

PART ONE . . . BOOK ONE

CHAPTER I

Birth of Katharine

Before Katharine Tekakwitha came to the Mission of Saint Francis Xavier of the Sault, where the Iroquois had professed the Christian religion for not more than twenty-five or thirty years, Our Lord seemed to prepare the place for a maiden so virtuous. This preparation began in ~~1670~~ 1667, when He inspired Father Peter Rafeix to found a new establishment at Prairie de la Madeleine, where three or four lodges of savages who wintered there with the French, became the foundation of the mission which is now the Sault. We learn from the *Annals* that they left Laprairie only because the land was not fertile enough to support them.

God took seven years to establish this new church in which may be seen Christians as faithful as those of the primitive Church. This may be observed from their lives which are given at the end and in the course of the *Annals*. By the goodness of God I was sent to this holy mission in 1677 and three or four months after my arrival, He allowed Katharine to come here from the land of the Mohawks, where she was born.

Katharine's mother was a devout Christian Algonquin woman, who had been taken by the Iroquois at Three Rivers

1667

a during the wars waged against the Hurons and the Algonquins under the rule of M. de Tracy and M. de Courcelles. It was the lot of this poor captured Algonquin to be married to an Iroquois. From this marriage between a Christian woman and a pagan, our Katharine was born. The woman, whose baptismal name I do not know, lived with her husband and children at Gandaouague, a small village of the Mohawks.

An epidemic of smallpox caused the death of many adults and children and perhaps this obliged the savages to make peace with the French. Katharine's mother died and left two small children, regretting only that she had to leave them unbaptized. It was said that she was a good Christian, that she prayed until her death, and that perhaps her prayer obtained the grace of Baptism for her daughter, and, for us, the grace of possessing a saint. The other child died and only Katharine remained. It was thought that she too would die at the age of four, because she had an attack of smallpox. This, in the course of time, obtained for her the blessing of virginity. Her face, which was formerly pretty, became ugly; she almost lost her eyesight, and her eyes were so hurt by this disease that she could not bear a strong light. This obliged her to remain wrapped in her blanket, and favored her wish to remain unknown. She often thanked Our Lord for this favor, calling her affliction a blessing, for if she had been pretty she would have been more sought by the young men, and so might have abandoned herself to sin as did the other girls in the country of the Iroquois.

This child never did anything that might be said to offend God, since from the age of six or seven she began to have a certain natural modesty, which is the guardian of chastity. Her good nature and the care her mother took of her while she was

still living, that is until she was four or five years old, went far to make her grow in age and wisdom. Nevertheless, during her life she considered herself a great sinner, because it seemed as if she had a stain on her body, which she was very careful to hide.

CHAPTER II

Her Early Years

The natural inclination which girls have to appear attractive makes them put great value on bodily ornaments. For this reason savage girls of seven or eight are foolish and very fond of beads. The mothers, who are even more foolish, spend a great deal of time dressing the hair of their daughters. They see to it that their ears are well pierced, and begin from the cradle to pierce them. They paint their faces and cover themselves with beads when they are going to dance.

The people to whose care Katharine was committed when her mother died, decided that she should marry early and therefore encouraged all these small vanities, but the little Tekakwitha, who was not yet a Christian and had not been baptized, had a natural indifference for such things. She was still a small tree without flowers or fruit, but the small wild olive-tree was growing so well that one day it would bear beautiful fruit. She was a heaven, covered by the darkness of paganism, but a heaven indeed, because she was very far removed from the corruption of the savages. She was gentle, patient, chaste, innocent, and behaved like a well-bred French child. This is the testimony given concerning her by those who knew her from the time she was a small child, and who have

... The text, however, thus revised, is perfectly similar to the manuscript of Quebec, and especially towards the end of the biography, where some cures are recorded. There are a few additions made only in this MS.

We have followed the original manuscript of Quebec for our edition. The additions in Le Brun's manuscript, correctly indicated, have been reproduced in their proper place. The spelling is modern. Finally, remark that the original text is divided into three books. For reasons of obvious usefulness, we have introduced other subdivisions, which correspond with the several chapters. Accordingly, the titles in *italics* are our own addition.

The Life of Katharine Tegakoüita
First Iroquois Virgin

BOOK ONE

Birth and Youth of Katharine

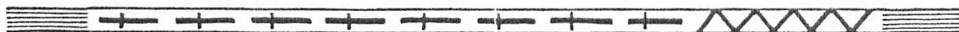
Katharine Tegakoüita who today is so renowned in New France because of the extraordinary marvels which God has performed and continues to perform everywhere through her intercession, was born among the Iroquois in the year 1656, in the village of Agniers, called Gandaouage. Her mother, who was of the Algonquin nation, had been baptized and raised among the French in the city of Three Rivers. It was there she was captured by the Iroquois, who were then waging war with us, and who carried her off as a slave to their country. She lived among them and soon after was married to an Indian of that nation, by whom she had two children, a boy and a girl, Katharine. It was told of this virtuous woman, as it has been said before her of the holy man Tobias, that she preserved her faith and the fear of God in her captivity, that she always prayed until her last breath, but that she had neither the time nor the consolation to inspire these praiseworthy sen-

timents in her two children, and that if she had the joy of bringing them into the world, she also had the sorrow of leaving it without seeing them baptized, which was her one desire.

