

THE
JESUIT MARTYRS
OF CANADA

By E. J. Devine, S. J.



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OF CANADA**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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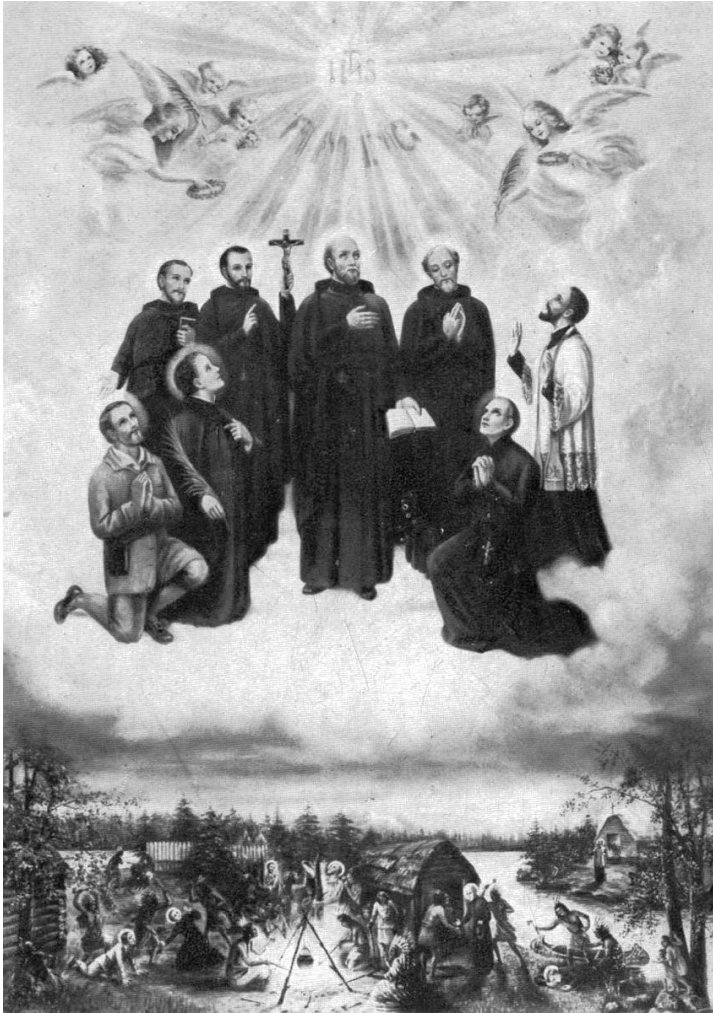
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Nealis pinxit

BLESSED JEAN DE BREBEUF AND COMPANIONS

THE
JESUIT MARTYRS
OF CANADA

TOGETHER WITH THE MARTYRS
SLAIN IN THE MOHAWK VALLEY

BY

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PREFACE

The recent Beatification of the eight martyrs of the Society of Jesus, whose careers are sketched in this volume, reminds us that it is just three hundred years—1625-1925—since the Order to which they belonged began its labours in the solitudes of New France. The dates are suggestive; they seem to indicate that, in honouring the martyred missionaries of New France, the Sovereign Pontiff wished not merely to reward the heroism of those men, but also loyally to recognize a long apostolate of abnegation and suffering, undertaken by the Jesuit Order to extend the boundaries of the kingdom of God in the New World.

Five of the martyrs, Blessed Jean de Brebeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Antoine Daniel, Charles Garnier and Noël Chabanel, were slain in the land of the Hurons, the section of the Province of Ontario bathed by the waters of Georgian Bay. The other three martyrs, Blessed Isaac Jogues and his companions, René Goupil and Jean de la Lande, fell in the Mohawk valley. This territory, which is a portion of the present State of New York, was, in the seventeenth century and probably for centuries before, known as the home of the Iroquois.

The eight missionaries, whose heroic careers and thrilling martyrdoms merited the triumph recently witnessed in Rome, stand out in bold relief in the army of Christ in America; but it is well to know that they were not the only brave soldiers in the field. Between the year 1625, when the Jesuits first landed at Quebec, and the year 1800, when the last of the Old Guard went to his grave, three hundred and twenty have been accounted for, men who, “having set joy before them, endured the Cross,” and despising the hardships of missionary life, went their way over the American continent, “preaching the Word, reproving, entreating, rebuking in all patience and doctrine,” and rejoicing in the conviction that God would one day be their reward exceeding great. Nearly a score of them, men who very likely will never wear the official crown of martyrdom, were nevertheless heroes who proved the sincerity of

their faith by yielding up their lives, often in a tragic manner, in the service of the Master.

Father Philibert Noirot and a lay-Brother, Louis Malot, were lost at sea off Cape Breton, in 1625, while bringing supplies to the newly founded missions in New France. In 1646, the year in which Blessed Isaac Jogues was slain on the Mohawk river, Father Anne de Nouë was frozen to death in crossing the St. Lawrence while on an errand of charity. In 1652, three years after Blessed Jean de Brebeuf and three of his companions perished among the Hurons, Father Jacques Buteux was ambushed and slain by the Iroquois on the River St. Maurice, and in 1655 the lay-Brother, Jean Liégeois, met a similar fate at Sillery. In 1656, Father Léonard Garreau expired from wounds inflicted by the Iroquois on the Lake of Two Mountains, Father Antoine Dalmas was assassinated in 1693, while on an expedition to Hudson's Bay. Sébastien Râle was cruelly shot down by New England soldiers at Norridgewock, Maine, in 1724, while defending his church and his Abenakis flock. Father Rodolphe de la Germandière and two other Fathers, whose names are not known, were drowned off Louisburg, N. S., on their way to Canada in 1725. In 1729, Father Paul du Poisson and Jean Souel were slain by the Natchez on the Lower Mississippi. In 1733, Father Vastus Huet was carried off while waiting on the plague-stricken at Quebec. Father Antoine Senat was burned to death at the stake by the Chicasaws, near Vicksburg, Miss., in 1736. In the same year, Father Pierre Aulneau de la Touche, chaplain of the Verendrye expedition, was slaughtered by the Sioux on an island in the Lake of the Woods. In 1759, Father Claude Virot, chaplain of the French army at Niagara, was cut to pieces by the Iroquois.

Those seventeen men, all members of the same Religious Order, all nourished at the breast of the same venerable Mother, the Society of Jesus, shared with Blessed Jean de Brebeuf and his seven companions the hardships of the apostolate in the New World. Like them, they made the supreme sacrifice under one form or another; like them, they are now enjoying the Beatific Vision. The honours of the altar may never be their lot, but those brave old French missionaries, while labouring in America, caught at least a glimpse of the ruddy glow of martyrdom. That is all that was vouchsafed them; the prize in all its fulness was denied them; but undoubtedly they are satisfied. In Heaven there is no room for jealousy. The possession of God for all eternity makes earthly honours—even the honours of Beatification—fade out like stars before the noonday sun. So that far from entertaining thoughts of envy at the great distinction recently conferred upon their more favoured brethren, they are sharing in our present joy and consolation, and are with us in praising the name of the Great and Good God in whose service they, as well as the eight

beatified martyrs, suffered and died.

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CHAPTER I

INDIANS AND MISSIONARIES

The Early Fur Traders of New France—Champlain seeks Missionaries—The Recollects arrive—Aided by the Jesuits—Quebec Captured—Missionaries are Banished—Return of the Jesuits—They go to the Huron Country—The Iroquois—Experiences in the Cantons—Destruction of the Huron Missions—A Colonizing Experiment—Its Failure—Treaty of Peace—The Jesuits among the Iroquois—Caughnawaga and St. Regis—Final Phase of Missionary Activity.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Samuel de Champlain was laying the foundations of the French colony at Quebec, he came in contact with Indian tribes whose ancestors had been living on Canadian soil for centuries; tribes who spoke their own peculiar tongues and followed their own traditions. These were the Montagnais from the Lower St. Lawrence, the Algonquins from the Ottawa valley, the Nipissings from the lake which still bears their name, and the powerful Huron race from the more distant Georgian Bay.

Skilled in hunting and trapping, these natives were welcomed at Quebec every Spring, for they brought with them cargoes of precious furs, the results of the previous season's hunt. Bales of bear and beaver, fox, marten, and other pelts, were soon spread out on fur counters before the eager eyes of traders from Old France, and days full of excitement followed in the little trading-post at Quebec, when French and Indian bargained amid a din of Gallic eloquence and guttural vociferations. When at last the wild, untutored Indians had bartered their wealth of furs for French blankets, ammunition and trinkets, they disappeared again into their primeval fastnesses just as quickly as they had come. Jumping into their frail canoes when the last pelt had been disposed of, the Montagnais vigorously plied their paddles, and were soon rounding Point Levis on their homeward way to Tadoussac and the Gulf. The tribes from the West usually awaited the incoming tide, and when the current was favourable started in their turn and were soon skimming their way over the St. Lawrence

and the Ottawa rivers to Allumette Island and Georgian Bay. The dusky visitors had departed for another year to their distant wigwams, where wives and children were anxiously awaiting both them and the goods they had bought from the French at Quebec. But this annual coming and going of the Indian flotillas, in addition to being a novel sight for the traders from across the sea, was also a satisfying one, to say the least; for with the arrival of each fur-laden canoe they saw rising before them the pleasant prospect of huge profits which the contents would bring them in European markets.

Unhappily, however, these picturesque Indians were poor pagans who had never heard of the true God, and were living their lives in the darkness of infidelity. The degrading superstitions and barbarous customs which had been handed down to them as a legacy by their ancestors would in turn be left to future generations if no effort were made by the French to provide enlightenment. Champlain, a man of lofty ideals, a Christian who knew that the soul is the only thing that matters here below, realized full well that the profits of the fur-trade were paltry when compared with the spiritual welfare of the natives of the country. The sad spectacle of thousands of aborigines lying in the shadow of spiritual death moved to compassion the great heart of the Father of New France, and he resolved to bring a knowledge of the true faith to them as soon as possible.

In 1614, he invited the Recollects of France to come to Canada and conquer a kingdom for God, and by way of response, in the following year, four members of this branch of the Franciscan Order—three priests and a lay-brother—stepped off the good ship *Saint-Etienne* on its arrival at Quebec, to begin the good work.

The few French colonists in the neighbourhood of Champlain's "habitation" were the first to feel the effects of the missionaries' zeal. Leaving these to the care of Father Jamay, before the Summer of 1615 was over Father Dolbeau had gone to Tadoussac to convert the Montagnais, while the third missionary, Father Le Caron, amid incredible hardships, penetrated to the shores of Georgian Bay where the Hurons dwelt. It is of interest to note that a lofty granite cross, erected a few miles west of Penetanguishene, stands on the spot where this Recollect said the first Mass ever celebrated within the limits of the present Province of Ontario.

Their own historian, Sagard, a Recollect who also tasted the bitterness of missionary life in those early years, has left us vivid impressions of the strenuous careers led by his religious brethren in the Huron country; their long wearisome journeys up the Ottawa and the Nipissing valleys, still in primitive wildness; their dreary portages around the falls and rapids that hindered their progress; their camping-out on the way; the exasperating swarms of insects

that worried their days and nights; and after they had reached their destination, the filth of the Huron wigwams in which they were obliged to lodge, their ignorance of the Huron language revealing an utter unpreparedness for the task before them; but above all, the degradation of the lives of the Hurons themselves; all these are graphically described by Sagard. The Recollects lived ten years in Huronia where notwithstanding the difficulties they had to surmount, difficulties that would have intimidated less courageous hearts, they succeeded in planting the seeds of Christianity.

After a whole decade spent in this apostolate, these pioneers of the faith began to make plans for the future. The vastness of the field, the magnitude of the task before them, and the paucity of the means at their disposal to accomplish it, all urged them to call for aid from other missionary bodies, and in consequence they sent a delegate to France to invite the Society of Jesus to share their labours in the New World. The invitation was heartily welcomed, for the Jesuits wished to exercise their zeal once more among the tribes of America. Thirteen years previously Fathers Biard and Masse had endeavoured to found a mission on the Acadian coast, and they were on the eve of success when sectarian hatred put an end to their holy enterprise. The Virginian buccaneer, Argall, not content with sending a bullet through the lay-brother, Gilbert du Thet, destroyed the budding mission and drove the Jesuits back to France.

The call of the Recollects brought the Jesuits, Jean de Brebeuf, Ennemond Masse and Charles Lalemant to Quebec in 1625. For a second time Masse had crossed the ocean on his zealous errand and he and Brebeuf were about to set out at once for the missions of Georgian Bay when news of the drowning of a Recollect Father—a crime attributed to three Huron apostates—decided them to postpone their journey for a whole year. Father Nicholas Viel, they learned, while on his way down from the Huron country to Quebec, had been thrown from his canoe with a companion Ahautsic, perishing thus at the hands of the people he had gone to evangelize.

Similar tragedies but far more spectacular, as we shall see, were reserved for the Jesuits at the hands of the Iroquois when those Indians began to terrorize the French colony.

The seizure of Quebec by the English, in 1629, ended for the moment the work of the missionaries in Canada; both Recollects and Jesuits were banished to France, where they remained for three years, uncertain as to their future movements. However, when the colony was restored in 1632, and the way opened again for missionary enterprise, while the Recollects remained in France, the Jesuits hastened to re-cross the Atlantic to the scene of their former labours. Hostile writers have seen in this exclusion of the Recollects from the

Canadian missions, in which they had spent ten years of abnegation and hard work, evidence of subtle maneuvering on the part of the Jesuits who apparently wanted the whole field for themselves. But this hardly explains the true inwardness of the affair. In those years, New France, rich only in suffering and heavy crosses, was a land scarcely inviting enough to urge even the Jesuits to use their influence at Court to secure a monopoly of effort there. The real explanation would seem to rest neither in any desire for exclusive occupancy nor in any special aptitude of one body of men over another for missionary work, but rather in the laws and constitutions which governed the missionaries themselves. Vowed to poverty, corporate as well as personal, the Recollects had to depend on the good-will of the fur company for the upkeep of their missions, a burden its Huguenot directors never relished, and would be glad to rid themselves of. The Jesuits, on the contrary, were permitted by the Constitutions of their Order to hold property and receive revenues—a circumstance which would leave them independent of Huguenot patronage^[1]. Undoubtedly Cardinal Richelieu and M. de Lauson, president of the trading company, reckoned that this independence would solve the problem of mission support in New France, and were quite willing to give the sons of St Ignatius a monopoly which, it may be remarked in passing, eventually turned out to be a monopoly of self-sacrifice “even unto death,” as the lives of their martyrs in Canada amply prove.

With light hearts the Jesuits returned to the colony the year after the signing of the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye, to begin a pious enterprise which was to last for nearly two hundred years, and which for persevering effort and heroic devotedness may claim preëminence in the annals of the Catholic Church. Written in letters of life-blood in the history of their Order is the story of the treatment they received at the hands of the Iroquois, a race of Indians who were the sworn enemies of the French and their missionaries on this continent for the greater part of a century.

The Iroquois, known up to the beginning of the eighteenth century as the Five-Nation Indians, occupied the picturesque and fruitful valleys and uplands which extend from the headquarters of the Hudson river to Lake Erie in the present State of New York. Naturally a bellicose race, they have received credit for great skill and cunning in military tactics. They were daring and fearless, and roamed far and wide on their marauding expeditions. They were prompt and spiteful in resenting insults, strong in their hatreds, and inhuman in their treatment of captives who had the misfortune to fall into their hands. Cruelty was perhaps the striking trait of their character. Prisoners taken by them were subjected to fiendish tortures; their scalps and finger-nails were torn off; their flesh cut away piecemeal and eaten before their very eyes; and

whenever the unfortunate victims survived those ordeals, they were usually burned at the stake or condemned to a slavery worse than death. Owing to their warlike tendencies, the Iroquois were continually invading the territories of neighbouring Indian tribes “leaving wrack and ruin in their track,” says a modern author, “much like Tartars when they invaded Hindustan, or the Goths, Vandals and Huns, when they overran Europe.”^[2]

Historians are not unanimous in deciding why from the earliest years of the colony, the Iroquois became the implacable enemies of the French. An unfortunate encounter^[3] with Champlain in 1609, on the shores of the Lake which bears his name, is sometimes ascribed as the initial occasion of all their enmity. It may at least be affirmed that in this first skirmish Champlain taught those Indians the efficacy of firearms, weapons which they easily procured later on from the Dutch settlers on the banks of the Hudson. In a very few years we find their primitive bows and arrows discarded for the more destructive powder and shot.

