexplored.

These Five Nations could choose their home or cabin lands because they were successful in war, and therefore prosperous in trade, the Mohawks especially who dwelt next to the Dutch at Schenectady, and not far from the other Dutch settlement, Fort Orange, later, under British domination, Albany.
How well the sachems and braves of this Nation had fixed their castles or villages about the year 1642 above the valley and the river now named after them may be seen by a visit to the first, Ossernonen, as it was then named, now Auriesville; then to the second, Andagaron, since Randalls, about six miles west, and last to Tionontoguen, now Sprakers, further west still about eight miles. Few places in the world combine so many of the elements of scenic beauty as Ossernonen, where Tekakwitha was born in 1656.

It would not be correct to speak of her, as we do usually of children, as first seeing the light of day, because daylight did not penetrate cabins whose walls and ceilings were closed except for a vent here and there to let out the smoke of the wood fires which gave the only light within. These fires were ranged on the ground along the middle of the cabin about twenty or twenty-five feet apart. On either side there were berths, something like our sleeping car berths, but more spacious, the lower for the adults and upper for the young people. The cabins were about twenty feet wide, varying in length from thirty to as many as one hundred, or even more feet, for which reason they were known as “long house.”

Tekakwitha’s father was a member of the Mohawk Nation, a leader among his people. In a raid on the Algonquin Indians at Trois Rivieres (Three Rivers), Canada, he had taken a woman captive. Very decently, instead of making her his slave, he took her as wife and
Tekakwitha was the offspring of this union, followed later by a brother. By her marriage the mother became a Mohawk. Like many other captives, men and women, she was a Christian and it is worth while knowing what manner of Christians these captives were, especially the Algonquins from Three Rivers. It will help in some measure to account for Tekakwitha’s being a child of grace even before she was purified in the waters of baptism.

Three Rivers is a smart city to-day. Even its early settlement was never dull. The second city of New France, it is now nearly 300 years old. During its first century it was the central trading place of its part of the world. Hither came from the north Indian Algonquins and Montagnais, and from the west Ottawas and Hurons to meet the French and exchange the goods which white and red man so much desired. The River St. Maurice, divided by islands into three channels, whence the city name, is broad and swift enough for an active industrial center.

Missionaries had not neglected this important post. As early as 1615 on Sunday, 26 July, Mass was celebrated there by the Franciscan Denys Jamet, and zealous men of his Order cultivated the mission field until 1634 when Jesuits followed them, notably Father James Buteux, who was to remain there until he was martyred in 1652.

This saintly man attests the solid devotion of the Indians to their Faith by four marks: their sorrow for sin, their opposition to the inroads of vice, their habit of
frequent prayer, and their constant thought and preparation for death. Under this influence, the Algonquins, at first indifferent, soon became very fervent and many are the instances of their steadfastness and even heroism. Though nothing is known of the mother of Tekakwitha, except that she was a Christian, she was, no doubt, a very earnest one and, on account of the holiness of her daughter Tekakwitha, legend has it that she was known as “Flower of the Prairie.”

Now the fierce Mohawk men liked the Algonquin women, the Christian women especially, for their docility and fidelity. Although it is usually said that Kateri’s mother was taken captive, it is just possible that she freely became the wife of her brave, since about that time the Mohawks had begun to fraternize with the Algonquins, so much so that chiefs of the latter consented to such unions.

The main point is, however, that Indian women were intensely fond of their children, and that they lovingly transmitted to them their own traits of character even from babyhood. In this way Tekakwitha would have become instinctively gentle, docile, self-restrained, pure and disposed to the influences of grace even though she lost her mother during a plague when she was only four years old. Fortunately there were a number of Indian women converts to watch over her. Their story is surprisingly heroic. We shall never know what heroism the missionary and martyr Buteux developed in the Three Rivers of his day.
KATERI TEKAKWITHA

LIKE THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

Writers of Lives of Saints do well to stress their origin, as a rule, from God-fearing parents. What predispositions children acquire before birth are by such parents, and particularly by mothers, corrected, if there be any even slightly vicious tendency in them, but developed and cultivated when, as most frequently happens, they tend towards what is good. Heredity has to do not only with bringing forth, but also with bringing up, children properly. It is easy to see how Tekakwitha's mother would do this and provide for others continuing it when she was called to her reward.

Like so many of her Algonquin people, she grew up in surroundings in circumstance very much like those of the early Christians. The guardian of her faith was the man who from 1634 to 1652 towered above all the settlers of the mission of Three Rivers, just about the time she was growing from child to womanhood. He had a special grace for imbuing the Indians with sentiments of piety and a steadfast spirit of faith. To adopt "the Prayer" as they called religion, they had to encounter opposition from their own and fear persecution by their enemies. Naturally they kept together almost as a class apart and they grew to love the Church which had emancipated them from superstition and evil ways.

Buteux was not the only good influence. The French men and women of the settlement were edifying. Even before the arrival of the missionaries they had prepared
Like the Early Christians

the way for them by instructing and baptizing hundreds of Indians. Other Indian Christians near them, among the Montagnais and Attikamegues, lived up to their beliefs, and constantly they were visited by heroic missionaries, several now canonized, like Saints Isaac Jogues, John de Brebeuf, Anthony Daniel, Charles Garnier, Gabriel Lalemant, whom Buteux followed in martyrdom, and Bressani and Poncet, who were imprisoned and tortured by the Iroquois.

Even when deprived in captivity of the ministrations of the Missionaries, they remained constant, and they were often strong enough in numbers to encourage one another and increase in the faith instead of abandoning it. They had with them such vivid memories of scenes illustrating the power of religion that its doctrines quickly grew into a tradition, supplanting the fables they had fed on before. That was a memorable morning when Jogues and some of their people left the banks of their river to meet captivity, torture and slavery. Those were solemn spectacles when the Governor of Canada, Jogues, Vimont and Bressani, with Algonquin, Montagnais and Attikamegues, met the Iroquois to agree on terms of peace.

We can imagine the Christian captives, Tekakwitha’s mother among them, numbering 80 of the 400 inhabitants of the Mohawk village at Ossernenon, confirming one another in their belief and devotion and all of them interested in the little orphan not yet baptized, nor even named, until she manifested the traits that won for her the name “She moveth all before her.”
Kateri Tekakwitha

A Thrilling Story

Star differeth from star in brilliance. Usually there is in every constellation one star more lustrous than the others. Tekakwitha is that star of the many among her people who make the early history of New France resplendent with virtue to heroic degree. The Indian converts of her day would protect her innocence. How they would inspire her to sacrifice everything for modesty may be gathered from the following. A thrilling story.

The Iroquois had cast an Algonquin captive in the closed part of their long house, intending, of course, to outrage and perhaps massacre her. While they slept in drunken stupor, she passed stealthily over their bodies. At the exit of the cabin, in righteous indignation, she seized the tomahawk of one and brained him. His groan aroused the others and they started in pursuit. First she hid in a hollow stump. When her pursuers turned in one direction, she darted to the other, but at daybreak they discovered her tracks and followed her two whole days. She plunges into a beaver pond, coming to the surface only at intervals in order to breathe. They give up the chase and then she starts on her journey homeward, passing thirty-five days in the woods without robe or covering, except a small piece of bark with which “to hide herself from her own eyes,” as The Jesuit Relations put it. Mosquitoes, gnats, flies and wasps were devouring her. For food she had only roots or the bark of trees. To cross lakes and rivers she had to make rafts. How she could escape wild beasts, or Indian braves on the hunt or
war-path, is a mystery. Nearing her settlement, she was heard approaching by some Hurons. Faint though she was with hunger, and sorely bitten, her only thought was her modesty. Concealing herself in bushes, she warned them not to approach, but to throw her a blanket to shield her nakedness.

That story is in Volume 30 of the Thwaites' edition of *The Jesuit Relations*, pages 267-269. It is only one of many such thrilling stories. Here is another from Volume 34, page 119: A fifteen-year-old girl was often, in her captivity, urged to do what she could not without losing her innocence; but never did she yield, preferring to die rather than commit sin.

Now we have the background for the story of Tekakwitha. In it move martyrs, holy missionaries, heroic Christian Indian men and women. Some day, let us hope, we shall have more accessible to all an edition of the Relations which record all this.

**A Well-favored Infancy**

We know the fine names by which she was called during her life and since. We know, too, the background of her infancy, the scenery, the surroundings, the character of her parents, some of the redeeming traits of the Indians, especially of the women. In all this the spiritual eye discerns the play of external graces through which this child of grace grew up preserved from dangers and pitfalls that might have marred the innocence so characteristic of her from the cradle to her tomb.
Cradle is not the word, nor carriage either. The Indian mother was never apart from her little one. No burden was it for her to carry her pet strapped to a board hanging on her back. For rocking, when she had to work in the fields, there was the supple branch of a tree from which the little one would sway with the wind. Then the sturdy child would toddle and yield the board and the tree to a younger brother, both of them absorbing from the tenderness and joy of the mother dispositions which could be cultivated and developed into real virtue if only favored with proper surroundings and watched over by careful guardians.

