

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS—THE STORY OF KATERI TEKAKWITHA

# TREASURE OF THE MOHAWKS



*Martini*

Kateri Tekakwitha—TREASURE OF THE MOHAWKS

# TREASURE OF THE MOHAWKS

by

TERI MARTINI

INDIAN food, manners, and customs are recounted in this book; the games of children are described and the wars of their fathers. But the shining figure around which the story is woven is Kateri Tekakwitha, the little Indian girl whom the Church has called Venerable and who may one day be the first American Indian saint.

She was not a pretty girl. The smallpox which carried off her parents when she was only four, left her face scarred and her eyes so weak that the sunlight was always painful to her. But she was such a kind, gentle, happy girl that everyone loved her. And when, a year after she was baptized, she went to live at the Mission settlement, people liked to be near her because they then felt nearer to God. There was never any unkind talk when Tekakwitha was around — she kept the women interested while they worked, with stories of the saints. When she prayed, her fervor inspired greater devotion in those near her.

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*(Continued from front flap)*

Baptism was not easy for Tekakwitha to obtain, for the uncle who adopted her after her parents' death violently hated the Black-robos, or Jesuit missionaries, although he had to accept their presence in the village. In addition, Tekakwitha wanted to remain unmarried and devote her life entirely to God. This desire, unheard-of among Indian girls, was also fiercely opposed but she persisted and won. Her steady determination and shining devotion caused a Jesuit missionary, Father Francis Xavier de Charlevoix, to describe her when speaking of her, years later, as the "New Star of the New World."

When she died, at twenty-four, the Indians of the Mission settlement started praying at once — not for her but to her. They were certain she was in Heaven and could help them. And all were filled with awe to see her thin face, with its pockmarked skin, become smooth and fair and glowing. They could not help feeling that this was Heaven's mark of approval on the Treasure of the Mohawks.

128 pages

Illustrated by  
Robert Bradbury

**TREASURE OF  
THE MOHAWKS**



Kateri appeared carrying a cross.

# TREASURE OF THE MOHAWKS

## The Story of The Indian Maiden KATERI TEKAKWITHA

By

TERI MARTINI

*Illustrated by Robert Bradbury*

1956

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*For Mother and Dad*  
*whose love and encouragement*  
*have inspired me*

# Introduction

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YEARS have grown into generations and generations have accumulated into centuries since the time when Mohawk Indians guarded the entrances to their stockaded villages. The extended bark houses, once sheltering numbers of families and serving as council halls, now long since turned into dust and ashes, are mingled with the soil upon which they stood. Where, at one time, the stillness of the forest was broken only by the songs of birds, the barks of foxes, and the voices of Indians, now is heard the drone of airplanes, the whistle of tugboats and the rumble of trains. Yes, three hundred years ago, the River of the Mohawks served the Indians as a highway for their canoes in which they transported furs to trade for other commodities with the Dutch at Fort Orange. Today the Mohawk River is no longer the primitive Indian highway; it is part of the New York State Barge Canal; modern state roads parallel it on both banks for long distances; villages and cities stand where formerly the forest thrived and the presence of the Mohawk Indian is but a memory.

Granting that the Mohawk Indian is but a memory to many people, nevertheless the history of the Mohawks reveals outstanding characters whose life story is worthy of study especially because prevailing primitive conditions did not entirely prevent singular attainments.

It is a credit to the Catholic Church that the French Jesuit missionaries, the "Blackrobes," applied themselves so zealously to announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Mohawk Indians. Despite opposition and danger of death, the Jesuit Fathers journeyed on foot and in canoe from Quebec into the Mohawk Valley, where they worked and dwelt among the Indians for years. Gradually their labors bore fruit and among the fruit were Mohawks whose names have not been obliterated even though the passing of centuries has wholly changed their ancestral land. The Mohawks brought forth Tadodaho, the Great Kryn, Anastasia, Karakwine, Marie Thérèse and Catherine Tekakwitha, not to omit the numbers who forsook their ancestral home at Caughnawaga on the bank of the Mohawk River to settle first at La Prairie de



la Magdelaine, later at Kanawake and Caughnawaga on the shore of the St. Lawrence River in Canada.

To compose a juvenile narrative of an historical Indian is no small task! Imagination must supply considerable fictional dialogue without distorting essential facts. If an author is able to write so as to engage the interest not only of youthful readers but also that of adults, the narrative may be acclaimed as a double success.

In offering *TREASURE OF THE MOHAWKS* to the public, Miss Martini is to be congratulated. The historical facts are correctly given and the general presentation is such that every reader ought to derive not only some knowledge of the Mohawk Indian way of living but likewise be edified by the simplicity and wholesomeness of the pictured life of Catherine Tekakwitha — sometimes called "The Lily of the Mohawks."

Miss Martini is fortunate as an author in having her book *TREASURE OF THE MOHAWKS* published this year of 1956, being as it is the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Tekakwitha, the Mohawk maiden whose memory still lives among the peoples of the world.

FR. THOMAS GRASSMANN, O. F. M. CONV.  
*Director*

*The Catherine Tekakwitha Memorial Shrine*  
*Fonda, New York, March 12, 1956*

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**A NOTE  
THAT YOUNG READERS  
NEED NOT READ**

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THE names of Tekakwitha's mother and father, as well as those of her aunt, uncle, brother, foster sister, and her foster sister's husband, were not set down in the first accounts of the Indian maiden's life and are consequently unknown today. The author has therefore used the English generic terms *My-Mother*, *My-Father*, etc., to identify these persons when they appear in the story. In each case she has also given the Mohawk equivalent (brought over into the English alphabet) which would express the proper relationship.

For the list shown below, of Mohawk terms with their corresponding English, the author and the publisher are indebted to Chief Elton Greene, President of the Tuscarora Indian Nation, Sanborn, New York.

<i>My-Mother</i>	Ah - kae - neh - stih' - hah
<i>My-Father</i>	Reh - kae - neh' - hah
<i>Little Brother</i>	Keh - ne - rah' - ah Reh - geh' - ah
<i>My-Aunt</i>	Ah - kae - neh - stih - hah' - hah
<i>My-Uncle</i>	Rah - kae - noo - ha' - ah
<i>My-Sister</i>	Ah - kgee - hah'
<i>My-Brother-in-law</i>	Ah - kya - kue - hah'
<i>God</i>	Rah - wah - neh' - yo

While history is silent concerning the names of members of Tekakwitha's immediate family, it does authenticate, along with Tekakwitha's own name, those of the following characters who appear in this story: Anastasia, de Tracy, Hot Ashes, the Christian Indian Marie Thérèse, and the Jesuit missionaries Fathers Raffeix, Pierron, Boniface, James de Lamberville, Chauchetière, Frémin, and Choleneç.

The only invented names are those of four minor characters who appear briefly in certain scenes as playmates or companions of Tekakwitha. These are: Moonbeam, Straight Arrow, Bear Claw, and Two Flowers.

While accounts by Tekakwitha's contemporaries differ on certain details of the Mohawk maiden's life, the basic facts are in agreement, and the author has built the incidents of her story on these early authentic sources.

# Chapter I



"Tekakwitha! Tekakwitha! Come at once!" called My-Mother.

(p. 3)



## I . . . A Surprise for Tekakwitha

---

THE Mohawk River flowed peacefully past the Village of the Turtles. But inside the long house Ah-kae-neh-stih'-hah (My-Mother) stood with her hands on her hips. There was a stern look on her face.

"Tekakwitha! Tekakwitha!" she called sharply. "Tekakwitha, come at once."

A muffled giggle came from the far corner of the lodge. Two sparkling black eyes peered mischievously over the top of a large corn-leaf basket.

My-Mother bit her lip, but she could not help smiling.

"You couldn't find me that time," laughed the little girl as her mother lifted her out of the basket.

The young squaw shook her head and spoke lovingly.

"We have no time for games today, my Tekakwitha. Now, bring me your clothes and I will help you dress."

The chief's little daughter looked at her mother, puzzled. How slowly she moved! Perhaps something was wrong.

Tekakwitha wrapped her arms tightly around her mother's neck.

"Has a sickness come on you?" she asked, frightened.

"No, no," cried My-Mother kissing the soft, dimpled cheek. "It is only that something wonderful is going to happen today."

The young squaw talked quickly as she dressed Tekakwitha in her fringed deerskin tunic and beaded shoes.

"Now here is what you must do. Run and get Anastasia. Tell her I need her. Then you may play outside until we send for you."

Tekakwitha listened carefully. Her eyes glowed with excitement.

"Then will I know what the wonderful thing is?" she asked.

"Yes," smiled My-Mother. "Then we will all know. Now go quickly," she said, pressing a small cornhusk doll into Tekakwitha's arms.

Tekakwitha ran past the brown, wooden long houses. Her brightly colored beads jingled as she went.

Tekakwitha's family, like others, lived in one of the sections of a Mohawk long house. This section or alcove was the lodge.

"Anastasia! Anastasia!" she called as she ran down the passageway of the long house and pushed aside the blanket at the entrance to Anastasia's lodge.

A kindly Indian woman looked up from her beading.

"Has your mother sent for me?" she asked.

"Yes, yes," cried the little girl. "Something wonderful is going to happen today!"

Anastasia hugged her fondly. Then she gathered some things together and hurried outdoors. Tekakwitha had to run to keep up with her. As they went the sound of children laughing could be heard from behind one of the houses. Anastasia stopped.

"There," she said, giving Tekakwitha a gentle push. "See, Straight Arrow and Moonbeam are playing."

Tekakwitha walked toward them. The children smiled a greeting when they saw her.

Moonbeam and Tekakwitha often played together with their cornhusk dolls. They would go to their special place in the forest and pretend that the berry bush was a long house and they were squaws. But today the dolls were forgotten.

"We're playing the hiding game," called Moonbeam happily. "Come and play, too."

Soon other children joined them. Although Tekakwitha was younger than the others, she often found the best places to hide. Because she was so tiny she could climb into small places. She was almost always the last to be found.

Today she found a hollow in a large oak tree. Stooping low, she crawled inside. It was a wonderful hiding place. Only the bottom part of her legs showed. She kicked up some leaves to hide her feet and then stood very still.

Tekakwitha smiled to herself as she listened to the children hunting for each other. After everyone else had been found they all began to look for the chief's daughter. Sometimes they passed so close to Tekakwitha's hiding place that they almost touched her.

Suddenly a new voice joined the others.

"What a silly game!" called a boy's voice scornfully.

Tekakwitha knew at once that it was Bear Claw, the son of a great warrior. She was very glad that she had found such a good hiding place. Bear Claw frightened her.

"Come and play the warrior game!" commanded Bear Claw.

"Yes, yes," cried the children eagerly. They were getting tired of the hiding game.

"Come out, Tekakwitha," they called.

Tekakwitha didn't move. She hated the warrior game. Perhaps they would go away and play the game themselves. When they were gone she could crawl out and play with her doll alone.

But Bear Claw had sharp eyes. He saw the two red-brown legs peeping out from the hollow. Tekakwitha held her breath as she heard his footsteps coming toward her.

"Here she is," he shouted, grabbing at one of the small legs.

There was nothing for the little girl to do but crawl out. She had to swallow hard to keep from crying. She was almost four years old and much too big to cry.

"You will sit here," said Bear Claw, leading her to a fallen log. "Now the Mohawk warriors will bring the paleface captives to the chief's daughter."

Tekakwitha obeyed, quietly clutching her doll. She watched with round eyes as the little boys loudly performed the war dance just as they had seen their fathers do it so many times before. Then with piercing yelps they ran off after the children who were pretending to be the paleface enemies.

When they returned, dragging their captives, Bear Claw shouted orders.

"Tie them. We will kill them for the Great War Demon."

Suddenly Tekakwitha jumped up. She was remembering the last time the real Mohawk warriors had come back with white captives. Without a word she ran off into the forest.

"Wha!" jeered Bear Claw. "Look how she runs away. She is not a true Mohawk."

But Tekakwitha was too far away to hear. What Bear Claw had said was true, though. Tekakwitha's father was a Mohawk and a chief of the Turtle clan, but My-Mother was an Algonquin.

Tekakwitha's mother did not like wars and killings. She was one of the few Indians who had been taught by the missionaries whom the Indians called Blackrobes. My-Mother was a Christian. Already Tekakwitha had learned many of her gentle manners.

Out of breath at last, Tekakwitha threw herself down on a grassy spot. She had run quite far. Even the voices of the children could not reach her here.

Why did Bear Claw always spoil things? It was such fun to play the hiding game or to sit quietly with Moonbeam and the dolls. Tekakwitha sighed sadly.

Leaning against the tree, she rocked her precious doll in her arms and sang softly to it. It was a song her mother often sang to her at night. It was about a little papoose who had been born one winter night. Great chiefs came from far away to see the baby. They brought many gifts.

The golden sun was warm and it was very quiet here. Tekakwitha closed her eyes and fell fast asleep. The sun's rays grew long and slanted while she slept.

It was late afternoon when Reh-kae-neh'-hah (My-Father) came to find his little daughter. He came silently into the forest and stood smiling down at her.

It was a proud day for the Mohawk leader. He was very happy.

"Tekakwitha," he called gently.

The little girl opened her eyes at once.

"What is it, My-Father?" she asked, jumping to her feet.

"A surprise, my little red-winged bird," answered My-Father, smiling.

"There is a new papoose in our lodge. A baby brother for you—Keh-ne-rah'-ah Reh-geh'-ah. Come, you will see him now."

A baby brother! So that was the wonderful surprise! Tekakwitha placed her small hand inside her father's. Together they walked quickly back to the village.

Inside the lodge Tekakwitha's mother lay on her mat holding the new papoose. Tekakwitha knelt down and looked into the tiny red face. How happy she was! Now she could sing to a real papoose. She would help feed and take care of him.

"Welcome, Little-Brother," she whispered softly.

My-Mother looked at her husband standing above them.

"My husband," she began slowly, "this is a joyous day."

"I am much pleased," replied My-Father.

"Perhaps you will grant me a favor," said the squaw.

"What is it, my wife?"

My-Mother took a deep breath.

"I would have the Blackrobe come and pour the blessed water over my children."

For a moment after she spoke My-Mother was terrified. She was a Christian and wanted her children to be baptized, but the Turtle chief hated the Blackrobes. Anger clouded his face. He shouted:

"I will not hear of it! Never!"

Tekakwitha looked up at the sound of her father's voice. What made him angry on this of all days? She turned to her mother, but My-Mother had bowed her head.

My-Father was displeased. What would he do?

But the chief was too happy with his son to be very angry.

"Do not speak again of this," he warned his squaw in a more gentle voice. "I will forget it."

He sat down to admire the new papoose.

But Tekakwitha's mother would not forget. Some day, somehow, she was sure she would find a way to have her children baptized.

## Chapter II





Three hideous creatures danced around Little Brother's mat. (p. 15)

## II . . . . . The Smallpox Devil

---

TEKAKWITHA shook the small turtle-shell rattle and held it out to the papoose. But Little-Brother did not seem to want to play this morning. He leaned against the long house and closed his eyes.

His sister looked at him unhappily.

"It is not time for sleeping," she told him impatiently.

"See what I have here." She held up her string of colored beads.

Tekakwitha was disappointed when even this failed to interest her year-old brother.

Ever since he had grown big enough to sit and crawl about by himself, she had spent many delightful hours playing with him. Many of the squaws called her "Little Mother."

Now she leaned forward and gazed into Little-Brother's face. Why, what was this? The small face was covered with spots. There were spots on his arms and legs.

"Mother! Mother!" cried Tekakwitha, running into the lodge.

My-Mother was busy preparing the sagamité for dinner. She mixed the corn meal and water in a large bowl. But her thoughts were not on her work.

A few days ago fearful news had reached the Village of the Turtles. The terrible sickness which the Indians called the Smallpox Devil had come to a neighboring clan. My-Mother was praying silently while she worked. She

was praying to the white man's God — Rah - wah - neh' - yo, as the Indians called Him. She knew that the medicine men could not really help the Indians, but Rah - wah - neh' - yo, the true God, could.

"What is it, Tekakwitha?" she asked, alarmed by the frightened look in the girl's eyes.

"Little Brother, he is——"

But before Tekakwitha was finished her mother had run outside to her son. She touched the child's face and found it burning with fever.