The proximity of their cantons to the Dutch settlements, then growing along the Hudson and the Mohawk rivers, and the intimate relations which were fostered by the fur-trade, gave the Dutch certain facilities for exercising a strong influence on them^[4]. For political purposes, they endeavoured to sustain the bitterness which already existed between the French and the Iroquois, and at the same time found it an easy task to instil into the minds of the ignorant Indians their own religious prejudices.^[5] And as the sequel will show, this insidious maneuvering had serious consequences for the French missionaries who went in later years to labour in the cantons.

The Jesuits had been twenty years in Canada before they came in touch with the Iroquois. In the coming chapters we shall see that this first contact was a thrilling one for the Jesuits, thanks to the ill-will intentionally excited against a body of missionaries who aimed at nothing more nor less than the extermination of their sorcery and pagan customs. The poor aborigines had accepted as truth the testimony of their Dutch allies, and they felt justified in their belief that the famines and pestilences and other misfortunes which befell them from time to time were the work of the French missionaries. All this ignorance and prejudice recoiled in years to come on the Jesuits, who paid the full price of their zeal in tortures and death.

But the French and their missionaries were not the only objects of Iroquois resentment. Those Indians extended their hatred to the native tribes who had been converted to Christianity and who remained friendly to the French, while the geographical positions of their strongholds made their warlike incursions against the allies of the French a comparatively simple task. The valley of the St. Lawrence and its tributaries were well within their reach through Lake

Champlain and Lake Ontario, over whose waters they could easily move in large war-parties, to carry devastation into the French settlements of Quebec, Montreal and Three Rivers; while from the western fringe of their territory they could advance quickly over Lake Erie into the present Province of Ontario and attack the allied Indian tribes living there. Profiting by these natural advantages and by their desire for vengeance, they had in a few years destroyed the flourishing missions among the Hurons on Georgian Bay, captured hundreds of those unfortunate Indians and killed their missionaries; they had ravaged the Montagnais settlements on the Lower St. Lawrence, the Neutrals along Lake Erie, the Algonquins on the Ottawa river, and the Attikamegs, a peaceful nation living on the Upper St. Maurice. A punitive expedition directed by the French in 1665 reduced the savage marauders to inactivity for a time, but during the rest of the seventeenth century they remained what history tells us they had always been, a cruel, sullen and treacherous race, in whom all humane feelings were dormant.

And yet in the strenuous years of that century, long before the strong arm of France had pressed heavily on the barbarous Iroquois, there were Jesuits unlucky enough to fall into their clutches. The first of those heroes of the Cross was Father Isaac Jogues, who with a companion, René Goupil, was seized by them in the year 1642. Goupil was slain six weeks after his capture, while Jogues succeeded in making his escape only after thirteen months of degrading slavery.

Two years later, another Jesuit, François Bressani, was seized and taken to the Mohawk country^[6]. Three pathetic letters written by this missionary have come down to us and give details of the tortures inflicted upon him, details which after nearly three centuries still cause a thrill of horror in the reader. The Iroquois began by obliging him to throw away all his writings, fearing that some malicious charm was attached to them. "They were surprised," he afterwards pathetically remarked, "to witness how sensitive that loss was to me, seeing that I had given no sign of regret for the rest."^[7] After incredible hardship and fatigue, the unhappy captive reached the Mohawk canton, where the tribe received him in a cruel fashion. He was stripped of his clothes and obliged to run the gauntlet between two rows of howling savages who showered blows upon him with clubs and iron rods. With a sharp knife they split his fingers open, one of his hands being nearly cleft in twain. Covered with blood, he was forced to mount a platform in the middle of the village, where he became the object of jeers and insults. This, however, was only the beginning of his sufferings. He was taken from village to village, and in each tortured by fire, his captors' favourite method being to light their calumets and then push the victim's fingers into the bowls. Eighteen times fire was applied

to his lacerated hands, until they became a mass of festering wounds. These tortures were usually inflicted at night, during which time he was securely tied to stakes and forced to lie uncovered on the bare ground. The poor sufferer relates that when finally he was condemned to be burned at the stake he accepted his fate with resignation, but begged his ruthless captors to despatch him in any way but by fire. "Taken prisoner while on his way to the Hurons," writes the historian Bancroft, "beaten, mangled, mutilated, driven barefoot over rough paths through briars and thickets, scourged by a whole village, burned, tortured, wounded and scarred, he was eye-witness to the fate of his companions who were boiled and eaten, yet some mysterious awe protected his life."^[8] Bressani himself acknowledged that he received this protection from God and His Blessed Mother^[9]. He was given into slavery and remained in that state until, like his predecessor, Father Jogues, he was humanely ransomed by the Dutch^[10]. Bressani afterwards returned to Italy and wrote an interesting account of the sufferings of the missionaries of New France, in a volume which was published in Macerata, in 1653.

The experiences of Jogues and Bressani will suffice to show what kind of Indians the Jesuits had to deal with in the work of spreading the Gospel in New France. In blood and tears, those devoted men tried to impress the Divine Master's message on souls steeped for centuries in the most degrading sorcery and superstition, and those of them who survived the task carried the marks of their heroism in their mutilated members until death.

Between the years 1642 and 1644 the Iroquois grew so daring, and their incursions into the colony were so numerous, that the French population became alarmed. Peaceful farmers were seized by them while working in their fields; Indians were often seen hiding under the very shadow of their dwellings^[11], ready to scalp the terror-stricken inmates, war parties were constantly prowling around the Ottawa river and the Lower St. Lawrence, waiting like tigers for their prey. They had blocked the route to the Huron country, a circumstance which menaced not merely the fur trade, but even the very existence of the missions on Georgian Bay. Matters had reached such a pass in 1644 that the colonial governor, Sieur de Montmagny, felt that something should be done, and hoping to put an end to the depredations and the consequent reign of terror which was paralyzing the colony, he suggested a treaty of peace with the Iroquois. Two years later, a conference was held at Three Rivers in which Father Jogues took part. This holy man went with Jean Bourdon to the cantons to discuss terms of peace, but when he returned thither four months later with his companion, Jean de la Lande, to work for souls, both were ruthlessly slain.

The news of this double crime perpetrated by the Iroquois on the Mohawk

river reached Quebec in the following year; other similar outrages were soon to be recorded against them on the shores of Georgian Bay, where the Hurons dwelt. The powerful Huron tribe of Indians had been under the spiritual supervision of the Jesuits since 1634. Pestilence had reduced their fighting strength, but they were still quite numerous and lived in dozens of villages dotting the territory now known as Simcoe county, in Ontario. Their two largest villages were Ossossané and Teanaostaye which were supplied with churches and resident missionaries. Other smaller missions were scattered here and there, and the Jesuits were leading lives of isolation and abnegation which only zeal and love for the Cross could explain. When Jerome Lalemant became superior of the Huron missions in 1638, he had a census taken of the entire population, and organized the work of his men so as to produce the best results. Aided by money which Cardinal Richelieu had sent out to him, he built a great central residence on the banks of the Wye, a little river flowing into Georgian Bay. This residence, dedicated to Our Lady Saint Mary, became the headquarters of the missionaries in Huronia, where they could retire to rest after their strenuous labours and gather strength for further conquests among souls. In those years converts were coming in large numbers; rare examples of Christian virtue were being shown by them. Everything promised a brilliant missionary future, when the sudden appearance of the dreaded Iroquois on the horizon checked the good work. Those barbarians, penetrating into the very heart of the Huron country in July, 1648, destroyed Teanaostaye and slew Father Antoine Daniel, the resident missionary. And during the following year four others—Jean de Brebeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Charles Garnier and Noël Chabanel—were given a similar fate.

After these disasters there still remained in the Huron missions eleven Jesuit Fathers, all of whom saw signs of impending doom. They realized fully that their converts, although numerous, were unable to resist the onslaughts of a well-armed and treacherous tribe like the Iroquois, and in consequence, three months after the martyrdom of Brebeuf and Lalemant, having burned the residence of Ste. Marie in order that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy, they migrated with their goods and chattels to Ahendoë, an island in Georgian Bay, now known as Christian Island. But a year spent there, living in the greatest penury, convinced them that the end had come. Hunger and want had carried away hundreds of their converts, and worst of all, the Iroquois had discovered their whereabouts. It was only then that they came to the grave decision to quit the Huron country forever. Making ready for the long and mournful journey, together with their converts and the personnel of their missions, they were soon on their way to Quebec, arriving there in the Summer of 1650. After various migrations in the immediate neighbourhood, the Hurons finally settled in 1673 at Lorette, a few miles from Quebec, where, it may be of

interest to note, their descendants may be seen today.

Three years after the destruction of the missions along Georgian Bay there appeared what seemed to be a turn in the tide of devastation. Three of the Iroquois cantons were at war with the Eries, and feeling that it would be a good policy to have the French on their side, they sent delegates to Quebec to discuss terms of peace^[12]. Governor de Lauzon, aware that he had to do with a treacherous horde, and that he had to be prudent in his replies, consulted the Jesuits. These missionaries, who now thought they saw an opening long-looked-for into the Iroquois country, decided to send one of their own men to sound the chieftains and get at the true state of affairs. Father Simon Le Moyne was chosen for this delicate task in the Spring of 1654. The attitude of the Onondagans favourably impressed him, and in the following year he returned, accompanied by two other Jesuits, Claude Dablon and Jean Marie Chaumonot. The Onondagans invited the French to come and live with them—a very flattering invitation; for a settlement in the Iroquois country would be not merely a center of French influence and civilization, but also a barrier against the Dutch and the English who had begun to monopolize the fur-trade. The Jesuits, on their side, had other designs, notably the establishment of a central mission for the Iroquois cantons, and with this end in view they spent the Winter of 1655-56 conferring with the delegates of the Five Nations.

In the Spring Dablon returned to Quebec determined to put his very elaborate scheme into execution. Governor de Lauzon had granted him a block of land, ten leagues square, situated near Lake Onondaga, and an expedition consisting of fifty or sixty persons—soldiers, artizans, and farmers—organized by the Jesuits, with René Menard, François Le Mercier and Jacques Fremin as chaplains, all under the leadership of Dablon, left Quebec in May, 1656. They sailed up the St. Lawrence, the first white expedition to ascend the great river as far as Lake Ontario, and chose Gannatea, in the Onondaga canton, for the new French colony, a site which has never been fully identified. While the missionaries were renewing acquaintance with the Huron converts, many of whom were settled among the Onondagans, the French workmen began to clear the ground. They built a church, the first Catholic temple ever raised within the present limits of New York State; they built houses for themselves and a large residence for the Fathers which could be further enlarged as time went on, and become a replica of Fort Ste. Marie, the “home of peace” near Georgian Bay which they had to abandon three years before.

The plan was an admirable one, and Claude Dablon and his brethren were sanguine of its success. They had hoped to settle down permanently in the cantons and do for the Iroquois what they had done for the Hurons on Georgian Bay; but they soon perceived that they were indulging in vain

imaginings. The Iroquois had evil designs and could not be trusted. While the Onondagans were professing a sincere friendship for the French who had come to live among them, their brethren of the other cantons were raiding the valley of the St. Lawrence and were capturing and torturing French prisoners; they were carrying on their depredations even under the very walls of Quebec itself. Dablon and Le Moyne were aware that in case of an uprising the French settlers, not being numerous enough to defend themselves, were at the mercy of the Indian marauders. Having in the interval been privately warned that their Onondagan colony might be attacked at any moment, and fearing a surprise, they decided to abandon the country. Boats were built secretly, and one night under cover of darkness the Jesuits and their little band of colonists disappeared from Gannatea. Paddling down the Oswego river, over Lake Ontario and then on down the St. Lawrence, they reached Quebec at last. And thus with the disappearance of the Blackgowns there also vanished the hope of reproducing in the Iroquois cantons the marvels of conversion witnessed in the Huron country, in former years^[13].

After this futile effort all peaceful communication with the Iroquois ceased for ten years. Meanwhile, a radical change was taking place in the administration of the French colony. Louis XIV had cancelled the charter of the fur company and put the local government in the hands of a Sovereign Council. This change had an effect on the Indian policy, but it came none too soon; for continuing their murderous raids, the Iroquois were blocking the waterways and tracking the colonists to their homes, seizing, scalping and carrying them off to their villages, there to undergo torture and death. Conditions had become so desperate that a petition was sent to France to help the colony, otherwise it would perish. In 1665 the Carignan-Sallière regiment, with the aged Marquis de Tracy at its head, arrived in Canada, and at once prepared an expedition against the offending tribes. Accompanied by an army of thirteen hundred men and by four chaplains, two of whom were Jesuits, Charles Albanel and Pierre Raffeix, De Tracy sailed up the Richelieu and over Lake Champlain. He invaded the canton of the Mohawks, burned their villages and destroyed their crops. This staggering blow brought the Five Nations to their senses. They signed a treaty with the French, a treaty which was to last eighteen years and which gave the colony a chance to enjoy peace and prosperity.

The ink had hardly dried on the parchment when three Jesuits, Jacques Bruyas, Jean Pierron and Jacques Fremin, started out to preach the Gospel in the Iroquois cantons. A few months later they were followed by other members of the Order, so that the Venerable Marie de l'Incarnation could write, in 1668, "Since we have begun to enjoy the blessing of peace, the missions are

flourishing. It is a wonderful thing to witness the zeal of our Gospel labourers. They have all left for their posts filled with the fervour and the courage which gives us hope for their success^[14].” Those tireless missionaries were continually on foot, travelling from village to village, baptizing little children and instructing adults in the Christian truths. A period of intense missionary activity was under way, and men like Jean and Jacques de Lamberville, Etienne de Carheil, Julien Garnier and Pierre Milet, founded permanent missions in the cantons, and were bringing many converts into the fold.

But the activity of the Jesuits among the Indians along the Mohawk river did not meet with the approval of the governors of the Province of New York. Perhaps the most aggressive of these was Thomas Dongan. Although a Catholic, this official showed his resentment at the activity of the French Jesuits, and he determined to restrain their work among the Iroquois. Not that he wished any evil should befall the Fathers or that he rejected the doctrines they preached, but he feared the influence they wielded, and he would have preferred to see them back in Quebec. He had, in fact, arranged for the arrival of Jesuits from England to replace their French brethren in the cantons.

The main grievance of those British governors was the constant flow of the Indian warriors from the Province of New York to the new mission which had been established at Laprairie, near Montreal, in 1667, and the consequent weakening of the fighting strength of the cantons. The Jesuits realized from the beginning of their ministry among the Iroquois that unless they kept their converts away from the corrupting environment of their pagan brethren and from intercourse with the English at Albany, they would make little headway in the work of conversion. At their suggestion, hundreds of neophytes migrated to Laprairie and later to Kahnawaké, where their instruction was completed, and where they could practise their new-found faith in peace. Aided by an ardent convert and apostle, known in American history as Kryn, the Great Mohawk, the stream of converts grew apace until the “praying castle” near Montreal became a flourishing missionary center. Among the illustrious converts who lived at Kahnawaké was the Iroquois maiden, Kateri Tekakwitha, who died there in the odour of holiness in 1680, after having edified the entire colony by her life and virtue, and whose Beatification is being urged at the present time.

The disastrous expedition of Governor de la Barre, in 1686, and the treachery displayed by his successor Denonville, in 1687, in sending forty Iroquois chiefs to be galley-slaves in France, alienated the Five Nations and endangered the lives of the Jesuits labouring among them. Jean de Lamberville, who, according to Denonville himself, was “an excellent man and very clever in dealing with the Indians,” barely escaped the fury of the enraged

savages, Pierre Milet was seized and held for seven years in captivity among the Oneidas; the other Fathers escaped to Canada.

Hoping to placate the tribes, Father Jacques Bruyas was sent in the following year to work for peace. Wielding a strong influence throughout the cantons he was on the eve of success. A delegation of Onondagans was already on the way to Montreal to discuss the terms when their interview with Kondiaronk, the wily Huron chief, took place. This historic interview spoiled all Bruyas' negotiations. The Iroquois, fully persuaded that they were again to be the victims of French double-dealing, started out to wage a more vigorous war than ever on the French colony; the Lachine massacre in August, 1689, and the outrages perpetrated for several years along the St. Lawrence, were the aftermath of the Denonville affair. The Senecas were usually at the bottom of these troubles, and six years later Count Frontenac had to go in person to give them a well-merited chastisement.

While the Iroquois professed their independence of both French and English, the influence of the latter, owing the proximity of the cantons to Albany, told in the long run. The hostility of the British governors, upheld as they were by the stipulations of the Treaty of Utrecht, gradually alienated the Indians from the French and reduced missionary activity to a minimum. The Earl of Bellomont threatened to hang any Jesuit found working in the cantons. Like Dongan, Burnett also complained of this missionary activity, but he was informed by Vaudreuil that the Senecas had sent delegates to Canada who expressed their regret that the missionaries had been removed, and asked that others be sent to take their places. With the exception of a brief visit made by the veteran Julien Garnier to the Onondagans, in 1705, no further attempts seem to have been made to establish footholds in the cantons of what is now the State of New York. The ancient missions there ceased to exist and the Iroquois Catholics and their families began to look on the "praying castle" at Caughnawaga as their permanent home. After 1755 St. Regis shared this privilege with the elder mission which, after various migrations; settled on the present site about the year 1719. In the two villages may still be seen the peaceful descendants of the tribes that made so much Jesuit blood flow in the seventeenth century.