Fortunately, there were, in the midst of the perverse and foul generation of her homeland and people, some men and many women of unalterable virtue and of the outstanding trait of their race, affection for the young.

Strange how we know the year of Tekakwitha's birth. With all our vaunted statistics, countless men and women to-day do not know when precisely they came into the world; but we know for certain that Tekakwitha was born in 1656, and we also know where, namely, on the site of the Mohawk village then called Ossernenon, but now Auriesville, known as Martyrs Hill. There ten years before her birth, the gentle, but intrepid Father Jogues and his companion, Lalande, were martyred in 1646, and four years before them the gentle Goupil, all three now honored as Saints, as we trust Tekakwitha will be in due time.

The Indians would not know how to name the hill
A Well-Favored Infancy

on which their village was located, but with few events to distract and dissipate their memories, such as we have unfortunately, they would recall, some with pride, others with pity, the bleeding and burning of prisoners; and the Christian converts who had been spared would, as the early Christians regarded their catacombs, feel that the precincts and the very atmosphere of their village had been hallowed by the torture of the gentle but indomitable missionaries.

The missionary, or the Black Robe, as they knew him—there was the trouble! Only as prisoners like Bressani and Poncet, or as casual visitors like Le Moyne, could they come to Martyrs Hill at all, and even then how could they attempt to minister to the faithful few, with their lynx-eyed captors watching? How those mothers must have grieved that their children could not have the saving waters of baptism! They could not do the pouring, because they were in awe of the holiness of the sacrament. Long had they themselves been kept preparing for it. The missionaries would keep the best of their candidates waiting for baptism and never would they let them impart the sacrament for fear of abuses. Rather would they trust them, when no missionary was about, to obtain the great grace of baptism by their fervent desire, and to instill the same efficacious desire into their little ones. We need not the mystery of the massacre of the Holy Innocents to know that little, very little, ones have perceptions of spiritual things and cravings for them altogether beyond our adult ken. They need not
the catechism to feel that there is something they long for: "Out of the mouths of infants and of sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

Four years passed after Kateri’s birth, 1656-1660, and no missionary came either as prisoner or as envoy. Other children besides Tekakwitha were born to captive Christians. Baptism, except by desire, was not available, when a dreadful scourge afflicted the village and Tekakwitha lost father, mother and brother. In her case was verified in a singular manner: "Thou wilt be a helper to the orphan."

Tekakwitha — “A Witty Child”

Tekakwitha was not the only orphan to survive the smallpox plague at Ossernenon that fatal year of 1660. There were others, boys and girls, some younger and some older than she, but thanks to one of the redeeming traits of her Mohawk Indians, fondness for children, they were adopted by families of relatives or friends and brought up in true Indian fashion. Girls were an asset in any home, because when grown they would attract some brave to marriage and he would become the support of the elder people in their declining years. They were good for housework and, when old and strong enough, capable of doing the outdoor work of planting, wood cutting, meat dressing and all but hunting and fishing, which the men reserved for themselves.

First, however, the entire village must be moved from its plague-ridden spot. Its new site must be on a
hill, as all the Iroquois villages were; it must not be far away and it must keep south of the Mohawk and west of the Schoharie Rivers, so that hostile Indians might not easily approach and assault it. Not quite a mile to the west was a hilltop steeper than Ossernenon, commanding even a broader view and overlooking a creek and the site of the present village named now after the creek, Auriesville.

It is not hard to imagine the upheaval and removal. The old palisade fortification, the cabins, or long houses, and all the infected belongings had to be abandoned. No doubt the sorcerers or medicine men, who could not prevent the plague or purge the ground and air it had infected, would be the first with their incantations and various forms of devil worship to pretend to render the new locality immune from future infection.

Unaccustomed to manual labor, the Mohawk braves strove in vain to have some of the white men who had come on trade from Fort Orange, now Albany, to cut and haul the timber for them so that their women folks might fashion it into palisade and fortification; but the good-natured Dutchmen were too cunning for this and had many ready excuses for withdrawing and letting the tribesmen do their own chores. At any rate, the new village was soon ready, and there Tekakwitha was to live for six years, from 1660 to 1666, when the French from Quebec, Three Rivers and Montreal, exasperated by the savage incursions of the Mohawks and other Iroquois tribes, determined once for all to crush their warlike
spirit, as they did so effectively under General de Tracy.

What was Tekakwitha doing those six years? Her school was in the cabin, in the field, in the wood or on the water. She would powder and bake or boil the corn, cook the meat, draw water from the well, learn to make the tribal raiment, and adorn it, moccasin, leggings, skirt with designs in beadwork and with color bands made from clay and the extract from fish skin. She would emulate her elders and vie with her companions rilling the corn rows, picking the wild berries, or tanning the skins of animals caught in the chase.

The day's work or outing over, the child would sit listening to the lore of her people, to stories of luck in the chase, of skill in the fishery, of the traditions of the clans in her own and in the neighboring villages, known chiefly as the Turtle, the Bear and the Wolf. Too young to comprehend the weird fancies of the elders concerning the universe, the deities and the spirits that controlled human origin and destiny, and too shy and serious to join in the frivolous amusements of others of her age, she would naturally keep to herself much of the time and acquire the habit of wondering what earth, air, sky and running water meant and what part she had in it all.

Those who are on in years seldom credit the young with the imaginings which for them interpret realities. They are not sophisticated. If let alone, they grow in wisdom as they grow in age. The wisdom is not profound, but it is simple and true. The gift of observation
in the Indian, young or old, is proverbial and this gift is not confined to his senses: it quickens his intelligence and determines his will. We can imagine, therefore, this young child of nature, partly because of her disposition to be alone with her thoughts, and partly because of her sight, impaired for a while by her smallpox affliction, pondering over the mysteries everywhere confronting her, and forming impressions that were to remain etched on her mind for life, impressions about the variety and beauty of all she saw about her, of the order of sunrise and sunset, of day and night, of season fierce and mild, of the power which brought about all this in order.

Then she would form impressions of another kind, even more mysterious, of the contrast between the cruelties wreaked on the prisoner of war and the kindliness of many of the women, especially of the Christian women, many of them captives like her mother had been, and who treated her as if she were their own. Naturally her little heart would be drawn to them and she would see that they were animated by a spirit wholly different from that of the others of the village. She would not fail to discern in them a habit altogether distinctive, nor would they fail to develop that same habit of prayer which marked off all who cultivated it and became the very name by which they were known, the Prayer Indians. In that way no doubt Tekakwitha passed beyond the knowledge of the seen to the unseen, from what was below to something altogether above it, to hear within her the voice of conscience and to realize that it was re-echoing
the voice of Him to Whom the Christians prayed. In this way Tekakwitha became a wise, that is, "a witty child."

**A Baptism of Fire**

It was an uncle who adopted Tekakwitha, a former chieftain still prominent in the Nation of the Mohawks. In his cabin she had more privacy than she could have had in one of the long houses which housed several families. For walls these cabins had young trees fixed in the soil and bent at the top so as to form an arched roof; bark and strips of skin kept out the weather; doors or windows there were none; vents in the roof let in the air and out the smoke rising from the fires which each family had in the passage along the length of the cabin.

Tekakwitha loved privacy. Her eyes, weakened by the smallpox, could not stand sunlight. She was grateful to her uncle and wanted to do all she could for him. True to either meaning of her name, she was busy moving all before her and putting it in order. Even that young, she would not let her cabin be untidy and unclean, as the others were. She could not yet do heavy work, but she could help to do things neatly and assist her aunts in the housekeeping.

When only ten years old she had to witness once more the destruction of her village, not by plague this time, but by cannon-ball and flame. It was in 1666. The French in New France could no longer stand the cruel invasions and deceptions of the Iroquois dwelling in what is now the centre of New York. Most of all, they
A Baptism of Fire

were determined to subdue the Mohawks, who were the war lords of the Five Iroquois Nations. Since Champlain's time they had waged almost incessant war on the French and on the Indians who traded with them. They had destroyed the Huron Missions and massacred their Missionaries, Brebeuf, Chabanel, Daniel, Garnier, Lalemant, now venerated as Saints. In their own village, Ossernenon, they had treacherously martyred Jogues, Goupil and Lalande, also among the Saints on our Altars. It had come now to the point for the French either to quit New France entirely or once for all break the power of the Iroquois, especially of the Mohawks.

In the winter Governor de Courselle led an army on snow-shoes from Quebec seeking the Mohawk Valley, but, deserted by his Indian guides, he lost his way and his army well nigh perished of cold and hunger. That summer Iroquois appeared in Quebec to sign a treaty of peace. Scarcely were signs manual of both parties dry on the parchment when word came of the capture of some French hunters and of the murder of a captain of the Carignan regiment. That decided the fate of the Mohawks.