The young mother sank to her knees and buried her face in her hands. So the Smallpox Devil had come to the Turtle clan.

"If only the Blackrobe were here," thought My-Mother. "He would pray to the Great Spirit."

To Tekakwitha she spoke reassuringly.

"It is nothing. It is a sickness, but it will go away."

In her heart My-Mother knew that there was very little chance of this. For when the Smallpox Devil came to a clan, many died.

That night the Village of the Turtles was filled with strange sounds. Drums beat loudly. Braves dressed in terrifying costumes danced about a fire in the middle of the village. They shook huge rattles and chanted weird prayers.

In the chief's lodge there was much sadness. Little-Brother lay motionless on his mat. The chief himself sat beside his tiny son and watched as the anxious squaw bathed the child's forehead with cool water.

Tekakwitha crouched in a dark corner holding her cornhusk doll tightly. She was frightened, but she did not bother her parents with questions.

The sound of drums and rattles grew closer. All at once the blanket at the doorway was drawn aside. Tekakwitha gasped.

Three hideous creatures entered and began dancing about Little-Brother's mat. These were the medicine men who had come to frighten away the Smallpox Devil. Their bodies were painted with black and white stripes. On their faces they wore masks that looked half bird and half animal.

Tekakwitha stared fascinated. The chief watched hopefully. But My-Mother moved away and prayed to Rah-wah-neh'-yo.

The next day Little-Brother was no better. Although My-Father was worried about his family and his clan, he left in the morning to lead the hunting party. There was little food in the village.

Anastasia came to comfort her friend. They took turns caring for the boy, but by afternoon it was clear that My-Mother was not well either.

"I am tired, Anastasia," she told the older woman.

"Rest, then. I will look after things."

The weary squaw lay down on her mat and closed her eyes. Anastasia knelt beside her and made the sign of the cross. She, too, was a Christian.

Outside Tekakwitha walked about the quiet long houses. Where were her friends? With her brother sick she wanted someone to play with.

Then she saw Moonbeam coming from the river with her water jar. She ran to meet her playmate.

"Shall we play with our dolls?" she called happily.

But as she came closer she saw sadness on her friend's face.

"Not today, Tekakwitha," said Moonbeam.

"But why? What is wrong?"

"It is my mother," cried the older girl. Tears came into her eyes. "The Smallpox Devil has her."

With this Moonbeam hurried away sobbing.

Tekakwitha was frightened and puzzled. No one had told her about the Smallpox Devil. What would it do to Moonbeam's mother? Suppose it tried to get her own mother or her little brother?

She rushed back to the lodge. She was horrified to find My-Mother lying on her mat in the middle of the day.

"Mother! Mother!" she screamed and tried to throw herself down beside her.

Anastasia held her back, lifting the little girl to her lap.

"The Smallpox Devil is taking her away," cried Tekakwitha, burying her head against Anastasia.

The kindly Indian woman did not know what to say. She knew that both Tekakwitha's mother and little brother were dying.

The next night the hunting party returned. Many of the braves had died from the sickness during the hunt. A small group came home bearing the body of the chief. The Smallpox Devil had taken My-Father, too.

Anastasia went about nursing the sick sorrowfully. She tried to comfort Tekakwitha, but the little girl was so

sad and frightened that she hardly knew what was going on about her.

"If only the chief had let the Blackrobes come," Anastasia thought.

The Blackrobes had medicines. They could teach the Indians how to be clean so that the sickness would not spread. Most important of all, the Blackrobes would teach them about the one true God. It was to this loving God that the Indians should pray, not to the make-believe spirits. Now it was too late.

Little-Brother died the next morning. Not long afterward My-Mother spoke for the last time.

"Anastasia," she begged, "take care of little Tekakwitha. I pray that she may yet receive the blessed water."

Anastasia bowed her head and did not try to stop the tears that spilled down her cheeks. My-Mother did not know that Tekakwitha, too, was sick.

For weeks Tekakwitha lay ill. Anastasia never left her side. Many times the little girl cried for her mother. Then Anastasia would rock Tekakwitha in her arms.

"Poor little red-winged bird," she would whisper. "O Son of the Great Spirit, spare our little Tekakwitha. Let her live so that she may serve You."

The Smallpox Devil took many lives that year. But Tekakwitha did not die. Slowly the fever left her and little by little she grew stronger.

Anastasia took the little orphan to live with her. Tekakwitha missed her family terribly, but the old squaw made her feel loved and wanted.

Soon she was well enough to go outside. Anastasia decided to take her for a short walk to the river.

Together they stepped out into the sunlight. They moved slowly, for the little girl was still weak.

The bright light revealed the scars that smallpox had left on Tekakwitha's face. Her skin was no longer soft and smooth. Now Anastasia noticed her blinking her eyes and shielding them from the sun.

"What is it, Tekakwitha?" she cried, distressed.

"I cannot see. The sun hurts my eyes," answered the frightened child.

Anastasia took the little red shawl from her shoulders and put it over the child's head so that it made a shade from the sun.

"That's better, isn't it?" she asked anxiously.

Tekakwitha nodded her head and smiled cheerfully. At least the sun didn't hurt her eyes now. But she still couldn't see clearly. It was almost as though she were looking through water. Everything was blurred.

Although Tekakwitha longed for her own mother, she was happy living with Anastasia. The older woman was kind and loving. She taught the little girl all the things that Indian maidens must know.

Soon Tekakwitha learned how to weave baskets and make sagamité.

Anastasia knew many stories, too. The one Tekakwitha liked best was about the papoose who was born on a winter night. He was the Son of the Great Spirit and He had come to save the world.

Anastasia said it was a true story. It was like the story in the song that Tekakwitha's mother used to sing.

"The great Rah-wah-neh'-yo loves everyone," Anastasia told her. "Even now your mother is with Him. You should pray to Him, for He helped you get well. He wants to help us all."

"But how shall I pray?" asked the little girl eagerly.

Carefully Anastasia taught her the sign of the cross and how to ask for God's blessing for herself and others. After that Tekakwitha repeated these prayers every morning and evening.

Then one day Tekakwitha's uncle, Rah-kae-noo-ha'-ah (My-Uncle), came to the lodge. Rah-kae-noo-ha'-ah was not only a brave warrior and a good hunter; since the death of Tekakwitha's father, he had become a chief of the Turtle clan. He looked very tall as he stood in the doorway.

"We will burn all the lodges. We will move and build a new village. We do not want the Smallpox Devil to come back," he announced.

Then he looked down at his small niece.

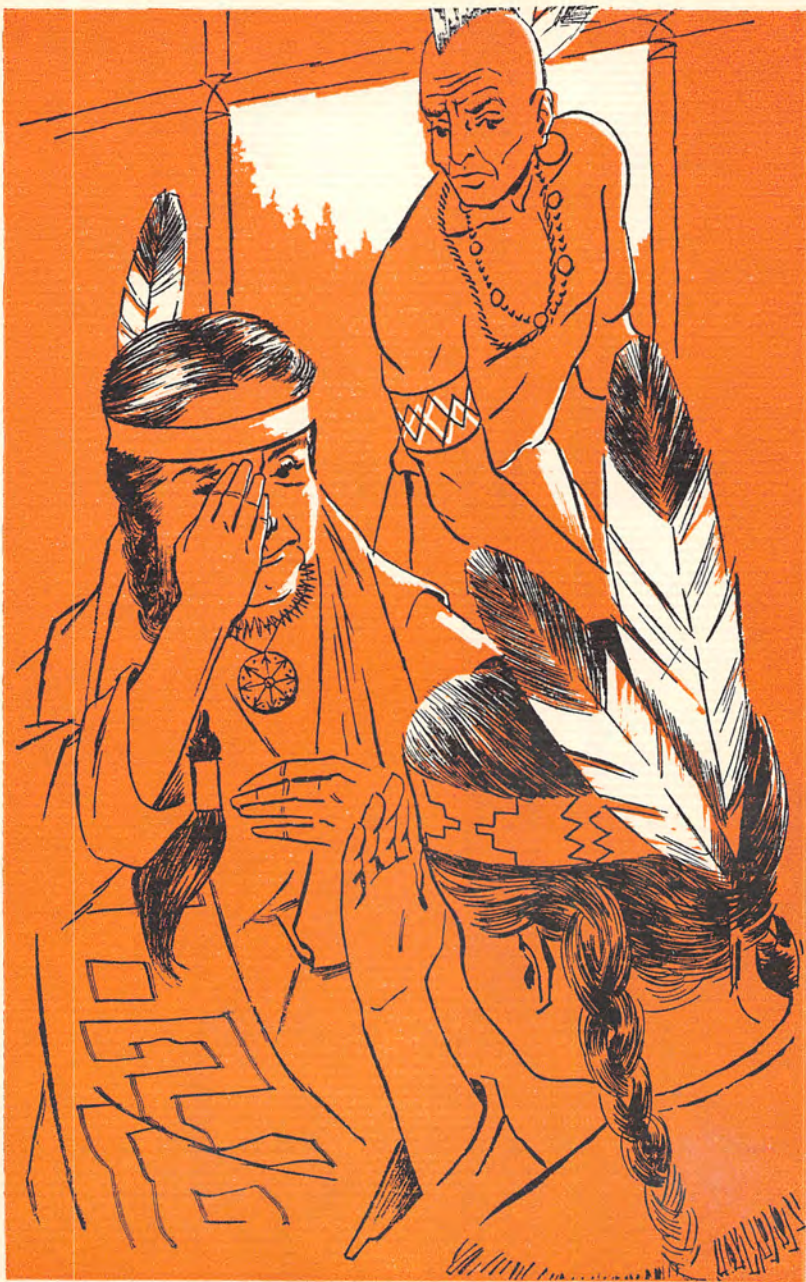
"When we are in the new village, I will come for you," he said. And he left without another word.

"But I want to stay with you," Tekakwitha cried, throwing herself into Anastasia's arms.

But Anastasia knew that there was nothing she could do. Tekakwitha's uncle was her chief. She knew that he would do whatever pleased him.



## Chapter III



Rah-kae-noo-ha'-ah stood in the doorway, glaring. (p. 25)

### III . . . . . A New Home

---

THE fires that had destroyed the Village of the Turtles at Ossernenon still smoldered in the dawn of the new day. The members of the Turtle clan traveled slowly along the path from the plateau to the river below. There the canoes waited to take them to their new home.

Little Tekakwitha looked back at the wisps of smoke rising lazily into the sky. This was all that was left of her first home. How she longed to have her mother and the happy days back again!

"Come, Little Squirrel," said Anastasia, pulling at her gently.

One by one the canoes left the shore and glided smoothly over the water. The braves looked very much alike sitting very straight and lifting the paddles with their powerful arms. Their red-brown skin shone like copper in the sunlight.

Beside them sat the squaws and children, surrounded by bundles that contained their belongings.

That night fires burned again in the new village. Braves with painted faces, rattling elk hoofs strung around their knees, danced to the sound of drums.

That night the entire Turtle clan joined in the ceremonies to the Master of Life—the Demon in whose existence they believed. With loud wailing and sharp screams the men promised to be brave warriors. They promised to bring back many captives and burn them for

the Demon. In this way they hoped to please him so that he would not punish them again. The Indians felt sure that they must have done something to offend the Demon or he would not have sent smallpox to destroy so many of the clan.

Tekakwitha watched with wide eyes. She shivered to hear the frenzied shrieks.

Silently and unnoticed, Anastasia took the little girl back to the shelter. There in hushed whispers she told again the story of the Queen of Heaven and her Blessed Son, the loving God of the white men. Together they said their evening prayers and soon Tekakwitha was asleep.

Anastasia looked sadly at the sleeping Mohawk child. Tomorrow My-Uncle, the chief, would come for her. Would the little girl forget what Anastasia had taught her of the true God? As the daughter of a Mohawk chief she would one day be expected to marry a Mohawk warrior and live in the pagan way of the tribe.

"O Rah-wah-neh'-yo, help Tekakwitha to serve You. Plant a lily in her heart and keep her safe," prayed Anastasia.

Tekakwitha slept peacefully that night. In the morning the old squaw held her close, and they talked alone together for the last time.

The little girl clung desperately to her friend.

"I don't want to live with My-Uncle," she cried with tears in her eyes. "Why can't I stay with you?"

"Hush, Little Squirrel," insisted Anastasia. "Your uncle is a fine brave. He will take care of you. He is our

chief and you are the daughter of a Mohawk chief. It is only fitting that you should stay with him."

But the old squaw had to fight back tears in spite of herself.

"There is one thing you must remember, Tekakwitha," she spoke in a commanding voice.

Tekakwitha's eyes met hers.

"Never forget what I have told you of Rah-wah-neh'-yo. No matter what happens, do not forget to pray to Him," she pleaded. "Now let us make the sign of the cross and pray together before you go."

Scarcely had the words been spoken when a shadow darkened the doorway. The blanket was thrown briskly aside. Rah-kae-noo'-ha-ah the chief stood before them, glaring angrily.

"So this is what you have done!" he shouted. "You have tried to put Tekakwitha under the spell of the White Manitou."

The chief shook with rage.

"Stupid squaw! What has the White Spirit done for us? He has sent His people to ruin our very lives. They treat us as children. They take our furs and give us worthless glass in return. They make us drunk with their evil fire-water so that we will do anything they want. And you worship their God!"

A dark hatred burned in the chief's eyes, but Anastasia met them without fear. She dared not contradict a chief of her clan, but she knew that what he said was not strictly true. Not all the white men wanted to cheat the

Mohawks; many of them were good and wished only to help the Indians.

The Mohawk leader went on angrily: "It would be well if all the white men were killed and the Blackrobes killed with them. The priests have made friends of our enemy the Huron. They have told us we must not be so cruel in war. Yet they themselves," the chief finished with a fierce roar, "taught you this evil sign, which can bring only ruin and death to our tribe!"

It was of no use for Anastasia to tell the chief that he was mistaken. He would never believe that the Blackrobes had taught her only good thoughts and prayers to the true and loving God. The chief was sure that the sign of the cross would bring sickness to the tribe and blight to the corn.

Tekakwitha trembled with fear. Her throat was tight and she felt as if she were choking. Anastasia held out her arms to the tiny, pathetic figure, but My-Uncle the chief pushed her outside.

Tekakwitha pulled her red shawl over her head to keep the sun from her eyes and to hide her tears. My-Uncle strode over the ground, muttering to himself and leaving the little girl to stumble along behind.

Tekakwitha bit her lip and blinked her eyes. Oh, if only she dared run away. She would go deep into the forest where no one could find her.

Suddenly her foot struck a root and Tekakwitha sprawled on the ground. Her doll and her other belongings were flung in different directions.

What would her uncle say now? Would he beat her? My-Uncle stopped short, annoyed at the delay.

"Get up," he ordered.

But Tekakwitha was stunned and could not move.

He bent impatiently to pick her up and looked into her little face closely for the first time.

"Is this what the Smallpox Devil has done?" he exclaimed, shocked at the sight of the deep marks in her skin. He noticed, too, that the strong light hurt her eyes and that she was shaking with fright.

His warrior's heart melted.

"Poor Little Squirrel," he whispered kindly, "it is not easy for you to see. Come, I will help you."

For the first time in his life My-Uncle felt tender toward another human being. He and his squaw had no children of their own. Now this small helpless little girl was coming to live with them. He would take care of her and be a father to her, and one day she would grow to be a useful squaw. It would be pleasant to have her in his lodge. She would be very different from his squaw, who complained all the time.

When they reached the long house Ah-kae-neh-stih-hah'-hah (My-Aunt) looked disapprovingly at Tekakwitha.

"Why does she not speak?" she demanded. "Certainly she is old enough."

"She has perhaps seen five summers," answered the chief. "Treat her kindly. She will speak soon enough."

The squaw shrugged. It was not her idea to burden their household with a helpless orphan. She hoped that

Tekakwitha would not be any trouble. She hated to think of extra work.

All day Tekakwitha sat beside the fire playing quietly with her doll. She spoke not a word.

"She is queer," thought My-Aunt as she sat weaving that afternoon. "One day my husband will be sorry he brought her here."

Of course Tekakwitha could speak as well as anyone. But her new home seemed strange, and her aunt unfriendly. How she longed to feel Anastasia's arms about her—to know that she was loved.