An epidemic of smallpox broke out among the Iroquois and killed a great many. She also died from the disease, leaving her two children who were still very young and incapable of taking care of themselves. She prayed to Him who was their Creator, that He might also be their Father and take them under His divine protection. We see in the person of our Katharine that God heard so just a prayer; as for her brother, he died from the same sickness a little while after his mother. Katharine also caught this disease, but Our Lord, who had chosen her to be His bride, so that in her the marvels of His grace might shine forth, saved her from death. She remained very weak for the rest of her life; her eyes especially were so affected that she was not able to suffer broad daylight, but was obliged during her entire life to hide her face in her blanket when she left the cabin. Thus she is always portrayed unlike the other savages, who wear their blankets on the shoulders.

We have not been able to ascertain what became of her father; we only know that Katharine, being orphaned at the age of four, lived with her uncle, one of the most important seniors of the village. Her aunts, who took all the more care of her since they hoped to benefit by it in the future, succeeded in giving her a good formation.

The child had a lovable disposition; she was sweet and as she grew in years she also grew visibly in goodness; all her inclinations tended to virtue. God, who wished her for Himself, early inspired her with love of work and solitude; it may be said that these two inclinations were the sources of the innocent life she led in the country of the Iroquois. She went out



DOCUMENT XII

LETTER OF FATHER CHOLENEC, S.J., to Father Le Blanc, S.J., containing a *Life of the Servant of God Katharine*, August 27, 1715. From the Original MS preserved in the monastery Hotel Dieu, Quebec.

This letter is a real biography of the Servant of God, written by the same Father Peter Cholenec, who in the year 1696 had composed the extensive *Life*, recorded in Document X. The occasion through which this new biography comes to light is indicated in its preamble: Father Le Blanc, Procurator of the Canadian Missions, residing in France, who had been a missionary at the Sault, asked information of the life and virtues of the Servant of God from Father Cholenec evidently with intention of publication. In fact it appeared immediately following Vol. XIII of *Lettres édifiantes*, Paris, 1717. This life of the Servant of God is the first ever published. Later, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many other editions appeared (cf. Streit, *Bibl. Missionum*, III, p. 463, n. 1341), and these furnished source-material for many publications on the Servant of God.

As for its content, following as it does the extensive *Life* composed by the same author twenty years before, this biography does not present any special interest; but it brings out a proof of the reputation for sanctity and the constant veneration of the Servant of God, thirty-five years after her death. Comparison of this text with others by the same author is useful as a matter of confirmation and of accuracy.

Our edition is based on a copy furnished to us by the Promoters of the Cause.

Sault Saint Louis,
August 27, 1715

The Peace of Our Lord be with you:

Dear Reverend Father:

The marvels which God is working every day through the intercession of a young Iroquois virgin who has lived and died

among us in the odor of sanctity, have induced me to inform you of the particulars of her life, although you have not pressed me in your letters to enter into detail. You have yourself been a witness of these marvels, when you discharged here with so much zeal the duties of a missionary, and you know that the high Prelate who governs this church, touched by the prodigies with which God has deigned to honor the memory of his holy maiden, has with reason called her the *Genevieve of New France*. All the French who are in the colonies, as well as the Indians, hold her in singular veneration. They come from a great distance to pray at her tomb, and many, by her intercession, have been immediately cured of their maladies, and have received from heaven other extraordinary favors. I will write you nothing, Reverend Father, which I have not myself seen during the time she was under my care, or which I have not learned from the missionary who conferred on her the rite of Holy Baptism.

Tegahkouita (which is the name of the sainted young woman about whom I am going to inform you), was born in the year 1656, at Gandaouagué, one of the settlements of the lower Iroquois, who are called Agniez. Her father was an Iroquois and a heathen; her mother, who was a Christian, was an Algonquin, and had been baptized at the village of Three Rivers, where she was brought up among the French. During the time that we were at war with the Iroquois, she was taken prisoner by these Indians and remained a captive in their country. We have since learned that thus in the very bosom of heathenism she preserved her faith even to her death. By her marriage she had two children, one son and one daughter, and the latter is the subject of this narrative; but she had the desolation of dying without having been able to procure for them the grace

of Baptism. In a few days the smallpox which ravaged the Iroquois country, removed her husband, her son, and herself. Tegahkouita was also attacked with the others, but she did not sink as they did under the violence of the disease. Thus, at the age of four years she found herself an orphan, under the care of her aunts, and in the power of an uncle who was the leading man in the settlement.