Caughnawaga and St. Regis have histories of their own. Many stirring memories are attached to these two missions, and many well-known names are to be found in the list of Jesuits who continued in the eighteenth century the work their brethren had begun in the seventeenth. Mention may be made of Pierre Cholenec and Claude Chauchetière, friends and advisers of the saintly Kateri Tekakwitha, Pierre de Lauzon, Luc François Nau, Jean Baptiste Tournois, who fell under the frown of La Jonquière, Jacques Quintin de la

Bretonnière, chaplain during the Beauharnois expeditions against the Foxes and Chicasaws, Joseph Lafitau, discoverer of the ginseng plant and author of remarkable works on ethnology. Jean Baptiste de Neuville, friend of Bougainville and Montcalm, Antoine Gordan and Pierre Billiard, founders of St. Regis. The last Iroquois missionary, Joseph Hugué, died at Caughnawaga in 1783.

Notwithstanding the heroic efforts put forth and the sacrifices undergone, the Jesuits never succeeded in accomplishing among the Iroquois what they had done among the Hurons along Georgian Bay; but according to Thomas Guthrie Marquis, their priceless contribution to history lay in the example which they gave the world. During the century and a half they laboured among the Iroquois they bore themselves manfully and fought a good fight. Strong in the spirit of faith and zeal, in all that time not one of them is known to have played the coward in the face of danger and disaster.

This chapter has been written to give a brief outline of the efforts made by the Jesuit missionaries for the conversion of the Hurons and the Iroquois. In the succeeding chapters, the reader will be treated to more intimate details concerning the lives and the martyrdoms of eight of the missionaries who shed their blood in the middle of the seventeenth century and on whom the Holy See has recently seen fit to confer the honours of the altar. In the face of tremendous odds occasioned by the uncongenial atmosphere into which these men, mostly men of culture and gentle breeding, suddenly found themselves thrust, when they began their task of spreading the Word amongst the uncouth Iroquois and Huron Indians; despite the never-ending series of discouragements and set-backs which seemed to be their lot, and the ever-present danger of annihilation at the hands of their charges, they strove mightily, carried as they were from sacrifice to sacrifice by an intense love for Christ Crucified; and when at last the supreme trial came upon them, they proved themselves true knights of the standard under which they had elected to march during their earthly careers, even unto death.

[1] DE ROCHEMONTEIX: *Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle France au 17^e siècle*, I, p. 182.

[2] BUELL: *Sir William Johnson*, New York, 1893, p. 83.

[3] *Œuvres de Champlain*, Quebec, 1870, Book II, chap. xi, pp. 193-96.

[4] “The settlement of the Dutch is near them; they go thither to carry on

their traffic especially in arquebuses; they have at present three hundred of those and use them with great skill and boldness.” *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXIV, p. 271.

[5] Blessed Isaac Jogues wrote during his captivity: “I escaped to a neighbouring hill where in a large tree I had made a great cross... The barbarians did not perceive this till somewhat later. When they found me kneeling as usual before that cross which they hated, and said this it was hated by the Dutch, they began, on this account to trust me worse then before.” *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 209.

[6] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXVI, pp. 33 and seqq.

[7] Letters from France which he was carrying to his brethren in Huronia (Cf. *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXVI, p. 33, et Vol. XXXIX, p. 59).

[8] *History of the United States*, Book II, p. 793.

[9] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIX, p. 75.

[10] “The matter was not very difficult,” wrote Bressani, “and they ransomed me cheaply, on account of the small esteem in which they (the Iroquois) held me, because of my want of skill in everything and because they believed that I would never get well of my ailments.”—*Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 77.

[11] “An Iroquois will remain for two or three days without food behind a stump, fifty paces from your house, in order to slay the first who shall fall into his ambush.”—*Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXI, p. 119.

[12] *Jesuit Relations*. Clev. edit., Vol. XLI, p. 81.

[13] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XLIV, p. 177.

[14] DE ROCHEMONTEIX: *Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle France au 17^e siècle*, II, p. 402.



BLESSED JEAN DE BREBEUF.

CHAPTER II

BLESSED JEAN DE BREBEUF

His Birth and Early Years—First Experiences in Canada—In the Huron Country—Studies the Language—Lives alone—Sent back to France—Returns to Canada—Again with the Hurons—Success in the Ministry—Persecution—Results of a Vow—The Central Residence—Arrival of the Iroquois—Brebeuf a Prisoner—Endures Tortures—The Supreme Sacrifice—Ragueneau's Testimony—Relics in Quebec.

The Brebeuf family was of Norman origin, and may be traced back to the middle of the eleventh century. William, Duke of Normandy, had a Brebeuf with him at the battle of Hastings in 1066. Another accompanied St. Louis, two centuries later, in his crusade against the Turks, and bravely led the Norman nobles during the siege of Damietta. In 1251, a Nicholas de Brebeuf is mentioned in the chronicles of the family as one of the chief citizens of Bayeux. According to Du Hamel, the annalist, the Arundels of England and the Brebeufs of Normandy both descended from a common ancestry, but posterity is impressed less by the ties of Norman blood, which may have linked those two ancient families together, than by the sacrifices they both made, even to martyrdom, to preserve their ancient faith. The Iroquois did their grim work in Ontario just as thoroughly as did the headsman of Queen Elizabeth in England.

Jean de Brebeuf was born at Condé-sur-Vire, in the diocese of Bayeux, on March 25th, 1593. No details regarding his early years have come down to us, but the child undoubtedly received the training in piety and learning which was one of the traditions of his race. Besides, it would be hard to believe that religious influences had not moulded the youth of one who was destined in later years to do great deeds for God in the forests of the New World, and who, when the supreme sacrifice was demanded, showed a heroism in torture and suffering almost unparalleled in the history of the Church.

At the age of twenty-four Jean de Brebeuf entered the Jesuit novitiate at

Rouen, November 8, 1617. In that home of peace and piety the young man devoted two years to prayer and reflection, and to the cultivation of those little virtues which were to be the foundation stones of his future holiness. Secluded from the distractions of the world, he laboured diligently to acquire self-knowledge, and to exercise himself in the practice of humility, a virtue he pushed so far that he desired to abandon all aspirations to the priesthood, to become a lay-brother in the Order. But his superiors, assured that the humbler the novice the stronger the indications that he would one day give more glory to God in the priesthood, refused Brebeuf's request and counselled him to accept whatever grade in the Society of Jesus obedience should decide.

At the end of his noviceship the young Jesuit was sent to teach grammar in the college at Rouen. There the religious kept pace with the professor; while Brebeuf taught the rules of grammar to his pupils he did not neglect to implant in their minds and their hearts the principles of Christian virtue. With untiring devotedness he spent two years in this important work; but his zeal in the class-room exacted its price. His labours undermined his health and forced him to retire and seek absolute rest. However, he had been taught to set a high value on the fleeting minutes and could not stay idle. The young man applied himself privately to the study of theology, and acquired sufficient knowledge for the duties of the sacred ministry. He was raised to the priesthood at Pontoise, near Paris, at the beginning of Lent, 1623, and celebrated his first Mass on the transferred feast of the Annunciation, April 4, of the same year. Years of waiting only intensifies one's consolations when the goal is reached, and the sentiments of the future victim of the Iroquois may be easily gauged on the morning he called down from Heaven, for the first time, the Spotless Victim on the altar and adored Him who lay hidden under the sacramental veil. One grace followed another after his ordination; the health of the young Jesuit priest improved rapidly, and he was named bursar of the college at Rouen.

While the months were thus passing peacefully away in the city of Rouen, an event of vast importance, one which was destined to change the whole course of his life, happened in the little French colony beyond the Atlantic. The Recollects had been labouring there since 1615, and now invited the Jesuits to share their ministry. The invitation was accepted, and in 1625, as we have already seen, three priests, Charles Lalemant, Ennemond Masse and Jean de Brebeuf, were chosen for the arduous missions of New France. Although thirty-two years of age, Brebeuf was the youngest of the three, but he was their equal in virtue. When the order was received to cross the Atlantic, he did not hesitate to sever the ties of blood and family affection, to abandon his homeland and consecrate himself forever to the salvation of the Indians of New World. Nature had well prepared him for this calling; he was now in

perfect health and in possession of a herculean frame; he was in the flower of manhood, a splendid type of manliness and strength. These physical qualities, so necessary in a foreign missionary, were crowned with a prudence and a maturity of judgment which made his advice on all matters valuable and eagerly sought after.

Such was Jean de Brebeuf, the missionary, when he reached Quebec in the Summer of 1625. His first impulse on landing was to go at once to the Huron country to begin the study of the language and prepare himself for his ministry; and he was about to start on the long and trying journey up the Ottawa when news of the murder of the Recollect, Nicholas Viel, contrived by treacherous pagan Hurons on the route he would have to pass, made his superior take no risks; Father Charles Lalemant held him in Quebec to await a more favourable moment.

A whole year elapsed before an opportunity for the realization of his ambition presented itself again; meanwhile as a preparation for his future career among the Hurons, the young missionary decided to taste its trials and hardships nearer home. In order to inure himself more thoroughly in the ways of Indian life, he spent the winter of 1625-1626 among the Montagnais, a tribe living along the Lower St. Lawrence. The language of this tribe differed from that of the Hurons, but Brebeuf knew that the time spent in acquiring it would not be lost; it could not fail to be useful some day. That first experience among the Montagnais during the rigours of a Canadian winter would have broken the spirit of a man less hardy than he, but his "iron frame and unconquerably resolute nature" were proof against such bitter trials. In those long winter months his days were spent in following the Indians on the chase, his nights in bark wigwams suffering from cold and hunger, breathing an atmosphere foul with the smoke of the fireplaces. Add to this the continual jibes and insults showered on him by the uncouth Indians for his faults in trying to speak their tongue, and we can form an idea of the life he led during his first months in New France. His success, however, was such that the following spring Charles Lalemant could write in a letter to the General of the Order: "Father de Brebeuf, a pious and prudent man, and of robust constitution, has passed a rude winter season among the savages, and has acquired an extensive knowledge of their tongue." Brebeuf had begun to show the precious talent which was later to give him such mastery over the Huron language.

The flotilla from the Huron country had reached Quebec early in 1626; the Indians had bartered all their furs and were on the eve of their return homewards. This opportunity could not be lost, and rather than wait another year, Brebeuf made every effort—even urging the intervention of Champlain—to assure his passage in one of the canoes. He had some difficulty, however;

the Indians complained of his weight; a frail canoe could not carry him safely hundreds of miles against the swift currents and over the dangerous rapids of the Upper Ottawa. A few gifts solved the objections of the Indian traders, and Brebeuf, accompanied by Father de Nouë and the Recollect, de la Roche Daillon, set out over the famous Ottawa and Nipissing route to the Huron nation. After thirty days of painful effort the three men floated out of French River and coasted down the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. A few wigwams scattered here and there along the shore gave evidences of human occupation, and soon the shouts of his tawny cohorts told Brebeuf that he had reached Otouacha, the landing-place of the Huron village of Toanche^[1], and the end of his journey.

The missionary's first care was to secure a cabin, or "annonchia," as Sagard called it, built of long poles driven into the ground and then bent forward till their topmost ends met. A covering of bark thrown over this funnel-shaped skeleton provided a cabin into which he could retire. Father de Brebeuf had come to preach the Gospel of Christ to a race of Indians who had never heard of the true God, and he began at once to acquire a knowledge of the Huron tongue, the only means of communication with them. His first weeks were passed in plying them with questions, writing down their answers as they sounded to his ear, thus augmenting daily his stock of words; his evenings beside the camp-fire were spent in classifying them, in forming sentences, and in trying to discover the mechanism of the strange tongue. Nature had given him a retentive memory and a marvellous facility for seizing the laws governing language, gifts he thanked God for more than once, and he made such rapid progress that in a short time he had acquired a tolerable knowledge of the Huron tongue. His two companions were less gifted, and after a sojourn of a year in the Huron country, both Daillon and de Nouë returned to Quebec.

Brebeuf was now alone in the Huron solitude. He began his lonely life by planting a large cross before his cabin, so that its shadow might bless him and his labours. He visited the homes of the Indians, gathered them together, explained to them the rudiments of the Christian faith, and tried to impress on them the existence of God, the duty of serving Him, and other great truths of religion. But the weeks and months were passing and he had not yet been able to make any impression on minds and hearts hardened by centuries of superstition. He struggled on patiently during the Winters of 1627-1628 and 1628-1629, hoping that the hour of grace would soon strike, consoling himself meanwhile with the baptism of a few children in danger of death. More than once, however, during the second year he had the satisfaction of seeing sick and infirm adults yielding to his burning zeal. He had hopes even of forming

the nucleus of a congregation among the converts of Toanche and its neighbourhood, when an order came from Charles Lalemant, his superior, summoning him back to civilization.

When the missionary reached Quebec he found the little French colony in the grip of famine. Vessels carrying provisions from the motherland had either foundered at sea, or had been seized by English corsairs in the St. Lawrence. The future looked dark; during the previous year an expedition under Admiral Kerkt had come to capture Quebec; but the haughty reception given him by Champlain had put off the inevitable for the moment. Intent on getting possession of the colony, Kerkt returned again in 1629. Hunger and want obliged Champlain to surrender, and together with the Jesuits, Recollects and a number of French colonists, he was taken back to Europe.

This turn of events wrecked many a bright hope in the heart of Brebeuf. Even the sight of his beloved France, after an absence of four years, could not reconcile him to the loss of the Huron mission. He knew not what the future had in store for the colony on the St. Lawrence, but he did know that the souls of thousands of pagan Hurons were awaiting salvation on Georgian Bay, and he resolved to return thither as soon as the occasion presented itself.

Three years were to elapse before this resolve could be carried out. However, they were years of solid spiritual profit for the future apostle of the Hurons. While at Rouen in 1630, he pronounced his final vows as a Jesuit, thereby binding himself irrevocably to the service of his Divine Master. "A few days before," he wrote, "I felt a strong desire to suffer something for Jesus Christ; and I said, Lord, make me a man according to Thine own Heart. Let me know Thy holy will. Let nothing separate me from Thy love, neither nakedness, nor the sword, nor death itself. Thou hast made me a member of Thy Society and an apostle in Canada, not it is true by the gift of tongues but by a facility in learning them." These noble sentiments were still uppermost in his soul when, a year later, he signed with his own blood the following solemn offering of himself:

"Lord Jesus, my Redeemer, Thou hast saved me with Thy Blood and precious Death. In return for this favour, I promise to serve Thee all my life in Thy Society of Jesus, and never to serve anyone but Thee. I sign this promise with my own blood, ready to sacrifice it all as willingly as I do this drop.

JEAN DE BREBEUF, S.J."

God did not forget this generous promise, but eighteen years had to elapse before the Iroquois gave Brebeuf the opportunity to redeem it. Meanwhile he was waiting patiently for the moment to return to his Hurons. Negotiations for

the transfer of Canada back to France were being pushed forward vigorously, and resulted in the treaty which was signed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, March 29, 1632. Canada became again a French colony, and the way was open to resume work among the native tribes.

Two Jesuits, Paul Le Jeune and Anne de Nouë, the latter for the second time, were sent at once to Canada, while Brebeuf, notwithstanding his ardent supplications, had to wait another year. He sailed from Dieppe, March 23, 1633, his ship casting anchor before Quebec two months later. He had hardly set foot on Canadian soil when he started for the Huron country, but difficulties again barred his way. The Algonquins of Allumette Island, through whose country the Hurons had to pass on their way up and down, had grown jealous of the trade relations which had sprung up between the latter and the French. They feared the influence of the missionaries, threatening to do them violence if they persevered in their intention to make the journey. And yet Le Jeune wrote: "I never saw more resolute men than Brebeuf and his companions when told that they might lose their lives on the way." Prudence, however, forbade risking the enmity of the Algonquins, possibly of closing indefinitely the route to the Huron country, and Brebeuf returned to Quebec, as he had done in 1625, to wait another year.