Marquis de Tracy was now Viceroy of New France. He had won the rank of lieutenant-general of the armies of Louis XIV. He had jurisdiction over all the French Possessions in the New World. He had with him the Carignan regiment which had done distinguished service in Hungary and bore the royal colors. He personally led his army into the Mohawk Valley, marching so rapidly
that the Indians had no time to prepare for defense. From Ossernenon they fled to the second village, Andagaron, five miles west, and from there to Tionontogen eight miles further, since it was their most strongly fortified castle. There they sent their women and children into the woods south of them. At the first roar of de Tracy’s guns they deserted their castle and the conqueror soon destroyed it by fire as he had done with the settlements to the east. At one of these on the way back, perhaps at Andagaron, his chaplain, the Jesuit Raffeix, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving. At Ossernenon he planted a cross. De Tracy took possession of the country in the name of the King. The Mohawks sued for peace and for missionaries.

Tekakwitha witnessed all this and no doubt, like all her people, bewailed it bitterly. Little did any of them know that the peace for which they sued was to come in a form that only the Prince of Peace could bring. Back they came to the ruins of their several villages, destitute of shelter, food and of all provisions against the approaching winter. With no fear of further invasion, the Mohawks could now move to the north bank of the river and remain during the winter on the lowland sheltered by the hills. There, until the Mohawk River was made the State Barge Canal, was a slight waterfall and, true to custom, the Indians named the temporary site “Gandaouaghe” (Caughnawaga) “laughing water.” When soon after, for protection against the Mohicans, they moved to the bluff hill west of Fonda, they still
A Baptism of Desire

kept the name, as underneath them rushed the waters of Cayudutta Creek. It was here they first received missionaries and here began Tekakwitha’s glimmer of the Faith. Tekakwitha had already begun to grow in wisdom; with age increasing she was now to grow in grace. She had her baptism of fire; soon would follow baptism of desire so common in the early days of the Church.

Tekakwitha’s Baptism of Desire

Tekakwitha abhorred the cruelty with which the braves of her village tortured and burned to death their captive victims, even though this was done under the pretext of sacrifice in order to propitiate their god, Aireskoi, and win victory over General Tracy and his warriors. She avoided such scenes, in which her people, old and young, participated and revelled. Later in life she would inflict on her fragile body rigorous penances in order to expiate the demoniacal barbarity of her tribesmen.

The girl could not, however, fail to observe the futility of the sacrifice to their war god in contrast with the triumph of the French, and start with a new emotion as she heard the chanting of their thanksgiving and Te Deum. Soon after she saw for the first time the cross which they had planted near the embers of the sacrificial fire to Aireskoi. On her way back to the site of her village now in ruins, she would again behold the cross which was erected at Ossernenon, as the Tracy army marched down the Valley on the eve of the anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Isaac Jogues.
Though only ten years old, Tekakwitha had been favored in many ways by Divine Providence: the protection and privacy of her uncle’s cabin, the example and care of her mother’s Christian friend, Tegonhatsiongo, and of other Christian captives. Now these were to become more frequent and, in some instances, to be exterior graces which at length would lead up to the reception of the inward grace by which she would become sanctified. More and more, in the way of children, she would ask questions, seek to know the meaning of the cross, and the crucifix, and learn to know what suffering is with winter coming on and her people without cabins, sufficient clothing, or provisions. Then she would see the missionaries, or Black Robes, as they were entertained in her uncle’s cabin, the Jesuits Frémin, Bruyas and Pierron, who came by agreement with the Mohawks in 1667.

The presence of a priest may be an external grace, but in addition Tekakwitha would observe their manners, see them at their devotions in prayer and reading the Divine Office, notice their crucifixes, their gentleness and modesty, their refined speech, courtesy, untiring zeal as they kept constantly going from one village to another to strengthen the Christian captives and recover the straying sheep. All that was a revelation to the child coming now at last to appreciate the Christian way of life in which her Algonquin mother had shared at Three Rivers before her captivity.

Now that the Christian captives could practise re-
ligion more freely—they were at least eighty in number, one-fifth of the village—it was still like another external grace to observe their eagerness to meet for prayer and instruction, and to hear them discussing what they would learn and what they prayed for. Gradually Kateri would thus begin to discern the gulf between the superstitions, idolatry and moral degradation of her own people and the closer faith, the devout worship, the charity, and the finer mode of life of those who had embraced the Prayer. They were living and doing things which human nature left to itself could not know or attempt to do without inspiration and support from a higher power. Her Iroquois braves considered themselves super-men, but how woefully incapable they seemed of a super-natural life!

As the young maiden grew in age and in wisdom, so she was in due time to be reborn into the life of interior grace, and grow in it. The missionaries were attracted by her disposition and reverent manner, and no doubt they treated her encouragingly. They would learn that she had a Christian mother, but also that she had not yet been baptized. Meantime their time and labor must be given to those who were already Christian. On these they could depend to attract others to the Faith. What labor this meant, it is well nigh impossible for us to appreciate.

The Indian of that day, fickle by nature, was the victim of tribal traditions and customs which became for him a second nature. To these were added prejudices
imprinted in his mind by his otherwise good-natured Dutch neighbors. Sorcerers and medicine men were in control, and, like Simon Magus, they would, if they could, deceive the priests, pretend conversion in order to learn the secrets of the witchcraft, as they considered it, of the Sacraments and various Christian practices. Prudently, the Fathers kept their candidates for baptism two and three years or more under instruction and trial.

Just as in the early days of the Church, it took time to cast out the old leaven of paganism and train the catechumen patiently, as was done even with the great St. Ambrose, so, too, the human nature of the Indian had to be newly leavened before it could be supernaturalized. The language had to be mastered, chapels built, catechists formed, the truths set to music in which the Indians delighted. Meantime, Tekakwitha was favored by Divine Providence with exterior graces and she was ever faithful to them.

**Kateri's Elements of Heroism**

By the time the Black Robes arrived in the Iroquois country, in August, 1667, the three castles of the Mohawk Nation were rebuilt, Kateri's people occupying the hill west of what is now the Montgomery County seat, Fonda, looking east to the hill of Ossernenon, her birthplace, and gladdened by the rapid waters of Cayadutta Creek below, from which the Indians named the site Caughnawaga, “Laughing Water.”

Recently the Franciscan Minor Conventuals have
acquired possession of this Caughnawaga site and they have begun there a novitiate and house of studies. On the Ossernenon site, now Auriesville, there is a spacious coliseum where over 10,000 pilgrims can assist at Mass and at other pious exercises. There is also a very devotional open-air chapel. There is to be a house for the young Jesuit’s final year of preparation and also for retreats. No doubt, as the missionaries traveled from hill to hill in that most beautiful part of the Mohawk Valley, they thought of “the desire of the eternal hills,” now happily fulfilled there.

The missionaries were received with enthusiasm. For the Indians they would be a pledge of peace. They lost no time going from village to village, recovering their scattered flocks and planning to erect chapels and their own dwelling quarters.

It was characteristic of the Black Robe to live in the very heart of an Indian village, repulsive though this was to men of their refined habits. It was not easy for them, however, with their few attendants, or donnés, devoted French laymen, to cut and draw wood, shape and erect it for church or home. The Indian despised manual labor: that was the woman’s part, and no doubt many a Christian woman, with the few men who were Christians, did their part in this as in all things to help the priests. By a strange turn of events, the pagan men, for a wonder, soon began to do their share. When the Mohicans came from the east to attack the Mohawks, Father Pierron was in the front rank as defender of his people, and courage
is the one quality that could win the admiration and co-operation of the Indian braves.

The Black Robes set to work systematically. They selected the cabins in which the Christians or neophytes could assemble for instruction and prayer: they designated the more experienced converts to gather and instruct them. Twice a week at least a missionary would visit each village, not only to help the Christians, but also to meet the pagan leaders and conciliate them. Their principal station was at Tionmontoguen, the village ten miles west, now Sprakers, where they called the chapel St. Mary's. Andagaron was the midway village, now Randalls. The mission at Caughnawaga was named after St. Peter.

It is easy to imagine how curious the pagan Indians would be about this new life, this transformation going on before their very eyes. They would hear from the Christians about the game of cards invented by Father Pierron, “from point to point” (birth to eternity), to correct their habit of gambling, the cards illustrating the commandments, sacraments, virtues, vices, death, judgment, heaven and hell. They would see his paintings of sacred scenes, and hear the chant of the hymns coming from the chapel.

All this time Tekakwitha was watching everything and divining the meaning of it all. From her Christian friends she would learn something of the mysteries of the Faith and of the moral life the converts were taught to lead. As they were in their first fervor, they would be
eager to communicate it to others. She would hear the bell call to instructions, but she dare not answer it. Her uncle was more than indifferent toward the priest. He tolerated him as a peace pledge, but no more. She knew he would oppose her going for instruction and she had reason to fear that to go would antagonize him and put him in open opposition to Father Pierron.

