TEKAKWITHA

The writer takes occasion of the appearance of this Life of Tekakwitha to thank the large number of her clients who help him as V. Postulator for her Beatification and Canonization; and to bless God that they grow in number and fervor.

Permissu Superiorum

Nihil Obstat: ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, D.D., *Censor*
Imprimatur: ✠ PATRICK CARD. HAYES,
Archbishop of New York
October 31, 1936

The Lily of the Mohawks

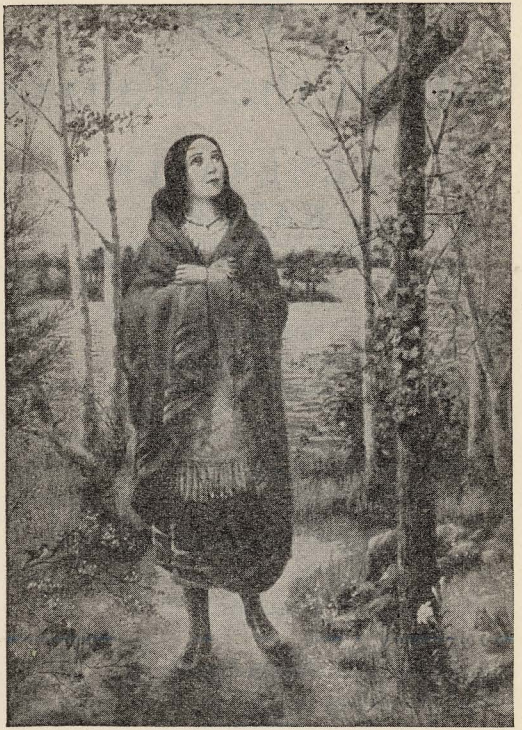
VENERABLE KATERI TEKAKWITHA

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

JOHN J. WYNNE, S.J.

Twelfth Edition

TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE
30 WEST 16TH STREET, NEW YORK 11, N. Y.



VENERABLE KATERI TEKAKWITHA
LILY OF THE MOHAWKS
From water-color by Mother Margaret M. Nealis, R.S.C.J.

THE LILY OF THE MOHAWKS

Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha

(TĔ-GĂH-KWEÉT-HĂ)

I — *On the Mohawk*

THREE HUNDRED years ago the Iroquois Indians occupied the center of what is now New York State, and lorded it over all the Indians east of the Mississippi. They were known as the "Five Nations," and fiercest of all five were the Mohawks. They called themselves Hodenosanee, "People of the long house," but the Algonquin Indians on whom they made war called them Mohawks, because they were man eaters. The name has clung to the beautiful Mohawk valley and river near which they dwelt, and which for over a century has been the chief highway from East to West.

These Mohawks were a proud people. They felt they were above all other mortals. The men were too proud to work, the women and children so proud as to commit suicide rather than submit to humiliation or restraint. Cruelty was their delight: young children were trained to shed human blood, to torment and help murder captives. They were all, old and young, crafty

and cunning; suspicious and treacherous; filthy in habits and shameless in impurities. As a missionary put it: "Ink was not black enough to depict their foulness."

Like all barbarous people they had some notion of a Supreme Being, their "Great Spirit," but this was vague and fantastic. In fact, they believed in many gods. There was a god of war, the hunt, the fishery; a god or spirit of the sun, forest, clouds and waters. Some of these they sought to make favorable, but others they feared as demons who could do them harm. Their fears were encouraged by their medicine men, who employed all the tricks of magic and the black art of sorcery to hold them in the bondage of fear.

To make matters worse the Mohawks occupied the eastern end of the Valley close to the Dutch, who had then settled in Albany and Schenectady. From them they obtained firearms in trade for furs, and that kept them constantly at war; from them also they got liquor that maddened them and intensified their cruelty and vice of every sort; from them they learned to dislike the Catholic missionary and to look upon the Catholic religion as something evil.

Tekakwitha was born 1656 in the Mohawk castle Ossernenon, which was closest to the Dutch, and unfortunately most open to corruption and hostile to the Faith. Her mother, an Algonquin, had been taken cap-

tive and married by a Mohawk chieftain. For some years she had been a Catholic of the steadfast type that the famous Jesuit missionary and martyr, James Buteux, formed at Three Rivers in Canada. She was one of many captive converts among the Mohawks who for lack of missionaries had to keep what religious practices they could, such as prayer in common, and talks about their religious belief. For them religion was *The Prayer*, and they were known as *The Praying Indians*.

Just about the time Tekakwitha's mother was led captive to Ossernenon, two Jesuit missionaries, Bressani and Poncet, were brought there and tortured, but released without any opportunity to act as missionaries. Again the year Tekakwitha was born, 1656, the great Le Moyne passed that way, but his stay was brief and he was occupied with the chiefs, so that he could not deal as a priest with the Christians. Thus, like other little ones born at the time, Tekakwitha and her younger brother were without baptism. About this and other Sacraments the missionaries were most particular; for adults they required long and careful preparation, and, fearing abuses, they never permitted even well tried converts to baptize.