The Summer of 1634 found him at Three Rivers seeking anew an opportunity to embark for Huronia. The objections put forward the previous year by the Indians were again resorted to, but a few presents smoothed negotiations and the zealous missionary found a place in one of the canoes. "Never did I witness a start," he wrote, "about which there was so much quibbling and opposition, all, I believe, being the tactics of the enemy of man's salvation. It was by a providential chance that we managed to get away, and by the power of glorious St. Joseph in whose honour God inspired me in my despair to offer twenty Masses." While on his way westward with Fathers Daniel and Davost, he wrote to Le Jeune, "We are going by short stages, and we are quite well. We paddle all day because our Indians are sick. What ought we not to do for God and for souls redeemed by the Blood of His Son?... Your Reverence will excuse this writing, order, and all; we start so early in the morning, lie down so late and paddle so continually, that we hardly have time for our prayers. Indeed, I have been obliged to finish this letter by the light of the fire."

The three missionaries travelled in separate canoes, and had been gone a few days when news reached Quebec, news which could not be verified, that Brebeuf was suffering greatly and that Daniel had died of starvation. Le Jeune exclaimed when he heard it: "If Father de Brebeuf dies, the little we know of the Huron tongue will be lost, and then we shall have to begin over again, thus

retarding the fruits that we wish to gather on this mission.” Happily the news turned out to be false, and on the Feast of our Lady of the Snows, August 5, 1634, after thirty days’ travel, Brebeuf landed alone on the beach where he had first set foot on Huron territory eight years before. Confiding in the help of the Guardian Angels of the country, he trudged on alone over a trail overgrown and deserted, and finally he was able to contemplate with tenderness and emotion the spot where he had lived and celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass from 1626 to 1629. But Toanche had disappeared, and after a short stay at Teandeuviata, awaiting the arrival of Daniel and Davost, he and his two companions settled at Ihonatiria^[2] on the north shore of the peninsula.

Brebeuf’s sound knowledge of the Huron tongue proved a valuable asset now; he began to visit cabins, instructing adults and baptizing children. He gathered the Indians together, and then clothed in surplice and biretta—“to give majesty to his appearance,” he remarked—he taught them the Sign of the Cross, the Commandments of God, and prayers in their own tongue. On Sundays he assembled them in his cabin to hear Mass and to answer questions in the catechism. Little presents given to the children enkindled in them so great a desire to learn, that the *Relations* inform us there was not one in Ihonatiria who did not wish to be taught; and as they were all fairly intelligent, they made quite rapid progress. The fruits were being gathered in slowly. “They would be greater,” Father de Brebeuf asserted, “if I could only leave this village and visit others.” Accordingly he made flying visits to the Tobacco nation and to Teanaostaye^[3], the largest settlement of the Cord clan. He summed up the results in a letter dated June 16, 1636, claiming eighty baptisms in 1635, whilst he had only fourteen the year before.

The moment had come for greater apostolic activity. Every Summer the Huron flotilla brought up a couple of Jesuits, who as soon as they secured a smattering of the language began to instruct and baptize in many of the hamlets with which the country was dotted. Ossossané, the largest village of the Bear clan, situated on Nottawasaga Bay, had become a residence^[4]. The future looked promising enough when a cloud suddenly appeared which threatened to destroy all missionary hopes.

In 1637 a strange pestilence visited the Huron nation and carried hundreds of Indians to the grave. The sorcerers, whose influence among their people was supreme and who feared a loss of prestige, laid the blame for this scourge on the Blackgowns, as the missionaries were named by their Indian charges. Every motive was seized upon to accuse them, and the lives of isolation and hardship which those devoted men underwent were to have an aftermath in persecution. Brebeuf himself was declared to be a dangerous sorcerer, in fact the most dangerous in the country; he was held responsible for the calamities

that were weighing heavily on the tribe. Not merely the death of their fellow-Indians, but even the absence of rain, the failure of crops and lack of success on the chase, were laid at his door by the malcontents, who more than once threatened to cleave his head with a tomahawk. Affairs had assumed so serious a turn in the Autumn of 1637, and Brebeuf was so convinced that his hour had come that he wrote to his superior in Quebec a farewell letter, revealing the greatest resignation to whatever fate God might have in store for him.

Wishing to show the superstitious Huron Indians his utter contempt for his own safety and the little value he placed on this miserable life, he invited them to what the Hurons called a “farewell feast,” which those condemned to death were accustomed to provide. Many accepted the invitation and listened in mournful silence while the holy man told them that death had no terrors for him, that it meant eternal life for himself and his brethren; but he warned the Indians of the crime they were about to commit. Meanwhile the days slipped away quietly without any attempt at violence. A complete change had taken place in the hearts of the wretched Hurons, a change which Father de Brebeuf attributed to the intercession of St. Joseph, in whose honour the missionaries had vowed to say Mass for nine consecutive days.

The arrival of Jerome Lalemant, in the Summer of 1638, to replace Brebeuf as superior of the Huron mission, gave the latter greater freedom to go from village to village. Ihonatiria had been abandoned; Ossossané had become the chief residence of the Bear clan; a residence had also been established at Teanaostaye. On these two centers of population depended many minor villages, and with the help of new missionary recruits a crusade was started throughout the length and breadth of Huronia. Numerous striking conversions are recorded in the *Relations*, showing that sorcery and native superstition were losing their hold on the tribe, and that an era of further expansion would have ensued had not the Iroquois begun their depredations. Those inveterate enemies of the Hurons had become active and irritating. Their presence was a menace both to the missionaries and their neophytes, and it was decided to build a permanent residence and fortify it sufficiently to resist the attacks of those cunning foes of both French and Hurons. The result of this decision was Fort Ste. Marie on the Wye river, built in 1639, a “home of peace” which, while it would protect the missionaries from their enemies, would also be a shelter where they could retire occasionally and recuperate their physical and spiritual strength.^[5]

The plans of the Jesuits were being carried out to the letter; the work of catechising the Hurons was going on vigorously, and new converts were asking for instruction, when a fresh scourge swept down on the unfortunate tribe. Smallpox began to ravage Ossossané, Teanaostaye, and the dependent

villages. As usual the Blackgowns were held responsible for the new pestilence, and Brebeuf who was looked on as the chief of the French sorcerers had the lion's share of savage resentment. An accident, the fracture of his shoulder-blade, which happened to him during a visit to the Neutral nation along Lake Erie in 1641, obliged him to go to Quebec for treatment, and he did not return to the Huron country until 1644.

Many changes had taken place there in those three years. The incursions of the Iroquois had become more frequent; small detachments were often encountered; everywhere they were leaving behind them a trail of blood. The terrified Hurons palisaded their villages and took precautions, as best they could, against those onslaughts. As if they had a presentiment of their coming doom and wishing to meet it fully prepared, they flocked around the Fathers in greater numbers than ever to hear the Word of Life. Although in constant peril, Brebeuf and his fellow-missionaries went from village to village, spending themselves in this arduous task. The harvest was growing, hundreds were clamouring for baptism. And yet amid their consolations the Jesuits saw that the clouds were lowering; disaster was following disaster, and all, even the missionaries themselves, were at a loss to say what the future would bring forth. They were soon to learn.

There were now eighteen Jesuits actively engaged among the Hurons, one of these being Gabriel Lalemant, who had arrived only in September, 1648. He had been sent to live with Father de Brebeuf at St. Ignace^[6], a small village which had been removed the previous winter to a strongly fortified site about three miles nearer Fort Ste. Marie. It was there, in March, 1649, that the supreme sacrifice, so long sought for, awaited Brebeuf and his companion.

Both missionaries happened to be at the neighbouring village of St. Louis,^[7] three miles away, instructing the neophytes, when, at early dawn of March 16, fully a thousand Iroquois stealthily approached St. Ignace.

The merciless invaders flung themselves on the unsuspecting and unprepared Hurons, murdering or making prisoners of them all. Only three escaped and hurried to St. Louis to warn Father de Brebeuf and the people. But at their heels rushed the Iroquois, and another massacre took place at that village. Although the two Jesuits were urged repeatedly to flee and save themselves, they refused to do so. They were seized, bound and brought back to St. Ignace where the inhuman captors had already made preparations for their torture and death.

The *Relation* of 1650 gives us many details of the tragedy, but Christopher Regnaut, a servant who helped to bring the charred bodies back to Fort Ste. Marie, three days after the event, has left us a thrilling account, gathered from the lips of the Huron Christians who had escaped, of the barbarous treatment

the two holy missionaries received.^[8] “They (the Iroquois) took them both and stripped them entirely naked and fastened each to a post. They tied both their hands together. They tore the nails from their fingers. They beat them with a shower of blows with sticks on their shoulders, loins, legs and faces, no part of their body being exempt from this torment. Although Father de Brebeuf was overwhelmed by the weight of the blows, the holy man did not cease to speak of God and to encourage his fellow-captives to suffer well that they might die well. ‘My children,’ he exclaimed, ‘raise your eyes to Heaven in this affliction; remember that God is watching your sufferings and will soon be your exceeding great reward. Let us die together in the faith, and hope from His goodness the fulfilment of His promises. I pity you more than I do myself. Keep your courage up in the few remaining torments; these will end with your lives; the glory which follows will have no end.’ ”

Whilst he was thus encouraging those good people, a wretched Huron renegade who had remained a captive with the Iroquois, and whom Father de Brebeuf had formerly instructed and baptized, hearing him speak of Paradise and holy baptism, was irritated and said to him, “*Echon*, (the missionary’s Huron name) thou sayest that baptism and the sufferings of this life lead straight to Paradise; thou shalt go thither soon, for I am about to baptize thee and make thee suffer well, in order that thou mayest go sooner to thy Paradise.” The barbarian having said this, took a kettle full of boiling water which he poured over his head three different times in derision of holy baptism. And each time that he performed this mock ceremony, the barbarian told him with bitter sarcasm, “Go to Heaven, for thou art well baptized.” “After they had made him suffer several other torments,” continued Regnaut, “the first of which was to heat hatchets red-hot and apply them to the loins and under the arm-pits, they made a collar of these red-hot hatchets and put it on the neck of the good Father. Here is the way I have seen the collar made for other prisoners; they heat six hatchets red-hot, take a stout withe, draw the ends together, and then put it around the neck of the sufferer. I have seen no torment which moved me more to compassion than this; for you see a man, bound naked to a post, who having this collar on his neck knows not what posture to take. If he lean forward the hatchets on the shoulder weigh more heavily on him; if he lean back, those on his breast make him suffer the same torment: if he keep erect, without leaning to one side or another, the burning axes, applied equally to both sides, give him a double torture. After that they put on him a belt full of pitch and resin, and set fire to it. This roasted his whole body. During all these torments Father de Brebeuf stood like a rock, insensible to fire and flame, which astonished all the blood-thirsty executioners who tormented him. His zeal was so great that he preached continually to those infidels to try to convert them. His tormentors were enraged against him for

constantly speaking to them of God and of their conversion. To prevent him again from speaking of these things, they cut out his tongue and cut off his upper and lower lips. After that they set themselves to stripping the flesh from his legs, thighs and arms, to the very bone, and put it to roast before his eyes, in order to eat it. Whilst they were tormenting him in this manner the wretches derided him, saying, 'Thou seest well that we treat thee as a friend, since we shall be the cause of thy eternal happiness. Thank us, then, for these good offices which we render thee, for the more thou shalt have suffered the more will thy God reward thee.' The monsters, seeing that the Father began to grow weak, made him sit down upon the ground, and one of them, taking a knife, cut off the skin from his skull. Another barbarian, seeing that he would soon die, made an opening in the upper part of his chest, tore out his heart, roasted it, and ate it. Others came to drink his blood still warm, which they did with both hands, saying that Father de Brebeuf had been very brave to endure all the pain they had caused him, and that in drinking his blood they would become brave like him."

After several hours of these inhuman tortures, the holy apostle of the Hurons expired at four in the afternoon, March 16, 1649. He was fifty-six years of age, sixteen of which he had spent in the Canadian missions. His long and painful ministry was at last ended; nothing now remained but the charred and blackened bones and flesh of the missionary. Father Bonin and several Frenchmen who went to St. Ignace to investigate, found there a spectacle of horror: or as Father Paul Ragueneau wrote, "the relics of that love of God which alone triumphs in the death of martyrs." The bodies of the victims were tenderly carried and given Christian burial in the little cemetery at Fort Ste. Marie.

In 1650, when the Huron mission was abandoned forever, the bones of Father de Brebeuf were raised from the grave and brought to Quebec, where they were held in high veneration. A rich silver reliquary was sent from France, probably by the Brebeuf family, to receive the skull of the venerable victim of the Iroquois. Other portions of his relics were distributed among the Canadian communities; others were sent to France, where they failed to survive the depredations of the French Revolution.

And yet, perhaps the most precious heirloom that has come down to us of this venerable servant of God is the story of his life and labours which has been preserved in the monumental record known as the Jesuit *Relations*. The heroism of the early Canadian missionaries has always excited the admiration of historians. Not all of them, however, have done complete justice to the lofty motives which could inspire a man like Brebeuf to bury himself in the forests along Georgian Bay and finally sacrifice his life, all he had to sacrifice, for the

conversion of the aborigines of New France. Others better qualified to judge have been fairer to his memory, when they give credit to the grace of God for his victories, and make him say with St. Paul, "I can do all in Him who strengthened me." "His death," wrote Ragueneau, his superior, "has crowned his life, and perseverance has been the seal of his holiness. He died while preaching and exercising truly apostolic offices, and by a death which the first apostle of the Hurons deserved."

Jean de Brebeuf was looked on as a martyr from the time of his death, and he would have been proclaimed as such even from that moment had his contemporaries dared to forestall the infallible decision of the Church. "Brebeuf's gentleness which won all hearts, his courage truly generous in enterprises, his long suffering in awaiting the moments of God, his patience in enduring everything, his zeal in undertaking everything he saw, was for the glory of God."

Nor has the veneration given from the earliest years to this victim of Iroquois cruelty yielded to the dissolving influences of time. Nearly three centuries have elapsed since the grim tragedy was enacted at Bourg St. Ignace, Simcoe County, Ontario, and yet the name of Blessed Jean de Brebeuf is still a synonym for zeal and heroic fortitude in millions of homes in America.

[1] Situated on Penetang Bay. Cf. Jones: *Old Huronia*, diagr. III, pp. 36, 46, 47, 59; colored sketch, p. 22 b.

[2] Situated in the immediate neighbourhood of Todd's Point, lot 6, Conc. xx, xxi, Tiny township. (Cf. *Old Huronia*, pp. 28-31).

[3] Known also as St Joseph II; situated on the Flanagan farm, west half of lot 7, Conc. iv, Medonte Township. (*Old Huronia* Cf. p. 19, and fig. 1., plate p. 21.)

[4] Known as La Rochelle by the French fur-traders; and by the missionaries as the Residence of the Immaculate Conception. The four successive sites of Ossossané lay in the vicinity of Varwood Point on Nottawasaga Bay (Cf. Jones, *Old Huronia*, p. 27.)

[5] Now known as the Old Fort, three miles from Midland, Ont., on the Canadian National Railway. The foundations are still visible.

[6] Identified in 1903, on the Campbell farm, east of lot 4, Conc. vii, Township of Tay; situated about a mile from Fort St. Ignace, on the Canadian Pacific Railway. A shrine was erected there in 1907 in honour of

the martyrs. (Cf. Jones, *Old Huronia*, pp. 121 and seqq.)

[7] Situated on the Newton farm, west half of lot 11, Conc. vi, Tay. Ashbeds, kitchen refuse, potsherds, etc., have been found there in abundance. A cairn erected by the Historic Sites Commission in 1923 recalls the tragedy of 1649.

[8] From a Ms. obtained by Mr. Douglas Brymner in Paris in 1883, and now preserved in the Canadian Archives, Ottawa. Reprinted in *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIV, pp. 25 and seqq.



BLESSED GABRIEL LAEMANT.

CHAPTER III

BLESSED GABRIEL LALEMANT

A Family of Missionaries—Gabriel's Early Years—He asks for the Missions—Prepares for His Future Work—Sets out for New France—Missionary Activity—Goes to the Huron Country—Hardships on the Way—Dangers and Fatigues—He Reaches Huronia—Assists De Brebeuf at St. Ignace—The Iroquois Invasion—Attack on St. Ignace—The Jesuits Refuse to Escape—Gabriel's Heroic End—News Reaches Quebec—The Family is Notified—Reputation for Holiness.

The name of Lalemant is well known in the missionary annals of New France. During the second quarter of the seventeenth century, three of this family, members of the Society of Jesus, distinguished themselves in the work of spreading the Catholic faith among the native tribes in Canada. They were pioneers in this country, men who laboured and suffered for their common Master; and when they died they left behind them memories which are still precious to all students of our early history.