To complicate matters, it was time now, so her guardian thought, for Kateri to be thinking about marrying one of the braves. That, after all, was a prime consideration in adopting and taking her into his cabin. Already when she was only eight years old, she had been, according to the tribal custom, betrothed by her aunts and uncle to an Indian boy of like age. It meant only she would have someone to look to in the future. Now, however, she was becoming of marriageable age and it was time to fulfil her agreements. The elders would not heed her protest that she did not want to marry. They actually invited the young brave into the cabin and urged her to sit by him and offer him food. That meant to accept him for husband. Instead, Kateri left the cabin and refused to return until he had departed. This, of course, embittered her household and that of the rejected suitor: it got abroad and roused the indignation of the girls of her own age, as if she were recreant to the tribal custom which they considered sacred.

From now on Kateri would have to bear petty persecution; she would be watched more closely so that she could not meet her Christian friends as freely as before;
she would have to do all the menial work of the cabin and much external work that was beyond her strength, even felling trees, which, by the way, would ultimately result in her baptism, so strange are God's ways. Meanwhile, she must suffer. She had committed the unpardonable sin in not taking into the cabin as husband one who would provide for her uncle and aunts in their old age! Saints practice virtue to an heroic degree. Tekakwitha was already beginning.

**HEROIC ASPIRATION**

Tekakwitha was no longer a favorite in her uncle's cabin. Her declination of marriage embittered him and her aunts. She must continue as before, doing most of the chores of the cabin and, as her strength was growing, assume more difficult and laborious tasks in the field, on the hunt and fishing expeditions; but there would be no response from her elders to her affectionate disposition.

There were, however, many new and stirring occurrences to engage her lively attention. Father Pierron was stationed at her village as missionary in 1669, and he threw himself into the life of her people, encouraging all that was good among them, laboring patiently also to overcome their prejudices, superstitions, fierce passions, ill-regulated marriages, and craze for the strong drink they could obtain from the neighboring colony, until lately under the Dutch and now governed by the English.

Gradually under his direction the Christian Indians
became more free in the practice of their religion, and those who were still pagan began to take more interest in his instructions and in the chapel services to which they were admitted. He had a zealous catechist, Mary Tsiaouentes, who attracted many to her lessons. Nor was it lessons alone that affected his proud and cruel people. Example was not wanting, often of heroic sort. One convert, shortly after baptism, was afflicted by the illness of her son, the death of a faithful husband and an eye trouble that disfigured her countenance. Her tribespeople taunted her that all this was because of her baptism and challenged her to forswear her religion. She stood firm and soon had the reward of her son’s health and of her own restored vision.

Tekakwitha could observe such evidence of the power of faith now that her years permitted her to move about more freely. She could go into the chapel at Christmastide and see the crib which Father Pierron had fabricated, study his pictures, listen to his choir of Indian children. If she was not present she would hear of his unyielding struggle for the soul of the tortured captive woman whose baptism a sorceress was striving to prevent and his triumph over her evil influences. She avoided scenes of torture, but she would know that the missionary had gone about among the captives, consoling, instructing and finally baptizing them before death.

All this made religion appear to her as the supreme thing in life. Never would one of the Mohawk braves exert himself in war or on the hunt as much as the priest-
Kateri Tekakwitha

warrior of Christ who sacrificed rest, comfort, and even health in order to gain souls. Besides the converts at Caughnawaga whom Pierron found there, he could report in his last year thirty adult baptisms, not to mention the children and dying persons who were baptized.

Father Boniface succeeded Father Pierron. For a time Tekakwitha's uncle had been more friendly with the missionaries and their converts, partly because they had helped to some extent in checking the habit of drunkenness that was ruining the men of the tribe. As a consequence, she could indulge her desire to learn more about the Faith and to mix with those who professed it. Indeed, it is certain that she would have sought baptism, but her natural shyness, her fear of making her uncle unfriendly to the missionaries, her absorption in household and other duties prevented her. Unwittingly, Father Boniface was the cause of further delay. In his great concern for his converts he actually led many of them off to the Christian village in Canada and that, of course, the Mohawk chieftain could not forgive. No one could blame the missionary; the uncle resented the disappearance of his people; for a time the innocent niece must be the victim of untoward circumstances.

Father James de Lamberville will ever be associated with the memory of "The Lily of the Mohawks." He was thirty years old when he came to Caughnawaga on the Mohawk to succeed Father Boniface, who died in December, 1674. The Mohawks were now more settled in their habits after many years of peace, and the mis-
A Child of God

missionary could regulate his ministrations in the chapel and visit them in their cabins. He was like a present-day pastor taking his census. As it was spring, the women were in the fields planting the corn. Passing Tekakwitha’s cabin, he did not enter, knowing how keen she was for outdoor work and knowing also her uncle’s unfriendly manner. Something, however, led him to look in and to his surprise the Indian maiden was there with two friends. The girl’s eyes were troubling her and she had hurt her leg stumbling against a tree.

Tekakwitha lost not a moment in telling the missionary of her pious thoughts and desires and begging for baptism. Lamberville reminded her of the obstacles her family would raise against her. She told him she was not afraid. She would even leave her home, her people and her country and go anywhere, even far away, to receive this great favor. Lamberville was deeply impressed. He perceived more in her character than words could express. He bade her to continue her instructions and encouraged her to hope in due time for her soul’s great desire.

A Child of God

James de Lamberville’s Mission was thirty miles long, but his people did not exceed in number 1,500 and of these not quite 500 were Christians. The more the others declined his approaches, the more he could devote his attention to his limited faithful and the more eagerly they responded to his devotion. This is why so many of them gave evidence of holiness.
After encouraging Tekakwitha to expect baptism, his first concern was to find how she was regarded by her tribespeople, to inquire about her manners, habits, steadfastness. All was open life among the dwellers in an Indian village. They knew one another, and they were not slow to find fault; on the contrary, they were given to detraction, the evil-doers, as usual, assuming that all others were like themselves. Not a word, however, would, or could, they say about the candidate for baptism except to praise her in the highest terms. Thus confirmed in his estimate of the Indian Maiden, he promised to baptize her on Easter Sunday. This was in 1676.

It was a gala day in the Mohawk Caughnawaga. De Lamberville regarded it as the most beautiful day in his apostolic career. The Christian Indians saw in it a triumph, that one whom all revered as exceptionally modest, charitable, industrious and prayerful, should now be admitted to dignify their own ranks. The pagans for once forgot their animosity to the Faith and attended the ceremony. The chapel was a revel of decoration, the sanctuary carpeted with fur of beaver, bear, fox and wild-cat, the walls hung with beaded necklaces, bracelets, wampum and trinkets used to adorn the hair. Catherine, as the missionary named her when pouring the saving waters, was the ornament that riveted the attention of all by her modesty, peace, piety and rapture. She had already won admiration and reverence. That day she won, as she walked to the chapel under the avenue of
trees her tribesmen had planted purposely for the occasion, a veneration which has never ceased.

Catherine did not need to go to the Christian village in Canada to live apart from the pagan practices of her people, their riotous festivals, superstitions, dances, and other assemblies of drunkenness, license and impiety. These she had instinctively avoided all along. Instead, she was frequently in the chapel and, when not engaged in errands of charity, diligently at work in her cabin, or, if need be, employed in the woods or fields, but always with her mind on divine things. Because her conduct was a rebuke to the dissipated young men and women of the village, they did not spare her. They even laid snares for her chastity, but only to their own confusion. Her cabin companions reproached her with idleness, and deprived her of food. Opposition helped her to realize her dependence on God. When kept by illness in her cabin, the rosary was her constant companion.

The persecution continued and grew violent. She became the marked woman of the village for drunkard and libertine to insult. Children taunted her and covered her with mud. Her uncle joined with her tormentors. A young brave followed her into her cabin threatening her with his hatchet if she would not renounce the Faith, to be told: “You may take my life, but not my faith.” An aunt seized on a flimsy pretext to impugn her chastity. She even insinuated that Catherine had sacrificed her honor during the hunt. Fortunately, de Lamberville, to whom she complained, knew how com-
monly the guilty party is not the accused but the accuser. He could soon disprove the story and put the accuser to shame.

AN INDIAN ACADIA

A godly man was Father James de Lamberville and so the Indians styled him “divine man.” Like all such men, he could discern what was in the minds and hearts of those he was forming to the image of Christ. He well knew that Tekakwitha would prove steadfast, that persecution would not weaken her will, but strengthen it. Still he also perceived her yearnings for surroundings more favorable to her faith. Though fond of seclusion, she could not avoid witnessing the wantonness and debauchery that were everywhere in the village, the rites of the sorcerers and their devil worship, and the orgies of cruelty inflicted on prisoners of war.