Only My-Uncle tried to make her feel at home. In the evening firelight he sat beside her, repeating old Mohawk legends. Tekakwitha listened and enjoyed them. She smiled timidly at her uncle, but she did not speak.

Even My-Uncle began to feel that something was very wrong with his little niece.

"Perhaps the old squaw has cast a spell upon her," he confided to his wife when Tekakwitha had gone to her mat to sleep.

"It is more than a spell," she grunted in return. "She has not spoken all day. I do not think she can talk."

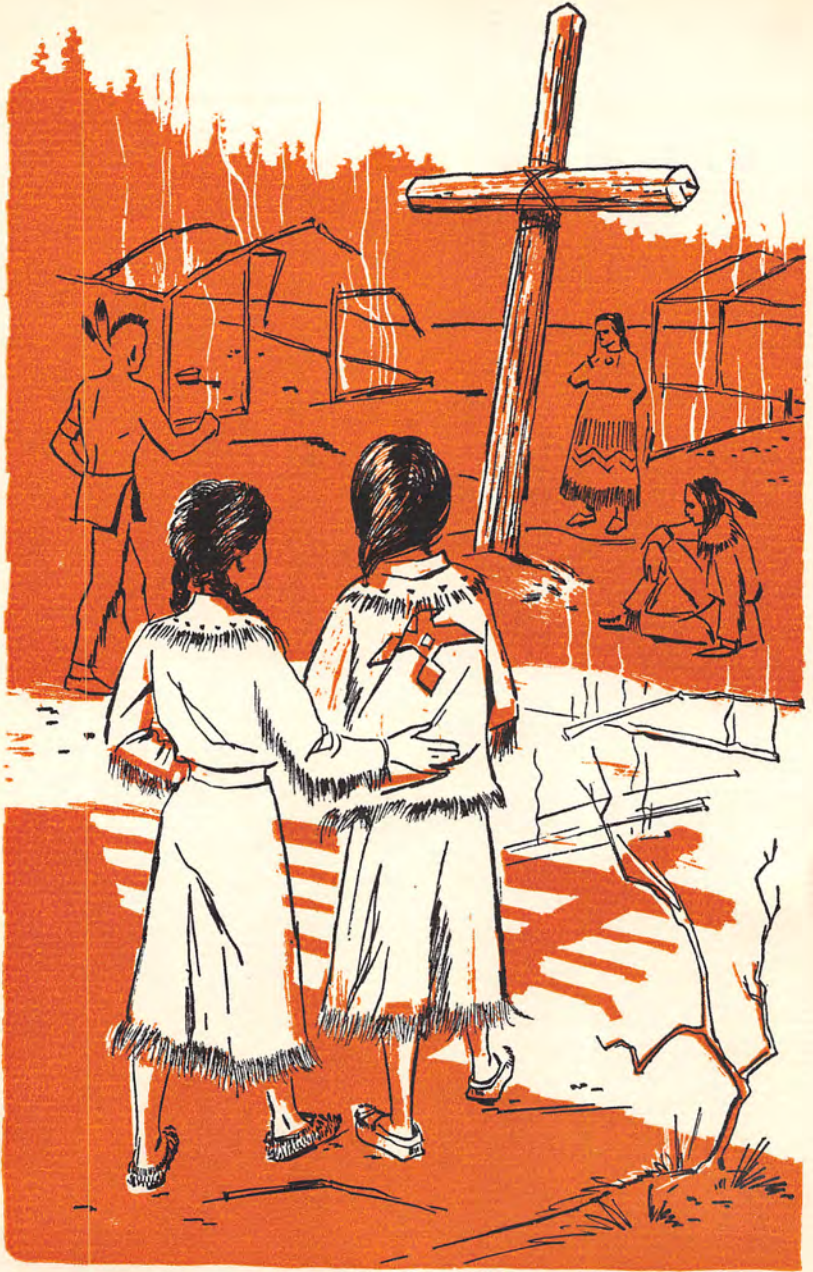
Then very softly in the quiet lodge a small voice could be heard whispering. They looked toward Tekakwitha.

My-Uncle smiled triumphantly. "She has found her voice. She talks to her little doll," he told his squaw. He was greatly relieved.



But the chief would not have smiled if he had known what Tekakwitha was really doing. She was praying to Rah-wah-neh'-yo. She asked God to make her brave and good. Somehow when she had finished she wasn't lonely any more. When she slept she dreamed of a lovely Lady who smiled at her like a mother, and she knew she need never be lonely again.

## Chapter IV



Tekakwitha and My-Sister looked at the cross in wonder.

## IV . . . . . On the Warpath

---

A TINY figure moved slowly up the path from the creek, staggering under the weight of a large water jar. At first glance the little girl might seem to be a part of the forest. Her earth-brown tunic and the red shawl that covered her head seemed to blend with the bark of the trees and the flame-colored autumn leaves.

Suddenly Tekakwitha stopped. She set the jar on the ground and sat down beside it. How tired she was!

Since early morning she had made seven trips to the creek. The little girl hoped that this was the last one. Perhaps My-Aunt would find something for her to do indoors.

At the thought of her aunt, Tekakwitha rose wearily. If she took too long the bad-tempered squaw would become angry and accuse her of being lazy. Tekakwitha knew how unpleasant her aunt could be then.

As she made her way slowly through the village Tekakwitha heard the children laughing and playing. It was the hiding game.

She sighed longingly. Ah-kae-neh-stih-hah'-hah kept her so busy that there was no time for play.

"Oh, well," laughed the little girl cheerfully to herself, "with my eyes the way they are I would never be able to find anyone."

Still it was hard not to be able to play with her friends. She was even forbidden to speak to Anastasia.

My-Uncle both hated and feared the old squaw. He was afraid that she might still put a spell on Tekakwitha and take her away from him.

"Where have you been?" demanded My-Aunt as Tekakwitha entered the lodge. "You knew I was waiting for the water! You are lazy. I will not forget this."

The angry squaw spoke harshly to cover her own confusion. Scouts had just reported that the war party was returning. Her husband the chief would be home shortly. He must not find Tekakwitha like this.

During the five years that the little girl had been with them My-Uncle had grown very fond of her. My-Aunt hardly dared think what he would do if he knew about all the work she had given Tekakwitha.

The squaw's tone was urgent but less harsh as she spoke again.

"Your uncle returns from battle. Dress quickly and bring me your beads. I will arrange your hair."

Tekakwitha ran to obey her aunt. As the squaw braided the bright beads in the shining black hair, she shook her head.

How thin the child was! Even dressed in the softest deerskin and the most beautiful wampum belts as befitted a chief's daughter she was not a pretty little girl.

"It will certainly be hard to find a brave who would be willing to marry Tekakwitha," she thought.

Her thoughts were interrupted as the sounds of the returning war party were heard. The women and children rushed outside to greet the warriors. They stared curiously at the captives who were soon to be tortured and killed.

Tekakwitha hung back. She did not like the little she knew about war. And she could only pity the poor captives.

That evening she shivered inside as she listened to My-Uncle's account of the battle. The fight with the Algonquins had been over so quickly that there had been time to attack a French fort.

The fierce warrior smiled as he recalled the fear and discomfort he had caused the white men.

"They will soon learn what it means to become the enemy of the Mohawk," he told the little girl confidently.

"Now, Little Squirrel, bring me my pipe and I will tell you of a surprise!"

Tekakwitha jumped up to do her uncle's bidding.

"What surprise, My-Father?" she asked shyly as her foster parent puffed happily.

The chief's white teeth gleamed in a smile. It pleased him when Tekakwitha called him "Father."

"It is lonely for you here without other children in the lodge. It has been agreed that another girl will come to live with us."

The Turtle leader watched Tekakwitha's delighted reaction. Not only had he made the little girl happy, but by adopting another daughter he could look forward to the prospect of two strong braves enriching his lodge when the girls were old enough to marry.

When her adopted sister arrived, Tekakwitha found her to be gentle and understanding. Tekakwitha and

Ah-kgee-hah' (My-Sister) soon were good friends. My-Aunt was glad enough to have someone else to help. She hardly ever did any work herself now.

My-Sister was able to do many of the outdoor tasks that Tekakwitha was not strong enough for. In the evenings the girls sat side by side near the fire, beading wampum belts and talking together.

As the months went by, My-Uncle led the warriors to battle more and more often. There was much gloating in the Turtle village over the way the Mohawks had been tormenting the French with raids.

My-Sister shook her head sadly as she worked one late summer evening.

"How long will it go on?" she asked Tekakwitha in a whisper. "The white men will certainly begin to fight back sometime."

Tekakwitha looked up at the older girl.

"Oh, Ah-kgee-hah', I have been so worried. They say the French are strong, much stronger than we. Suppose they begin to attack the Mohawk villages!"

My-Sister nodded with understanding.

Just then the blanket at the doorway was thrown aside as a messenger rushed in to speak with My-Uncle the chief.

"The white men in a large war party with many Hurons and Algonquins are coming this way. They are determined to destroy the Mohawk villages."

My-Uncle dropped his pipe in astonishment. Had the white men dared to approach the Mohawk villages!

"Fools!" he shouted, rising to his feet in a rage. "Gather our warriors together. We will stop them. Not one will live!"

But the messenger did not move. He shook his head.

"There are too many men. They have many muskets."

Fear took the place of anger in the chief's eyes.

"How far away are they?" he asked.

"Half a day's journey," was the answer.

My-Uncle called his Council together and within minutes their decision was made.

"Go, tell the clan to make ready. We go to the Castle of the Bears. Together we will force the white men back."

The place where the Bear clan lived was strongly fortified. Like all the principal villages of the Mohawks, it was protected by palisades—that is, high fences made of stakes. Because they were fortified, these villages were called "castles."

Numb with terror, the members of the Turtle clan gathered their most precious possessions and made their way to the Village of the Bears.

Tekakwitha and My-Sister clung together. Would the white men kill them all?

Scouts were left behind, well hidden. They would sound the alarm when the French were sighted.

The valley was ominously quiet when Lieutenant de Tracy led his war party of French and Indians into the deserted village. With him was the missionary Father Raffeix, who had come along to minister to the sick and



dying. The kindly priest was greatly saddened by the violent actions of the French. In his heart he knew that punishing the Indians was not the answer.

"Burn the lodges and the fields," he heard de Tracy order his men.

Father Raffeix protested.

"This will only make the Mohawks more resentful," he pleaded. "They will never trust the white men enough to let the missionaries live among them if you destroy their villages."

"They must be punished for their raids on our forts," answered de Tracy.

As the first sparks crackled hungrily against the dried bark of the long houses, the scouts left their hiding places. By the time they arrived at the Castle of the Bears, the news they brought had already reached the Turtle clan.

For the orange glow of flames in the sky had told the Indians that their village was burning. More terrifying than that was the news that the French were still coming.

The Turtle chiefs and the chiefs of the Bear clan decided that the Indians must flee again—this time to the Castle of the Wolves. This was the strongest of the Mohawk forts. There they would store all their winter provisions and fight with their lives to defend this final outpost. At the last moment the leaders decided that the women and children should, for the sake of safety, go into the hills or remain concealed in the woods.

The Castle of the Wolves was protected by a triple palisade twenty feet high. The Mohawk warriors crouched on scaffolding behind the second wall and waited silently.

Then, as the advance guard of the French drew into sight, the horrified Indians saw something they had never set eyes on before. Two gigantic machines—or so they seemed in size to the inexperienced Indians—were being set in position by the French soldiers.

The huge mouths of the machines were trained upon the Mohawk fort. Though the Indians did not know exactly how the cannon worked, they realized at once that their own crude weapons would be useless now. As if this were not enough, it was clear that the Frenchmen greatly outnumbered the Mohawks.

Despair struck the heart of the Indian warriors.

“To the woods! The demons of the white man are in these big-mouthed monsters!” shouted the Turtle leader, pointing to the cannon. Quickly the Mohawks scrambled from the scaffolding and fled. They were forced to leave behind all the winter provisions of the tribe.

De Tracy and his men moved forward to take possession of the fort. Night was falling and it was impossible to pursue the Indians into the woods and hills. But the French commander ordered that this Mohawk village too should be burned. Now every “castle” of the Mohawk valley would be destroyed. As the palisades crackled in the flames, the French retraced their steps and were soon out of the valley.

Slowly the Mohawks came from their hiding places and looked upon the ruin the French had left behind.

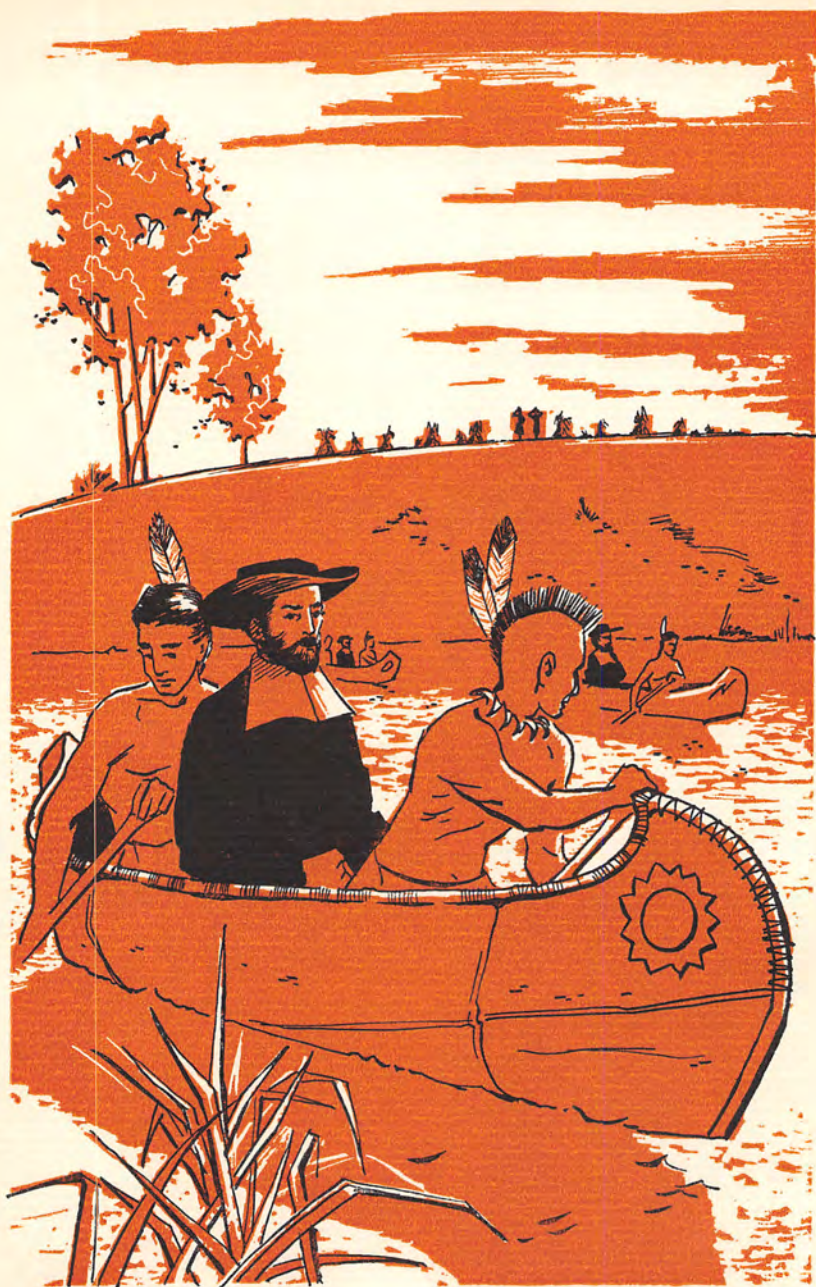
Nothing caused more comment than the sign the French had left. For there, in the middle of the square, stood a giant wooden cross, the sign of the Blackrobes.

When this cross had been erected Father Raffeix bowed his head in silent prayer. He had not been able to prevent the French from taking such severe measures. But now, looking at the cross of the Saviour, he found his heart filled with hope. The missionaries would bring the Indians the consolation and love of Christ. "Let this cross be a sign of that pledge," he prayed.

The Mohawks knew nothing of this promise. They only knew that their homes had been destroyed.