Then, as so often happened in Indian encampments, a plague broke out at Ossernenon, leaving Tekakwitha a lone orphan to be adopted by her uncle who was also

a chieftain and not well disposed toward the missionary or his religion. The infected village was abandoned, and the Indians moved about a mile further west to a hill overlooking the site of the present village of Auriesville. This was about 1660, when Tekakwitha was four years old. By this time she would have acquired her name, for the Mohawks did not confer names on their children. They noted what a little one did well or frequently, and the word or words for that became the name of the child. Tekakwitha means "putting things in order," or "moving all before her," and she was notable for doing both.

By the same process Tekakwitha has had many names. "Good Catherine" is one, because she was so good on this earth, and is still so good to those who invoke her. "Iroquois Virgin" is another, and that is descriptive, too. "Lily of the Mohawks" is a favorite name. "Kateri," her baptismal name, is Indian for Catherine, and Catherine means pure.

Life among the Mohawks was in the open, but unlike other Indian peoples they had homes for sleeping and winter quarters. Indeed, they were known as the Cabin Indians. The cabin, or long house, accommodated several families usually related; it varied from thirty to one hundred feet long, and fifteen to twenty feet wide. The inside was divided by a passage in which

fires were made for cooking and heating, and on either side of it were the dwelling spaces, each family or group occupying berths somewhat as in railroad sleeping cars. There was little or no privacy and no care at all for sanitary provision, no windows for air and light, only vents in the roof to let out the smoke. The walls were young trees bent at the top so as to form an arch and then covered over with bark.

As a child of a chieftain, Tekakwitha would have been spared some of the unseemliness of the Mohawk cabin, and her Christian mother would have shielded her from its indecencies. Indian fashion, cradled on her mother's back, she would be taken to the fields and let swing from a tree branch while the women did tilling and harvesting. She was no burden to her mother when carrying home the firewood, and she would be among the Christian women who would naturally group together to grind the corn and prepare the meat or fish for cooking. Quite naturally, too, she would be with them when they were dressing skins and doing their ornamental bead work, sewing and coloring.

The death of her mother did not deprive her of the care of some good women who survived. There was one especially who looked after her, the friend of her mother, Anastasia, who later became one of the helpers of the missionaries in Canada. Some of these Christian Indians

were women of heroic virtue. Take one, for instance, who had been captured and flung at the closed end of a cabin until the warriors would recover from their drunken stupor and outrage or massacre her. Stealthily she stepped over their bodies, tomahawked the one nearest the entrance and fled, with them all in pursuit. She slipped into a beaver pond until they lost the scent and then she travelled for nearly a month through jungle, over lakes and swollen streams, living on roots and wild berries, her scant coverings torn from her until, when nearing her village, her only thought was to hide in bushes and cry out for a blanket to shield her modesty.

With Kateri's adopting uncle were two aunts who nurtured her. Though not too consistent in their conduct, they would watch over their ward, who even at that early age was winsome and eager to please. As the plague had affected her sight, she preferred the shade of her cabin to the piercing sunlight, and she soon learned to do the simple service of keeping it in rude order. For six years she lived on the new site of Ossernenon with nothing more eventful than the agreement made by her guardians to marry her, when grown up, to the son of one of the leading families. That was the custom, but not always did the marriage occur. In Kateri's case it surely did not.

Then came the catastrophe which was to crush the warlike spirit of the Mohawks and keep it in check for years. Determined to put a stop once for all to Mohawk incursions into Canada, the French government sent some of its best soldiery, the Carignan regiment, under the leadership of General de Tracy, to subdue the Mohawks, and make them sue for peace. He led his army into the Mohawk Valley so rapidly that the Indians had no time to prepare for defense. From Ossernenon they fled to Tionnontoguen, fourteen miles west, their most strongly fortified castle. They sent their women and children into the woods south of them. At the first roar of de Tracy's cannon they deserted the 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, Andagaron, his chaplain, the Jesuit Raffeix, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving. At Ossernenon he planted a Cross. The Mohawks sued for peace. This was in September, 1666.

Tekakwitha witnessed all this and no doubt bewailed it bitterly. With no fear of further invasion, the Mohawks could now move to the north bank of the river. When, soon after, they moved to the hill west of Fonda, they called it Gandaouaghé, "laughing water," 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. She had already begun to grow in wisdom: with age increasing, she was next to grow in grace.

Though only ten years old, Tekakwitha was favored in many ways by Divine Providence. Thus she waited on 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 priests is an external grace. Tekakwitha would observe their manners, see them at their devotions in prayer, 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 stray sheep. All that was a revelation to her.