All things conspire for the welfare of those who love God. Had Catherine not suffered, de Lamberville would have treated her as a fervent but ordinary neophyte. Witnessing her heroism, he felt constrained to teach her the way of the counsels of Christ. Up to this she had been so far as anyone can be, self-taught, or self-made, as we say, in the ways of grace. Now she was to have the special guidance of one who practised as well as preached heroic virtue. The more she learned of the heights to which one might rise in the love of God and devotion to her neighbor, of prayer, and self-sacrifice, the more she yearned to live where her environment as well as her inclination would enable her to give herself unreservedly
to the service of God and her own people. As visitors would come occasionally from the Christian village which the missionaries had established in Canada and tell of the fervor and devotion that flourished in it, Catherine longed to go there to practise her faith and cultivate virtue in peace. The village then was at Laprairie, across the St. Lawrence from Montreal, where French and Indian Christians lived together.

Youth is fond of the day dream, and the young Indians usually found material for dreams in the hunt, the fishery, the trading excursion, the start or return of the nation’s warriors when hostilities were on. At Gan-daouaghe a change had lately come over the spirit of some of the dreamers. They had witnessed numbers leave the cabin, some of them chiefs of the tribe, to begin life over on new soil and with altered surroundings. They had seen some of these return and recount what to Mohawk imagination must have seemed like life in the happy hunting ground, where there was no laziness, no cruelty, no beastliness, no torture, no demoniacal spell or witchcraft, no drunkenness, no licentiousness, no mad orgy, but instead industry, kindliness, decency, sobriety, chastity and innocent pleasures.

In the loneliness of her cabin Kateri would revel in the very thought of this celestial paradise. The more her craving for religion grew, and the more she was impeded or persecuted in her quest for it, the more she would naturally long for the haven where she could serve God with the liberty of His children.
KATERI TEKAKWITHA

The missionaries themselves had dreamed of such a refuge for the Christian Indians years before they could establish one. Meantime they tried various methods of withdrawing them from their vices and superstitions. They had encouraged French families to raise Indian boys and girls in their homes; they had the nuns take young maidens in their schools; they had induced adults to live away from their own people and near the French settlements, so as to civilize at the same time that they Christianized them. All this was not enough. It could benefit only a few and it had no element of permanence. Even when they had acquired a site suitable for an exclusively Christian Indian settlement, they could not get any to come there and stay for any length of time. They were using the place as a rest resort for worn-out missionaries when again an apparent chance brought about what they desired.

What their fellow Jesuit Missionaries had done in Paraguay and the Californias, they were now to do in Canada on a smaller scale, but with results lasting to this day.

INDIAN SUMMER PILGRIMAGE

That Indian Acadia still exists. It is now on a bluff above the St. Lawrence River in sight of the Lachine Rapids. Montreal is in sight and the noble Mercier Bridge makes easy access to the place. There are over two thousand Catholic Indians there from all the tribes which the early Jesuit missionaries evangelized, many of them giving their lives as Martyrs, and eight of them
now honored on our altars as Saints, Jogues, Brebeuf, Lalemant, Daniel, Garnier, Chabanel, Goupil and Lalande.

How did it come about? The missionaries were using the place for a rest resort, not knowing what else to do with it. Wandering Indians discovered it and soon started there a resort for rest from the wild and warlike ways to which they had been accustomed.

An Iroquois of the Oneida Nation, Pierre Tonsohoten, Christian at heart, with his wife, Gandeakteua, her mother, brother-in-law and five friends of his tribe accompanied the Jesuit lay assistant, Charles Boquet, to Montreal, partly to act as guide, partly to obtain remedies for his rheumatism. On witnessing the lives of the Christians at Montreal, they were so entranced that they forgot all about the Iroquois country whence they came. Father Raffeix suggested that instead of returning to their homes they should live at St. Francis Xavier's, as the missionaries' retreat was then called. There they spent the winter 1667-68 under instruction, and in the following summer they went down to Quebec, all to receive baptism from Bishop Laval, except Tonsohoten, who was baptized some years later. This was the beginning of a religious settlement which has lasted to our day. By this time the Indians had their own village four miles above Laprairie, near the Lachine Rapids.

Reports of this new venture captivated the imagination of the Indians everywhere. Attracted by curiosity, many who were returning from the hunt or fishery
KATERI TEKAkwITHA

stepped aside to see what the new abode was like, and they were so satisfied that they remained, or went home to urge their friends to go there. Christians from every tribe in lower Canada and what is now upper New York began to flock there. Never did gold fields lure more eager adventurers. Soon there were members from twenty-two tribes, all of them bent on living as Christians unmolested, many of them seeking to lead the Christian life in all its fulness. Tribes which had a respectable number, like the Hurons, Oneidas, Algonquins, were permitted to name a captain or trustee to regulate the affairs of the canton under the direction of the missionaries. Garonhiague, baptized Louis, with his wife, Marie Garhio, was captain for the Oneidas.

"Hot Ashes," as he was nicknamed, was no mere political leader. He was catechist and apostle. At home he instructed and exhorted his fellows, and explained pious pictures. He made many trips to the Iroquois country to tell his former tribesmen of the new life at St. Xavier. It was on one of these expeditions that he became the instrument of Kateri's escape from Gandaouaghe to the Christian reservation. It was no easy matter. Though her aunts consented, her uncle, who was on a political mission in Albany, on hearing she had left the village, pursued her. As he came near her guides, one a relative of Kateri, the other a Huron from Lorette, they feigned hunting whilst she hid in the thick of the woods, thus throwing their pursuer off the scent.

It took the fugitives four days to reach Lake George,
or Holy Sacrament, as Jogues, the first white man to canoe over it, had named it thirty years before. The English named the lake after one of their kings, but the State of New York is erecting there an imposing monument to its missionary discoverer. There they found the canoe of Hot Ashes. To traverse this lake, and the longer one named after Champlain, and then reach the St. Lawrence, was a smart week's journey, but they made it without fear of hindrances with the prospect of a blissful biding place ahead, in the midst of the loveliest of seasons, the Indian summer of 1677.

Thus read the letter of Father de Lamberville introducing Kateri to Father Cholenec, who with Fathers Frémin and Chauchetière, was then in charge of the mission: "Catherine Tegakwitha is going to live at the Sault. Will you kindly undertake to direct her? You will soon know what a treasure we have sent you. Guard it well! May it profit in your hands, for the glory of God and the salvation of a soul that is certainly very dear to Him."

Their first care was to lodge her with a pious family and naturally they selected the cabin of the one who had guided her from her home on the Mohawk, her brother-in-law as she called him. His kindness was to bring him and his family many graces. In the cabin was the elderly woman, Anastasie Tegonhatsiongo, who was like a mother to Kateri. She devoted her time to preparing
women and young girls for baptism. What an entirely new environment it was, far from the scandals of the pagan village, free from the persecution of her own household, and brightened with the glow of an affection which she had not known since her mother died! Gratitude added new incentive to her desire for an undivided service to God. She had long outgrown the disposition to know merely what she must avoid. Her sole thought now was to learn to do what was most pleasing to Him.

The chapel became her rendezvous whenever she left her cabin, from four in the morning when the doors opened until all the Masses were over, often during the day, especially in winter and the rainy season when she could not work in the fields, and always for night prayers in the evening. On Sundays she spent most of the day, with the rest of the Mission, in the chapel, at the usual Mass in the morning, the Rosary, and in the afternoon with the Confraternity of the Holy Family, and at Vespers. At this last devotion, instead of psalms, the Indians used to chant things which the Fathers wished them to learn, a form of morning prayer, a prayer for Mass, another to the Guardian Angel, a fourth for Faith, a fifth, the Commandments.

“Prayer” was the word all these Indians used to express religion, the Faith, the Church and its teachings. They seemed to grasp that the essence of all religion is union, or communing, with God especially by prayer. When at all in earnest they were fond of prayer, especially of prayer in common, and even its solitary practise
became easy for them. In Catherine faith enlivened every prayer and she soon realized that her relation with God was personal, that love of Him must be the only worthy motive of all she did for Him, that the slightest unfaithfulness was unthinkable, as it was a grievous offense in her eyes.

It was this purity of heart that led the missionaries to admit her to receive Holy Communion the Christmas Day after her arrival at St. Francis Xavier's, whereas they usually kept others waiting a year or more in preparation. After this the Eucharist became her one desire, and when she received it so great was her recollection, and so attractive her piety that other Indians liked to be near her as the sight of her increased their own devotion.

Winter was the hunting season and the hunt lasted four months. Few even of the women remained at home. Out over the snowbound St. Lawrence and through the denuded woods the men tracked and killed elk, bear, beaver, wildcat, fox, porcupine, otter and seal, the women bringing home the quarry, dressing the meat, preserving the skins, setting up the cabins, and doing the household work. This was the Indians' fondest occupation and often an occasion of license. The missionaries had gradually accustomed them to follow a simple rule of life during the hunting season, and to meet daily as much as possible for prayer. They had calendars on birch bark marking Sundays, holydays and days of fasting and abstinence. Men were assigned to give the signal for prayer and to preside at it.
Catherine accompanied an adopted sister with her husband. She did her full share of work in camp and cabin. Not content with the prayers said in common, she made her own oratory in a glade of evergreens, carving on one of them the cross. Little did she imagine that her journey to and from this solitude was to be misconstrued by a woman of her own cabin who was jealous of her. After the hunt this woman denounced Kateri to the missionary who, like all men of sense, insisted on getting the story of Catherine before forming a conclusion. Naturally he trusted her. In a short time the jealous accuser, unlike so many more civilized Christians, recognized her injustice and deplored it bitterly.

