

"This is my mother's grave," he said simply.

"Your mother, sir? Oh, yes. I remember burying her. I remember her when she was a merry little maid in a white pinafore. She used to make daisy chains and put them in the graves for the poor dead people, she said, while I was digging. She made a great friend of me—I was only a young fellow at the time. She always used to say she wanted to be buried under this beech tree. 'Then I shall come up and sit among the leaves, in the lovely sunshine. And all the birds will be beside me, just like the doves from the rectory come when I hold out corn in my hands for them.' A nice little maid she was, sir."

"Look at the roots!" said the man in a whisper. "Wrapped right round the coffin."

"Yes, sir. They always do that here. These great old trees—I never cut them if I can help it when I dig a new grave. Seems to me, sometimes, as if they're a ladder."

The old sexton took off his two earthy boots, put on others, and hobbled towards the church, and still the man stood there. At last the twitter of birds made him look up into the great dome of greenery above him.

"Mother's little house! I wonder if it's still there?" he thought, and, leaving the dark hole and the disturbed earth, climbed the tree, not so easily now, for his limbs had set and stiffened. He was growing older.

Yes, it was still there; the boards were rotting and had grown right into the wood of the ever-growing tree. He sat down in a fork of the branches and closed his eyes. A church bell stopped, the flutter of leaves whispered to him, and the distant shout of playing children. Peace was stealing about him, quietness wrapping him round.

"Oh, mother! If only you hadn't died I shouldn't have made such a mess of things!" he whispered, and as he leaned, the hard branches of the tree became soft and peaceable as her breast when he was a little boy. "I've thought of you dead all these years . . ."

The still, small voice ceased to flutter, became articulate.

"And they found the stone rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre. And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining raiment and said unto them, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen. . . .'"

The leaves whispered and fluttered; presently he fell asleep, comforted. Later, when the moon came up and cast long, inky shadows about the churchyard, he came down from the tree. But he did not look again into the empty grave. He went out into the land of the living, the land of sun and moon and flowers and tears and laughter, and thought no more of death as an enemy dogging him.

It is great folly not to part with your own faults, which is possible, but to try instead to escape other people's faults which is impossible. Marcus Aurelius.

THE LILY OF THE MOHAWKS

(By MARY C. MAGNELL, in America.)

The beatification of Father Isaac Jogues and his associates in the Society of Jesus, who won their crown of martyrdom at the hands of the Mohawk Indians during the colonial period of American history, was a comparatively recent occurrence in Rome, and an auspicious occasion of the Holy Year. Two and three-quarter centuries have elapsed since these men sacrificed their lives in bringing Christianity to the original Americans.

And now the Holy Father has authorised the institution of a process through which canonisation may be declared for the first truly American saint, Catherine Tekakwitha, a North American Indian maid. Rome will pursue with its accustomed care its investigation of the life of the Lily of the Mohawks. The original action initiating steps for the ultimate canonisation of Catherine was solicited by the Fathers of the Church in America, meeting in the Third Plenary Council at Baltimore.

Pope Pius X recently designated Rev. Aurelian Fajella, S.J., to institute the process looking to the beatification of Catherine Tekakwitha. Although in this instance about 250 years have passed, documentary evidences of the saintliness of the Indian maiden will be sought. These will embody records of miraculous power attributed to her.

Catherine Tekakwitha is even now the subject of veneration in places far distant from the diocese of Quebec where she lived and died. Her intercession has been effective to a most startling degree.

Catherine received Baptism at the hands of Father Jean de Lamberville, and her earlier desire to be received into the Catholic Faith came by natural inheritance from her mother, a convert to Christianity, it may possibly be, through Father Jogues.

Bishop Laval called her the Genevieve of New France and recorded that "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 the tomb, and many, by her intercession, have been immediately cured of their maladies and have received from Heaven other extraordinary favors." The testimony is not that of hearsay or tradition, but, as the biographer wrote, "is nothing that I have not myself seen during the time she was under my care, or which I have not learned of the missionary who conferred on her the rite of Holy Baptism."

Catherine was born at Gandaougue, a settlement in the lower Iroquois country, in 1656. Her father was an Iroquois of the Turtle clan; her mother an Algonquin who had been baptised a Catholic at Three Rivers. Smallpox carried off the parents and a brother, leaving Catherine orphaned at the age of four to be cared for by an uncle, a powerful native of his village, and aunts. The dreadful disease which had robbed Catherine of parents left another mark on her, a weakness of eyesight which she accepted as a means of preserving her innocence of life

as she grew to girlhood in scenes of corruption common among the Iroquois.

Then came the missionaries. The Iroquois, fearing the power of the French army, agreed to a treaty of peace. The missionaries by chance were granted shelter under the roof where Catherine lived, and she, as it were, became their handmaid. The modesty with which she performed these services touched the priest guests.

When Catherine became of marriageable age her guardians announced that they would find her a husband. Suggestions of this nature were rejected by Catherine, but that only strengthened them in their decision that she should wed. A husband was agreed on, the match arranged, and the time appointed for the simple native ceremony. But they reckoned without Catherine.

The prospective groom came to Catherine's wigwam on marriage bent one evening, and seated himself beside her, according to the custom, an action which, to the Indians, was sufficient to give her a husband, being the equivalent of a ceremony. The action was met by Catherine's immediate abandonment of the wigwam, nor would she re-enter while he remained. Her indignation only served to make her relatives angry and more determined that she should wed. They resorted to strategy for the accomplishment of their purpose, but this, like their previous blandishments, was unavailing. Not even the fact that Catherine was subjected to what equalled slavery caused her to waver. She persevered in her purpose, preserving the equanimity of mind and natural sweetness of disposition, remarked by the earlier missionary visitors to the Indian village.

Then came Father Jean de Lamberville to prosecute his missionary efforts in the village. Catherine heard the missionary's message and lingered over his words. Seizing her opportunity she unburdened herself to him, disclosing the bitter opposition of her guardians to Christians, and her own courage and convictions. Impressed by Catherine's goodness, simplicity, and candor, Father de Lamberville believed she would some day make great progress in virtue. He devoted the entire winter to her instruction in the Catholic Faith and to investigation of this most unusual Indian girl. Despite common practice among the Indians to slander, Father de Lamberville heard only the highest praises of good qualities in Catherine, and so on Easter, 1676, she was baptised a Catholic. She was twenty years old.

Catherine's adoption of Christianity made her an object of derision among the Indians and her most unusual fervor ultimately caused annoyance from her guardians. On one occasion a hunter came into her wigwam while she was engaged in prayer, and with upraised tomahawk threatened her life. Catherine's action was merely a bowing of her head in submission, as if inviting him to strike his blow. This action caused the hunter to retire in confusion.

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