The smallpox had injured her eyes, and this infirmity having rendered her incapable of enduring the glare of light, she remained during whole days shut up in her cabin. By degrees she began to love this seclusion, so that what she first endured only from necessity, at length became her preference. This inclination for retirement, so contrary to the usual spirit of the young Iroquois, was the principal cause of her preserving her innocence of life while living in such scenes of corruption.

When she was a little older, she occupied herself at home in rendering to her aunt all the services of which she was capable, and which were in accordance with her sex. She ground the grain, went in search of water, and carried the wood; for such among these Indians are the ordinary employments of females. The rest of her time she spent in making little articles, for which she possessed an extraordinary skill. By this means she avoided two rocks which would have been equally fatal to her innocence—idleness, so common in those parts among her own sex, and which is the source of an infinite number of vices; and the extreme passion they have to spend their time in gossiping visits, and to show themselves in public places where they can display their finery. For it is not necessary to believe that this kind of vanity is confined to civilized nations; our Indian females especially the young girls, have a great taste for parading their ornaments, some of which they

DOCUMENT XIII

LETTER AND LIFE OF KATHARINE TEKAKWITHA, *first to vow virginity among the Iroquois barbarians*, by Father Cholenec, S.J., to Father Michael Angelo Tamburini, General of the Society of Jesus, Sept. 26, 1715. From the autograph copy in the Archives of Saint Mary's College, S.J., Montreal, Series A, Portfolio 11, No. a.

This document is of the same nature as the preceding and is also from the pen of Father Cholenec. Herein also is given a biographical sketch of the Servant of God. It was prepared for the Provost-General of the Society of Jesus in the Latin Language. Naturally the two texts have many points in common, but in this second document a well-illustrated fact is especially developed, namely, the virtue of chastity and the love for virginity, which prompted the Servant of God to take her vow.

The text of this document, as attached to the Process showed numerous readings certainly incorrect, and several omissions. For this reason, we endeavored to trace the original, which according to the Promoters of the Cause, should be in the general archives of the Society of Jesus; but the archivist of the Society searched diligently for it and notified us that he could not find it. Fortunately, however, through the interest of the archivist, we have come to know of and have received photographs of a copy, existing in Montreal. This is one of the numerous copies of documents procured by Father Martin in the last century for the Archives of Saint Mary's College, at Montreal. The text of this copy is very correct and we follow it exactly. It has a continuity of parts, that is, without any divisions. The subdivisions and sub-titles shown in italics are by the Promoters of the Cause and are taken from the copy attached to the Process. Finally, it must be said that the original text is, as far as we know, unpublished, but a French version was made and published in the year 1889, in the *Semaine Religieuse* of Montreal.

*To the Very Reverend Father,
Reverend Father MICHAEL ANGELO TAMBURINI,
Provost-General of the Society of Jesus:*

We bring to Your Paternity a flower rising from a mass of thorns, a new light shining in utter darkness, the first virgin among the savage Iroquois, a girl who by the altogether singular blessing of divine Providence lived over twenty years among these same Iroquois (and that is to say she lived in a welter of every sort of wickedness), without stain of body or soul. From this one life you will see that your workers, in this vineyard of Canada, whom you favor with remarkable kindness, are not altogether useless or wasting their time. May it be the part, Very Reverend Father, of your well-known goodness to accord them your kindly thoughts, to add new missionaries to the ranks of the old, to cherish the missions themselves—in particular that of Saint Francis Xavier, which God Almighty has deigned to make famous in the merits of our Katharine and to fortify by her example. I know you will accept this tiny and almost barbarous gift in a kindly way, and that you will acknowledge the power of the Divine Spirit in these far-flung tribes lately won to Christ; that at the same time you will grant to their shepherds—to me in particular—your paternal blessing.

*Very Reverend Father, Your Paternity's very humble
and most respectful servant and son in Christ,*

PETER CHOLENEC, S.J.
Missionary in Canada

*From the Mission of Saint Francis Xavier,
September 26, 1715*

*THE LIFE OF KATHARINE TEKAKWITHA**The First Among the Iroquois Savages to Pronounce the Vow of Virginity*

Katharine Tekakwitha, a new star in the New World, had for her mother an Algonquin woman, who was baptized by the Jesuit missionaries at Three Rivers and brought up a Christian. While the Iroquois were making an incursion into Canada, this woman was taken captive and carried off to the Iroquois country, where she married one of the chiefs of the village and by him had two children—Katharine (of whom we write) and her brother. The pious woman died in an epidemic which swept the Iroquois villages, but, as the sacred scriptures tell of Tobias, she did not leave the way of truth. Her small son died with her. Katharine alone survived and her virtue began to shine in the darkness. The girl was of mild disposition; she was indeed a good soul, and seemed well adapted for every kind of virtue. Her prudence increased with her years. Her chief pursuit was of solitude and work, and from this in later years an entirely wonderful innocence of life and moral integrity blossomed forth. Unless under real necessity she hardly ever left her cabin; she was ever intent on her household work. And yet it is the common thing among savage women of her age to gad about from cabin to cabin, visiting friends, gossiping and idling whole days away, with little use for work.