Now that the Christian captives could practice religion 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 people and the devout worship, charity, and finer mode of life of those who had embraced the Prayer.

II — *The Black Robe*

The missionaries were received with enthusiasm. For the Indians they would be a pledge of peace. They set to work systematically. They selected the cabins in which the Christians and well disposed 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.

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. The elders would not heed her protest that she did not want to marry. They actually invited a 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. Saints practice virtue to an heroic degree. Tekakwitha was already beginning.

Gradually, under Father Pierron's direction, the Christian Indians became more open 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.

Tekakwitha could go into the chapel at Christmastide and see the crib which Father Pierron had fashioned, study his pictures, listen to his choir of Indian children. 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. She observed that never would one of the Mohawk braves exert himself in war or on the hunt as much as the priest-warrior of Christ who sacrificed rest, comfort, and even health in order to gain souls.

Father Boniface succeeded Father Pierron. For a time Tekakwitha's uncle had been more friendly with the missionaries, partly because they had helped to check the drunkenness that was ruining his people. Unwittingly, Father Boniface antagonized him. In his 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. 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 succeeded Father Boniface, who died in December, 1674. The Mohawks were now more settled in their habits after some years of peace, and the missionary could visit them in their cabins. As it was spring, the women were in the fields planting corn. Passing Tekakwitha's cabin, he did not enter, knowing how keen she was for outdoor work and her uncle's unfriendliness. Something, however, led him to look in and to his surprise the Indian maiden was there.

At once she told the missionary of her pious thoughts and desire for baptism. De Lamberville reminded her of the obstacles her family would raise against her. She was not afraid. She would even leave her home, people and country and go anywhere, even far away, to receive this great favor. De 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 for her soul's great desire.

His first concern was to find how she was regarded by her tribespeople. 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, detraction was one of their chief vices. They praised 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.

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 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 wildcat, 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, as she walked to the chapel under the avenue of trees her tribesmen had planted purposely for the occasion, she won a veneration which has never ceased.

Soon, however, this veneration made enemies; 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. For observing Sunday her cabin companions reproached her with idleness, and deprived her of food.

The persecution continued and grew violent. She became the mark 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. Fortunately, de Lamberville, to whom she complained, knew how commonly the guilty party is not the accused but the accuser. He could soon disprove the story and put the slanderer to shame.

A godly man was Father James de Lamberville and so the Indians styled him "divine man." 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. 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 surroundings 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. The village then was at Laprairie, above Sault St. Louis, across the

St. Lawrence from Montreal, where French and Indians lived together, with St. Francis Xavier as patron.

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

That Indian haven still exists. It is now on a bluff above the St. Lawrence River near the Lachine Rapids. It is named Caughnawaga. Montreal is in sight and the Mercier Bridge makes easy access to the place. There are over two thousand Catholic Indians there from all the tribes which had been evangelized by early Jesuit missionaries, many of whom were martyrs, 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.

Reports of this new venture captivated the imagination of the Indians. Attracted by curiosity, many returning from hunt or fishery 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. Christian Indians from lower Canada and what is now upper New York began to flock there.

"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 Ganda-ouaghé to the Christian reservation. It was no easy matter. Though her aunts consented, her uncle, who was on an errand 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 renamed the lake after one of their kings, but the State of New York has erected 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; they made it in the lovely Indian Summer of 1677.

III — *On the St. Lawrence*

There could have been no ceremony over Kateri's stealthy departure. Her arrival at Laprairie was different.

Thus read the letter of Father de Lamberville introducing Kateri to Father Cholenec, who with Fathers Frémin and Chauchetière, was then at the Laprairie mission: "Catherine Tekakwitha 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 had been like a mother to Kateri at Ossernenon. She devoted her time to preparing women and young girls for baptism.

The chapel became her rendezvous from four in the morning 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 was there 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 what 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" for all these Indians meant religion, the Faith, the Church and its teachings. They seemed to grasp that the essence of all religion is union, or communing, with God by prayer. Tekakwitha's faith enlivened every prayer and she soon realized that love of God must be the only worthy motive of all she did, that the slightest unfaithfulness was unthinkable.

It was this purity of heart that led the missionaries to admit her to receive Holy Communion the Christmas Day after her arrival, 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 Indian's 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.

Kateri went with an adopted sister and 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 insisted on getting the story of Catherine before forming a conclusion. Naturally he trusted her. In a short time the jealous accuser recognized her injustice and deplored it bitterly.

It was a sharp transition from the excitements 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 Sunday, 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 considered herself unworthy, and sought to expiate her 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 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.

A certain Mary Teresa Tegaiguenta had not lived up to the promise of her early life. In the winter of 1675 she had gone hunting with a party of eleven, her husband among them. 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 buried him in the snow. Soon after she overtook her former companions, now starving and debating the proposal to kill and eat one of the party, but they

wanted her advice. She was afraid to answer. When she saw them kill and devour first one then another of the party, she was struck with remorse and determined to atone for her sins with due penance. With four of her party she reached the Mission and straightway threw herself at the feet of the missionary, repentant, begging his help to carry out her good resolutions.