When Tekakwitha and My-Sister saw the cross, they looked at it in wonder. Tekakwitha still remembered the sign of the cross that Anastasia had taught her to make. Could this be what that sign meant? Was this cross like the one on which the Son of the Great Spirit had died?

## Chapter V



"There are three strangers in the canoes!" cried My-Sister.

(p. 45)

## V . . . . . The Coming of the Blackrobes

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COLD winter winds battered the chief's lodge. Here and there bits of bark flew off where they had been placed to repair the damage done by the fires of the French. Icy blasts of air chilled the lodge.

Tekakwitha and My-Sister sat close to the fire. Their shawls were drawn tightly about them. Their hands were too stiff with cold for working with their beads.

My-Aunt sat across from them, staring angrily into the fire.

"No meat again!" she complained bitterly.

"If Rah-kae-noo-ha'-ah does not return soon with something to eat, we shall all starve."

The girls said nothing but listened hopefully for the chief's returning footsteps.

They did not have to wait long. For soon My-Uncle entered the lodge carrying one small rabbit. He dropped it at the squaw's feet.

"We will eat now," he told her.

My-Aunt looked at him in disgust.

"This!" she exclaimed, pointing to the rabbit. "Is this what you bring for all of us to eat? It is hardly a mouthful!"

"Silence, squaw!" shouted My-Uncle in exasperation. "It is all we have. We will eat now."

The disgruntled squaw spoke in a gentler tone. "It is not enough. Tekakwitha," she ordered, "go out and fill your basket."

Without a word the little girl pulled her shawl more closely around her. Taking up her basket, she threw herself into the pathway of the bitter winds.

Snow covered the ground and it was hard to find anything growing at all. Even so Tekakwitha dug first with sticks and then with her fingers to find the roots the Indians ate when there was no other food. She returned to the lodge with her basket only partly filled.

"Lazy girl," scolded My-Aunt unreasonably. She spoke softly so that her husband could not hear her. "You don't deserve to eat at all."

And she saw to it that Tekakwitha's portion was smaller than the others.

"Have some of mine," whispered My-Sister kindly. "I really don't want it all."

But Tekakwitha was too cold to eat. She was very thin and the cold weather was harder on her than on the others.

It was a hard winter for the Mohawks. The French had destroyed their crops. There was little game to be had. The Indians often went hungry. But spring came at last and with it a feeling of new hope.

Again and again Tekakwitha and My-Sister crossed the river to the place the tribal leaders had chosen for a new village. Together they worked in the fields with the others, planting the new corn seeds.

Even though the bright sun made Tekakwitha's eyes burn, it was good to feel the sun's warmth on her back.

Then one evening in late spring the leaders of the Turtles, richly dressed, left the village. They were going to meet with the chiefs and other leaders of the Iroquois nations.

When they returned they brought with them the news that the Iroquois nations had signed a peace treaty with the French.

Tekakwitha breathed a sigh of relief.

"Perhaps there will be no more wars," she thought.

And as spring turned into summer it seemed as though peace had really come at last. It had been months since Tekakwitha had seen the war dance.

One warm day in July while working in the corn-fields she was surprised to see a small group of canoes on the river. Swiftly they approached the shores of the village.

Tekakwitha strained her burning eyes to see who had come. But it was useless. The dazzling sun was too strong for her weak eyes. She waved and called to My-Sister on the other side of the field.

"Look, My-Sister," she cried excitedly. "Can you see who has come?"

My-Sister joined Tekakwitha and shaded her eyes with her arm as she looked toward the water.

"I see a chief of the Bears and five braves. There are three strangers with them."

Suddenly she gripped Tekakwitha's arm and spoke in a hushed, awed voice. "The strangers are Blackrobes."



"Blackrobes!" echoed the younger girl. "Surely they aren't captives," she whispered in consternation.

For a moment the girls stood silently, thinking what the French would do if the Mohawks had really kidnapped the Blackrobes. It would mean that they had broken the peace treaty. How angry the French would be!

"We shall all be killed," wailed My-Sister. "They will come again and burn our villages and kill us all."

"No, no," gasped Tekakwitha. "Our tribe would not be so foolish."

But in her heart she knew the Mohawk quick temper and its daredevil spirit. The Mohawks might very well take out their revenge on these Blackrobes.

Together the girls stumbled up the slope to the village. They found many members of the clan crowding into the square. The chief and his councilmen stood in the center and awaited the visitors.

Tekakwitha was puzzled by their calm, almost friendly, attitude. Then the small procession entered the square. The Blackrobes were not being treated as prisoners. They walked freely, carrying gifts which they presented to the leaders.

There was a hushed silence as the chief spoke.

"Welcome, welcome, O Blackrobes. Eat our food. Sleep in our houses and teach us the things the white man knows."

Tekakwitha almost fainted from surprise and relief.

"Did you hear?" cried My-Sister. "Perhaps the Great Spirit has spoken to him. He has never acted like this before."

But Tekakwitha hardly heard her. She was too busy trying to see and hear everything that happened.

The chief, the members of the Council and the visitors seated themselves in a circle. The peace pipe was passed among them.

At last one of the Blackrobes rose and began to speak.

"O mighty chief, we thank you for your kindness. We are happy that you have welcomed us. We have come to tell you of the Great Spirit, Rah-wah-neh'-yo."

Tekakwitha stared fascinated at the kind face. She was soothed by the soft tones of the loving voice.

"We have come to tell you of the Son of the Spirit, who came to earth to save us all," went on the missionary. Slowly he drew the crucifix from his belt and held it high above his head.

As Tekakwitha listened to the story of our Lord, a strange thing happened. It was as if a warm light had begun burning inside her. Then somehow—it seemed from long ago—she began to remember more stories of our Lord that her mother and Anastasia had told her. It was seven years since she had heard them.

The Blackrobe spoke of God's love. He told how much Christ had suffered to save our souls. When he spoke of the crucifixion, tears came into Tekakwitha's eyes. Then the priest went on to tell of the happiness of heaven, the joy that does not end.

The Blackrobes remained with the Turtle clan for three days. They stayed in My-Uncle's lodge. Tekakwitha was ordered to wait on them.

The Mohawk girl was delighted. She could be near the missionaries, and could listen carefully to all their teachings. Their kind ways impressed her.

"God bless you, child," they would say when she brought them food or water. And though Tekakwitha wanted terribly to speak to them and ask them many questions she only managed a shy smile.

Her uncle watched her carefully. Hadn't he forbidden the girl to speak to Anastasia when he had found that the old squaw had been teaching her to pray to the white man's God? Certainly he did not want her to learn any more from the Blackrobes.

Although he had greeted the missionaries in a friendly way and allowed them to stay in the village, he did not do it because he wanted to. There was no other choice. It was one of the terms of the peace treaty with the French that the Blackrobes would be made welcome. But My-Uncle the chief still hated the French for having punished his people. The Blackrobes were Frenchmen; so he felt toward them as he did toward other Frenchmen.

"The time will come when the white men will beg for mercy at the feet of the Mohawk," he muttered. "We must be patient."

Tekakwitha was saddened to hear this. For many of the tribe listened with great interest to the teaching of the missionaries. Many were thinking of becoming Christians. How could they do this if chiefs and Council were against it? Tekakwitha believed that if My-Uncle even knew of her thoughts he might kill her.

When the Blackrobes left, Tekakwitha could hardly bear to see them go. She went deep into the woods and remained there the whole day. With the Blackrobes in the village she had felt very close to Rah-wah-neh'-yo. And now they had gone.

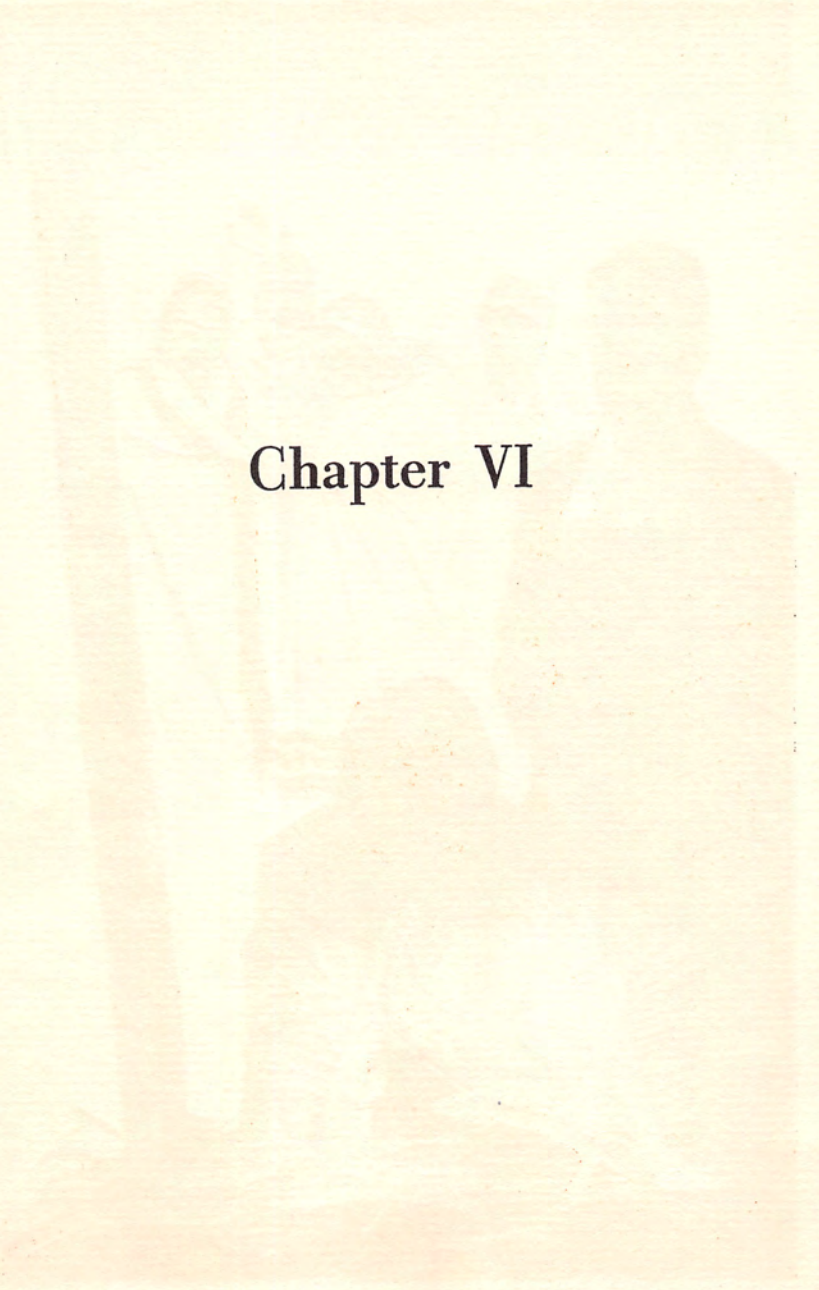
For hours she wandered about, thinking over all she had heard in the past days. Then she remembered something the Blackrobes had said over and over again.

"The Great Spirit is the Father of us all. He loves us and watches over us. He hears everything we say."

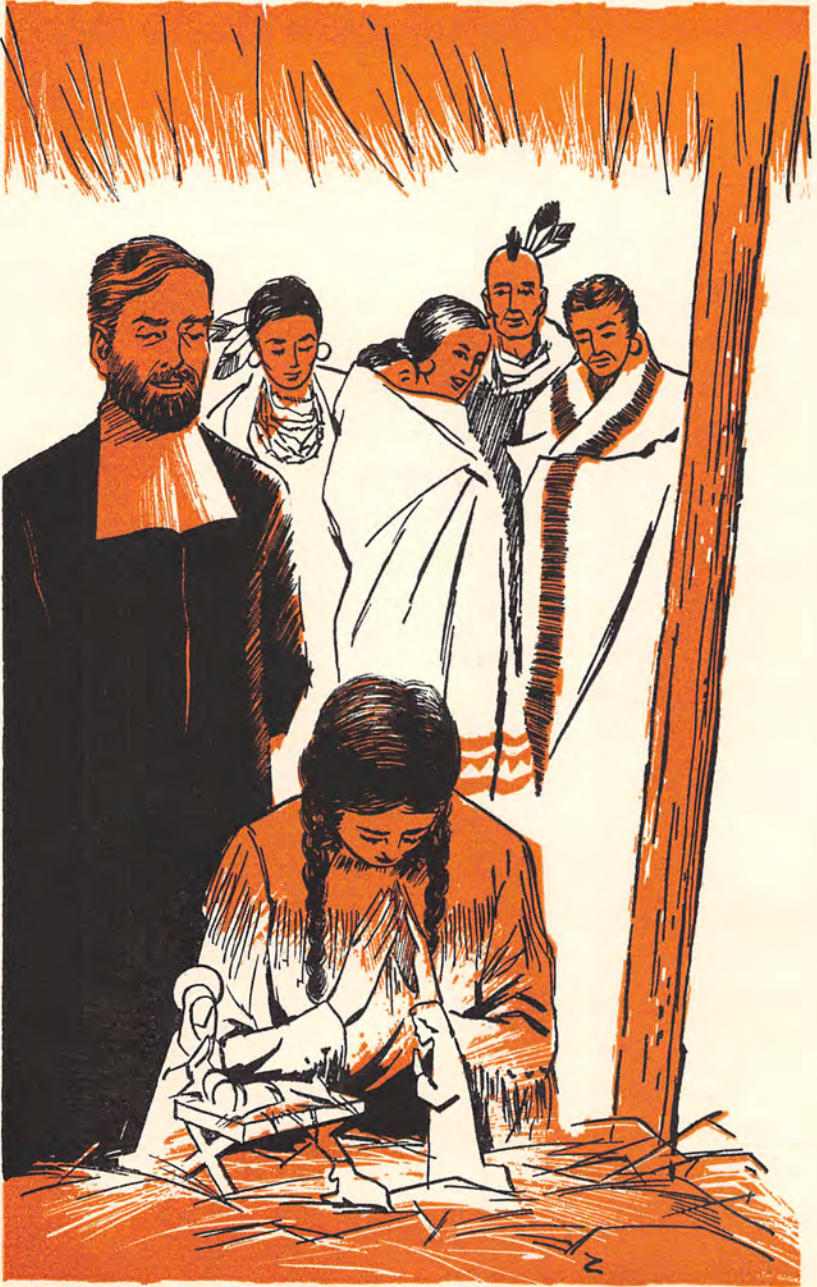
These words reminded Tekakwitha that even after the beloved Blackrobes were gone she need not feel far away from Rah-wah-neh'-yo.

The Indian girl began searching in the earth. At last she found what she was looking for—a sharp pointed stone.

Without hesitation and with sure, firm strokes she carved the sign of the Blackrobes in the tree—a cross. Then humbly she fell on her knees before it.



**Chapter VI**



"O Rah - wah - neh' - yo, help me!" Tekakwitha prayed. (p. 61)

## VI . . . . . Christmas Comes to the Mohawks

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TEKAKWITHA often visited the crude cross she had carved in the forest. During the months that passed, it brought her a wonderful feeling of peace.

Then, one day about two years later, shrieks and cries of fear and pain broke the calm of the summer afternoon. Tekakwitha dropped her beading. She rushed outside with the other frightened squaws.

Three women came running from the fields.

"Mahicans! Mahicans!" they cried, pointing.

Several braves snatched up hatchets and muskets and followed their chief.

The Mohawk women wailed and screamed. No one could understand them. One thing was certain. The Mahicans had struck again.

The Mahicans were fierce warriors who lived along the banks of the Hudson River in New York. They are not to be confused with the Mohicans (sometimes spelled "Mohegans"). But both Mahicans and Mohicans belonged to the Algonquian tribe.

There was the sound of angry whoops and the crack of gunfire. Then silence.

In a few moments the braves returned, carrying the body of a Mohawk woman. She had been scalped and beaten by Mahican raiders.

Horrified, Tekakwitha drew back from the crowd and dropped to her knees. Around her the shocked and frightened villagers talked excitedly. Noiselessly her lips moved in a secret prayer.

"Help us, O Rah-wah-neh'-yo," she prayed. "Help my people."

Suddenly the voices were hushed as the Turtle chief held up his hand. He spoke slowly. There was both anger and fear in his voice. Most of all there was hatred.