She avoids scandals.—But the one thing above the rest which is wonderful and like to a miracle, was her altogether innate horror of any sort of obscenity, joined to an equal love of

in writing everything that has come to us from all sides about our Katharine, and is still coming. I shall say but this: Among the miracles related as having been performed by Katharine, I consider the greatest of them all to be Katharine herself, truly the Wonder Worker of the New World.



DOCUMENT XIV

EXTRACT FROM THE WORK: *Recent Journey in Canada or New France and the Wars Between the French and the English and the Aborigines*, by De Bacqueville de la Potherie, 1716. From the Paris Edition, 1753, Vol. I, pp. 351-358.

Claude Charles le Roy, the Lord of Bacqueville de la Potherie, was born of a noble French family at Guadaloupe in 1668. He was still a very young man when he entered the administrative offices of the Marine. In 1698 he was sent to Canada, as controller-general of the Marine and of the fortifications of New France. He retired to Guadaloupe in 1703, as chief aide to the Governor, and died there in 1738.

Since 1702 he had obtained the privilege from the King to publish his historico-geographical memoirs on Canada. This work was published in 1716, in four volumes, duodecimo, under the title mentioned above. The work was later reprinted variously, but with a more general title and one less in correspondence with the matter contained in the *Histoire de l'Amerique Septentrionale*, editions of 1722 and 1753.

In the first volume is a well-developed account of Tekakwitha. As the text shows, the account was written about 1705. It does not furnish new historical data, but it is important because of the reputation for sanctity of the Servant of God and because of the miracles which had been granted through her intercession.

We make use of the Parisian edition of 1753, attached to the Process, since it has been impossible to have at hand the first edition of 1716.

The reputation of the Iroquois girl, Katharine Tegakouita, is so commendable in this new world that we must not pass by this model of virtue and holiness in silence. Her memory is held in great veneration, and it has been observed that many persons have felt wonderful effects from the pious confidence they have placed in her on different occasions. However that may be, about twenty-five years ago [1680] there was among the Iroquois a girl twenty-five years of age, who possessed the best qualities of the Algonquins and of the Iroquois. She was born of an Algonquin mother and of an Iroquois father. Her mother had been captured forty years previously in the great overthrow of her nation. Conducted to the Iroquois, they spared her life and married her to one of their tribe. She had been baptized at Three Rivers by the Jesuit Fathers and never forgot the duties of Christianity in the midst of an infidel nation. Tegakouita, who was born later, doubtlessly was the recompense of the Christian life she had always led. This girl lived among the Iroquois in an inexplicable innocence until she was twenty-two years old. While still very young, she had small-pox which disfigured her considerably. Before her Baptism she preserved a natural modesty which led her to shun the pleasures of the senses, and even marriage. In fact, she wished never to marry. This was not in order to be freer in her actions, but so that she might be guided only by Providence, and to devote herself more freely to the exercises of piety.

One did not find in her the vices to which savage girls, who care only for debauchery, are so much subject. She was not at all given to the visions and dreams which occupy their imagination so much, and of which they make a divinity.

Her greatest fault was to permit them to dress her too properly, which she did only to pass the time or to comply with

vers 1665 9



DOCUMENT XV

EXTRACTS FROM *The Annals of Hotel Dieu*, QUEBEC, by Mother Juchereau of Saint Ignatius, 1713-1723. From the original MS in the Monastery Hotel Dieu, Quebec.

Among the sources of the history of Canada, *The Annals of the Hotel Dieu*, Quebec, are very important. The Hotel Dieu was a famous hospital, founded in 1637 and placed under the care of the Augustinian Sisters. These *Annals* were composed by Sister Joanna Frances Juchereau de la Ferté, known in religion as Sister Saint Ignatius, who was the Superioress of that hospital from 1683 to her death in 1723. The composition of the *Annals* ranged through 1713 to 1723.

In 1680 a rather brief but complete account is given concerning the Servant of God, Katharine. The author naturally must have taken the biographical data from some *Life* already in circulation, probably, it would seem, from that by Father Cholenec. It is not the present purpose to take new biographical data from it. The importance of this account consists mainly in its witness to the reputation for sanctity which the Servant of God already enjoyed throughout the entire Canadian scene.

The Annals of the Hotel Dieu were published in 1752 by a Sulpician, Bertrand de la Tour: *Histoire de l'Hôtel Dieu de Québec*, Montauban, 1752. (Cf. *Bibl. Missionum*, III, p. 480, n. 1408.)

Our extract has been edited by the Promoters of the Cause, according to the original text preserved at Quebec.