The first of these was Charles Lalemant, already mentioned, who arrived at Quebec when the Recollects called the Jesuits to their aid in 1625. He heads the list of that long line of Jesuit superiors who guided the labours of their religious brethren in Canada uninterruptedly for one hundred and seventy-five years, that is, until the complete extinction of the old Order in the first year of the nineteenth century^[1]. The second, Jerome Lalemant, brother of Charles, is undoubtedly one of the most illustrious figures in the history of New France. He reached Canada in 1628, and went immediately to the Huron country, where he succeeded Jean de Brebeuf as superior. During his seven years' occupancy of that office, he built Fort Ste. Marie, the foundations of which are still visible on the shore of Georgian Bay, systematized the work of evangelization among the Hurons, and extended the influence of the missionaries far and wide. In 1645, he returned to Quebec to superintend all the Jesuit missions in New France, fulfilling that duty from 1645 to 1650, and again from 1659 to 1665. We have from his pen the Huron *Relations* from

1639 to 1643, and the more elaborate *Relations* of New France from 1646 to 1649, and from 1660 to 1664.

It was reserved, however, for Gabriel Lalemant, the nephew of Charles and Jerome, to give still greater luster to the name of this excellent family by the heroic death he suffered at the hands of the savage Iroquois in March, 1649. After having spent barely three years in this portion of the Master's vineyard, he received the highest reward that God can give a servant here below, death for His sake. "Being made perfect in a short space he fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased God; therefore He hastened to bring him out of the midst of iniquities" (Wis. IV. 13. 14).

Gabriel was a native of Paris, where his father, a lawyer, held an office of some importance in Parliament. He was born on October 10, 1610, and was the youngest son of a family of six children. From his earliest years he aspired to the foreign apostolate, and with that end in view, consecrated his life to God in the Society of Jesus. On March 14, 1630, though not yet twenty years of age, and delicate in health, he entered the novitiate at Paris, there to lay the foundation of his sanctity.

The young man had chosen the proper outlet for his future missionary activities; for his Jesuit brethren were at the full tide of their apostolic expansion. They had already penetrated Asia, Africa and South America. France, even then the fruitful mother of missionaries, was sending her soldiers of the Cross into foreign fields; several of them had begun their labours among the native tribes in the new colony beyond the Atlantic. Unhappily, the seizure of Quebec by the English corsair, David Kerkt, in 1629, had deprived France of her possessions on the St. Lawrence and had compelled the Jesuits living there to abandon their work and return home. But those men of God felt that this was only a temporary interruption. The active negotiations that were actually under way between Cardinal Richelieu and Charles I of England, buoyed up their hopes, and they made no secret of their keenness to return to Canada as soon as the colony was restored.

All these topics were familiar to the young novice in Paris, and often helped to carry him in spirit across the Atlantic to New France. Besides, the visits he received from his uncle Charles, who had already tasted the trials of Canadian missionary life and who was then in Paris, after his escape from shipwreck on the Acadian coast, had undoubtedly given Gabriel vivid pictures of the life led among the Indians, and filled him with the ambition of sharing in it some day. He had more than once expressed this desire formally, and asked his superiors to be considered a future missionary of New France. His holy ambition, however, brought opposition from his own family, who did not relish the departure to the end of the earth, even in after years, of one so well

loved. And yet the later life of Gabriel Lalemant showed that considerations of this kind could have had little weight with him; he was not one to allow ties of flesh and blood to stand between himself and duty. While his affection for his family had not cooled on entering the Jesuit Order, the religious training he was receiving in the novitiate in Paris was teaching him how to purify this natural sentiment and subordinate it to the higher love he owed to God. The following passage found among his writings after his death, gives the true character of his love for his own: "I am indebted to my relatives, to my mother and to my brothers, and I must try to draw down on them the mercy of God. Never permit, O God, that any of my family, for whom Thou hast shown so much love, perish in Thy sight, or that there be one amongst them who will blaspheme Thee for eternity. Let me be a victim for them! *Quoniam ego in flagella paratus sum; hic ure, hic seca, ut in aeternum parcas!*"

These were the sentiments which animated Lalemant when he entered on his religious career; and yet one is at a loss to find a reason for the young man's ardent prayer, for the later life of Gabriel's family was a striking instance of sacrifice and religious fervour. After the death of her husband, which occurred while her children were still in minor age, Madame Lalemant had evidently taken to heart the task of bringing them up conformably to the Divine will. With the exception of a son who remained in civil life and attained eminence at the Parisian bar, all the other members of the family consecrated themselves to God in the religious state. The eldest son, Bruno, became a Carthusian monk; two daughters entered the convent of the Assumption in Paris, while another adopted the strict rule of the Carmelite nuns shortly before Gabriel entered the Jesuit Order. And to put a fitting crown to this edifying oblation of her family, when the news reached Paris that her son Gabriel had shed his blood for the faith, Madame Lalemant herself retired behind the cloister of the Recollectines and devoted the remainder of her life to prayer and meditation.

Gabriel Lalemant completed his novitiate and pronounced his three vows in 1632. Evidently obeying a Divine inspiration he obtained from his superiors at the same time the permission to add a fourth vow, namely, to consecrate himself to the foreign missions. But while he persevered unflinchingly in this determination, Heaven desired to prepare him well for the great sacrifice he should one day be called to make; sixteen years were to elapse before he saw the realization of his holy wishes.

During this long period the future victim of the Iroquois was employed in colleges in France exercising the various functions of his Order. Owing either to his frail health or to the thoroughness of the classical studies he had made previous to his admission, he was sent immediately after his noviceship to

teach in the college at Moulins. In the Jesuit system of formation, if age or ill-health be not an obstacle, members of the Order rarely pass to their higher studies and the priesthood without a preliminary halt in colleges of four or five years. The reason is evident; barring actual contact with the world and worldlings, nowhere may one study human nature to better advantage than in the din and battle of college life. The same clashing of temperaments, the same ambitions, the same craving for success, that one meets in the outside world, are active in the throbbing hearts of students on their way to manhood. A young professor, therefore, aspiring to the priesthood, gains experience in the class-room or on the playground that is of lifelong utility; he has ample opportunities for character study which will serve him well in the ministry of after-life.

Lalemant was employed three years in this important work before he was sent to study theology at Bourges. There he was ordained in 1638. The following year he was appointed prefect of students in the famous college at La Fleche, and in 1641, was sent to teach philosophy at Moulins. He was employed as prefect in the college at Bourges, in 1646, when the news so anxiously looked for and so long put off, reached him that he had been chosen for the Canadian missions. His delicate health had apparently been the cause of the long delay. "He had been for several years," the *Relations* tell us, "asking God, with tears and sighs, to be sent to these far-away missions, but his body had not the strength except that given by the Spirit of God and his desire to suffer for His name." However, the long weary sixteen years of intense desire had at last ended, and he joyfully prepared for his journey across the ocean. He quitted France during the same Summer, and after a tedious voyage of nearly three months' duration, landed at Quebec where his uncle Jerome Lalemant, the superior of all the Canadian missions, gave him a generous welcome.

Fourteen years had elapsed since the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye had restored Canada to France. The Jesuits who returned to these shores as soon as the treaty was signed, were passing through a period of feverish activity. Quebec had possessed a college since 1635; residences had been established at Tadoussac, Three Rivers and Montreal; fresh accessions of missionaries, arriving from France every Summer, had enabled the Order to spread over an immense territory and give their services to many native tribes. Jesuits were found at work on both banks of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers and along the Great Lakes. They had missions in Acadia, and were preparing to establish others in Maine, and on the reserves in New York State. They were evangelizing and gathering in converts to the Christian faith among the Hurons, Montagnais, Abenakis, Ottawas, Algonquins, Otchipwes and Iroquois. Several of them, as we have seen, had known what it was to suffer for Christ;

Bressani, Jogues and Goupil had already given testimony even unto blood for the faith that was in them.

These results had been accomplished when Gabriel Lalemant reached Quebec in September, 1646. Carried away by his enthusiasm, his first impulse was to start at once for some Indian tribe or other to begin the study of the language, but his superior, Jerome Lalemant, moved by the prudence which was the result of long experience, put a curb on his nephew's excessive zeal, and found work for him to do nearer home. He spent two years exercising his ministry among the French colonists in Quebec, Sillery, Beauport and Three Rivers. The *Journal des Jésuites* recalls various incidents which help us to follow his career during those two years. On Christmas Day, 1646, he said Mass at the Ursulines, in Quebec; on the last day of the same year he was present with other Fathers at a representation of the Cid given in honour of Governor de Montmagny; he preached every Sunday at Beauport during the Lenten season of 1647; he went to Three Rivers in September of the same year to labour for souls, a fact which is attested by entries in the baptismal register still carefully preserved there. He returned to Quebec later on, for we find him in the following Summer, 1648, taking part in the procession on the feast of Corpus Christi.

While the young priest was destined ultimately for some mission among the native tribes, it was apparently not the intention of his superior that he should go to the Hurons. This conclusion may be gathered from other entries in the *Journal des Jésuites*. At the date, July 16th, 1647, Jerome Lalemant writes that when Father Le Jeune returned from Montreal, he consulted him on several topics; among these were the safety of the Huron route, the sending of supplies to missionaries, and the disposal of the services of Gabriel Lalemant.

Although the Huron route was infested by Iroquois marauders, it was decided that someone should risk the journey at the first favourable opportunity and carry succour to Huronia; but it was also decided that Father Gabriel should betake himself to the Montagnais, a peaceful tribe living on the Lower St. Lawrence, and too far away from the ferocious Iroquois to be molested by them. One might ask, had Lalemant gone to live with the Montagnais would the crown of martyrdom awaiting him in the Huron country ever have been his? And besides, how would the great desire of his life have been accomplished? Among his writings found after his death, it was learned that "before coming to Canada he had consecrated himself to our Lord for the purpose of receiving from His hand a violent death, either in exposing himself among the plague-stricken in Old France or in seeking to save the souls of savages in the New,"—with the added clause that he would esteem it a favour if he were allowed to die for God's glory in the flower of his age.

Providence evidently had its own designs on the career of this privileged soul.

“Behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping
Watch above His own.”

The favour that Gabriel Lalemant so ardently desired was to be granted him in all its fulness. The mission to the peaceful Montagnais was subsequently cancelled, and he was allowed to leave Quebec on July 24th, 1648, for Three Rivers, there to join the Hurons on their return homewards. On the 6th of August, a flotilla of fifty or sixty canoes started from that trading-post near the mouth of the St. Maurice to begin the long journey of seven hundred miles to the shore of Georgian Bay. Thirty years had elapsed since the missionary, the Recollect Joseph le Caron, had gone over the route for the first time, a route which was now as familiar to the French as it had been to the Indians for centuries. Every cape and rock and rapid had a local habitation and a name well known to missionary and fur-trader; but unhappily a knowledge of the topography of the route that led to the Huron country did not diminish the hardships the Europeans had to undergo, or minimize the dangers that were always evident, during the journey.

Paddling up the St. Lawrence, Lalemant's frail bark canoe entered the Rivière des Prairies at the foot of the Island of Montreal. After surmounting the rapid at Sault-au-Recollet, the first of the thirty-five he was to encounter, he floated out into the pleasant Lake of Two Mountains. A few more hours brought him to the main body of the Ottawa river, flowing through a wilderness of pine and maple trees, and easily recognized by the murky colour of its waters. Skipping the Long Sault at Carillon, a spot destined a few years later, through the heroic resistance of Dollard and his seventeen companions against a legion of Iroquois, to become the Thermopylae of New France, Lalemant moved in close to the shore, not merely to avoid the stronger currents of the mid-stream, but rather to get a better view of the panorama of water and islands, of bare rock and luxurious vegetation, that passed all too quickly and silently before his wondering eyes.

After three or four days' steady work, the rumble of falling waters was heard, a sound long familiar to Indian ears, but strange and not unwelcome music to the young French missionary. A glance to the left revealed to him a small stream tumbling over a cliff and paying the gracious tribute of its waters to the larger river beneath. This was Rideau Fall on the present site of the city of Ottawa.

But a more imposing view awaited him a little further on. While passing at the foot of what is now Parliament Hill, a distant rumbling sound told him that he was approaching the famous “asticou” of the natives, known even in those times, as it is today, by the name which Champlain had given it thirty years before—the Chaudiere or “Big Kettle”—where the entire Ottawa river hurls itself with terrific force over a semi-circular cliff into a seething cauldron below. Long before the mass of waters reaches the brink of this precipice, it is checked by rocks and islands; but then, deep and treacherously silent, it rushes onward in its mad career, carrying to destruction whatever falls within its hungry grasp. Many a tragedy was enacted at this spot in those early times, and no Huron or Algonquin ever passed up or down the river without chanting his traditional dirge or making his oblation of tobacco leaves to appease the angry Genius of the fall.

The course of the Ottawa, thenceforward broken by rapids and obstructions, must have wasted the physical strength as well as exercised the patience the delicate Lalemant, who was obliged to land and pack his burden over the trails as the wiry Hurons themselves had to do. “When these rapids and torrents are reached,” wrote Brebeuf, thirteen years before, “one must land and carry on his shoulder, through the forest or over high rocks, all the baggage and the canoes. This is not accomplished without great labour, for there are portages one and two and three leagues long, and for each, several trips back and forth must be made, no matter how few our bundles may be. In some places where the current is as violent as the rapids, though easier at the outset, the Indians get into the water and haul their canoes after them. This is a dangerous operation, for they sometimes sink up to the neck; they are then obliged to abandon their canoes and save themselves as best they can.” When the rapids became too dangerous to attempt to run them, the canoes were swung over the heads of the more muscular Hurons, who let the weight rest on their shoulders, and then started off over the trails to the smoother waters above.

Portaging their goods and chattels was undoubtedly the hardest task the missionaries had to endure on their tiresome journeys westward, and after one of those fatiguing spells both Indian and whitemen rested for a few hours, often for the night. The Recollect Sagard, who wrote from experience, gives us a graphic description of a night’s repose on the Ottawa route. “The first care of the Indians,” he tells us, “was to look for a spot where they could find dry wood to make their fire and prepare their supper. Once the spot was chosen, they carried up their canoes, packages, and everything belonging to them, and set to work immediately to prepare for the night. One went to gather dry wood, another to cut poles for the cabins, another to strike fire, another to set over the

fire the pot which was attached to a stick driven into the earth, another to look for two flat stones to grind the corn with which to make *sagamité*. When the poles were raised, rolls of birch bark were stretched over them, and the bundles of merchandise were placed around inside, while the canoes were turned upside down and left outside. Then each Indian took his place within the cabin, his back leaning against the bundles, stretched himself, and indulged in a smoke with a pipe until the pot of corn began to boil. Once the *sagamité* was ready each savage received his share in a bark dipper, which he carried with him as part of his personal baggage. After supper, they lay down to sleep on the ground, usually on a skin covering a few cedar branches. At dawn they were at work again preparing for their day's journey by another meal of corn, rolling up their birch bark and replacing their bundles in the canoes."^[2]

It is doubtful whether Gabriel Lalemant had to use the paddle or not, for after 1634 the Jesuits provided their Huron missionaries with a sail which they could attach to their canoes; but even that slight improvement did not lessen the torment of sitting daily at the bottom of those frail vessels, for weeks at a time.

At last in the beginning of September, 1648, after his wearying journey up the Ottawa, across Lake Nipissing and down the French River, Father Lalemant reached Fort Ste. Marie, the headquarters of the Jesuits in Huronia. This residence, built by his uncle Jerome in 1639, nine years before, was accomplishing the purpose for which it was intended. "It is a resort for the whole country," wrote Paul Ragueneau, "where the Christians find a hospital when sick, a refuge when panic-stricken, and a shelter when they come to visit us. During the past year we have counted over three thousand persons to whom we have given hospitality, and sometimes within a fortnight to from six to seven hundred Christians, which, as a rule, means three meals to each one. This does not include a large number who come continually and pass the whole day and to whom we give charity." "As a rule only two or three of our Fathers reside in this house," he wrote elsewhere; "the others are scattered throughout the missions, now ten in number... A single Father has at times to take charge of ten or twelve villages; some have to range much further, over eighty or a hundred leagues... We try, however, to meet together two or three times a year in order to commune with ourselves, to think of God alone in the repose of prayer, and afterwards to confer together respecting the means and light that experience and the Holy Spirit continue to give us daily to make the conversion of those peoples easier for us. After that we must hurry back our work as soon as possible."

The Huron flotilla of 1648 brought up a large contingent to strengthen the missionary forces. Besides Gabriel Lalemant, there were among the new

arrivals, Fathers Bressani, Greslon, Daran, two coadjutor Brothers, and several laymen who were to be employed in various functions. “We number forty-two Frenchmen in the midst of all these unbelieving nations,” wrote Father Ragueneau in 1648, “eighteen of our Society; the remainder are picked men, most of whom have made up their minds to live and die with us.”