"The Mahicans are ready for war. They attack us to make us angry. They know that they are very strong. They want to destroy us forever."

The men shouted with anger. The Mahicans were a treacherous enemy. Their small raids were only a warning of a terrible destruction to come.

The chief held up his hand again.

"We Mohawks are brave warriors. We will show the Mahicans how fierce we are. They will never capture our villages. We are strong. We are ready."

The Mohawk leader's words were received with great shouts and war whoops.

Since the Turtle clan had moved to their new home there was plenty of food once again. But there had hardly been a peaceful day. Again and again the Mahicans had attacked small groups of Mohawks.

The women were no longer safe when working in the fields. This excited anger among the Mohawks, and, worse, it frightened them. The Mohawks had been strengthening their castles. Now the time drew near when they would have to fight for their very lives and homes.



How strangely still the August night had become after the loud war ceremonies!

No one stirred within the Turtle village. Tekakwitha lay still on her mat, listening and waiting. Tears stung her eyes. Soon it would start again. There would be fighting and killing and torturing of captives.

"When will it stop, O Rah-wah-neh'-yo?" she asked desperately. "When will my people learn to live in peace as You want them to?"

Tekakwitha was now thirteen years old and she had not lived through a year of peace in her life.

She was not the only one awake with such thoughts that night. For some time now the Blackrobe Father Pierron had been visiting the various Mohawk villages and instructing some of the Indians. Since he had been coming with stories of the love of the Great Spirit, many had begun to long for the peaceful life of which he spoke. Now they too waited in fear and sorrow.

Then, just before dawn the terrifying sounds of war whoops and musket fire awakened the entire village. At once the Turtle clan burst into action.

The braves quickly gathered up their hatchets and guns and rushed to the fortress. The women followed, carrying knives and wailing with fear.

The battle raged for days. The Mahicans were strong, but the Mohawks were desperate. Slowly they forced the enemy down the valley to a stronghold on a hill.

The Mohawks followed. Father Pierron went with them. The sick and the dying needed him.

In her own village Tekakwitha worked alongside the women who were tending the sick. Eagerly they awaited news of the battle.

At last a messenger entered the village crying: "The leader of the Mahicans has fallen. Many of the bravest Mahicans have fallen with him."

The women crowded about him, shouting in triumph.

"The battle is not yet over," warned the messenger. "Ten Mahicans remain. They are holding a fort alone."

The women almost laughed.

"Ten braves," said My-Aunt scornfully. "What can they do?"

My-Aunt did not know how stubborn these warriors were. Safe in their fort, they fought off the Mohawks bitterly.

The Mohawks went in groups, using fallen trees and bushes for shields. They tried to rush the enemy. But one by one the Mahicans picked them off and many of the Mohawks died.

At last the fighting stopped. It was night. Under cover of darkness the ten Mahican braves had escaped. With these warriors gone, the fierce battle was over and the Mohawk valley saved.

The next day the Mohawks returned, leading Mahican prisoners they had captured during the days of fighting.

The women gathered about their men, clamoring and jeering at the prisoners. Everyone was filled with the excitement of the ceremonies to come. There would be dancing and feasting and the torture of the captives. Only Tekakwitha held back.

"What is the matter with you, stupid girl?" shouted My-Aunt. "Our warriors have beaten the enemy. Aren't you coming to greet them?"

She shook Tekakwitha and pushed her toward the crowded square. But Tekakwitha still hung back, looking at her aunt with pity and sorrow.

Suddenly she broke away and ran into the forest. There, far from the noise of the village she sank to her knees, sobbing.

Where was the great Rah-wah-neh'-yo now? Where was the life that Father Pierron had spoken of, where everyone lived in peace, loving one another?

"It must be far from here," thought Tekakwitha.

She hated the cruel customs of the Mohawks. She knew that even now they must have begun to torture the Mahican prisoners.

"O Rah-wah-neh'-yo, my people have forgotten all they have learned about You from the Blackrobes. When will they begin to love one another?"

Tekakwitha remained in the forest many long hours. At last she knew she must return to the village.

Dusk had fallen when she returned. She had to pass the prisoners on her way to the long house. There they were, slumped and moaning.

Suddenly Tekakwitha noticed a tall dark figure standing before them and speaking softly.

It was Father Pierron, telling the Mahicans of the love of Rah-wah-neh'-yo. The Mahicans listened and Tekakwitha felt that they were comforted by his words.

Then from behind her came the sneering voice of a Mohawk squaw.

"Look at him. See how he loves our enemies."

Several angry braves agreed with her. Tekakwitha held her breath. Would they force Father Pierron to leave the prisoners?

But Father seemed undisturbed. He turned to the Mohawks and spoke kindly.

"Christ wants us to love our enemies."

In soft tones he told them of heaven and that all who loved Christ and did His will would one day be there.

Many of the Mohawks left their long houses to listen.

Tekakwitha stood very still. There were tears in her eyes. But now they were tears of happiness. Rah-wah-neh'-yo had not forgotten her people.

Here was Father Pierron speaking not only of the white man's God but of His teaching that we must show kindness to our enemies. Yet not one Mohawk moved to stop him. Even My-Uncle stood silently in the background.

Father Pierron's instruction and good example were winning many of the Mohawks. Though My-Uncle dared not try to stop him, Tekakwitha knew he did not like to have the priest come to the village. She and My-Sister were almost afraid to be seen in the groups that gathered around him.

They would hide behind bushes and listen. Sometimes when carrying water to the long house they would find an excuse to walk past the group the missionary was teaching.

Each time Father Pierron came he brought pictures he had painted. The pictures were very beautiful. Once

Tekakwitha caught a glimpse of a picture showing a place more lovely than anything she had dreamed about. It showed creatures in long white garments, with wings like birds. The place in the picture was heaven, Father Pierron said.

As the months went by Tekakwitha longed to learn more about the Christian religion. Much to her uncle's disgust, some of the Mohawks had actually been baptized. Tekakwitha longed for the holy water, too. But for three years she kept this fervent desire locked in her heart.

Then one cold day in November My-Sister came into the lodge and sat beside Tekakwitha at the fire. She was very excited.

"Come quickly, sister. Father Pierron is in the small cabin at the edge of the forest. We can slip inside and stand in the shadows. No one will notice us. Hurry!"

The girls picked up their water jars. They looked about to see that no one was watching. They made their way to the lodge and slipped inside.

"Many years ago the Great Spirit sent His only Son to the people of the world," Father Pierron was saying.

"And His Son came to earth as a baby and was born in a wooden lodge that was used for animals. It was called a stable."

As he spoke the missionary held up the picture he had drawn of the Holy Family. Carefully he pointed to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph and the Infant Jesus. He looked about at the faces of his pupils and was pleased by their interest.

Then from the back he saw someone move forward. In her eagerness to see, Tekakwitha had forgotten herself. Her shawl fell from her head and Father Pierron looked directly into her face. He was amazed by the gentle look of love he saw there.

When Father Pierron had finished telling the story of the first Christmas, he invited all the Indians to come to the Christmas ceremonies at the little chapel Father Boniface had built in the village.

Tekakwitha and My-Sister wanted to go. They determined to ask My-Uncle for permission.

"We will wait till after the evening meal," suggested My-Sister. "When he takes up his pipe, you speak to him. He is very fond of you."

That evening when the chief was sitting quietly before the fire My-Sister whispered, "Now."

Tekakwitha moved closer to her foster father.

"My-Father," she said quietly, "I wish to ask something of you."

"What is it, Little Squirrel?" asked the chief fondly. He was in a very good mood.

Tekakwitha hesitated, but she forced herself to speak.

"My-Sister and I wish to visit the chapel for the Christmas ceremonies." There, she had said it!

Tekakwitha stiffened and waited for his burst of anger. Instead, My-Aunt came forward.

"I, too, want to go, My-Husband," she said.

The angry chief stood up abruptly.

"Go then, fools!" he shouted and left the lodge angrily.

And so it was on Christmas Eve, 1672, that the women of Rah-kae-noo-ha'-ah's lodge joined the others as they walked through the snow to St. Peter's chapel.

As they came near the chapel the voices of the Indian converts could be heard singing. To Tekakwitha the song sounded very familiar. Then all at once she remembered. It was the song her mother had taught her long ago about the little papoose who was born one winter night. It told the story of the Great Chiefs who had come from far away to bring Him gifts.

Inside the chapel Father Boniface had prepared a surprise. He had made a manger scene. Each Mohawk in turn stepped up to the tiny stable and looked inside.

When Tekakwitha's turn came her heart filled with such happiness and longing that she sank to her knees and prayed as she had never prayed before.

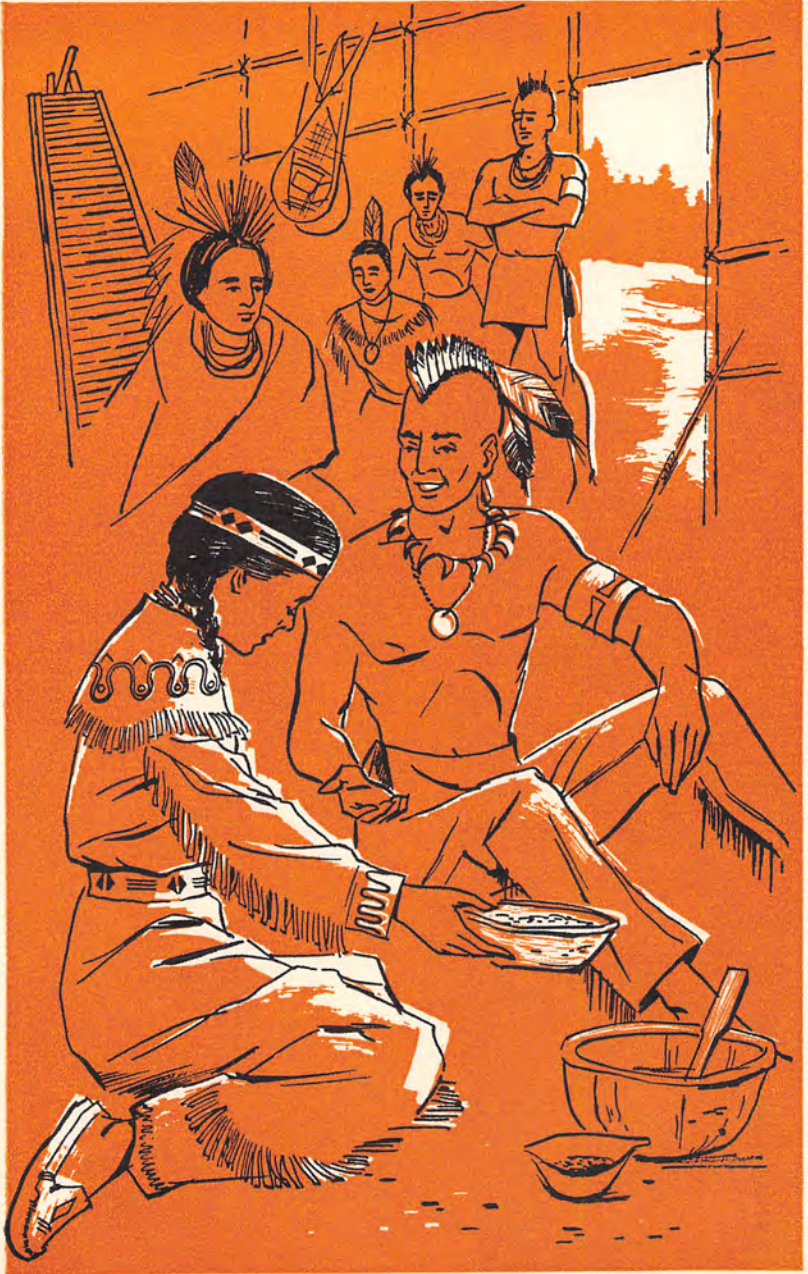
"O Rah-wah-neh'-yo, help me. I want to belong to You. Help me to become a Christian," she begged.

The soft strains of the Indians' Christmas carol floated over the cool air as the Mohawk women returned to their homes. Tekakwitha noticed what a strange and wonderful feeling of happiness and love there seemed to be among the members of the Turtle clan.

Yes, Christmas had come to the Mohawks at last.

## Chapter VII





**Tekakwitha lifted the bowl to offer it to the young brave.**

## VII . . . . . The Trick

---

SMOKE filled the long house, making Tekakwitha's eyes smart. But she had no time to think of this now. She continued to pound the corn carefully under the watchful eyes of her aunt.

"You said My-Sister went for water," My-Aunt told her suspiciously. "That was long ago. Why isn't she back?"

Tekakwitha merely shrugged. She went on working with the corn. She hoped that My-Aunt would not ask her any more questions. My-Sister had taken her jar for water. She did every afternoon. But on the way back the girl often stopped at the little wooden chapel to learn more from the Blackrobes.

Although on some occasions, such as Christmas, My-Aunt also had visited the chapel, she continued to talk against the Blackrobes and their teachings.

For many months now, many of the Turtle clan visited the chapel regularly. Some of the clan had actually become Christians. Much as Tekakwitha longed to become one of them, she did not dare.

"I would rather kill a member of my household with my own hand than see him become a Christian," My-Uncle had sworn.

The girl shuddered as she remembered her uncle's dreadful words. Silently she begged Rah-wah-neh'-yo to help My-Sister keep her secret.

Then the bearskin rug was thrown aside as My-Sister returned. She still carried her water jar and her cheeks were flushed from hurrying.

"Are we to wait forever for you?" asked the angry squaw. "You knew we were to have visitors tonight, and yet you were not here to help."

Shaking with rage, she lifted her arm and slapped My-Sister.

Tekakwitha gasped as though she herself had been struck. She was frightened for her sister. Perhaps My-Aunt had found out that My-Sister had been at the chapel.

But she said nothing more. Picking up a bowl, she motioned to My-Sister to begin grinding corn.

Both girls breathed a sigh of relief. As soon as My-Aunt had turned her back, My-Sister leaned toward Tekakwitha. Her eyes were shining.

"I have wonderful news," she whispered. "Bring your water jar to the creek tomorrow when the sun is low. We can talk alone there."

For, of course, this was not the time for conversation. There was much to be done. Tekakwitha was told to dress in her finest robes and braid her hair with beads. She put on her prettiest wampum belt. Tonight she would truly look like the chieftain's daughter that she was.

But Tekakwitha found these occasions very dull. When visitors came the men talked of things she did not understand. She was always too shy to join in the conversation with the women.

Tonight even My-Sister was not there to comfort her. She had been suddenly called away to a neighboring lodge to help with the work of the squaws there.

Tekakwitha wondered what My-Sister's news could be, but she knew she would not have a chance to talk to her until the next day.

There were many guests in the lodge that night. Tekakwitha kept herself busy by waiting on them. She passed the bowl of sagamité and brought water to those who wanted it. Soon she grew tired. She thought the evening would never end.

She sat down in the shadows to rest a while. She could hear the voices of the women. For a moment Tekakwitha did not really listen. Then she realized that they were talking about her.

"Tekakwitha is growing up. Soon she will marry," said one.

"Yes," it was her aunt's voice, "soon it will be time."

"Of course, she is not a strong girl and certainly not beautiful. The Smallpox Devil left her weak. But she does beautiful beading and she works hard when she must. I don't know. If she were not the daughter of a chief, it might be very hard to find someone to marry her. As it is, many young braves would be happy to have her for their squaw."

Tekakwitha felt her cheeks grow hot as she listened. Now they wanted her to marry one of the Mohawk braves. No doubt they would choose a brave warrior, one who had killed many men and tortured even more.

"Oh, no," thought Tekakwitha, "I cannot marry a Mohawk. Then I might never be able to become a Christian. I don't want to marry anyone. I won't let them make me."

"Perhaps it is too soon to worry," she decided at last. "Perhaps they will not try to make me marry yet."

But Tekakwitha was now sixteen years old. Many as young as fourteen were already married.

The very next afternoon My-Aunt brought up the subject.

"My-Husband," she said, "It is time that we began looking for a fine brave for Tekakwitha."

The Mohawk leader turned to Tekakwitha and smiled lovingly at her.

"You will make a fine squaw," he said.

Tekakwitha shrank from his gaze. She knew that she must speak. My-Aunt was determined to make plans at once. She held her head high and looked into her uncle's eyes.