1680

*Death of the Good Iroquois Maiden
Katharine Tegahkouita*

On the seventeenth of April of the following year, 1680, the good Iroquois maiden, Katharine Tegahkouita, died in the odor of sanctity at Sault Saint Louis, where she had been living for several years. Her mother was a Christian Algonquin who had been baptized at Three Rivers and brought up by some French people. While very young she was seized in war by the Iroquois and taken captive to their country where she preserved her faith until death, though she became the wife of an Iroquois very stubborn in his superstitions. By him she had two children, of whom Katharine alone survived and became an orphan at the age of four. The smallpox which devastated her whole tribe, deprived her of father, mother, and brother. She herself suffered severely from this malady, which nearly destroyed her sight. This was the beginning of her happiness, for her misfortune, on account of which she could not endure broad daylight obliged her to live in retirement. Since solitude is always a great advantage, in her desire to amuse herself alone she set about performing small tasks in which she was very dexterous, so that her laborious and solitary life brought her at once two great benefits: it kept her from sin, and disposed her to receive with a holy ardor the first seeds of Christianity as soon as she heard of it. The missionaries who were sent to the Iroquois after the Marquis de Tracy had made peace with them in 1666, were lodged at the hut where she lived, and although she was very young she was entrusted with its care.

DOCUMENT XVII

EXTRACT FROM THE WORK, *History and General Description of New France*, by Father Francis Xavier de Charlevoix, S.J., Paris, 1744 (Didot, publisher), Vol. II, pp. 437-459.

Father Francis Xavier de Charlevoix, S.J. (1682-1761), is a well known writer among the historians of the missions. While still a young scholastic, he was sent to Quebec in 1705, and taught there in the College of the Jesuit Fathers. Here he began to gather material for his *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*. After his return to his country he was sent again to Canada in 1709, with a royal mandate to undertake a voyage of exploration. In 1721 he visited the Mission of the Sault. (Cf. E. Leconte, *Katharine Tekakwitha*, 2d ed., Montreal, 1930, p. 283.) He returned to France in 1722, to give a report of the results of his journey, which was contained in a voluminous work published in 1744: *Histoire et Description générale de la Nouvelle-France avec le Journal historique d'un Voyage fait par ordre du Roi dans l'Amérique Septentrionale*, 6 vols., Paris 1744. (Cf. Streit, *Bibl. Missionum*, III, p. 476, n. 1390, where several editions and translations are recorded.)

Father Charlevoix included in his work a long account of the Servant of God, which is followed by a letter of Father Cholenec to Father Le Blanc. (Doc. XIII) Accordingly, the matter here treated is already familiar, but in a certain sense is more valuable, because the author knew personally both Father de Lamberville and Father Cholenec, and visited the Mission of the Sault, and there perceived, as we may easily suppose, the still echoing report of the virtues, and of the reputation for sanctity of the Servant of God. We have made use for our text of a copy inserted into the Process by the Promoters of the Cause edited according to the Paris edition of Didot (1744).

Katharine Tegahkouita, Iroquois Virgin

New France has had her apostles and her martyrs, and has given the church saints in all conditions, and I do not hesitate to say that they would have done honor to the primitive ages of Christianity. Several I have made known, so far as the course of this history permitted me. The lives of some have been published; but God, who exalted His glory during their lifetime by the great things which He effected through them,

by the lustre which their sanctity has diffused over this vast continent, by the courage with which He inspired them laboriously to found a new Christendom amid the most fearful barbarism, and to cement it with their blood, chose none of these to display on their tombs all the riches of His power and mercy; but conferred this honor on a young neophyte, almost unknown to the whole country during her life. For more than sixty years she has been regarded as the Protectress of Canada, and it has been impossible to oppose a kind of *cultus* publicly rendered to her.

This holy virgin, so celebrated under the name of Katharine Tegahkouita, was born in 1656, at Gandahouhagué, a town in the Mohawk canton, of a heathen Iroquois father and a Christian Algonquin mother. She lost her mother at the age of four, and was still quite young when her father died, leaving her to the care of one of her aunts, and under the control of an uncle who had the chief authority in his village. The small-pox, which she had in her infancy, having weakened her sight, she was long compelled, as it were, to remain in the corner of a cabin, her eyes being unable to stand the light, and this retirement was the first source of her happiness. What she did at first from necessity, she continued to do from choice, thereby avoiding whatever could cause her to lose that moral purity so hard to preserve amid idolatrous and then very dissolute youth.

As soon as she saw herself of age to act, she took on herself almost all the toil of the household; and this shielded her from two dangers, fatal to most Indian girls; I mean, private conversations and idleness. Her relatives however wished her to use the decorations common to young persons of her sex, and although she yielded from simple compliance with their wishes, and with all possible repugnance, it was a matter of much

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The smallpox had injured her eyes, and this infirmity having rendered her incapable of enduring the glare of light, she remained during whole days shut up in her cabin. By degrees she began to love this seclusion, so that what she first endured only from necessity, at length became her preference. This inclination for retirement, so contrary to the usual spirit of the young Iroquois, was the principal cause of her preserving her innocence of life while living in such scenes of corruption.