The newly arrived Fathers devoted themselves during the first months in Huronia to the study of the language and acted as assistants to the missionaries in the principal villages, the chiefest of which containing a resident missionary being St. Ignace, known in Huron as Taenhatentaron^[3]. It had been established only about three years, and is first mentioned in the *Relation* of 1645; but during that short period it had become an important center of Gospel activity. Its distance, however, from Fort Ste. Marie and its exposed position made it an easy mark for the Iroquois who for over a year had been spreading terror throughout the neighbourhood. In the Summer of 1647 the whole country was threatened by an army of these merciless marauders. Three hundred had attacked a village of the Neutral nation and massacred or made prisoners of all who dared to resist. This onslaught intimated to the Hurons further north what was in store for them, and in fact, the following Spring, while three hundred Hurons, “nearly all Christians who had come together the better to say their prayers night and morning, who lived in innocence and spread everywhere the sweet odour of Christianity,” were encamped in the woods near St. Ignace, they fell a prey to the treacherous Iroquois, who killed seven on the spot and carried off twenty-four into captivity.

Looking on these ominous visits as a prelude to others in the near future, Father de Brebeuf, who had charge of the mission of St. Ignace, decided to transfer his neophytes to a spot nearer Fort Ste. Marie, where they should enjoy whatever protection the French could afford. The site chosen for the new residence of St. Ignace was an elevation located close to the border of a little stream emptying into Sturgeon Bay. It was fortified by nature on three sides and required artificial strengthening only on the fourth side to make it relatively impregnable. Aided by French workmen, the Hurons surrounded the top of this hill with a palisade of posts fifteen or sixteen feet high, and it is presumed that, having Brebeuf for engineer, they profited by the practical lessons gained at Ossossané, and built their fort square with towers at the corners, thereby providing for defence even with a small garrison. This new village was called St. Ignace II, and the missionary in charge had also supervision of the neighbouring villages at Ste. Anne, St. Louis, St. Denis and St. John.^[4] Thither the Hurons transferred their worldly goods in the Spring of 1648, and thither also went Gabriel Lalemant in February, 1649, as assistant to Father de Brebeuf.

Meanwhile the Iroquois had grown more aggressive. The Christians of the mission of St. John Baptist, at Cahiaugué,^[5] on the outskirts of the tribe, were obliged to disband and betake themselves to more populous centers. The massacre of Antoine Daniel and his people at Teanaostaye, in July, 1648, served as a warning to the neophytes and catechumens of the various villages to prepare for the worst. It served also as an incentive for them to lead better lives, and as a result, a wave of fervour swept over the land, the intensity of which may be gauged from Ragueneau's statement that between July, 1648, and the following March, the Fathers had baptized more than fourteen hundred Hurons.

Worried beyond measure by the uncertainties of the moment, the Jesuits took every precaution to safeguard the interest of their Christians flocks. Regardless of their own safety they went from village to village to give spiritual strength to their wards and prepare them to die well if that crisis were reached. Missionaries as well as Indians had a presentiment that they were on the eve of a catastrophe, and no one was penetrated with this feeling more deeply than Gabriel Lalemant who had long before acquiesced, if necessary, in the sacrifice of his life. "My Jesus and my Love," he wrote, "Thy Blood, shed for barbarians as well as for us, must be efficaciously applied for their salvation. Aided by Thy grace, I offer myself to co-operate in this work and to sacrifice myself for them."

God was about to accept this co-operation and this sacrifice made out of pure love for Him; the supreme moment had at last arrived. During the first days of March, 1649, the Iroquois, numbering about a thousand strong and well equipped with firearms which they had obtained from the Dutch, had arrived on the frontier of Huronia. They had started from their own country along the Mohawk in the Autumn of 1648; had lived by hunting on the way during the Winter, and were ready for operations in the Spring. At dawn on March 16, they attacked the palisade of St. Ignace on its weakest side, and so stealthily did they do their work that they were masters of the place before the inmates had time to offer any defence. They worked quickly and successfully; many Hurons were massacred during the onslaught; others were made captives, the total losses amounting to about four hundred souls. Only three men escaped and hurried across the snow to give the alarm to the neighbouring village, St. Louis, about three miles away, where Brebeuf and Lalemant were stationed for the moment.

Elated at their victory at St. Ignace, the Iroquois rushed to St. Louis to continue their deeds of carnage, but not before more than five hundred of the inhabitants, mostly women and children, had time to escape in the direction of Fort Ste. Marie. Eighty Huron warriors met the ferocious enemy outside the

walls and killed thirty of the more daring. But the Iroquois had the advantage of numbers; they battered down the palisades and opened passages for themselves to the interior of the stockade. The scene which ensued is one of the most heartrending in the history of the Huron missions. Beside themselves with rage at the opposition offered, the Iroquois aimed their blows at every Huron they met, and blood soon ran like water. During the massacre the Christians begged Lalemant and his companion to flee and save themselves. But these devoted pastors steadfastly refused to go away. The salvation of their flock was dearer to them than their own lives, and while the Iroquois were slaughtering and scalping their Huron children, the two Fathers stood in the midst of them, baptizing, giving them absolution and animating them to die nobly for the faith. However, in this unequal struggle the end came quickly. The few Hurons who still lived were seized and made prisoners by their cruel enemies, and with them the two Jesuits who were bound with thongs and reserved for special torture. The Iroquois set fire to St. Louis, and hurried back to St. Ignace with their two prisoners, who were then stripped naked and obliged to run the gauntlet, under a shower of blows on their shoulders, loins, legs and faces, there being no part of their bodies which did not endure this torment.

The Iroquois then tore off the finger-nails and pierced the flesh of both Brebeuf and Lalemant with sharp awls; they applied red-hot hatchets under their arm-pits, and put a necklace of them around their shoulders. As has been related on a preceding page, in derision of Christian baptism, they poured kettles of boiling water on their quivering flesh until their entire bodies were bathed with it. At the same time they mocked them saying, "We baptize you so that you may be blessed in your Heaven." Others added in derision, "Do we not treat you as friends since we shall be the cause of your greater happiness in Heaven? Thank us, then, for our good services, for the more you suffer the more your God will reward you." The more the tortures increased, the more the two sufferers entreated God to pardon those unfortunate renegades. While Brebeuf, impassive and lion-like, withstood the excruciating torments, his more delicate companion Lalemant raised his eyes to Heaven and uttered sighs to God to come to his aid. The final episode of this awful tragedy was the tying of the two men to posts, when their persecutors again applied flaming torches to their bodies, then gouged out their eyes and inserted burning coals in the empty sockets.

These tortures, seemingly beyond the power of human endurance, were soon to end. Brebeuf expired about four o'clock on the afternoon of the day of his capture; but his companion still lived on. A cousin of Father Gabriel, also a missionary in Huronia, Father Poncet de la Rivière, writing two months later to

his brother in France,^[6] gives a few details which are not found in the *Relation* of 1649. He tells us that owing to Brebeuf's more perfect knowledge of the Huron tongue, it was this Father who instructed and heard the confessions of the Christians during the assault at St. Louis, while to Father Lalemant fell the task of administering most of the baptisms. The baptism of boiling water, therefore, which he received was a form of torment most appropriate to him who was occupied chiefly in this apostolic function. Lalemant did not preach to the Hurons, and the barbarians did not cut off his lips, as they did to Father de Brebeuf, but they split his jaws, drew his mouth wide open and drove burning brands down his throat. A hatchet blow over his left ear penetrated the skull and left the brain exposed. Though he was completely charred with fire, the executioners left his body entire, so that his sufferings might be more intense during the coming night.

Let this suffice; the pen refuses to enter into further details. But the reader will have remarked the strange paradox. While the powerful Brebeuf died after a few hours' agony, the frail Lalemant, he who had been a prey to physical weakness and ill-health from childhood, withstood the tortures of the Iroquois for twelve hours longer. He gave up his soul to God only at nine o'clock the following morning, March 17th, 1649. When the precious remains of both victims were brought to Fort Ste. Marie, three days later, it was found that their breasts had been cut open, their hearts had been torn out and had evidently been eaten by their captors.

The two heroic Jesuits were buried on Sunday March 21st, "with so much consolation," wrote Father Ragueneau, "and with such tender feelings of devotion in all who were present at the funeral, that I know of none who did not desire a similar fate rather than fear it... Not one of us could ever prevail upon himself to pray to God for them, as if they had any need of prayer; but our minds at once were directed towards Heaven, where we had no doubt their souls had gone."

Thus ended the short but glorious career of the young French missionary, Gabriel Lalemant. Barely seven months had elapsed since he reached Huronia, and he had already borne off the crown. Although the last in the field, he had been chosen by God as one of the first victims to be sacrificed out of the hatred of the Christian name. The news of the massacre did not reach Quebec until the following July; the *Journal des Jésuites* at the date July 20th, 1649, has this simple entry: "The sad account of the destruction of the Hurons and of the martyrdom of three Fathers arrived tonight."^[7]

Father Jerome Lalemant did not leave to any one else the duty of announcing the news to the family in France. He wrote to the Carmelite sister of the victim to assure her that, far from deploring the event, she should glorify

God. “What a happiness for our family!” he exclaimed... “It seems to me that the news should help you to raise your mind and heart to God. The baptisms of more than two thousand seven hundred savages—a ceremony which accompanied his death—proves that the blood he shed had a more than ordinary efficacy; I myself have felt on different occasions the effect of invoking him... And yet,” he adds, “it is not we who make saints; the Church requires striking miracles. It is this that prevents me from listening to the demands of large numbers of devout persons (for relics). I cannot, however, refuse his sister a portion of the scalp torn from his head by his executioners... It bears the glorious marks impressed with iron on his frail and delicate body. There is nothing more to add. It is at his feet and at those of his good Master that we must learn to live and die.”^[8]

During nearly two hundred and eighty years the name of Lalemant, a man “almost too feeble to live but strong enough to die in torture without a murmur,” coupled with that of the “towering Brebeuf whose enthusiasm would not shrink from the necklace of red-hot tomahawks that was in store for him,”^[9] has become in American annals a synonym for heroism in suffering for Christ’s sake. To this admiration for the victim of the Iroquois, expressed by writers of all shades, should be added the element of devotion to his memory which is strong among American Catholics, and which will undoubtedly grown stronger now that the martyr is numbered among the Beatified.

^[1] The Jesuits of the restored Society did not return to Canada until 1842.

^[2] SAGARD, *Histoire du Canada* (Tross Edit.), p.177.

^[3] Situated on the east half of lot 12, Conc. viii, Medonte Township.

^[4] The sites of these Huron villages have been located (cf. Jones, *Old Huronia*, p. 263).

^[5] East half of lot 20, Conc. x, Oro Township.

^[6] *Chronique de l’Ordre du Carmel*, tom. IV.

^[7] News travelled slowly in those days; the third father was Antoine Daniel, slain the previous Summer at Teanaostaye.

^[8] *Chronique de l’Ordre du Carmel*, tom. IV.

^[9] SMITH: *Our Struggle for the Fourteenth Colony*, New York, 1907, p. 17.



BLESSED ANTOINE DANIEL.

CHAPTER IV

BLESSED ANTOINE DANIEL

Early Years and Training—First Thoughts of Canada—He quits his Native Country—Spends a Year in Quebec—Goes to Huronia—Trials met on the Way—Studies the Huron Language—The Project of a Huron Seminary—Daniel Returns to the Colony—Arrival at Three Rivers—The Huron Students—The Failure of the Seminary Scheme—Returns to Huronia—Narrow Escape from Death—Ossossané and Teanaostaye—Fresh Iroquois Invasions—Daniel's Heroic End—Apparitions after Death.

Antoine Daniel, the first Jesuit to give his life for the faith in the Huron country, was born at Dieppe, in Normandy, May 27th, 1601. His parents had intended him for the Bar, and after the completion of his classical studies he began a course in Jurisprudence. But already the call to eschew worldly honours and riches had sounded in his ear; God was inspiring him to give himself to His service. Yielding to the supernatural impulse, the young student, then twenty-three years of age, threw aside his law-books and entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Rouen, in 1621. After he had completed his two years of probation and made his religious profession, he was sent to the Jesuit college in the same city to begin the term of teaching and regency through which members of his Order usually pass before they proceed to the study of theology and the priesthood.

A circumstance, trivial in itself, occurring in these years, evidently turned the young professor's attention to the missions of New France. In a letter to his brother Jerome from Quebec, in 1621, Father Charles Lalemant wrote: "A little Huron is going to see you; he longs to visit France. He is very fond of us and manifests a strong desire to be instructed. It is important that he should be thoroughly satisfied; for if he is once well taught, he will make our way easy into the tribes where he will be useful." This interesting youth was Amantacha, a Huron, who was taken to Rouen and baptized under the name of Louis de Sainte Foy, having as sponsors the Duc de Longueville and Madame de Villars. While at the college of Rouen his instruction was confided to Father

Daniel, and the ease with which the young Huron Indian assimilated the knowledge provided for him undoubtedly excited his teacher's interest in the land whence he had come, and gave him the desire to work among the members of the Huron tribe.

Other reasons also may explain Daniel's vocation to the Canadian missions. Charles Lalemant had returned to Paris in 1627, and was residing at the college of Clermont when Daniel reached there for his theology. The missionary and the young student undoubtedly met and gained each other's confidence. Moreover, the "League of Prayer for the Missions of New France" was active in those years in the famous Parisian college, and considering that future apostles like Paul Le Jeune, Jerome Lalemant, Simon Le Moyne and others, could claim membership in it, there is little doubt but that Antoine Daniel was also of the number. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1630, the call of the Indian missions in Canada grew louder and more imperative, but he was obliged to wait for two years at the college of Eu before he saw the accomplishment of his desire to cross the Atlantic.

The occasion which presented itself in 1632 could hardly be more favourable. His brother, Charles Daniel, a sea-captain in the employ of the De Caen Company, who had already distinguished himself along the coast of New France during the English occupation of Quebec, was about to sail for Cape Breton, and he offered to carry his missionary brother with him. The latter, accompanied by Father Ambrose Davost, who had also volunteered for the Canadian missions, set sail and arrived at St. Anne's Bay, in the Summer of the same year. The two Jesuits had hardly landed when they began to exercise their ministry along the Bras d'Or estuary, among the few French colonists and fishermen who had been hitherto deprived of spiritual succour. During a whole year they lived with those poor people, helping them to bear patiently their isolation, providing them with Mass and the Sacraments and reconciling them to God.

This work, however, was only temporary. Both men were destined for the Huron missions on Georgian Bay and were called to Quebec by Paul Le Jeune to prepare for their future labours. They reached the little settlement on the St. Lawrence on June 24th, 1633, and there under the guidance of Father de Brebeuf, who had returned to Canada the same Summer, began to study the Huron tongue, without which their presence among the savages would be useless.

It was the wish of all three to start for Georgian Bay immediately, but the danger of falling into the hands of lurking Iroquois along the route was always imminent, and they were dissuaded from undertaking the perilous journey. On the undaunted bearing of these men when informed of the perils ahead of

them, their superior Paul Le Jeune favourably commented, but as the sacrifice of their lives would involve the French in war, "it was agreed with M. de Champlain that the preservation of peace among the tribes was preferable to the consolation the missionaries would experience in dying for their Lord!" As a consequence they put off their departure till the following year and decided to spend the interval in the study of the Huron language. A few months later, they merited this testimonial from their superior: "Fathers Daniel and Davost are both quiet men. They have studied the Huron language thoroughly. I took care that they should not be diverted from this work which I believe to be of very great importance."

In 1634, the three Jesuits set out for Huronia. As we have seen in preceding pages, Brebeuf had already been over the arduous route and had a bitter experience of the hardships suffered thereon, but Daniel and Davost were to taste for the first time a journey which, on this occasion, Brebeuf himself asserted, "was accompanied with more fatigues, losses and expenses than any former one."

Their troubles began at the trading-post of Three Rivers, the terminus of the Huron flotillas. When they reached there, eleven canoes were already manned and about to start, but the Indians showed great unwillingness to find room for the three Jesuits and their seven French workmen. It required the intervention of the commandant of the post, Duplessis-Bochard, coupled with several substantial presents, to find places in the canoes for them. Father Daniel had to be satisfied with a reduced amount of baggage, taking with him only what was required to say Mass with, and the minor necessaries for life.

Barefooted and armed with a paddle, the young missionary started out for his long journey up the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa, across Lake Nipissing and down its great tributary, the French river, to Georgian Bay. Hunger and pain and sleeplessness were his portion during a whole month. A little *sagamité*, Indian corn crushed between two stones and boiled in water, was his food; the bare earth or a hard rock covered with a few branches, his bed; while his daily wading through water and mud during the long and tiring portages, the entanglements of forest shrubbery, to which must be added the stings of insects and constant intercourse with filthy savages, rendered his plight painful indeed. The almost absolute silence, which missionaries ignorant of the language had ordinarily to observe along the route, was another great trial he had to undergo.