**Kateri as an Apostle**

It was a sharp transition from the excitement and irregular habits of the hunt to the services of Holy Week and Easter. Good Friday was for her a day of sorrow and a fresh inspiration to a life of penance. Easter Day, with the memory of her baptism, brought her the singular honor of admission to the Confraternity of the Holy Family reserved for older and select members of the Mission. With her companion Anastasie, the more others regarded her as deserving, the more she appreciated the evil of sin, and sought to expiate her own crimes as she called them by chastising her frail body, after the examples she heard of in stories of the saints and of the fathers of the desert. About this time when felling a tree, she was struck by the falling branches and
KATERI AS AN APOSTLE

knocked unconscious. She was picked up for dead, but soon came to, exclaiming: “O Jesus, I thank Thee for having succored me in danger.” She believed that God had spared her life in order that she might do penance.

This Indian village of St. Francis Xavier, though Eden compared with Gandaouaghe, was not altogether without an occasional sinner and scandal. The missionaries had to fight the traders who were forever striving to introduce liquors into the cabins, for liquor would spoil in a day what had taken them months to accomplish. The Indian, though viciously inclined, had some self-control when sober; when drunk he was more demon than man. Not all in the village precincts were Christians. Some had come there with their Christian relatives; others were still awaiting baptism. Side by side therefore with marvelous examples of piety there were instances of depravity, as when on one occasion three young women determined to tempt some of the instructors of the Indians, and, failing in this, succeeded in misleading a young brave, until they were driven from the reservation.

A certain Mary Teresa Tegaiguenta had not lived up to the promise of her early life. She had come up from the Oneidas baptized, but prone to intemperance. In the winter of 1675 she had gone hunting with a party of eleven, four men, her husband among them, three other women, and three children. Game failing, they were on the verge of starvation when her husband fell ill.
Deserted by the others, she stayed with him until he died and she buried him in the snow.

Soon after Mary overtook her former companions, now unable to proceed from hunger, and all awaiting death. They were debating the proposal to kill and eat one of the party, but they wanted to know what she as a Christian would advise. She was afraid to answer. When she saw them kill and devour first one then another of the party, she was struck with remorse over her past conduct and she determined, if God would restore her to her people, to atone for her sins with due penance. With four of her friends she survived and reached the Mission. Straightway she threw herself at the feet of the missionary, repentant, begging his help to carry out her good resolutions.

Soon after this woman met Kateri near the new chapel in course of construction, and their chance acquaintance ripened into a fast friendship. They used to meet with another friend, Marie Skarichions, and deliberate how they might live holier lives. Their rendezvous was under the great cross overlooking where the river widens round Heron Island. The cross was replaced from time to time until 1890, when the present monument was erected. After Kateri’s death, some ornaments which she left were buried beneath it. At the blessing of a new cross in 1844, her picture adorned it. There then these three studied how they might retire by themselves, build a cabin on the island, and serve God as did the Sisters whom Skarichions and Kateri had seen at
Montreal. They decided to submit their design to Father Frémon and be guided by his advice.

While Catherine was thus meditating a life of virginity, her adopted sister was planning to have her marry one of the young braves of the village. It seemed so natural that a maid whom any young man would be proud to marry should think of her future and do as others do. Indeed, according to the Indian way of thinking, it was highly proper. Kateri's manifest disregard of fashion in dress and ornament just at this time made the sister fear she was not looking out for her own interest. Her almost exclusive companionship with the two good women who, like her, were following the rule of life drawn up for them by Father Frémín, was considered as singular and hurtful to her prospect in life.

So artful was the chief lady of the cabin in presenting what she considered as the obligation to enter the married state, that Kateri, not confident in her own powers to reply, had recourse to the missionary to learn from him the Christian view of the two modes of life in virginity and in marriage, only to confirm her in love for the former. When in her early girlhood she evaded the efforts of her relatives to have her marry, she was shunning what appeared unnatural and wrong to one so young. Now, however, she was choosing what she regarded as a distinctly better condition, in that it left her freer to devote her whole soul to God's service. For a
time she kept her secret to herself. When urged to marry, she made it known.

To avoid further pressure, she sought from Father Cholenee a thing until then unheard of among her people, permission to make a vow of virginity. He bade her deliberate over it for three days. In good faith she agreed, but before an hour was up she returned to tell him she could not deliberate on a decision she had long since made and would never alter. Needless to say, he approved her resolution. Soon the motherly Anastasie, who had urged her to marry, came to support her resolution not to do so. Her penitent friend, Teresa, had all along encouraged her in her high resolve. Her vow was made on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1679.

Hunting was as much an occasion of sport as a time for securing food and skins for trade. It was the outing of Indian man and woman from the tame enclosure of the palisade and the laborious days in the cornfields. Those who went hunting would have plenty to eat and relish for it: those who remained at home must live on sagamite and dried fish or meat with little savor. Only the old and very young remained at home with those who were infirm. Though never robust, Catherine was not at this time infirm. Still she chose to remain at home in spite of the pressure of her relatives to accompany them. Her reason was that the excitement and irregularities of the hunt, though not necessarily sinful, tended to distract her thoughts and kept her away from what she had now come to regard as the very center and substance
of her life, the chapel with her Saviour ever present in its tabernacle.

HER SPIRIT OF Penance

In the chapel she knelt close to the altar every morning long before sunrise, waiting for the Mass, her blue cloak wrapped about her body and serving as a hood modestly to conceal her features. Thither she went five times daily to make her acts of faith, contrition, humility, resignation, and to conclude with a rosary. Urged to leave her post and stay near the fire, she would do so only for a moment, pleading, in that rigorous climate, she did not suffer cold. It would have been more precise to say she did not advert to the suffering. Her mind was intent on the altar; the altar was for her a Calvary; the sufferings she thought of were her Lord’s, not her own. Indeed, so vividly did she realize what He had suffered, she felt it natural that she should suffer, so natural that she went out of her way to seek suffering and to experience it even to excess.

Some of Kateri’s austerities and penances were so excessive that her spiritual adviser had to forbid them. He admired her courage, but he knew that virtue never goes to extremes. The refinement of torture that her tribesmen used to inflict on a captive enemy, she inflicted on herself. Hard labor, fasting, watching counted for naught with her; the lash and pointed metal cincture she applied to her weak body regularly; she even branded herself with hot iron and walked barefoot in the snows
PORTRAIT OF KATERI, 1681

By her spiritual adviser, Chauchetière
of winter; when she at length began to put hot embers between her toes, and sleep three successive nights in the brambles she had found in the woods, her strength gave way, her secret was discovered, and Father Cholenec bade her moderate her eagerness to imitate the saints in rigorous penances that were altogether beyond her powers. About this time others in the village besides herself practised self-torture to such an extent that the chronicler Chauchetière actually recorded the fact as due to the influence of the evil one, and as leading to a fanaticism which the missionaries had to check, particularly after the death of Catherine, when it began to exceed all bounds.

Half measures had no place in Catherine’s life. Whatever she did was whole-hearted and, when occasion offered, heroic. With an uncle chief in the village of her youth, she might have been foremost among its growing maidens, in dress, in common esteem, in social favor such as it was. Instead, she kept out of notice and resented even ordinary attention. It required spirit to decline that marriage which was well nigh forced on her when only eleven years old. It required meekness to stand the taunts and jeers she had to bear for this. It required still more courage to leave her home and people, risking pursuit by her uncle, who would have spared no one’s life to recover her. Frail as she was and often ill, only a will of adamant could support her in her incessant toil on the hunt, in the fields, within the cabin. Only an extraordinary light from heaven and an exceptional influ-
ence of Divine grace could have moved her to seek a perfection far in advance of what her spiritual advisers had thought of recommending to her, especially when without suggestion from them she sought permission to consecrate her life to God in virginity.

From the day Kateri made that vow, the problem of the missionaries to keep the Indians steadfast Christians was solved. Indian maidens sought to imitate her. Older women, married as well as widowed, began to have great admiration and love for chastity. Through this exalted example of their women, Indian men appreciated the purifying influence of religion, and the possibility of living as it requires. The missionaries had to moderate the fervor of the reservation. They were at last reaping richly the reward of the labor, patience, sufferings, and death of their martyr pioneers, Jogues, Goupil, Lalande, Brébeuf and his companions. Once more the blood of martyrs was the seed of Christians. Once more, as so often before in our Catholic annals, a woman’s devotion became the seal of faith among thousands. Kateri’s influence over her people lasts to this day.