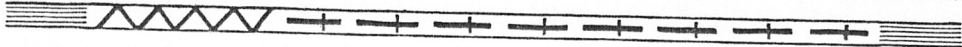
When she was a little older, she occupied herself at home in rendering to her aunt all the services of which she was capable, and which were in accordance with her sex. She ground the grain, went in search of water, and carried the wood; for such among these Indians are the ordinary employments of females. The rest of her time she spent in making little articles, for which she possessed an extraordinary skill. By this means she avoided two rocks which would have been equally fatal to her innocence—idleness, so common in those parts among her own sex, and which is the source of an infinite number of vices; and the extreme passion they have to spend their time in gossiping visits, and to show themselves in public places where they can display their finery. For it is not necessary to believe that this kind of vanity is confined to civilized nations; our Indian females especially the young girls, have a great taste for parading their ornaments, some of which they

DOCUMENT XIII

LETTER AND LIFE OF KATHARINE TEKAKWITHA, *first to vow virginity among the Iroquois barbarians*, by Father Cholenec, S.J., to Father Michael Angelo Tamburini, General of the Society of Jesus, Sept. 26, 1715. From the autograph copy in the Archives of Saint Mary's College, S.J., Montreal, Series A, Portfolio 11, No. a.

This document is of the same nature as the preceding and is also from the pen of Father Cholenec. Herein also is given a biographical sketch of the Servant of God. It was prepared for the Provost-General of the Society of Jesus in the Latin Language. Naturally the two texts have many points in common, but in this second document a well-illustrated fact is especially developed, namely, the virtue of chastity and the love for virginity, which prompted the Servant of God to take her vow.

The text of this document, as attached to the Process showed numerous readings certainly incorrect, and several omissions. For this reason, we endeavored to trace the original, which according to the Promoters of the Cause, should be in the general archives of the Society of Jesus; but the archivist of the Society searched diligently for it and notified us that he could not find it. Fortunately, however, through the interest of the archivist, we have come to know of and have received photographs of a copy, existing in Montreal. This is one of the numerous copies of documents procured by Father Martin in the last century for the Archives of Saint Mary's College, at Montreal. The text of this copy is very correct and we follow it exactly. It has a continuity of parts, that is, without any divisions. The subdivisions and sub-titles shown in italics are by the Promoters of the Cause and are taken from the copy attached to the Process. Finally, it must be said that the original text is, as far as we know, unpublished, but a French version was made and published in the year 1889, in the *Semaine Religieuse* of Montreal.

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To the Very Reverend Father,
Reverend Father MICHAEL ANGELO TAMBURINI,
Provost-General of the Society of Jesus:

We bring to Your Paternity a flower rising from a mass of thorns, a new light shining in utter darkness, the first virgin among the savage Iroquois, a girl who by the altogether singular blessing of divine Providence lived over twenty years among these same Iroquois (and that is to say she lived in a welter of every sort of wickedness), without stain of body or soul. From this one life you will see that your workers, in this vineyard of Canada, whom you favor with remarkable kindness, are not altogether useless or wasting their time. May it be the part, Very Reverend Father, of your well-known goodness to accord them your kindly thoughts, to add new missionaries to the ranks of the old, to cherish the missions themselves—in particular that of Saint Francis Xavier, which God Almighty has deigned to make famous in the merits of our Katharine and to fortify by her example. I know you will accept this tiny and almost barbarous gift in a kindly way, and that you will acknowledge the power of the Divine Spirit in these far-flung tribes lately won to Christ; that at the same time you will grant to their shepherds—to me in particular—your paternal blessing.

*Very Reverend Father, Your Paternity's very humble
and most respectful servant and son in Christ,*

PETER CHOLENEC, S.J.
Missionary in Canada

*From the Mission of Saint Francis Xavier,
September 26, 1715*

THE LIFE OF KATHARINE TEKAKWITHA

The First Among the Iroquois Savages to Pronounce the Vow of Virginity

Katharine Tekakwitha, a new star in the New World, had for her mother an Algonquin woman, who was baptized by the Jesuit missionaries at Three Rivers and brought up a Christian. While the Iroquois were making an incursion into Canada, this woman was taken captive and carried off to the Iroquois country, where she married one of the chiefs of the village and by him had two children—Katharine (of whom we write) and her brother. The pious woman died in an epidemic which swept the Iroquois villages, but, as the sacred scriptures tell of Tobias, she did not leave the way of truth. Her small son died with her. Katharine alone survived and her virtue began to shine in the darkness. The girl was of mild disposition; she was indeed a good soul, and seemed well adapted for every kind of virtue. Her prudence increased with her years. Her chief pursuit was of solitude and work, and from this in later years an entirely wonderful innocence of life and moral integrity blossomed forth. Unless under real necessity she hardly ever left her cabin; she was ever intent on her household work. And yet it is the common thing among savage women of her age to gad about from cabin to cabin, visiting friends, gossiping and idling whole days away, with little use for work.