"But I do not wish to marry, My-Father," she said softly.

The chief looked stunned by these words. Ever since Tekakwitha had come to live with them he had thought of the fine brave that she would bring to their lodge.

It was the custom among the Mohawks for the girls to bring their husbands to live in their father's lodge. The more daughters a man had the richer he became. Because more braves living in a lodge meant more hunters. There would be more meat and furs to trade. It was for this reason that My-Uncle had brought Tekakwitha into his

home. It was for this reason that he had adopted My-Sister. He always thought that one day they would marry and bring braves to his home.

My-Aunt was not at all stunned. She was furious.

"Are you mad, Tekakwitha? Whoever heard of a Mohawk girl who did not marry?"

"Don't speak nonsense, Tekakwitha," ordered My-Uncle, recovering at last. "Of course you will marry."

Tekakwitha rose from her place. There were tears in her eyes. She was very frightened. But she spoke bravely.

"I do not wish to marry. No matter what you do to me, I will not marry." Her voice choked on the last words and she ran from the long house.

For a moment Tekakwitha's aunt and uncle stood looking at one another.

"Are you going to let the girl disgrace us?" the squaw asked My-Uncle at last.

"No, no," insisted My-Uncle angrily. "She is just young and foolish. We will find some way to change her mind."

Suddenly the crafty squaw smiled slyly. "I know," she said. "We will trick her. I have a plan. She will be married before she knows what has happened."

She began to explain her idea to her husband.

While My-Uncle and My-Aunt made plans to trick her, Tekakwitha was walking swiftly through the forest. She had picked up her water jar outside the long house. Now she hurried to meet My-Sister at the creek. The sun was already very low in the sky. The argument with her

aunt and uncle had upset her. She had nearly forgotten that she must meet My-Sister this afternoon.

"Here, Tekakwitha," called My-Sister as the girl approached.

"Why, what is it, little one?" asked the older girl when she saw how unhappy Tekakwitha looked.

Tekakwitha shrugged and tried to smile. "It is nothing. I'm—I'm just tired. Now hurry. Tell me the news."

"Oh, Tekakwitha," cried My-Sister, smiling happily and taking her adopted sister's hands in hers, "the most wonderful thing in all the world has happened. I am going to be married."

"Married!" exclaimed Tekakwitha and the worried look returned to her face.

"Oh, no, sister, it is not what you think," explained the older girl. "I am going to marry a Christian. I will leave the long house and live with the other Christians. The Blackrobe says that I too may receive the holy water very soon."

Tekakwitha was delighted. For a moment she had thought that My-Sister meant to marry one of the braves who hated the Blackrobes.

"How wonderful!" she cried, hugging her adopted sister. Then the thought of her uncle and his terrible promise made her stop.

"What of our father?" she asked.

"The Blackrobe has told me not to worry about him. After all, I am not really a member of the family. He has promised to protect me. Rah-kae-noo-ha'-ah will be

afraid to anger him. Everything will be arranged in a few days."

Tekakwitha's eyes filled with tears of joy.

"I will miss you very much. But I am so happy for you. How I wish that I could become a Christian, too."

"I know," said My-Sister gently. "And I have spoken to the Blackrobe about you. Why don't you go to him? He will find a way to help you, I am sure."

But the other girl shook her head sadly. "Oh, I don't know what to do. I'm so afraid."

"Don't be," insisted My-Sister. "Pray to Rah-wah-neh'-yo. He will help you."

It was growing dark. The girls knew that they must hurry home. The others might become suspicious. In the days that followed there were many changes in their lodge. The Blackrobe came to speak to Tekakwitha's uncle. The Mohawk leader was very angry when he heard of My-Sister's plans. But the priest reminded him of the agreement the French had made with the Mohawks.

After de Tracy had burned the villages the Indians had promised to stop their plundering. They had also promised to allow the Blackrobes to live and teach among them.

If a young Christian like My-Sister were to be persecuted because of her new faith, the French would indeed be angry. The Mohawk leader knew all this. He was afraid to arouse the white men in any way. He had to give in. What else could he do?

My-Sister left the house. Tekakwitha was forbidden ever to see or speak with her again. No matter where she



went her uncle had her watched. He would not tolerate having both his daughters become Christians. He would sit for hours and hours staring into the fire and dreaming of ways to get rid of the Blackrobes.

Now My-Uncle and My-Aunt were more determined than ever to see that Tekakwitha married. One afternoon some weeks later, My-Aunt called the girl to her.

"You must dress in your finest robes tonight," she said. "We shall have visitors this evening."

Tekakwitha obeyed as she always did. Once again she braided her hair with the bright beads and put on her soft deerskin dress.

If Tekakwitha had not been so busy preparing the sagamité, she would certainly have noticed that these were not ordinary visitors. For all the men and women were members of one family. One of the strongest Mohawk braves was among them. As they came in they presented My-Uncle with many beautiful gifts.

Because Tekakwitha's eyes were so weak and the light so dim she did not notice—until she was seated—that My-Aunt had pushed her to a place beside the young brave. There was much talking and laughing that evening.

At last My-Aunt brought the bowl of sagamité to Tekakwitha.

"Offer it to our guests," she said, motioning toward the handsome young brave.

Again Tekakwitha obeyed. She lifted the bowl and stretched out her arms to offer it to the young brave. It became strangely quiet in the long house. Suddenly

Tekakwitha stood very still. Her heart was pounding. Everyone was looking at her.

Then, as if a voice within her had spoken a warning, everything became very clear. These guests had come to a marriage ceremony. It was the custom among the Mohawks for the brave's family to come to the long house where the maiden lived. They brought many gifts to the father. Then, when everyone was seated, the Mohawk girl offered a bowl of sagamité to the young brave. When he accepted it, the simple ceremony was over. The two were married.

The brave waited smiling, holding his hands out for the bowl Tekakwitha was about to offer him. Instead, the bowl dropped from her hands. Before anyone could stop her she ran out of the long house into the dark night.

The guests were shocked. They stood up angrily.

"What an insult! What is the matter with the girl? Any young maiden would be fortunate to marry such a fine brave."

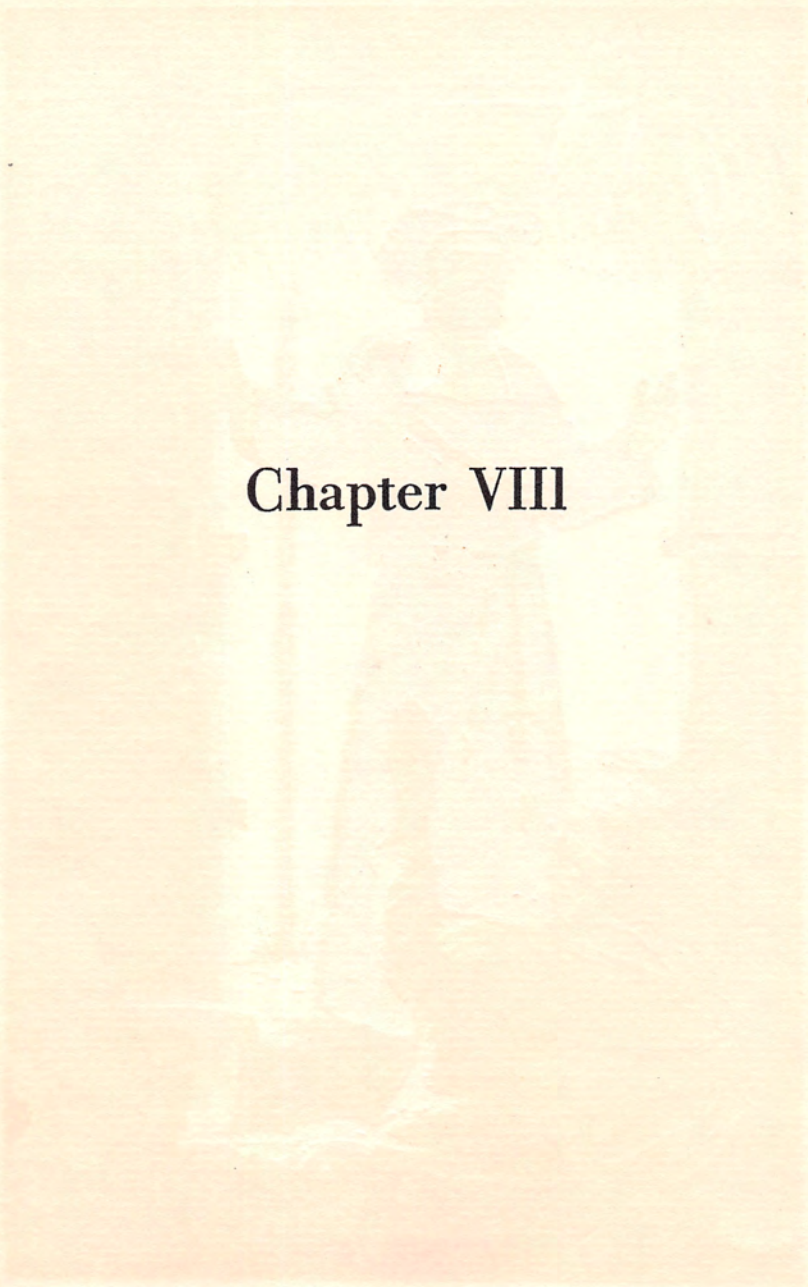
My-Aunt tried to explain what had happened.

"She is very shy. She did not mean to insult you."

But the family of the young brave would not listen. They left angrily.

"That stupid girl!" cried the angry squaw. "Now, how will we ever find anyone to marry her?"

In the forest Tekakwitha crouched sobbing in the darkness. Although she was thankful that she had recognized the trick in time, she knew it would not be easy to escape a second time. Her family would stop at nothing to see that she married a Mohawk brave.

A very faint, light-colored illustration of a person, possibly a woman, wearing a long, flowing dress or gown. The figure is centered on the page and appears to be a watermark or a very light print. The person's face is not clearly defined, but they seem to be standing with their arms slightly away from their body.

## Chapter VIII



"Who is it? Who calls?" asked the Blackrobe.

## VIII . . . . . A Prayer Is Answered

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ANGRY black clouds threatened the bright sun one June afternoon. Tekakwitha was in the cornfields with her basket. She was gathering ears of corn for dinner. There were many women with her.

"Tekakwitha," called a soft familiar voice.

The girl pushed back her red shawl and squinted, trying hard to see who had spoken. It was no use. The sun was too strong. All she saw was a blurred figure.

"Who is it?" she whispered.

She felt a gentle hand on her shoulder.

"Don't turn around. Go on with your work. Your aunt is at the end of this row. She is watching you. Just listen."

Now Tekakwitha knew who it was that had spoken. Her throat became tight. She swallowed hard.

"Oh, Anastasia! How good it is to hear your voice," she cried.

It had been over two years since Tekakwitha's adopted sister had left the long house. And it was more than a year since My-Sister had left the village to go to live in Canada. During all that time Tekakwitha had hardly heard a friendly word. She had long ago been forbidden to see Anastasia. Now she could not help herself. Her shoulders shook with sobs, but she did not dare turn to face her old friend.

"Don't, Tekakwitha," said the kind squaw. "It makes what I have to tell you even harder. The Blackrobe Father Boniface is leaving. Many of the Christians want to go with him to Canada. There is a village for Christian Indians there."

Again Tekakwitha felt the gentle touch on her shoulder.

"I, too, am going."

Without stopping to think, the girl turned and threw her arms around her friend.

"No, Anastasia," she pleaded.

The thought of Anastasia's leaving was too much. She would not have one real friend left in the village.

Before she could speak My-Aunt pulled her away.

"Go back to the long house," she ordered. Tekakwitha obeyed without a word. It was useless to try to fight My-Aunt.

The chief's squaw turned to Anastasia.

"Tomorrow will be a happy day for us," she said wickedly. "You will leave the village. Tekakwitha will forget her foolishness about the white man's God. I always knew that you had cast a wicked spell on her." With these words the angry woman walked quickly away.

Anastasia shook her head sadly. Poor little Tekakwitha, she thought. If only she would speak to the Blackrobe. He would find some way to help her. I will pray. Perhaps Rah-wah-neh'-yo will find a way to give her courage.

In the grey dawn of the next morning the Christian Mohawks climbed into the waiting canoes. They began

their journey to Canada with Father Boniface. Anastasia's eyes filled with tears as she thought of Tekakwitha. Only God could help her now.

Many months went by. Tekakwitha became more and more miserable and lonely. My-Uncle hated the Black-robos more than ever. He was very angry that Father Boniface had taken so many of his people away. In the Sault St. Louis, the village for Christian Indians, Anastasia found My-Sister and her husband, Ah-kya-kve-hah' (My Brother-in-law), living happily. They spoke often of Tekakwitha. Together they prayed that God would help her.

To Tekakwitha it seemed as though she did not belong among the godless Mohawks. She refused to take part in their ceremonies. Somehow she knew that the wild festivals were not pleasing to God. She longed to join her Christian friends. Each night she prayed. She would not give up. Her faith in God was very strong.

Then one day Tekakwitha was working in the fields. Many of the women were there, working with their hoes. It was hard work, and the sun made Tekakwitha's eyes burn. She did not mind. Being busy made the time pass more easily. Some of the women were working very close together. Then suddenly it happened. Tekakwitha let out a little cry and fell to the ground.

At once the others crowded about her. My-Aunt pushed forward.

"What is the matter here?" she asked, brushing her forehead with her arm. It was a hot day and she was out of humor.

"Oh, it's you, Tekakwitha. This is no time to be lazy. Get up!" she ordered.

But the girl did not move.

"Wait!" said one of the other women. "She is hurt. Look at her foot."

Blood was spilling over the little moccasin onto the ground. A sharp hoe had cut Tekakwitha's foot. While some of the women stood gasping, two others lifted Tekakwitha gently and carried her back to the long house. Carefully they bound the injured foot.

At last Tekakwitha moved and opened her eyes. She shut them again tightly when she felt the stab of pain in her foot.

"Huh," grumbled My-Aunt. "I suppose now you will complain that you are sick and cannot work." She was thinking of the extra rows of corn that she would have to hoe.

Tekakwitha tried to speak. My-Aunt was being unfair. It was an accident. Certainly she had not wanted to hurt herself.

"Come, we are wasting too much time with her," said the squaw.

Slowly the other women followed My-Aunt from the long house. Only Two Flowers looked back. "Don't worry, Tekakwitha. Just lie still and don't try to move. You'll be well in no time."

Tekakwitha smiled her thanks.

Now that she was alone she began to think once more of her friends in the new village.

"If only I could be a Christian, too," she thought.



If only there were some way she could speak to the Blackrobe without someone seeing her. Perhaps he could help. If the Blackrobe knew how much she wanted to become a Christian—

Since Father Boniface had left, a new priest had been sent to the Mohawks. He was Father James de Lamberville. Many times Tekakwitha had seen him going through the village visiting the sick.

How quiet it was now. The men were out hunting and the women were in the fields. Tekakwitha's foot throbbed with pain. She closed her eyes. Suddenly they flew open again as she sensed someone near. As she heard footsteps Tekakwitha cried out. She was sure it was the Blackrobe passing by.

All at once a feeling of courage had come over the girl. Somehow she wasn't afraid any more.

"Father! Father!" she called.

Immediately the priest came to the entrance and peered into the darkness.

"Who is it? Who calls?" he asked, still blinded for a moment after the strong sunlight outside.

"I do, Father," answered Tekakwitha from her mat.

How surprised the priest was to find a young girl alone in the long house.

"Why, child! What has happened?" he asked, seeing her bandaged foot.

Tekakwitha told him about the accident as he unwound the bandages. As he had expected, the women had bound up the wound without washing it first. Father de Lamberville had become something of a doctor while

living among the Indians. They were hardly ever careful to be clean. They expected the medicine men to chase away the evil spirits instead of trying to help themselves. He took care of Tekakwitha's wound. When he was finished she felt much better.

At last Tekakwitha spoke again. "Father, will you help me?" she asked.

"Of course, child. In what way can I help you?" asked the kind priest.

The missionary was so gentle and friendly that Tekakwitha lost her fear entirely. She told him everything. She told him that her real mother had been a Christian, and how, after her mother's death My-Uncle the chief had adopted his little niece. She also told him of Anastasia and My-Sister. Last of all, she revealed her great longing to become a Christian as her mother and her friends had.

