

THE LILY OF

Fairest flower that ever



THE MOHAWKS

bloomed among true men

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JUNE

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 will build 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. 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 Tionnontoguen, 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

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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 arrangements. 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. Meantime, 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.

In the Court of Holiness — VIII

Apparently "The Lily of the Mohawks" has set many thinking and wondering if it be not possible to propose for beatification and canonization many of the distinguished Servants of God who have led saintly lives and consecrated our land, some with their blood as martyrs, some as Confessors and virgins. Already we are receiving requests for information how to proceed in such a matter.

Previous numbers of this Monthly Message give such information, but they have not

yet mentioned one very important requisite, *viz.*, the articles or points that should be drawn up stating the facts in the life of a Servant of God, the special virtues, proof of the reputation for holiness, and evidence of remarkable answers to prayer through the intercession of the Servant of God in question.

In Tekakwitha's case, one hundred such articles were submitted, thirty-six on her life; thirty-one on her virtues; nineteen on her reputation of holiness and fourteen on

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the answers to prayer. With each article was one or more references to the books or documents by which the statements could be established, and at the end a complete list of all the publications in various languages about the "Good Catherine."

All this had to be done with the greatest care, because it was on these articles the witnesses were required to give testimony; on them also the Promoter of the Faith, "devil's advocate," was to base his test questions.

Besides, every member of the Congregation of Rites must have a copy. They were printed in English, French, Latin and Italian.

Fortunately, the sources of information were abundant, as listed in the February and March numbers, and they are of incontestible authority. No other Servant of God, of a people then uncivilized, in an obscure mission, was ever memorialized so completely as to her life, virtues, renown for holiness and intercessory powers as Kateri Tekakwitha.

Becoming Known Everywhere

KATERI KNOWN IN AUSTRALIA

The Lily of the Mohawks is a brief Life of Tekakwitha, by Rev. J. Phillips, S.J., published by the Catholic Truth Society of Melbourne.

AND IN ENGLAND

Specialists and doctors gave no hope of my recovery, in fact they thought it was impossible for me to live. I was nursed by a Bon Secour nun who told us of Tekakwitha, and we started a novena to her. I made wonderful progress and am well and strong again.

—Newton-le-Willows, Lancashire, England.

FROM ALASKA, HARDEST OF MISSIONS

How to thank you for the precious and many treasures you have sent me? I leave it to Kateri and the American Martyrs to do it for us.

The numbers of *THE LILY OF THE MOHAWKS* monthly will do much for Catherine's Cause and the spiritual benefit of the readers, as well as for their temporal welfare.—JOSEPH R. CRIMONT, S.J., Juneau.

ON THE AIR

Tekakwitha was the subject for the Ave Maria Hour broadcast from St. Paul's Friary, Graymoor, N. Y., Sunday, April 11. In the Ave Maria country she passed the last few years of her life, where instead of clocks for telling the time of day the Angelus Bell at morning, noon and evening summoned her people to their devotions and daily tasks.

Soon we shall have a victrola record of the story of the Indian Maiden.

IRELAND TRUE TO FORM

"I am sending a few names and subscriptions for *THE LILY OF THE MOHAWKS* to go to them. Please pray that I may win a lawsuit." —Bray.

"Please send me leaflets I, II, III, or the Life of Tekakwitha, anything to excite devotion."

—Killarney.

"Dear Father: Words of mine fail to thank you enough for the relics, leaflets, pictures and medals of Kateri which I received safe and sound. God

bless you for same. I have given them all out and you cannot imagine the joy of the friends I gave medals and relics to, they were so glad. She is already known and loved here in Killarney. I teach in one of our country schools and at morning prayers we all say her prayer, also before breaking up in the evening we do the same. Even the little ones have the prayer off by heart. I gave leaflets to the senior classes and they give them out at home and among the neighbors. God grant that we shall soon see her made a Saint. Again thanking you and may God bless you always." —M. O'D., Killarney.