She avoids scandals.—But the one thing above the rest which is wonderful and like to a miracle, was her altogether innate horror of any sort of obscenity, joined to an equal love of

in writing everything that has come to us from all sides about our Katharine, and is still coming. I shall say but this: Among the miracles related as having been performed by Katharine, I consider the greatest of them all to be Katharine herself, truly the Wonder Worker of the New World.



DOCUMENT XIV

EXTRACT FROM THE WORK: *Recent Journey in Canada or New France and the Wars Between the French and the English and the Aborigines*, by De Bacqueville de la Potherie, 1716. From the Paris Edition, 1753, Vol. I, pp. 351-358.

Claude Charles le Roy, the Lord of Bacqueville de la Potherie, was born of a noble French family at Guadaloupe in 1668. He was still a very young man when he entered the administrative offices of the Marine. In 1698 he was sent to Canada, as controller-general of the Marine and of the fortifications of New France. He retired to Guadaloupe in 1703, as chief aide to the Governor, and died there in 1738.

Since 1702 he had obtained the privilege from the King to publish his historico-geographical memoirs on Canada. This work was published in 1716, in four volumes, duodecimo, under the title mentioned above. The work was later reprinted variously, but with a more general title and one less in correspondence with the matter contained in the *Histoire de l'Amerique Septentrionale*, editions of 1722 and 1753.

In the first volume is a well-developed account of Tekakwitha. As the text shows, the account was written about 1705. It does not furnish new historical data, but it is important because of the reputation for sanctity of the Servant of God and because of the miracles which had been granted through her intercession.

We make use of the Parisian edition of 1753, attached to the Process, since it has been impossible to have at hand the first edition of 1716.

The reputation of the Iroquois girl, Katharine Tegakouita, is so commendable in this new world that we must not pass by this model of virtue and holiness in silence. Her memory is held in great veneration, and it has been observed that many persons have felt wonderful effects from the pious confidence they have placed in her on different occasions. However that may be, about twenty-five years ago [1680] there was among the Iroquois a girl twenty-five years of age, who possessed the best qualities of the Algonquins and of the Iroquois. She was born of an Algonquin mother and of an Iroquois father. Her mother had been captured forty years previously in the great overthrow of her nation. Conducted to the Iroquois, they spared her life and married her to one of their tribe. She had been baptized at Three Rivers by the Jesuit Fathers and never forgot the duties of Christianity in the midst of an infidel nation. Tegakouita, who was born later, doubtlessly was the recompense of the Christian life she had always led. This girl lived among the Iroquois in an inexplicable innocence until she was twenty-two years old. While still very young, she had smallpox which disfigured her considerably. Before her Baptism she preserved a natural modesty which led her to shun the pleasures of the senses, and even marriage. In fact, she wished never to marry. This was not in order to be freer in her actions, but so that she might be guided only by Providence, and to devote herself more freely to the exercises of piety.

One did not find in her the vices to which savage girls, who care only for debauchery, are so much subject. She was not at all given to the visions and dreams which occupy their imagination so much, and of which they make a divinity.

Her greatest fault was to permit them to dress her too properly, which she did only to pass the time or to comply with

DOCUMENT XVII

EXTRACT FROM THE WORK, *History and General Description of New France*, by Father Francis Xavier de Charlevoix, S.J., Paris, 1744 (Didot, publisher), Vol. II, pp. 437-459.

Father Francis Xavier de Charlevoix, S.J. (1682-1761), is a well known writer among the historians of the missions. While still a young scholastic, he was sent to Quebec in 1705, and taught there in the College of the Jesuit Fathers. Here he began to gather material for his *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*. After his return to his country he was sent again to Canada in 1709, with a royal mandate to undertake a voyage of exploration. In 1721 he visited the Mission of the Sault. (Cf. E. Lecompte, *Katharine Tekakwitha*, 2d ed., Montreal, 1930, p. 283.) He returned to France in 1722, to give a report of the results of his journey, which was contained in a voluminous work published in 1744: *Histoire et Description générale de la Nouvelle-France avec le Journal historique d'un Voyage fait par ordre du Roi dans l'Amérique Septentrionale*, 6 vols., Paris 1744. (Cf. Streit, *Bibl. Missionum*, III, p. 476, n. 1390, where several editions and translations are recorded.)

Father Charlevoix included in his work a long account of the Servant of God, which is followed by a letter of Father Cholenec to Father Le Blanc. (Doc. XIII) Accordingly, the matter here treated is already familiar, but in a certain sense is more valuable, because the author knew personally both Father de Lamberville and Father Cholenec, and visited the Mission of the Sault, and there perceived, as we may easily suppose, the still echoing report of the virtues, and of the reputation for sanctity of the Servant of God. We have made use for our text of a copy inserted into the Process by the Promoters of the Cause edited according to the Paris edition of Didot (1744).