"Not just because they are Christians," she said, "but because I love Rah-wah-neh'-yo more than anything or anyone else. I will do anything for Him. I will die for Him, for surely My-Uncle will kill me when he learns of this."

As Father de Lamberville listened he was more and more amazed.

"Never have I seen such devotion among the Mohawks. And this child has had almost no instruction at all," he thought.

"Father, pour the holy water on me now, quickly," begged Tekakwitha.

The priest smiled at her eagerness.

"Not so fast, Tekakwitha. We must be absolutely sure. You must come to the chapel for instructions. Then, if you still want to become a Christian, you can be baptized," he explained. "After all, you yourself say that you know very little about the Christian ways."

Tekakwitha frowned a little as she answered.

"Yes, that is true. But I know Rah-wah-neh'-yo and I am already sure, but I will do whatever you say."

"Good. The first thing I am going to ask of you will take much courage. You must tell your uncle of your desire to become a Christian. He will be angry, of course. Don't be frightened. Be sure to tell him that you have already spoken to me. He will not want any trouble with us and the French," said the priest. "And remember, God is with you. He will help you."

Tekakwitha nodded solemnly. "I will speak tonight," she promised.

"Tonight, tonight, tonight." The word kept going around and around in her mind. All afternoon she thought about what she would say.

In the evening My-Uncle sat by the fire smoking his pipe as he always did. There were deep lines in his forehead. He looked sad and very lonely to Tekakwitha. She felt sorry for him. She knew how unhappy he would be when she told him her secret.

"My Father," she began, "today I spoke with the Blackrobe."

The chief's brows raised slightly and he stopped smoking.

Tekakwitha trembled. The little speech she had prepared was forgotten.

"I want to become a Christian," she said simply.

To her great surprise her uncle said nothing. He placed the pipe in his mouth and went on smoking. At last he looked at his adopted daughter.

"Do what you want," he sighed helplessly.

Tekakwitha could not believe it. What had happened to My-Uncle? She knew that he feared the Blackrobes. But now he didn't even seem angry. Surely Rah-wah-neh'-yo was watching over her.

It had been so long since Tekakwitha had felt herself smiling inside that she hardly remembered what it was like. Every morning and every evening she went to St. Peter's Chapel for prayers. She looked forward to each visit. She would walk slowly along the path and remember what Father de Lamberville had said.

"God so loved His people that He made the world a beautiful place for them to live in."

Now Tekakwitha always saw the beautiful tall trees and the lovely birds as things God had made. They seemed even more beautiful now.

"Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, God is with us," the priest told her. "Speak to Him. Ask for His help. He wants us to."

How often Tekakwitha spoke to our Lord! What a wonderful feeling to know that He was always near!

It was in the chapel that Tekakwitha really felt at home. She would kneel for hours gazing at the small image of Our Lady. At last she had found her mother.

Both Tekakwitha and Father de Lamberville were sure that she really wanted to become a Christian. But more than half a year passed before she was baptized.

It was Easter morning, 1676. What a really lovely April day it was! The sun shone brightly in the sky. All around, new life appeared—flowers, animals and budding trees. Even the chapel looked new. The Indians had decorated it with wampum belts, furs and blankets.

It was still early morning when Tekakwitha left the lodge. But many Indians followed her as she made her way to the chapel. At last she was going to become a Christian.

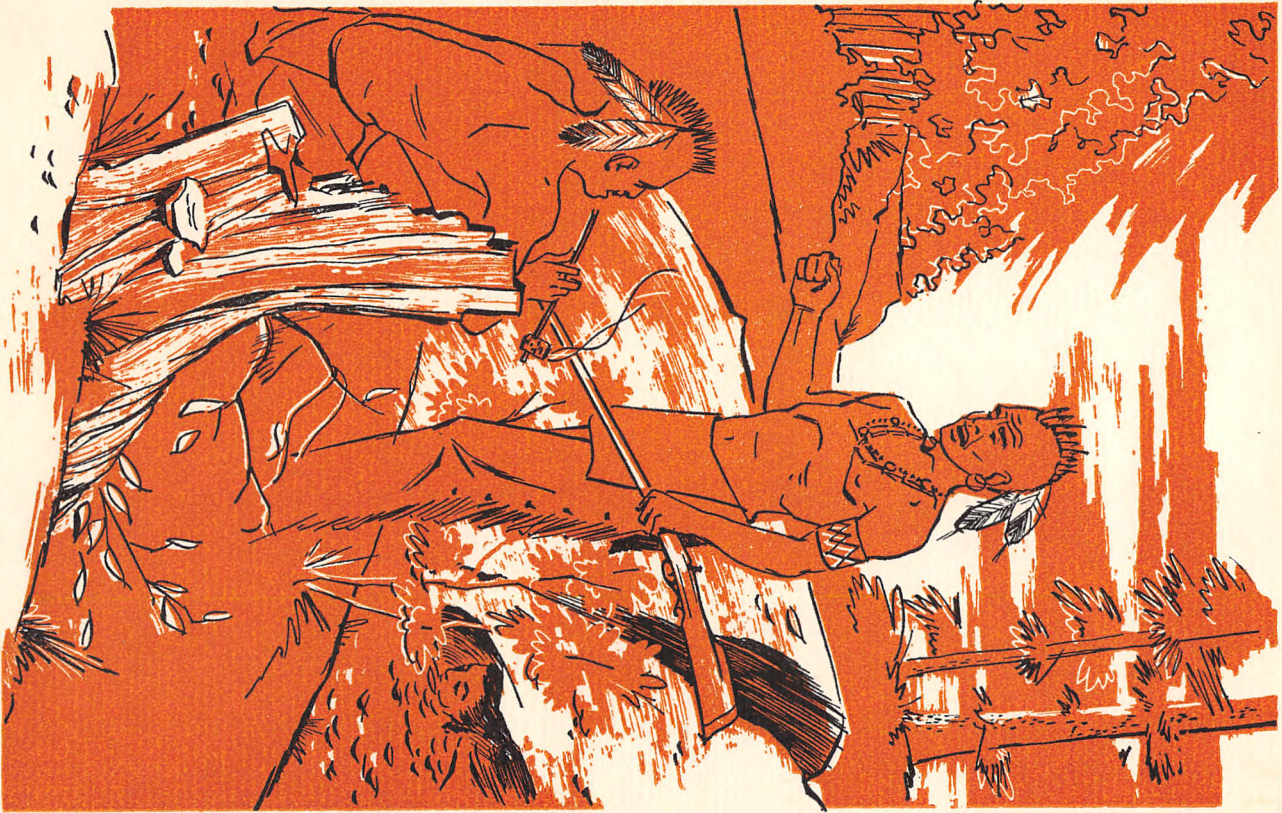
“Thank you, Rah-wah-neh'-yo, for granting me this favor. I love You so,” Tekakwitha repeated over and over again.

After the chief ceremony at the chapel the Christian Mohawks crowded around Tekakwitha. They were almost as happy as she.

Tekakwitha was twenty years old when she was baptized. She had waited a long time for this day. Now her whole life had changed. She even had a new name, Catherine—or Kateri, as the Indians said.

Anastasia, My-Sister and Kateri herself had asked God for this many times. In the years that followed it seemed as though a small miracle had happened that day. The impossible had been accomplished. But perhaps the most thankful of all was Kateri's mother. Perhaps she was able to look down from her place in heaven that day and smile at her daughter's happiness. Hadn't she been the first to ask God that her child might be baptized?

## Chapter IX



"Has anyone passed here?" the chief shouted.

(p. 96)

## IX . . . . . Kateri's Escape

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THE path to St. Peter's Chapel was bumpy. Rocks and roots made the walk difficult for Kateri. In the dim light of dawn it was hard for her weak eyes to see. Though she had walked this way many times, still she stumbled now and then as she hurried.

It was Lent. Almost a year had gone by since Kateri Tekakwitha had entered the Church. Already she practiced her religion more seriously than any of the other Christians. She visited the church at least once a day during Lent. She was on her way now to morning Mass.

Then suddenly, almost from nowhere, a small stone struck her shoulder. Then another and another. Kateri winced, but kept going.

"Look at the Christian!" jeered a voice.

"Christians have no feelings," said another.

Kateri did not turn to see who had spoken. She was not even surprised. For months now things like this had been happening. No one ever really tried to hurt her. Some of the pagan Indians simply wanted to annoy her. At first she had tried to ignore them and think about other things. But matters were getting worse and worse.

As soon as she reached the chapel she forgot her troubles. The prayers of the Mass filled her mind. Kateri did not know that while she prayed many could not take their eyes off her. A few tried to find places near her.



Father de Lamberville noticed. After Mass he took several of the Indian men and women aside.

"Is there something strange about Kateri?" he inquired. "You all seem to stare at her so."

"Oh, Father, there is!" answered one of the women. "She is very different. When Kateri is praying somehow God seems nearer to us," answered one of the women. The others agreed that this was so.

Father shook his head. He was bewildered. He, too, had noticed something. But he wasn't sure what it was. He would watch and wait.

My-Aunt was in a terrible temper when Kateri reached home. Everything had gone wrong that morning. There was hardly any water left and her husband had complained. Then she had burned her hand on a hot stone while preparing the corn.

She blamed it all on Kateri.

"Well, well! The Christian is back!" she exclaimed as Kateri entered the long house.

"The Blackrobes certainly teach you to be lazy. If we all went off to that chapel the way you do the clan would go hungry. Probably that is what they want anyway. So you won't mind having nothing to eat now. There is nothing left," the squaw said spitefully.

Kateri was really weak from hunger. She had been fasting during Lent. Besides that, My-Aunt had seen to it that she had hardly enough food to keep alive. But Tekakwitha determined not to let her aunt make her angry. She took up her jar and went for water without a word.

Try as she would, Kateri knew that things were only getting worse. She wondered how much longer she could go on living here where she knew she was not wanted. Even My-Uncle hardly ever spoke to her now.

By evening Kateri was so weak and tired that she lay down on her mat as soon as her evening chores were done. The others had gone to the center of the village to join in one of the spring feasts.

Alone in the long house, Kateri closed her eyes and tried to sleep. Only the sounds of drums and singing broke the stillness.

All of a sudden the bearskin curtain was thrown aside. Kateri sat up quickly, sensing danger. The figure of a tall young brave was outlined in the doorway. He held a tomahawk in his hand.

The young girl was too frightened to speak as the brave came toward her. Before she could move he reached out and grabbed her hair, forcing her to her knees. With the other hand he raised his tomahawk.

"Christian!" jeered the young man angrily. "We kill Christians," he shouted.

He raised the tomahawk and swayed unsteadily. For a split second he waited. Perhaps he expected Kateri to scream or show some sign of fear. But Kateri did neither. Bowing her head, she clasped her hands in prayer. The brave could hardly believe his eyes. Something about the girl seemed to hold him back. What magic did the Christians have? They were afraid of nothing.

And then the Mohawk brave became frightened. He released Kateri and left as swiftly as he had come.

Kateri felt that God had spared her life. She was very thankful. Now at last she knew what she must do.

\* \* \*

"I am glad that you have decided to leave your people, Kateri," said Father de Lamberville the next morning to the young girl. "It is much too hard for you to be a Christian among your family. It will not be easy to get away. Everything must be kept secret. I will send to Sault St. Louis for help."

After talking to the missionary, Kateri felt much better. At last there was hope that she would see Anastasia and My-Sister again. But escaping from the Turtle village would be dangerous. If she were caught it would mean death. But Kateri put her trust in God.

It was almost seven months before plans could actually be made. That autumn the mission had three unexpected visitors. One was a strong convert from the Oneidas called Hot Ashes because of his quick temper. His inspiring talks brought many to Christianity. The other was a Christian Huron. But the third, and most important to Kateri, was the husband of My-Sister, whom Kateri called My-Brother.

How happy Kateri was to see him. They talked for hours about My-Sister and Anastasia. Kateri could not learn enough about her friends.

"We want you to come back with us, little Kateri," My-Brother told her. Together they went to Father de Lamberville to make exact plans.

"Yes, Kateri, the opportunity has come," said the priest. "Your uncle is away at the trading post. We will never have a better chance."

It was decided that Kateri would slip away from the long house before dawn. She would meet My-Brother and the Christian Huron and leave in a small canoe. There would be room for Kateri, because Hot Ashes was not returning with the others. He was going to visit the Oneida Indians to preach to them about the Great Spirit.

It seemed like a long night to Kateri. She lay on her mat, much too excited to sleep. This was the last, the very last time she would ever be in this long house. And My-Aunt had scolded her for the last time.

There was nothing in the Turtle village that she was really sorry to leave now. Her poor aunt would be very angry. Without Kateri there would be much more work for her. Kateri hardly dared think what her uncle would do. She pushed the thought of him from her mind.

Then the waiting was over. The cry of an owl reached her. It was My-Brother telling her that it was time to go. Kateri gathered her tiny bundle of belongings and slipped from the chief's lodge without a backward look. In the square she joined My-Brother and the Huron.

There was no time to waste. Quickly the three made their way to the river and climbed into the waiting canoe. Noiselessly the paddles dipped in and out of the dark glassy water. Arriving at the place where the river turns to the southeast, the Indians hid the canoe in the weeds. The small party continued the long journey on foot. So far no one had spoken a word.

My-Brother led the way, his long legs striding swiftly over the Indian trail. Kateri followed, her small feet moving twice as fast trying to keep up with him. Last of all came the Huron. Sometimes he hung behind, peering searchingly back over the way they had come. They must not be followed! Now the first faint rays of light were beginning to creep through the thick forest. It would not be easy to hide now.

In the Turtle village the day had begun. It was no ordinary day. My-Aunt had called the swiftest messenger to her.

"Go at once," she told him, "and find my husband at the trading post. Tell him Tekakwitha is gone. Tell him that My-Brother and the Huron are gone, too. He will know what to do."

To Kateri's uncle the news of the girl's escape was too much. He had been patient with her when she had refused to marry. He had even allowed her to join the Christians. But now she had left his lodge!

"It will be the last thing she does," thought My-Uncle, snatching up his musket.

The Turtle chief was boiling with rage. Anger seemed to speed him on. Shrewdly he guessed the trail the Christians would take. He knew these forests well. By taking short cuts he knew he could overtake them.

Not far ahead My-Brother turned to Kateri and the Huron.

"We have a long journey ahead, and I fear we do not have enough food. The Dutch trading post is nearby. I will go there for bread. If I see any danger for you,

I will fire one shot. Then you must try to hide. It is our only chance," he said.

Then he looked at Kateri and smiled. She smiled back bravely and in a moment My-Brother was gone.

It was My-Brother who spied the chief first. The Mohawk leader came charging through the forest. In his anger he did not try to hide his approach. My-Brother's heart froze when he saw him. If the chief recognized him there would be no hope. My-Brother decided on a bold plan. He did not try to run or hide. Turning his back on the chief, he looked up into a tree, pretending to be a hunter. He aimed his musket and fired—the signal!

The chief could not see My-Brother's face. In his hurry he did not even stop to question the Indian.

"A hunter—" he muttered disgustedly under his breath and went on.

Farther along the trail the Huron and Kateri heard the danger signal. They knew that they could not run fast enough to escape the angry chief. Thinking quickly, the Huron hid Kateri in a hollowed ledge and covered her with the brown shawl and leaves. Then sitting down cross-legged nearby, he began to smoke.