The inhabitants of the village were absent when Kateri took her last illness. It was the hunting season of 1680. For two months she suffered violent and weakening stomach pains, and she lay in her cabin not altogether neglected, but not as well cared for as she would have been were the people at home. She little heeded
the lack of attention so long as she could enjoy the solitude and the opportunity it gave her for prayer. Those who came to visit her entered her cabin as if it were a sanctuary. They came because they felt it was a grace to witness her patience and hear her speak of holy things.

When the sickness became fatal in Holy Week, the missionaries made an exception in her favor by carrying the Viaticum to her cabin instead of having her brought to the chapel to receive it as was customary. The procession from chapel to cabin was a memorable affair, not unlike the ceremony which marked the day of her baptism. Watchers were assigned to remain with her until her death, which occurred the following day, Wednesday, April 17, when she was still fully conscious, clasping her crucifix and repeating: "Jesus, I love You."

Her death was the occasion of extraordinary religious manifestations. It was apparent that all regarded her as a saint. Her mat, blanket and crucifix were regarded as sacred relics. Prayers were offered to her. It was suggested that she be buried not in the cemetery, but in the chapel. Father Cholenec considered this inadvisable, much as he believed her worthy of the distinction. The Christians from the neighboring village at Laprairie came to the funeral. From the moment of her burial men, women and children formed the custom of coming to pray at her grave. The French came there as well as the Indians. Soon a cross was erected over it like the one near which she used to pray on the banks of the St.
Lawrence. Novenas were made and Masses offered in her honor.

Very soon it became known that prayers to her were answered in a remarkable manner. She appeared twice to Father Chauchetière, the second time bidding him: "Look and do according to the model." The model as he interpreted it was Catherine herself and accordingly he painted her image, the only picture extant of an Indian maiden of that day. When the Governor of Canada, M. de Champigny, was cured of throat trouble of two years' standing, after praying at Catherine's grave, his wife had many copies of this image made for distribution in France and among the Indians. Many were the favors granted from heaven by its pious use.

Cures through her intercession became so frequent that Father Cholenece ceased to record them. M. de la Colombière, Canon of the Cathedral Church in Quebec, brother of the famous Blessed Claude de la Colombière, director of Saint Margaret Mary, was cured of slow fever and bleeding which had lasted six months. Père Remy of St. Sulpice, Curé of Lachine parish, was disposed to question the marvelous favors granted through Catherine's intercession; but when one of his parishioners came to have him offer a Mass of thanksgiving, for favors obtained through the Indian Maiden, he felt moved to invoke her to bring about his own cure from deafness and when his prayer was heard, out of gratitude he wrote a record of the numerous remarkable favors attributed to her intercession.
Father Cholenec had at first the same attitude as Remy, but when he witnessed the cure of Claude Caron by the use of Catherine’s crucifix, of another named Roanez, a woman over sixty, by the same means, and of a third, an Indian girl from paralysis and a passion for gambling, he not only changed his mind, but, like Remy, wrote her life three times over, once for the Edifying Letters, again in Latin as a report for his superiors in Rome, and the third for general use. Other missionaries witnessed similar favors, among them Fathers Bruyas and Morain. It has not been the lot of many mortals to have had their lives recorded by such accomplished biographers, Cholenec and Chauchetière, and later by the eminent historian, Charlevoix, eye witnesses and intimate observers, who have kept her memory alive, the latter by brush as well as pen.

Veneration After Death

It is no wonder then that Indians and French in Canada became convinced that Catherine was a Servant of God specially favored. In these remarkable answers to prayer through her intercession, she was their wonder worker, their protectress, their Genevieve, the protectress of Paris. “Canada has also her Genevieve,” remarked the second bishop of Quebec, de la Croix St. Valier, as he rose after praying at the tomb of Catherine, referring no doubt to her protection from the cruel Iroquois in 1688. Nor is it a wonder that Father Cholenec at length felt justified exhuming her remains so as to
Kateri Tekakwitha

preserve her bones sacredly in the sacristy of the Mission Chapel. For a time they reposed even under its main altar. They are now under seal. The skull was given as a source of blessings to the Indians of Regis when they were establishing their reservation.

Catherine's tomb, however, had become a holy place in the eyes of the Indians. They had seen miracles worked by the use of the soil taken from it, they had experienced graces as they prayed there, they had gone to it in pious pilgrimage, when their village was moved in 1696 and again to its present site in 1716, and they had seen visitors coming from afar to venerate it. For over sixty years Charlevoix attests all this had lasted, and it had grown into an abiding tradition. From time to time the great cross was renewed with ceremonies notably in 1843, and after a destructive gale again in 1884. In 1890 Father Clarence A. Walworth, of St. Mary's, Albany, erected a lasting monument on the spot, a great urn of granite surmounted by a high cross, palisaded and covered by a rustic roof. On the stone is inscribed:

Kateri Tekakwitha
April 17, 1680
Onkweonweke Katsitsiio Leokitsianekaron
meaning
Fairest flower that ever bloomed among true men.

Though, as Cholenec wrote, the wonders worked by this "Little Flower" of the Indians became too numerous to record, there was always one so obvious as to need
Veneration After Death

no record, the fervor of her people after her death, their veneration for her virtues, their belief in her holiness, and their steadfast adherence to the faith down to our day. Their disposition to pay her the tribute of their worship has spread far beyond their home on the St. Lawrence. Wherever Christians read of her saintly life, there is the same impulse to venerate her, and to wish that one day she may be honored on our altars. The Bishops of the United States assembled in the Plenary Council in Baltimore in 1884 expressed this wish to the Holy Father, when recommending the beatification of Father Jogues and his two companions, now saints, who died for the Faith where Catherine was born, the ripest fruit of their blood, since the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians.

At Auriesville, Catherine’s memory is associated with that of the Saints Isaac Jogues, Joseph Lalande and René Goupil. Although she did not die for the Faith as they did, she lived as one of its confessors and she consecrated her life to God as virgin. It is very fortunate that we have a portion of her relic, kindly given by Most Rev. William Forbes, now Archbishop of Ottawa, when pastor at Caughnawaga, on the St. Lawrence, opposite Montreal, the present home of the Indians with whom Catherine spent her last four years. Many favors are attributed to the use of this relic. Caughnawaga Castle, the Indian village in which Kateri dwelt ten years and in which also she was baptized, had long been a place of interest, the spring there, known as Tekakwitha Spring, being a spe-
KATERI TEKAKWITHA

cial attraction. It is on the hill overlooking Fonda, about four miles west of Auriesville and on the north side of the Mohawk River. This site, like Auriesville, will become a place of pilgrimage in honor of the Lily of the Mohawks.

Process for Kateri’s Beatification

When about 1921 it became clear that the Martyrs would be soon beatified, redoubled efforts were made to prepare for the Cause of Kateri. The documents concerning her were collected, translated and manifolded so as to be distributed among those who might appear as witnesses in her favor. Ordinarily the process of her beatification would be instituted and conducted in the diocese in whose territory she departed this life, then Montreal, but now St. John of Quebec. For very good reasons it was thought best to institute this process in the diocese of Albany, as Kateri has spent most of her life within its limits.

At the meeting of the hierarchy in Washington September 27, 1922, a petition was sent to the Holy See to permit the Rt. Rev. Edmund Gibbons, Bishop of Albany, to take the first step toward the beatification of Catherine. Early in 1931, after the many delays which are unavoidable in such a process, he appointed a Commission of his clergy to examine testimony to her holiness. He named the V. Rev. Msgr. Joseph Breslin, Vice-Rector of the North American College in Rome, Postulator of her Cause who, in turn, designated Rev. John J.
PROCESS FOR KATERI’S BEATIFICATION

Wynne, S.J., Vice-Postulator here. The present Postulator in Rome is the Rev. Charles Miccineilli, S.J.

The members of the Commission, or Court, were:

Rt. Rev. Msgr. John P. Glavin
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Michael J. Looney
Rev. Louis Lavigne
Rev. James Hilden
Rev. Henry Miller
Rev. Joseph P. Kelly
Rev. Edward J. Maginn

This Commission has already examined the witnesses to the heroic virtues of Catherine and the tradition of her holiness and their report is now being examined by the Congregation of Rites in Rome.

The witnesses were:

V. Rev. Canon P. J. Bourget, St. Regis, P. Q., Canada
Miss Monica Carroll, Port Leyden, N. Y.
Rev. Peter F. Cusick, S.J., Auriesville, N. Y.
Rev. Joseph A. Dunney, Albany, N. Y.
Rev. Michael J. Dwyer, S.D.T., Latham, N. Y.
Most Rev. Joseph G. Forbes, Archbishop, Ottawa, Canada
Rev. C. M. Hauser, S.J., St. Regis, Canada
Miss Katherine Hennessy, Albany, N. Y.
Mrs. Joseph and Thomas Hughes, Amsterdam, N. Y.
Rev. Arthur Melancon, S.J., Montreal, Canada
Rev. John O’Connor, Albany, N. Y.
Rev. Joseph M. O’Connor, Granville, N. Y.
Mother Marie Louise Schroen, Albany, N. Y.
Rev. Martin Scott, S.J., New York, N. Y.
Miss Ellen H. Walworth, Saratoga Springs, N. Y. (deceased)

Official witnesses:

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Brown, Amsterdam, N. Y.
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Slattery, Troy, N. Y.