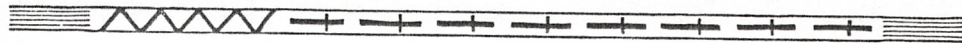
Katharine Tegahkouita, Iroquois Virgin

New France has had her apostles and her martyrs, and has given the church saints in all conditions, and I do not hesitate to say that they would have done honor to the primitive ages of Christianity. Several I have made known, so far as the course of this history permitted me. The lives of some have been published; but God, who exalted His glory during their lifetime by the great things which He effected through them,

by the lustre which their sanctity has diffused over this vast continent, by the courage with which He inspired them laboriously to found a new Christendom amid the most fearful barbarism, and to cement it with their blood, chose none of these to display on their tombs all the riches of His power and mercy; but conferred this honor on a young neophyte, almost unknown to the whole country during her life. For more than sixty years she has been regarded as the Protectress of Canada, and it has been impossible to oppose a kind of *cultus* publicly rendered to her.

This holy virgin, so celebrated under the name of Katharine Tegahkouita, was born in 1656, at Gandahouhagué, a town in the Mohawk canton, of a heathen Iroquois father and a Christian Algonquin mother. She lost her mother at the age of four, and was still quite young when her father died, leaving her to the care of one of her aunts, and under the control of an uncle who had the chief authority in his village. The small-pox, which she had in her infancy, having weakened her sight, she was long compelled, as it were, to remain in the corner of a cabin, her eyes being unable to stand the light, and this retirement was the first source of her happiness. What she did at first from necessity, she continued to do from choice, thereby avoiding whatever could cause her to lose that moral purity so hard to preserve amid idolatrous and then very dissolute youth.

As soon as she saw herself of age to act, she took on herself almost all the toil of the household; and this shielded her from two dangers, fatal to most Indian girls; I mean, private conversations and idleness. Her relatives however wished her to use the decorations common to young persons of her sex, and although she yielded from simple compliance with their wishes, and with all possible repugnance, it was a matter of much



DOCUMENT XV

EXTRACTS FROM *The Annals of Hotel Dieu, QUEBEC*, by Mother Juchereau of Saint Ignatius, 1713-1723. From the original MS in the Monastery Hotel Dieu, Quebec.

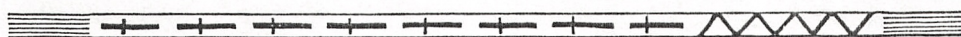
Among the sources of the history of Canada, *The Annals of the Hotel Dieu, Quebec*, are very important. The Hotel Dieu was a famous hospital, founded in 1637 and placed under the care of the Augustinian Sisters. These *Annals* were composed by Sister Joanna Frances Juchereau de la Ferté, known in religion as Sister Saint Ignatius, who was the Superioress of that hospital from 1683 to her death in 1723. The composition of the *Annals* ranged through 1713 to 1723.

In 1680 a rather brief but complete account is given concerning the Servant of God, Katharine. The author naturally must have taken the biographical data from some *Life* already in circulation, probably, it would seem, from that by Father Cholenec. It is not the present purpose to take new biographical data from it. The importance of this account consists mainly in its witness to the reputation for sanctity which the Servant of God already enjoyed throughout the entire Canadian scene.

The Annals of the Hotel Dieu were published in 1752 by a Sulpician, Bertrand de la Tour: *Histoire de l'Hôtel Dieu de Québec*, Montauban, 1752. (Cf. *Bibl. Missionum*, III, p. 480, n. 1408.)

Our extract has been edited by the Promoters of the Cause, according to the original text preserved at Quebec.





1680

*Death of the Good Iroquois Maiden
Katharine Tegahkouita*

On the seventeenth of April of the following year, 1680, the good Iroquois maiden, Katharine Tegahkouita, died in the odor of sanctity at Sault Saint Louis, where she had been living for several years. Her mother was a Christian Algonquin who had been baptized at Three Rivers and brought up by some French people. While very young she was seized in war by the Iroquois and taken captive to their country where she preserved her faith until death, though she became the wife of an Iroquois very stubborn in his superstitions. By him she had two children, of whom Katharine alone survived and became an orphan at the age of four. The smallpox which devastated her whole tribe, deprived her of father, mother, and brother. She herself suffered severely from this malady, which nearly destroyed her sight. This was the beginning of her happiness, for her misfortune, on account of which she could not endure broad daylight obliged her to live in retirement. Since solitude is always a great advantage, in her desire to amuse herself alone she set about performing small tasks in which she was very dexterous, so that her laborious and solitary life brought her at once two great benefits: it kept her from sin, and disposed her to receive with a holy ardor the first seeds of Christianity as soon as she heard of it. The missionaries who were sent to the Iroquois after the Marquis de Tracy had made peace with them in 1666, were lodged at the hut where she lived, and although she was very young she was entrusted with its care.