Soon after this woman met Kateri, and their chance acquaintance ripened into 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. There these three studied how they might retire by themselves, build a cabin on the island, and serve God like the Sisters whom Skarichions and Kateri had seen in Montreal. They decided to submit their design to Father Frémin.

While Catherine was thus meditating a life of virginity, her adopted sister was planning to have her marry. So artful was this chief lady of the cabin that Kateri, not confident in her own powers, had recourse to Father Cholenec to learn the Christian view of the two modes of life in virginity and in marriage, only to confirm her in love for the former. To avoid further pressure, she sought from the Father 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. 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. 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. Kateri preferred 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 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.

In the chapel she knelt close to the altar every morning long before sunrise. Urged to leave her post and stay near the fire in winter, she would do so only for a moment, pleading, in that rigorous climate, she did not suffer cold. 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. 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 of winter telling her beads; when at length she began to put hot embers between her toes, and sleep three successive nights in brambles she had found in the woods, her strength gave way, her secret was discovered, and Father Cholenec bade her moderate penances that were altogether beyond her powers.

Half measures had no place in Catherine's life. Whatever she did was whole-hearted and, when occasion offered, heroic. 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.

From the day Kateri made her vow of virginity, 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 for chastity. Through this exalted example of their women, the men appreciated the purifying influence of religion, and the possi-

bility of living as it requires. The missionaries had to moderate the fervor of the reservation. Once more, as happens so often in our Catholic annals, a woman's devotion became the inspiration of thousands. Kateri's influence over her people lasts to this day.

The inhabitants of the village were absent hunting when Kateri took her last illness. 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: 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 on Wednesday, April 17, 1680, when she was still fully conscious, clasping her crucifix and repeating: "Jesus, I love You."

IV — *Renown for Holiness*

Kateri's death was the occasion of extraordinary pious manifestations. It was apparent that all regarded her as a saint. Her mat, blanket and crucifix were revered 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.

PORTRAIT OF KATERI
1681

Cures through her intercession became so frequent that the missionaries ceased to record them. Père Remy of St. Sulpice, Curé of Lachine parish, was disposed to question the marvels; 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 grati-

tude 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 one cure after another, he not only changed his mind, but zealously wrote her life three times over. Other missionaries witnessed similar favors, among them Fathers Bruyas and Morain.

It is no wonder then that Indians and French in Canada came to believe Tekakwitha was a Servant of God specially favored. In these remarkable answers to prayer through her intercession, she was their wonder worker, their protectress, like St. Genevieve, 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 preserve them sacredly in the sacristy of the Mission Chapel. For a time they reposed even under its main altar. They are now at Caughnawaga under seal.

The tomb of Kateri, however, had become a holy place in the eyes of the Indians. They had seen marvels worked by 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, Caughnawaga, in 1716, and they had seen visitors coming from afar to venerate it.

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 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 Kateri was born, the ripest fruit of their blood, since the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians.

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 had spent most of her life within its limits.

Early in 1931, after the many delays which are unavoidable in such a process, the Most Reverend Edmund F. Gibbons appointed a Commission of his clergy to examine testimony to her holiness. Its findings were sent to Rome in June, 1932.

On May 19, 1939, Our Holy Father Pius XII sanctioned the formal Introduction of Tekakwitha's Cause.

On June 12, 1942, His Holiness approved the find-

ings of the Congregation of Rites that the virtues of this Servant of God were heroic, and authorized the Decree in which she is styled *Venerable*.

Thousands of singular graces and favors are reported by those who invoke her aid, many of them extraordinary.

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 (thrice)
Imprimatur: ✠ PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES, *January 10, 1933*

Lord Jesus, glorify Thy Servant
Catherine Tekakwitha:
We beg of Thee by Thy Holy Cross.

Imprimatur: ✠ FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN, *Archbishop of New York*
February 2, 1940

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, 32 pages, 3 illustrations — 20c. a copy.

Leaflet I, Sketch and prayers.

Leaflet II, Novena for private devotion, 2 for 5c.; 25c. a doz.

Lily of the Mohawks: Bi-monthly message reporting progress of the Cause; 60 cents a year; two copies, $1.00.

Pictures, in color, 5 x 3 in., 10c.
" " " silk applied to relics, 20c.
" " " 12 x 8½ in., 75c.

Medals, Sterling silver, 60c.
" Oxidized silver, 15c.

Book-marks, 2c., 20c. a doz.

TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE
30 WEST 16TH STREET
NEW YORK 11, N. Y.

LOUGHLIN BROS., PRINTERS
NEW YORK