The bishops of the United States, at their meeting in Washington, November, 1937, agreed unanimously
to express to the Holy See their great interest in the Cause of Tekakwitha and testify to the widespread and profound desire of our priests and people to have her honored.

To all who cherish her memory, who use her precious relics, and who above all imitate her virtues, we recommend the custom, dating from her death, of those who went to pray at her tomb, to recite three times the Lord’s Prayer, the Hail Mary and Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. We recommend also the prayer:

“O God, Who didst wondrously protect the innocence of Thy Servant Catherine Tekakwitha, and bestow on her the gift of faith and spirit of penance, grant, I beseech Thee, that all who invoke her intercession may obtain what they desire, and I also the blessing I humbly beg; so that her favor with Thee may be manifest to all, and she may be exalted to the honor of our altars, as among the Blessed in Heaven. Amen.

“Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.”

Imprimatur + Patrick Cardinal Hayes

Meantime the belief that prayer through the intercession of Catherine does not fail, continues to grow. Besides remarkable cures, attributed to her intervention, many singular graces and favors are reported by her devout clients, many notable cures, conversions, relief in the recent and present business depression, of which a few examples follow:—
Remarkable restoration of a venerable Indian missionary from an ailment seldom curable without an operation at his age, still at his labors in rugged conditions—attested by a Protestant doctor. —G.A.A., S.J.

Attestation:
When Rev. Father A. was admitted on May 22nd last to our hospital he was in a most deplorable condition. For fifteen days I visited him twice daily to relieve him. He was praying to Catherine Tekakwitha, and about three days after he commenced these prayers he was completely returned to normal functions. I had told him that his only remedy was a surgical operation, but, owing to his advanced age, and his physical condition, that this would prove too dangerous. I believe that it was after this conversation he commenced his appeal to Catherine Tekakwitha—with a most gratifying result.
—W.V.H., St. Joseph’s Hospital, Guelph, Canada.

While interning at City Hospital in December, 1928, I was stricken with an illness called agranulocytic angina. Up to that time it was a very little known disease and almost always fatal. Father Bernard was with me at the time and he gave me a relic of Catherine Tekakwitha. I received nine transfusions, different serums and medicines and the case looked almost hopeless. Several of my professors thought I would not recover. But one day I made a turn for the better and I recovered after a convalescence of several months.
In June, 1930, I also had another attack, which was not so serious as the first. Father Bernard again brought me the relic and with the same routine of treatment I again recovered and am now practicing medicine.
Although I like to give some credit to medicine, I feel as though the relic was the real aid to my cure.

—V. A. Nowicki, M.D., Yonkers, N. Y., 12-20-31.

C. H. (A. W.'s wife) has been cured in a most wonderful manner through the intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha. For eleven months she had been suffering from ulcers of incurable type in the mouth. The physician's treatment notwithstanding, she was becoming worse. She wanted to have recourse to my medical services. (Father C. had practiced medicine before becoming a Jesuit.) I proposed that she have recourse to the powerful intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha. Since Almighty God had caused Catherine Tekakwitha to flourish in Indian soil, as a rose of sweet odor, it was evidently for the spiritual advantage of the Indians.

On the third day of the novena, she was perfectly cured. This is assuredly a manifest intervention of God.

—T.C., S.J., Montreal.

It must be to her credit that I am a convert.

—Rahway, N. J.

My boy was never allowed by his father to practice the faith. As he came of age he was engaged to a fine Catholic girl. He took ill, asked for a priest and had a holy death, all through prayers to Tekakwitha.

—Canada.

About a year ago I met a man in the hospital suffering from cancer. He had not gone to church or sacraments for almost 40 years. I visited him nearly every day for ten months, trying to reconcile him to God, to no avail. I sent other priests there and they returned unsuccessful.
I began to say the rosary at his bedside. When I reached the third decade, he ordered me out of the room and threw a cancer-stained towel at me. On leaving I said: "—, I will never return until you call me." When I reached my home I regretted this. The next day I found the little pamphlet you sent me on the proposed beatification of Catherine Tekakwitha. I prayed to her, and told her that if he would call me I would look upon it as a manifestation of her interest. All his relatives prayed with me, hopeless as I was. After one month of silence, the man called me and made his peace with God. I never saw such compunction on the part of anyone.

He said his rosary every day, awaiting death with patience and resignation. He looked for me each day to read one-half hour from the *Following of Christ*.

—B.N., O.S.B., Port Angeles, Wash.

Again Kateri came to my assistance. My atheist called me and in a few days made his profession of faith, received all the sacraments and three days later died kissing the cross with a smile on his lips.

—Port Angeles, Wash.

I promised to write this if Catherine would help me obtain donations to renovate our Church. It is now a beauty. Over and above, we finished a big hall which cost about $8,000 and we owe only $2,500 on it.

—Pastor, Alexandria, Ky.

I told Catherine in October that I needed $3,000 by the end of December to pay bills and interest. When the time came I had my $3,000. I certainly did not know where to get it.

—Sr. M.J.
KATERI TEKAKWITHA

Thanksgiving for the construction of a church at an Indian Mission where it seemed a forlorn hope; also for the adoption of the Sisters as public school teachers needed as all the children are Catholics.

—Pastor, Superior, Wis.

Facing a semi-monthly (hospital) payroll of $10,000 with only $200 October 23, I asked the staff to make a novena to Catherine asking for the payroll by October 31. She sent $10,000 and $6,000 more. —Sr. M.C.

At the suggestion of a fellow priest, I began a novena to Tekakwitha to assist me in my financial difficulties. Within a week, it seems almost miraculous, a check for a very considerable sum was received. —Mars, Pa.

Enclosed you will find a letter from Dr. P. who treated a young married man, afflicted with a grave throat disease. He was so far gone that the poison had spread to his system, when I was called to administer the last rites to him. Feeling sorry for his wife and children, and on the earnest plea for help of his mother, I pinned a second class relic on him and gave the leaflets to the family to pray to Kateri. In a short time this man was back to work and feeling fine, thanks to Kateri’s help.

—Rev. J.D.P.

I wish to verify what I believe to be a miraculous cure of a patient who was desperately ill with little hope of recovery. After having received the benefit of everything medicine had to offer, he still was in a precarious condition; and it was not until after a relic of Kateri was applied that he regained his health. —J.B.P., M.D.
BOOKS AND DOCUMENTS ON TEKAKWITHA

1680-1695: The annals of the Mission of the Sault, from its foundation to 1696, by Fr. Chauchetière.


1696: M. Remy, P.S.S., Testimony of M. Remy, Curé of La Chine, to the miracles done in his parish by her intercession.

17—: Synopsis of the Life of Catherine Tegaskouita, Christian Iroquois.


1717: Fr. Cholenec, Life in ms. form, at the Hotel-Dieu of Quebec.

1722: La Potherie (M. Bacqueville de), *History of North America*, vol. i, p. 351, portrait of Catherine.


1744: Charlevoix, *History and General Description of New France*.

1756: Translation of Charlevoix into German.

1797: Chateaubriand, *Voyages in America*.

1819: Third edition of *Lettres Edifiantes*.

1836: Chateaubriand, Natchez. *Parallel between St. Genevieve and Catherine*.

1843: Spanish translation of *Lettres Edifiantes*.

KATERI TEKAKWITHA


1850: *Catherine, or the Virgin of Canada*, Limoges, France. Reprint of her life by Father Cholenec.


1876: Life of Catherine Tekakwitha in Iroquois.


1897: *Catharina Tegahkwita eene Lelie onder de doornen gevolgd.* (Catherine Tegakwitha, a Lily among Thorns.)


In thanksgiving for blessings received those who are favored become zealous in making Tekakwitha better known. For this purpose they distribute some of the objects listed below. In this way they enable others to obtain favors and they increase veneration for this Servant of God whom we hope soon to honor on our altars.

**Life**, by Wynne, 64 pages, 3 illustrations—25c. a copy; 3 for 60c.

**Leaflets**—I, cures—II, money aid, employment, etc.—III, Novena—IV, special for priests and communities, 5c.; 25c. a doz.

**The Lily of the Mohawks**—Monthly Message—60c. a year; 2 copies, $1.00.

**Pictures**, colored, 5x3 in., each 5c.; 10x13½ in., each 40c.; discount on quantities.

**Image of Kateri**, in wood, with wood of tree from her birthplace, growing at the time of her birth, 5¾ x 3 in., 40c.

**Medals**, Oxidized silver, 15c., $1.50 a doz.; Aluminum, 5c., 50c. a doz.

*(Prices include postage)*

TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE
226 EAST FORDHAM ROAD, NEW YORK CITY
ROOM 217

LOUGHLIN BROS., PRINTERS
NEW YORK