Happily, Father Daniel had had a year's study of the Huron tongue; he could make himself understood well enough to let his Indian companions know how keenly he felt the injustice of the act they were to perpetrate when they reached the Algonquins on Allumette Island. There the Hurons had

decided to abandon him to his fate and to start off without him, and his lot would have been a hard one had not a friendly captain from Ossossané overtaken the dissatisfied and mutinous crew and relieved them of their unwelcome guest for the rest of the journey.

Daniel's progress in the language gave him advantages fully appreciated by Brebeuf who had been an excellent tutor to him during his year in Quebec. In fact, Brebeuf generously wrote that, "the pupil knew the language as well as he," and Daniel gave ample proof of his linguistic ability when he translated into Huron the Lord's Prayer, and obliged the Indians to learn it by heart and sing it, a method which helped him greatly in teaching them the rudiments of the faith. Daniel's proficiency in the tongue gave Brebeuf the occasion to set on foot a plan long contemplated by the missionaries.

One of the projects that appealed to both the Jesuits and the Recollects who preceded them in those early years of the colony, was the training of the native children apart from their families. The devoted men were buoyed up with the hope that when those children had been fully instructed in the faith and in civilized ways, and had returned to their villages, their words and examples would raise the Christian religion in the esteem of their elders, and ultimately lead to their conversion. "I see no other way than that which your Reverence suggests," wrote Le Jeune, "of sending a boy every year to France. Having been there two years he will return with a knowledge of our tongue, and having become accustomed to our ways, he will not leave us to return to his countrymen."^[1]

This experiment suggested by the superiors in Europe, of sending Huron youths to France was tried and deemed impracticable for many reasons, and a plan that could be carried out nearer home was resolved upon. "If a small seminary of a dozen or so of the Hurons could be founded at Kebec," wrote Le Jeune, in the *Relation* of 1635, "in a few years incredible aid could be drawn from them to help in converting their fathers and in planting a flourishing Church in the Huron nation." "If we had only a fund for the purpose!" exclaimed the same writer elsewhere, "we have marked out a little spot for the beginnings of the seminary while waiting until a special house shall be erected for the purpose. If we had one built, I have hopes that in a couple of years Father de Brebeuf could send us some Huron children."^[2]

Meanwhile the missionaries among the Hurons were not idle. Brebeuf especially had entered fully into the plan because it appealed to him; already owing to his tact and the ascendancy he had acquired over the tribe, he had secured the promise of twelve intelligent boys who should be sent to Quebec. The important task of taking the youths down to the colony and of acting as father and teacher to them while there, was entrusted to Father Antoine Daniel;

and lest an accident should befall him on his journey down the Ottawa, Davost was named to accompany him.

The date fixed for the departure was July 22nd, 1636, and everything was made ready. But the missionaries had not reckoned on the inconstancy of the Indian character, or on the love of Huron parents for their offspring. The tears and wailings of the mothers became so eloquent at the moment of leaving that the boys refused to enter the canoes; and of the twelve youthful volunteers, only three could be prevailed upon to go.

The journey promised to be rapid and pleasant, wrote Daniel to Duplessis-Bochard, and everything went well until the flotilla reached the nation of the Algonquins on Allumette Island. Those Indians were naturally jealous of the growing commerce of the Hurons with the French colony, and the sight of canoes laden with furs which had begun to pass down-stream yearly excited their enmity. Besides, they had for years arrogantly claimed control of the Ottawa route and tried under various pretexts to hinder the passage of the Hurons. This year the specious reason put forward for their refusal was the fact that the body of their great captain, recently deceased, had not yet been laid away. This captain was Le Borgne, the second Algonquin chief of that name, known to the missionaries as “unusually arrogant and malicious,”^[3] who continued till his death to be a wily enemy of the French. A regular blockade was declared in consequence. However, in a letter which Father Daniel succeeded in getting through, he informed the commandant of Three Rivers that the Algonquins were willing to let the French pass down the Ottawa, but as for the Hurons, they should have to return home. This would have wrecked his plans completely, and he resolved not to continue down-stream if the Hurons were not allowed to accompany him. Only after infinite parleying were the Algonquins persuaded to permit the flotilla to proceed, and with new hopes he embarked his charges once more.

A pleasant incident of this memorable journey of Daniel was his meeting, somewhere on the Upper Ottawa, with Fathers Chastelain and Charles Garnier, the future martyr, fresh from France, and on their way to Huronia. “They both wore their shoes in their canoes, and carried no paddles,” he wrote, “which led me to believe that they were kindly treated. This urged me to do something for their men that I had not done for my own. I made them a present of an herb which they adore and which we do not like, namely, tobacco, which is high-priced this year.”^[4]

The zeal of the devoted Daniel found occasion to exercise itself further down the river. At Petite Nation, another Algonquin settlement on the Ottawa, he found an Iroquois prisoner tied to a stake awaiting torture and death by fire. The deep interest he took in his fate and the kind words he spoke to him,

softened the heart of the poor pagan prisoner, who before his death had the happiness of being baptized.

On August 18th, 1636, the flotilla, with Daniel and the three Huron youths, arrived at Three Rivers. When the canoes hove in sight the little population hastened to the river bank to welcome them. "Our hearts melted," wrote Le Jeune, "at the sight of Father Daniel. His face was gay and happy, but greatly emaciated; he was barefooted, had a paddle in his hand, and was clad in a wretched cassock, his breviary suspended to his neck, and his shirt rotting on his back. We embraced him, and having led him to our little room, after having blessed and adored our Lord, he related to us in what condition was the cause of Christianity among the Hurons. He handed me the letters and the *Relation* sent from that country, and we sang a *Te Deum* as a thanksgiving for the blessings God was pouring out upon this new Church." Daniel's absence would be a great sacrifice for the new Church in Huronia. He was really necessary there, wrote Le Mercier, "for only he and Father de Brebeuf are able to wield the language easily." And yet the sacrifice was made only with the hope of gathering greater spiritual fruit in the future. A few days later, the interpreter, Jean Nicolet, brought three more recruits, and with his little flock of six, Father Daniel continued on down to Quebec, full of hope that one of the problems of the missions was about to be solved. Meanwhile other Indian boys nearer home had been persuaded to enter the seminary, and soon, fifteen, including a few Montagnais, were gathered together at Notre Dame des Anges, on the banks of the St. Charles, two miles from Quebec.

But the trials and tribulations which usually go hand in hand with all works undertaken for God, were about to begin for the Huron seminary. One of the students, Tsi-ko, fell sick, and his illness became so serious that Father Daniel was at his side day and night. Tsi-ko was the nephew of a well-known Huron orator; he showed considerable talent, and much was expected later from this young man; but in a short time he was a lifeless corpse. And he had hardly been laid in his grave when Sabouta, another Huron youth, was carried off.

These deaths affected Father Daniel very much, for they threatened to compromise the future of the seminary. What would the Huron parents and relatives on Georgian Bay say when they heard that their sons were dead in Quebec? The worries were greater than the missionary could bear; Daniel himself broke down with fatigue and mental strain, and so ill did he become that for a time his life was despaired of. Happily the illness passed off; he continued his work of instructing the few remaining Hurons, and the first months promised good results. A rule of life had been given the students, which mingled a great deal of recreation with a relative amount of study. This was necessary, for "a wild ass is not given to greater freedom than these little

Canadians. Still, they wait upon the priest at the altar with as much grace and modesty as if they had been brought up in a well regulated academy. They are ready with their lessons at the proper hour, but it is also necessary to give them time for play, and as they are not led by fear, one must seize the occasion to subdue them by love.”^[5]

The only drawback to this idyllic state of things was the isolation of Notre Dame des Anges on the St. Charles river, where the Huron seminary had been temporarily located. “Experience is showing us,” wrote Le Jeune, “that it must be established among the bulk of the French population, so that the French children may attract the Indians.”

Convinced that something should be done to bring those two elements together, the energetic superior began to consider a project which had been already discussed, but which had been delayed for several years, that of founding a college at Quebec. In 1626, a French nobleman, the Marquis de Gamache, had made a donation of sixteen thousand gold *ecus*^[6] “for the establishment of a school in Canada,” but the seizure of Quebec by the English, in 1629, had put off indefinitely the carrying out of this important work. Father Le Jeune took it up when he came to the colony, three years later, and in 1635, he laid the foundation of the college which in after years became the chief source of education for the entire country. This institution, founded two years before Harvard, was destined to flourish for nearly a century and a half, although its beginnings were modest enough, comprising only a few pupils and a professor. There the children of the French colonists were taught catechism and the rudiments of learning and thither came the young Hurons and Montagnais from Notre Dame des Anges. It was hoped that their contact with Europeans would civilize them and eventually facilitate the christianizing of their countrymen; but unhappily this mingling of races never fulfilled the cherished expectations of the early Jesuits in Canada. After having made the experiment for five years they had to acknowledge failure. The *Relation* for 1642 informs us that “the Huron seminary which had been established at Notre Dame des Anges, some years ago, to educate children of that nation has been interrupted for good reasons, the chief one being because no noteworthy fruit is seen among the Indians. Our experience of beginning the instruction of a nation through its children has made us recognize this fact.”

Father Daniel did not stay long enough in Quebec to witness the failure of the seminary scheme. In the Autumn of 1637 he handed over to others his classwork among the young French and Hurons and early in the following Spring started out on what threatened to be a perilous mission.^[7] Rumours had reached the colony that the Hurons along Georgian Bay had risen up against the few French in that region and had slaughtered their missionaries; Governor

de Montmagny, stirred by this news, decided to send military aid to his countrymen, and a small company of soldiers quitted Quebec for Huronia. They were accompanied by Father Daniel who took as his companion Armand, one of the seminarians. The trip nearly proved fatal for both. While doubling a point on the Upper Ottawa river, the surging of the water upset the canoe occupied by the young Huron, and he went to the bottom with the missionary's altar equipment and baggage. Daniel, who had reached the shore to begin a portage, did not witness the struggles of his companion, but perceiving the upturned canoe he flung himself on his knees and begged God to save the life of the young man. A moment later the Huron appeared on the surface; and catching hold of some branches protruding from the water, was soon rescued from his dangerous position.

This first mishap, including the loss of a portable altar and baggage destined for the mission, was followed shortly after by another far more serious. The Huron canoes generally travelled apart, being oftentimes at quite a distance from one another, and meeting rarely except at the usual hour for camping in the evening. Daniel occupied the last canoe, and was within a day's paddling distance from Allumette Island. While making a portage to the head of what is probably now known as Split Rock rapid, he lost his trail in the thick woods. The unfortunate man has left us his own account of the tragic incident. "We started early one morning," he writes, "without eating or drinking, and travelling rapidly over a very bad road and in extreme heat. I was burdened with my little baggage, and supposed that the others would stop about noon to eat something. But they had kept right on and left me far behind. My weakness increasing with the heat of the day, I stopped, and almost fainting, threw myself on the ground unable to move. After having rested a little while, and eating some berries, which did not help me much, I tried to start again. But I was compelled to lie down, as my head ached severely. I felt a great weakness through my whole body . . . I remained an hour or two in this condition when my people, having noticed that I delayed too long, came back and found me."

After weeks of hardship and suffering Daniel reached Huronia on July 9th, 1638; never again to travel over a route of which he, perhaps more than any of the early Jesuits, retained the most painful souvenirs. It was pleasant, however, for him to learn that the rumours of the Huron uprising were false. During his two years' absence, missionary activity had not abated throughout the country; it promised, in fact, to extend still further in the near future. Daniel was sent to Ossossané, a mission on Nottawasaga Bay, which had been opened the year before and was already solidly fortified against attacks of the enemy. When he went to reside there, in the Summer of 1638, the residence was enclosed within a palisade of posts ten or twelve feet high, with a bastion built up of some

thirty odd posts at one of the angles. This was known as the residence of the Immaculate Conception, and was occupied by Brebeuf, Le Mercier, Ragueneau and Garnier, while the other and older residence, Ihonatiria, harboured Pijart, Chastelain, and Jogues. However, Ihonatiria had lost its importance as a mission center. The bulk of the inhabitants had been carried off by the pestilence of 1637 and for this reason the Jesuits decided to abandon it entirely.

The result of this decision was the establishment of Ossossané just mentioned, and of Teanaostaye, the latter being the largest village of the Cord clan. Four hundred families resided in the latter place, many of whom, although pagans, were favourably disposed towards the missionaries; and if won to the faith would exercise a great influence for good over the minor villages in the neighbourhood. Accordingly, in 1638, Father de Brebeuf betook himself thither, to confer with the inhabitants. He carried on his negotiations with such tact and prudence that the Hurons decided to receive the Fathers and provide a cabin and chapel for them. The first Mass was said at Teanaostaye on June 25th, and thenceforward, while not always used as a residence after Fort Ste. Marie on the River Wye was built, in 1639, this mission, known as St. Joseph II., and situated near the modern Mount St. Louis, became one of the most important in the Huron country.

Father Daniel's presence there is recorded in the *Relation* of 1641, when, with Simon Le Moyne as assistant, he had under his pastoral care both Teanaostaye and Cahiaгуé. For the coming nine years he exercised his zeal in these two places which were the nearest to the eastern frontier of the Huron country, and consequently the most exposed to the Iroquois marauders. Cahiaгуé, situated near the shore of Lake Simcoe, about a mile from the present town of Hawkstone, was one of the best known localities in the country. Champlain spent the winter of 1615-16 there, before he continued his warlike expedition southward to the Iroquois country. In his time it contained two hundred lodges occupied by the Arendaenronnons, or Nation of the Rock, a tribe partly Huron, partly Neutral.

The memory of the great white chief was still vivid among them and had done much to link the Hurons to the French; they were the first to engage in the trade with the French and regarded themselves as their special allies. Daniel, profiting by this circumstance, immediately started his work of instructing them. He had not to begin, as was the case in other Huron villages, the task of gaining their good-will; this was already secured to him, and his five years' residence in the mission of St. John Baptist at Cahiaгуé, and in the surrounding villages, were years of fruitful toil. The number of fervent Christians began to grow so rapidly that the devoted missionary was no longer

equal to the task. The *Relation* for 1641 devotes a chapter to the frontier missions of Cahiagué and Teanaostaye and asserts that they were sufficiently well peopled to give employment to six or eight Gospel labourers; but the fewness of the missionaries obliged them to unite those two important villages under the care of Antoine Daniel and Simon Le Moyne. The labour and fatigues of those two men were augmented by the distances between the settlements, and by the dangers they were exposed to from the wandering Iroquois, but “their joy increased in proportion to their sufferings, since the steps one takes for the conquest of a single soul are so many steps toward Heaven.” “The two devoted missionaries,” Jerome Lalemant informs us, “travelled from town to town and from village to village, gathering in those ears of corn which the angels separate from the tares, so that in Heaven they may make the crown of the Elect which cost so many labours and fatigues to the Son of God.”

So successful had been Father Daniel’s ministry along the border of Lake Simcoe that a permanent residence might have been looked for at Cahiagué, had not the Iroquois begun to make their presence felt. That village lay on the route to and from their country and was subject to hostile surprises; it was in the danger zone, so to speak, and prudence urged the natives to disperse or to retire to places less exposed to the enemy. This migration, chronicled by Ragueneau in 1648, had begun in 1646, and had brought a large number of the Rock clan to St. Joseph’s mission at Teanaostaye. Father Daniel followed them thither and replaced Charles Garnier who had gone to begin his cruel apprenticeship in the Tobacco nation. But Teanaostaye was not beyond the reach of the Iroquois, and the brave Daniel, during the two years which preceded his great sacrifice, “carried his life in his hands, awaiting with hope and supernatural love the death which fell to his lot.”

The Iroquois had grown more daring in the Spring of 1648, especially along the frontiers of Huronia. Small parties of them appeared here and there and then vanished, only after having raised the scalps of some unfortunate Hurons whom they left for dead, or else carried off into captivity. They had now begun to raid what was exclusively Huron territory, and the Jesuits and their neophytes, notably those at St. Ignace, drew nearer to Fort Ste. Marie where they looked for better protection. In the same Spring a large contingent of Huron warriors accompanied the flotilla to Quebec, not merely to protect the canoes from encounters with the enemy along the route, but also to purchase arms and ammunition from the French. Many of those warriors belonged to Teanaostaye, a circumstance which was unfortunate, for it left their village with only a few defenders in case of attack. The incident, however, showed how confident the Hurons were that all was safe for the

moment.