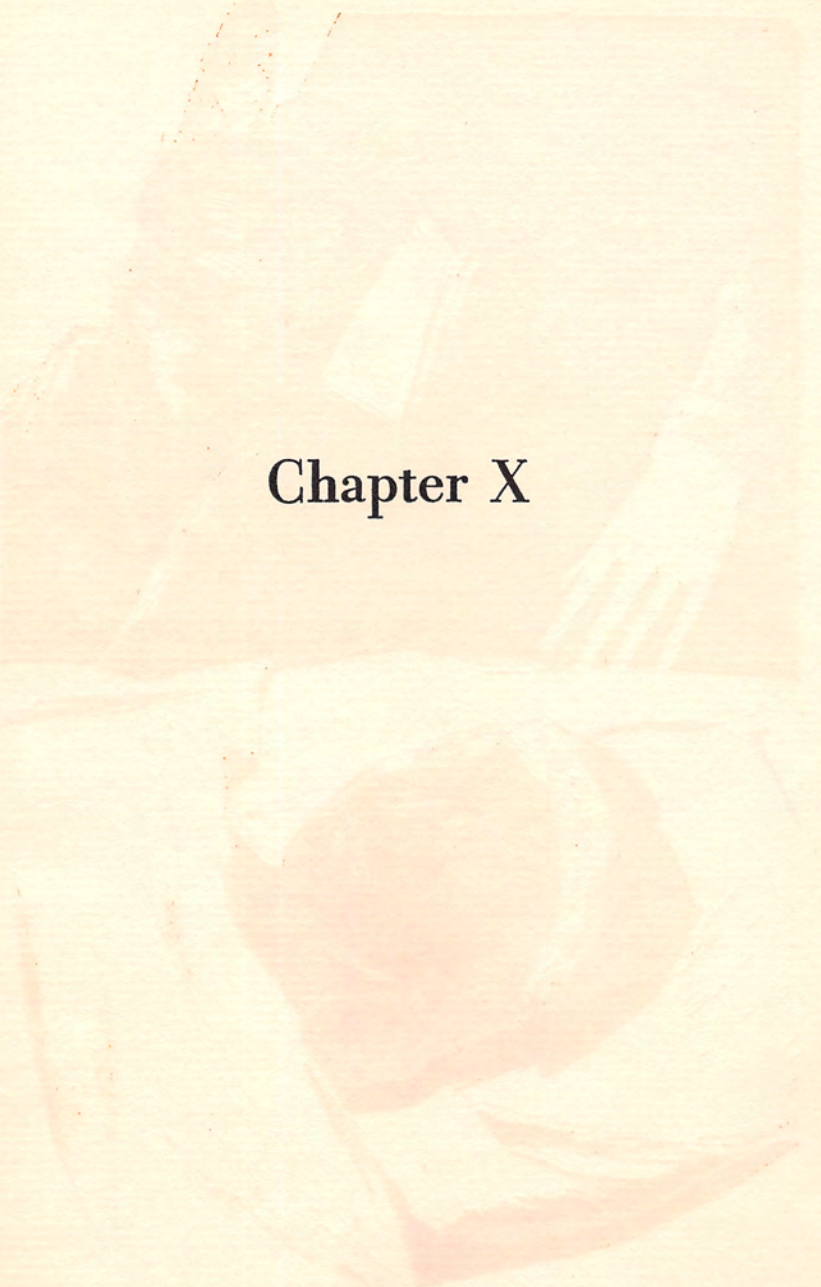
A few minutes later Kateri's uncle reached the clearing. He rushed up to the seated Indian. Although the Huron had spent several days at the Turtle village, the chief had not met him. Fortunately My-Uncle did not for one moment consider that this lone Indian might be the one he was looking for. Standing so close to Kateri that he might have touched her, the chief shouted at the Huron.

"Has anyone passed here—a girl and two braves?"

"Passed here? Girl?" repeated the Huron blankly. He stared at the chief with round eyes. Kateri listened, terrified. Claspng her hands together, she prayed.

The Mohawk chief shook his head in despair. He would never find the girl with fools like these about. Perhaps his squaw was mistaken. How could she think that Tekakwitha would be so foolish as to run away? He could find no trace of her. While the Huron continued to stare at him blankly, these thoughts went through the chief's mind. Suddenly he turned and went back the way he had come.

The Huron waited several minutes; then he called Kateri from her hiding place. When My-Brother joined them again he found the two kneeling in prayer. Laying aside his musket, he too sank reverently to his knees. Certainly God had smiled upon them. It was truly a miraculous escape.



**Chapter X**





No trace of Tekakwitha's scars remained. She was beautiful.

(p. 108)

## X.... Treasure of the Mohawks

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ANASTASIA stood with her arm about Kateri's thin shoulders while Father Chauchetière read the letter sent by Father de Lamberville. Kateri would have blushed to know the fine things the letter said about her.

"I am sending you a treasure," Father de Lamberville had written. "Guard it well."

The priest smiled kindly at the small girl standing before him. She was twenty-one years old, but she looked like a child. For a moment he wondered what Father had meant by "treasure."

"Father de Lamberville is very fond of you," he told Kateri. "He has asked me to help you in every way. We will try to make you happy here."

"We are happy to have her here, Father," replied Anastasia quickly. "We all love Kateri and she has been a very brave girl. We have made arrangements for her to live in our lodge," she said, referring to My-Sister, My-Sister's husband and herself.

"Fine," said the missionary.

Just then Father Frémin came into the chapel. Seeing the newcomer, he came forward to meet her.

"Why, Tekakwitha!" cried Father Frémin in surprise. "Tekakwitha and I are old friends, you know, Father," he said, turning to the other priest.

"Do you remember me?" he asked the girl.

"Oh, yes, Father," she replied at once. "You are one of the first Blackrobes I ever saw. But it's Kateri Tekakwitha now. I am a Christian," she told him proudly. Father Frémin had been one of the three missionaries who had stayed at her uncle's lodge years ago.

As Anastasia and Kateri left the lodge, Father Frémin turned to Father Chauchetière.

"I thought there was something unusual about that child the first time I saw her."

"It seems that you were quite right," replied the other priest. "Father de Lamberville says that she is a treasure. He has never seen such devotion among converts as at the Turtle village. He says that Kateri has been, without even knowing it, a wonderful example to the others."

If Kateri had been an inspiring example in the old village, she was even more so here at the Praying Castle, as the Indians had named their new home.

The missionaries worked hard among their people and they had done a thorough job of instructing these new Christians. But one of the hardest things they had to overcome among the women was their constant gossiping. They did not mean to be wicked, and they did not realize the real harm their gossiping often did.

No matter how hard they tried, when the women were busy in the fields or sitting in the long houses with their beading, somehow the gossiping would begin.

Kateri was surprised at first and just listened in silence. She was too shy to say anything. Even My-Sister and Anastasia forgot themselves and joined in.

Then one day she decided to put aside her shyness. As soon as the gossiping began, she spoke up.

"Do you know the story of St. Christopher? He was so strong and brave. Once he carried our dear Lord on his shoulders across a dangerous river."

All eyes turned to the young girl.

"Why, Kateri," said My-Sister, "I don't remember that story."

"Tell us, Kateri," begged another girl, forgetting the gossip.

And Kateri told the story. She seemed to have a gift for storytelling. The women listened, spellbound. When Kateri had finished they asked for another. Soon they began to look forward to Kateri's stories of the saints. The girl began to search her memory for all the tales that she had learned from the missionaries. Many times the women asked her to tell the story of her own escape. When Kateri was with them the women did not have a chance to gossip.

Kateri hardly ever thought of her old home as the months went by. She was so happy here. Each morning the bells of the chapel awoke the village for morning Mass. The days began and ended with the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. It was a good life and Kateri loved it. She listened carefully to all that Father Chauchetière taught her. For the sake of her heavenly Father she did everything that was asked of her. And yet she wanted to do more.

She worried constantly about committing even the slightest offense against God. Many times she went to the

missionaries, asking them to name some penance that she might practice.

From Anastasia she learned that vanity was a sin often committed by the Indians. At once she decided to put aside her bright beads and beautiful wampum belts. She began to dress very simply.

The missionaries watched all these things carefully. They had begun to see what Father de Lamberville had meant when he said that Kateri was a treasure. Everyone loved her; but more than that, their love for her made them stronger in their faith.

The women no longer gossiped in her presence. When they saw Kateri doing penance for even the slightest sin, they were even sorrier for their own sins.

"We all know how well Kateri has tried to practice her religion," said Father Cholenec to the other missionaries. "Perhaps it is not necessary to wait the usual length of time before giving her Holy Communion."

"You are right," replied Father Frémin. "You may tell Kateri that she can make her first Holy Communion on Christmas Day. It will make her very happy."

How surprised the villagers were to learn that Kateri was to be given this privilege! It only made them more certain that she was a very saintly person and very close to God.

Kateri was sure that this Christmas of 1677 was the second happiest day in her life. The first had been the day she was baptized. Only this day seemed happier, for all her friends could share it.

The winter months were hard on Kateri. She had always been thin and frail. Now it seemed that she was never able to get warm. On the long winter hunting trip she suffered terribly. She became even thinner than before and very weak.

But when the Indians returned she continued her work as usual. The villagers found that she was always willing to help. They came to ask favors. Kateri never refused. She helped nurse the sick. She played with the children and taught them about God. She never thought of herself.

At last My-Sister and Anastasia decided to have a talk with her.

"Kateri," began Anastasia, "you must know that we love you very much. We are worried about you. You are working too hard. You will make yourself sick."

"But I am fine," protested Kateri, laughing.

"No, you're not!" insisted My-Sister kindly. "You are so thin and tired. Oh, Kateri, we are so afraid that something will happen to you," she cried finally, throwing her arms around her adopted sister.

"That is why we think you should marry," said Anastasia at last. "You are of marriageable age now. We will find a good Christian brave and he will provide for you. Then you won't have to work so hard."

Kateri was touched by their kindness, but she knew that she must refuse.

"I have no wish to marry," she told them. "I am happy the way I am."

"But, little one, it is the right thing to do," insisted Anastasia.

Then a mischievous look came into Kateri's eyes.

"If you think it is the right thing to do, why don't you marry again?" she teased the old squaw.

How Anastasia and My-Sister laughed at the thought of the older woman marrying again. So the matter was forgotten with their joking.

But Kateri did not forget. The next day she went to Father Cholenec. At last she must tell the secret she kept nearest her heart.

"Father, I have no wish to marry. I want to belong only to our Lord. I wish to take a vow of chastity. May I?" she asked.

The missionary was astounded. It was unheard of for a Mohawk girl not to marry. He questioned Kateri carefully, and at last he decided that she really meant what she said.

"This is an important decision, Kateri. If you are still sure a few months from now, I think it will be possible," he said, trying not to show his excitement.

That evening he talked the matter over with the other missionaries.

"It is truly amazing," exclaimed Father Frémin. So far none of the missionaries had tried to suggest to the Indians that giving up marriage and worldly possessions for God would bring them closer to Him. Now Kateri had suggested it herself.

At the Praying Castle Kateri met a Christian Indian named Marie Thérèse. She and Kateri became good friends almost at once.

Marie Thérèse felt that she had been a terrible sinner in the past. She had not tried to resist the temptations of Indian life. Now she was sorry. She wanted to make up for her sins.

Kateri was so kind and friendly that Marie Thérèse could not help telling her the whole story.

"Don't worry, Marie Thérèse. We will do penance together. I am sure God has forgiven you already," Kateri assured her new friend. She was so moved by the sad story that her heart went out to the young woman. After that they were almost always seen together.

Kateri told Marie Thérèse her secret. Father Cholenec had promised that she might take a vow of chastity. Marie Thérèse was so impressed by Kateri's devotion that she wanted to follow her example. Marie Thérèse had already been married, but her husband had died. She promised God that she would never marry again. Now the two felt closer than ever to God. They had given up everything for Him.

Kateri lived happily at the Praying Castle for almost three years. But it was a hard life for one so frail, perhaps too hard. The winter months were especially difficult. After her first year at the mission Kateri and Marie Thérèse decided to remain in the village during this time. During the winter most of the Indians went on a long hunting trip. Those who went were unable to hear Mass or receive the sacraments, since the missionaries stayed in the village. Food was very scarce for those who were left behind. But Kateri could not bear the thought of missing Mass and her daily devotions in the chapel. She and



Marie Thérèse moved to a small cabin, where they lived happily together.

As time went by Kateri's devotion seemed more and more remarkable. She inspired many to improve their way of life by her fine example. She never had a harsh word for anyone. There was nothing that she was asked to do that she did not do willingly for God.

There were many here, as in the Turtle village, who felt that to be near Kateri was to be nearer to God.

During the winter Kateri looked forward to the spring. She loved this time of year best. It meant the beginning of new life, when the world became beautiful again. Living was easier after the hard winter. But best of all spring brought Easter, the feast of our Lord's glorious Resurrection.

Sadly enough it was in the spring almost three years after Kateri had come to the Praying Castle that she fell seriously ill. All her friends were gathered about her. Only My-Sister and Anastasia were not there. They had not returned from the winter hunt. But Marie Thérèse was near and could comfort her friend. The entire village seemed hushed and waiting. Not one of the Indians could bear the thought that Kateri was leaving.

Then the soft tinkle of a bell was heard coming toward the lodge. Two of the missionaries, followed by a procession of the villagers, were bringing Holy Communion to Kateri. This had never happened at the Praying Castle before.

In the lodge Kateri lay in borrowed clothes for the special occasion. She was so pale and thin that she looked

far older than her twenty-four years. Her face, scarred by smallpox, was yellowed and rough. But the love shining in her eyes was beautiful.

Two days later, the Wednesday of Holy Week, Father Cholenec knew that Kateri had only a few hours to live. He brought her Extreme Unction. The villagers crowded outside the cabin. The fields were deserted.

"I cannot leave you," whispered Marie Thérèse. It was time for her to go to the fields, but she could not go.

Then Kateri's soft voice came. "Go. It will be all right. I will be here when you return."

Marie Thérèse told the others what Kateri had said. God had granted the saintly girl so many favors that the Indians were sure He would grant this last one. Quietly they went about their work.

When they returned in the afternoon they found Kateri waiting. Softly she whispered her goodbyes.

To Marie Thérèse she said, "Remember, I will help you from heaven. I will pray for you."

As she closed her eyes for the last time the Indians about her prayed fervently, but not for Kateri's soul. No, so certain were they of her saintliness that they immediately began to pray to the Indian maiden herself for their own souls.

About fifteen minutes later Father Cholenec looked up from his prayers at her bedside. He let out a cry of amazement.

At once the others followed his gaze. Kateri Tekakwitha, who in life had been scarred and old-looking

beyond her years, had been transformed. No trace of scars could be seen. She was beautiful.

The Indians gasped and asked the missionaries to explain this miracle.

"It is the beautiful soul of our little Kateri shining through," said Father Chauchetière. "She is with God now."

When Kateri Tekakwitha died on April 17, 1680, the real treasure of the Mohawks was found. Many turned to her for help and Kateri showered favors upon them. The villagers became fired with a great religious feeling. And Kateri's story was spread everywhere. Now many Indians spoke of doing penance and giving up everything for God. Hadn't God shown through Kateri Tekakwitha the rewards the faithful would receive in heaven, the joy they would find in sacrifice for God?

When Anastasia and My-Sister heard the news on returning from the hunting trip, they were grief-stricken.

"If only I could have been with her," cried Anastasia. She was terribly unhappy.

A few months later Anastasia went to Father Chauchetière. For the first time since Kateri's death she looked happy. Kateri had appeared to her in a dream the night before. She was carrying a cross and begging that all should turn to it as she had.

Father was more than ever convinced of Kateri's saintliness. Within the year several miraculous cures were effected through the intercession of Kateri Tekakwitha.

A Frenchman, Claude Caron, was cured of a serious illness. A Christian Iroquois, suffering from a long and

painful sickness, was rubbed with earth from Kateri's tomb. He was cured almost immediately.

Not long after her death Kateri appeared to Father Chauchetière himself. She asked him to paint her picture and write her story so that others would follow her way of life. She promised to help any who asked her for favors.

Father Chauchetière did as she asked.

During the years that followed many favors were attributed to Kateri. Devotion to her increased as time went on.

In 1884 the Archbishops and Bishops of the whole United States asked Pope Leo XIII to begin the process for her beatification. This is the first step to calling anyone a saint.

In Rome there is a group of priests and Cardinals who make a study of such cases. This is the Sacred Congregation of Rites. They studied all the records for many years. Finally, in 1943, they declared that the records prove that the goodness of Kateri Tekakwitha was so great that it could be called "heroic."

The Church then permitted her to be called "Venerable." Many people of both the white race and the Indian race are hoping and praying that Kateri Tekakwitha will finally be declared a saint. If this happens and the "Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha" becomes "Saint Kateri Tekakwitha," she will be our very first Indian saint.

Yes, the treasure was richer and greater than the missionaries had dared dream. God had planted a Lily among the Mohawks.

*BOOKS*  
*ABOUT*  
*KATERI TEKAKWITHA*

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