TEKAKWITHA IN CHINA

"In my last letter I wrote about the dangerous position of our Mission. Very earnestly we altogether implored the help and the intercession of Tekakwitha during many weeks and suddenly the last weeks and quite unexpectedly the circumstances changed for the better and we enjoy peace now the more cheerfully, that we had been in trouble for so many months. We will ask her now that she may make it a permanent peace. As for spiritual factors, I am convinced that our Sisters benefitted very much and I myself, feeling her influence and more and more confident that she may, according to Divine Providence, even help us also by material means which we need so badly for constructing a Postulate and Novitiate House. Pray for my twin brother who died at his mission post in February."

—JOSEPH HOOGERS, Tsining, Suiyuan.

The pilgrimage season is on us. Visit, or tell your friends to visit the Shrine at Martyrs Hill, Auriesville, where the Saints Jogues, Goupil and Lalande died for the Faith and where Tekakwitha was born; Caughnawaga, near Montreal, where her relics are kept sacredly sealed, and the Shrine at Midland, Ontario, where the other Saints of North America, Brebeuf, Daniel, Garnier, Lalemant, and Noel were martyred. More than once did Tekakwitha make pious pilgrimages in the Mohawk Valley and near her St. Lawrence River home.

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THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF TEKAKWITHA

The Petitions and Thanksgivings are placed in an Indian vase of beautiful design with symbolical images in colored beads, all the work of Kateri's own people at Caughnawaga.

Resting on a stately pedestal of grayish marble with a faint dark streak, this basket resembles in shape a four-sided vase, narrow at the base, but opening gradually toward the top. Each side or face has images in rare Indian beadwork in various colors, on dark red background: Kateri, a chalice, an ostensorium, the cross rising from spears of wheat. A card in beadwork reads, "The hand work of her own people," for it was made at Caughnawaga, Canada, where her remains rest. Pendant from the top of the pedestal is a beautiful bannerette inscribed, "Tekakwitha—Petitions and Thanksgivings."

One of the great blessings we owe to the veneration for the Lily of the Mohawks is the habit of prayer it has developed and confidence in the power or virtue of prayer. Another great blessing is to help us know better what is meant by "Communion of Saints." The note that runs through all the correspondence about Tekakwitha is that she is a friend in court, as a client of her's in Ireland's own Killarney puts it:

"... Well, I gave them all (the leaflets) out among the people of the district. She has proved a very dear friend to us all. I could write pages about her and the requests granted through her intercession. Several have said to me that she appears to them like one of the family, that she is a dear sweet little Saint. . . ."

"Twice I asked a special favor of Kateri Tekakwitha and promised to spread devotion to her if same were obtained. Now is the time for me to keep that promise."
—Governor's Island, N. Y.

"I am a graduate nurse and have been with a patient who is a mental condition for eight months. Before I received the leaflet I was unable to make her eat or drink—since the family has been praying to this little Lily of the Mohawks I have had no trouble."
—Hingham, Mass.

"I have been quite ill and under the circumstances incurred great debts. Recently I begged Catherine to plead for my cause—assistance in my present financial stress. The very next day I received a full month's check from the firm with whom I have been employed for only a short time."
—San Antonio, Tex.

"My friend works in a mill and does very heavy work. She strained her leg one day and suffered great pain, she used the leaflet of Kateri, before bedtime she was able to walk much better, and by the following morning she was able to go to work. She has not been troubled since."
—Rockville, Conn.

"I have been praying to her that she would obtain a position for me as the place of business that I was in was closing. I asked that I obtain it within two weeks. Before two weeks I was hired by a concern that I have always wanted to be associated with. When I applied the manager said there was no opening, but within two days said he could employ me."
—Norwich, Conn.

"Mrs. Cronin has been a semi-invalid for four years. On January 30 she was dying—she remained in a dying condition for twenty-four hours—gradually in the next twenty-four hours, she became brighter and claimed out of danger. Now, February 22, she is in fair condition. She is better now than she has been since January 16, 1937."
—Philadelphia, Pa.

"I was very ill with tonsilitis. A few days previous I received the booklet pertaining to Catherine Tekakwitha and was reading it after I was allowed out of bed. The next day a lady who is employed at the same place I am came to see me and told me my place was taken. I prayed to Catherine and on Monday I received word to come to work, a place would be given me. I worked for about four months when the woman whose place I had returned. I started praying again and as far as I know my position is still safe."
—Baltimore, Md.

Make Tekakwitha Known

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