Towards the close of the month of June, 1648, Daniel had gone to Fort Ste. Marie to make his annual retreat. He spent eight whole days there conferring with God alone in preparation for his passage to eternity. While unconscious of any proximate danger, he was evidently inspired to hurry back to his mission; for the *Relation* informs us that his retreat having ended on July 2nd, he refused to rest even a day longer at Fort Ste. Marie and returned to Teanaostaye. On the morning of the 4th, he had just said Mass when a swarm of Iroquois appeared behind the palisades of the village. The pious Hurons, according to their custom, were still at their devotions when the cry was heard outside: "To arms!—the enemy is here!" Terror seized the poor Indians; they rose from their knees; some took to flight; others prepared to fight for their lives. Father Daniel, realizing in a moment how desperate the situation was, stood up in their midst and encouraged them to defend themselves. He gave absolution to the Christians still kneeling at his feet, and exhorted the catechumens present to prepare for baptism which they had not yet received. Unable to confer the sacrament on each one singly, he seized a handkerchief, dipped it in water, raised it over his head and sprinkled the dozens of kneeling forms before him, while he pronounced the words which brought the grace of regeneration into their souls.

Meanwhile the enemy had broken through the palisades and were becoming masters of Teanaostaye. Instead of taking flight, as many of the Indians were doing, the heroic missionary hurried from cabin to cabin to baptize, to absolve the old and the sick, and encourage them to die bravely. The holy man then made his way back to the church which was now filled with terrified Hurons. Closely on his heels came the barbarians whose savage howls rent the morning air. After a second absolution and a word of consolation to his flock, Daniel went forward fearlessly and faced the enemy at the door. The Iroquois, astonished at the sight of the Blackgown standing so stoically before them, suddenly recoiled. A moment later they surrounded him from every side, aimed their arrows and guns at him and fired. The arrows penetrated his body in many places, while a bullet from a musket pierced his breast, inflicting a mortal wound. A moment later, Father Daniel yielded up his soul to God, bravely and dutifully as a good pastor sacrificing his life for the salvation of his flock. The enraged Iroquois rushed upon his prostrate form, and as if he alone had been the object of their hatred, washed their hands and faces with his blood, "because," wrote Bressani, "it was formed in so brave a heart."^[8] They stripped his body naked, covered it with blows, and having set fire to the church, threw the remains of the martyr into the flames.

Thus ended the career of this holy Jesuit, a career precious before God and

men.^[9] He was the first missionary to die among the Hurons and had for fourteen years borne the trials and sufferings so plentiful in the beginning of that dangerous field. In the words of Father Ragueneau, “he seemed to have been born only for the salvation of these peoples; he had no stronger desire than to die for them, and we hope all this country will have in him a powerful intercessor before God.”

The destruction of Teanaostaye was complete. The number of those killed or taken captive was probably about seven hundred souls, mostly women and children; the number of those, however, who escaped was much greater. They fled in the direction of Fort Ste. Marie, where the Fathers, despite their own poverty, tried to assist them in their dire need, to mourn with them in their affliction, and to console them with the hope of Paradise. Father Ragueneau feelingly concludes his account of the disaster in these words; “If God will only receive His glory from our losses, that will always be a source of gladness to us. That is enough for us, whatever it may cost us, provided we see the number of the Elect increased for eternity, since it is for heaven we labour and not for earth.”

Heaven did not wait long to testify to the heroic holiness of Father Daniel. He appeared twice after his death to Father Chaumonot who had been his companion at various times in the mission-field, whom he had once saved from drowning, and with whom he had lived in a holy intimacy. The first apparition took place at the village of Ossossané when he came to Chaumonot in a dream with the features of a man about thirty years of age and surrounded with glory. According to Chaumonot’s own account he seemed to be with the other Fathers who were conferring together about the means to convert the savages. Realizing that he was in presence of one who had left this world and who was present there miraculously, Chaumonot was seized with a great desire to speak to him, but out of respect for others who were present, the thought came to him that if Father Daniel was a saint, as he believed he was, he could speak to him intellectually, and he asked him to come to him. Father Daniel approached and embraced him. When Chaumonot asked him to tell him what God required most particularly of him, the vision repeated the fifth demand of the *Our Father*, “Forgive us our trespasses,” and then kissed his cheek. On awaking, the good Father Chaumonot was so persuaded of the reality of the apparition and so filled with compunction and fear of the justice of God, that those sentiments remained with him during the rest of his life.

The same Father was favoured later by a second apparition of Father Daniel. This time, moved by the desire to honour him through his relics, he asked him why the Divine goodness had permitted his precious body to be so unworthily treated after his death, so that no one had the happiness of being

able to gather up its ashes. Daniel replied that he had been well rewarded; God, holy and adorable, had considered his death and sufferings and made them a great help to the souls in Purgatory. This answer filled the heart of the pious Chaumonot with fervour and devotion towards the suffering souls, and urged him ever after to make acts of humiliation and mortification to alleviate them. Father Ragueneau himself in 1652, four years after the death of the holy missionary, asserted under oath that what he wrote in the *Relation* of 1649 was the result of his personal observation and of the public testimony of more than two hundred Christian Hurons who had escaped death when Teanaostaye was destroyed, many of whom were baptized by him, even while his church was in flames, and who saw him giving up his life heroically for them.

Truly the earthly career and the virtues of Blessed Antoine Daniel have made this missionary one of the heroic figures in the early years of the Church in Canada. No greater love could he show his flock than by dying that they might live. His supreme sacrifice was made at the foot of a little rustic altar in Ontario, nearly three hundred years ago, and the memory of his heroism is cherished not merely in the land in which he suffered, but far beyond.

May we not hope that the Blessed martyr, now that he has been raised to the honours of the altar, will make his power felt near God by all who ask his intercession?

[1] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. VI, p. 85.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 83.

[3] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. VIII, p. 296.

[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 273.

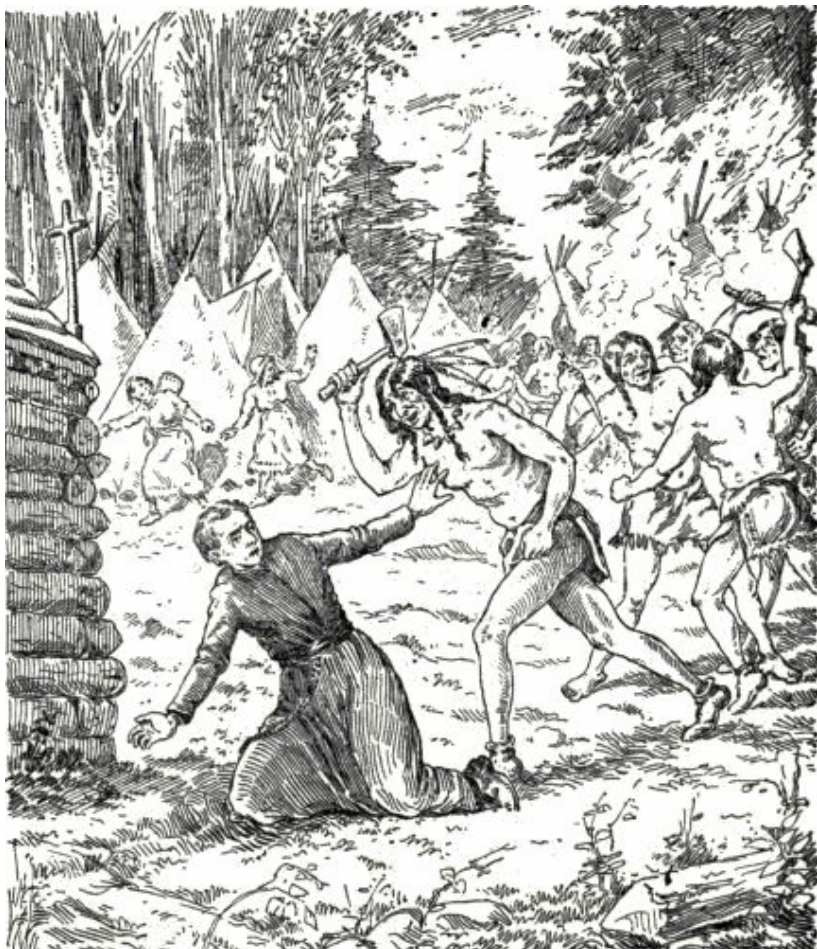
[5] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XVI, p. 181.

[6] An *ecu* was valued at about sixty cents.

[7] Father Ambrose Davost replaced him and taught both the French and the Hurons from 1637 till 1643.

[8] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIX, p. 241.

[9] "The victim to the heroism of charity, the name of Jesus on his lips," wrote Bancroft (*Hist. U.S. II, p. 796*); "the wilderness gave him a grave; the Huron nation were his mourners."



BLESSED CHARLES GARNIER.

CHAPTER V

BLESSED CHARLES GARNIER

Early Years and Education—Enters the Jesuit Order—Vocation to the Missions—Arrives in New France—Starts for Huronia—Happenings on the Way—First Missionary Trials—Foundation of Ossossané—Description of the spot—Building of Fort Ste Marie—Visits the Petuns—Appreciated by Brebeuf—His Personal Influence—His Labour and Untiring Zeal—The Darkening Horizon—He Falls Mortally Wounded—Heroism even in Death—His Mangled Body Found—His Aspirations to Sanctity.

Charles Garnier, the son of a rich and noble Parisian family, was born on the twenty-fifth of May, 1605 (or 1606), and from his earliest years he was singled out as one on whom God had lofty designs. Innocence of life, coupled with a frank and manly character, gave him a prestige which imposed respect among companions of his own age. While he was a student in the Jesuit college in his native city, his father was accustomed to give him a few pieces of silver every month, either as a reward for his application to study or to enable him to gratify his personal fancies; but the boy rarely applied this money to his own use, preferring to throw it into the almsbox of one of the city prisons, the Petit Chatelet. One day, while crossing the Pont Neuf, in Paris, Charles saw an impious book for sale. With his small monthly allowance he purchased the volume and destroyed it, "lest some one by reading it might offend God." His horror of everything that could wound the Heart of God he attributed to the love he had for our Lady whom he called his Mother and to whom he gave all his confidence. "It was she," he asserted in after-life, "who carried me in her arms during my youthful years; it was she who called me to the Society of her Son."^[1]

This call to the religious profession was promptly answered by the young man; Charles decided to consecrate his life to God's service in the Society of Jesus. Monsieur Garnier, who evidently had other plans in view for his son, opposed this pious design and endeavoured to dissuade him from the

irrevocable step. He yielded, however, after he had been convinced that the youth was not the plaything of a passing illusion; and nobly did he make the sacrifice. When the moment of separation came, he told the superiors of the Order that he was giving them a child, “who from his birth had never committed the least disobedience, and never caused him the least displeasure.”

Charles Garnier entered the Jesuit novitiate in Paris, on September 5th, 1624, and soon became a model of exact observance of the Rule. His angelic modesty shone in a face beaming with happiness; he was held up as a “mirror of holiness”^[2] to those around him. So deep indeed was the impression Garnier made on his fellow-religious that all felt his was a favoured soul, and that God had other gifts in store for him. After the young novice had completed his term of probation and pronounced his vows, in 1626, he was sent to study in the college of Clermont, one of the chief institutions of the Jesuit Order in France. From 1629 to 1632 he taught in the college of Eu, returning to Clermont only in the latter year to study theology and prepare himself for the priesthood, a dignity to which he was raised in 1635.

The missions of Canada had begun by this time to attract the young Jesuit. The perusal of the letters sent back by his brethren from those distant shores, the accounts of the spiritual conquests which were being made among the Indian tribes, the pathetic call for more labourers in the vineyard, had set his heart afire. His superiors, to whom he confided his secret longing, were willing to give full scope to Charles Garnier’s zeal, and would have allowed him to leave France for Canada immediately after his ordination in 1635, but “having desired that his father should give his consent on account of special obligations to him which the Order was under,” they delayed his departure. But this delay only served to augment the young priest’s desire for the mission-field beyond the Atlantic. His one thought day and night was the conversion of the Indians and the prospect of his future life among them. The permission to sail, however, was granted in 1636, and he quitted the shores of France in the fleet which brought out Monsieur de Montmagny, the successor of Champlain, as governor of New France.

During the voyage he seized the opportunity of effecting a remarkable conversion. Among the members of the crew was a sailor “without conscience, without religion, and without God,” who had not gone to confession for over ten years, a dereliction of Christian duty that was looked on as tragic in that age of faith and practice. The unhappy man was avoided by every one on board until Father Garnier, urged by his zeal for souls, took him in hand. After many kind services and delicate attentions he succeeded in winning him over, heard his confession, and restored him to the friendship of God. This conversion, we are informed, brought such peace and joy of conscience to the

poor sailor that the hearts of all on board were touched.^[3]

This edifying incident helped to shorten what was already a remarkably rapid voyage across the ocean. The vessel, with M. de Montmagny, entered the Gulf, sailed up the St. Lawrence and arrived at Quebec on June 11th, 1636. The governor, "having arrived before Kebec on the night of St Barnabas," wrote Le Jeune, "he cast anchor without announcing himself; the next morning we had word that he was on the vessel which the darkness had hidden from us. We went down to the shore of the river to receive him and found that Father Pierre Chastelain and Father Charles Garnier were in his company."^[4]

The young missionaries were present at his solemn installation and had the privilege of witnessing the profound Catholic faith of the second governor of New France. "Monsieur de Champlain," continued Le Jeune, "having left us to go to Heaven during his last year of office, we were anxious as to what zeal his successor would have for this infant Church. If first actions are auguries of what is to come, we have reason to thank God for the arrival of Monsieur de Montmagny."

One of his first acts, after the usual installation festivities were ended, was to stand sponsor for an Indian about to be baptized. When invited to perform this function, the pious governor very willingly accepted and "rejoiced in his good fortune that in beginning his official life he could help to open the door of the Church to a poor soul who wished to enter the fold of Jesus Christ."^[5] The Father who had prepared the Indian asked Father Chastelain whether he would not be glad to begin his labours in New France with a baptism. The newly-arrived missionary accepted the offer with the greatest alacrity, and it is easy to surmise that Father Garnier, his companion on the voyage, also assisted at this consoling ceremony.

As they were destined for the Huron missions on Georgian Bay, the sojourn of the two Jesuits in Quebec was of short duration. On the first of July, Chastelain and Garnier, with two other Jesuits, Buteux and Quentin, started for Three Rivers, a mission which had been founded by Paul Le Jeune two years before, and which had become the terminus of the Huron flotillas from the West. Governor de Montmagny, "with matchless courtesy and affection," escorted the four men to the river bank, and had three cannon shots fired as a farewell salute at their departure. Travelling up the St. Lawrence, Buteux and Chastelain in one canoe and Quentin and Garnier in the other, they received at Three Rivers such a cordial welcome from Father Le Jeune that "the demonstration of affection impressed the natives present." A feast next day completely won the hearts of the Indians, and, as we shall see, made the route to the Huron country smoother for the missionaries. While at Three Rivers Father Garnier had a consolation similar to the one Chastelain experienced at

Quebec; he was initiated into his ministry in Canada by baptizing a little Indian girl on July 7th, 1636.

On the twenty-first of the same month they embarked in their canoes and started for Huronia—"the happiest men in the world," the *Relation* recorded.^[6] Their passage was so easily secured—and yet "the affairs of God are generally so crossed at the beginning," Le Jeune remarked—that it was almost suspected something had gone wrong. The missionaries, however, were treated well on the way. In the first place they were allowed to wear their shoes. This was a special privilege, for usually the Jesuits were obliged to travel barefooted lest they should deposit sand or dirt in the small canoes. In cold or hot weather they had to adapt themselves to this Indian custom unless they met with natives kind enough to let them follow their own. They enjoyed another privilege in not being obliged to use the paddle. This favour they evidently appreciated, for the *Relation* of 1636 remarked, "It is hard work, especially at first, when one is not accustomed to it... We give to every canoe in which any of our Fathers embark a large sheet which serves as a sail to relieve them from this work; but although these barbarians are told that the sail is the Fathers' paddle, and they do not wield any other, they do not fail sometimes to make them take a wooden one, which has to be well worked to satisfy them."^[7]

A canoe full of Indians on their way down to Three Rivers met them at Petite Nation^[8] on the Ottawa, and the two Jesuits seized the occasion to drop a note to Father Le Jeune. "The bearer of this," Chastelain wrote, "will tell you better than we can the name of the place where they met us. We are in good health, thank God, and gliding along swiftly in our bark gondolas. We are flying to our long sought Paradise with an increase of courage which God had given us."^[9] He had a kind word for Kionche and Aenons, the two Indians who had charge of their canoes.

Garnier, in his turn, wrote when they reached Lake Nipissing, August 8th: "We have been here since yesterday among the Nipissings, so happy and in such good health that I am quite ashamed of it; for if I had had heart and courage enough, I feel that God would have given me a bit of His Cross to bear, as He has done to our Fathers who have been over this route before us. If He had done me this favor I would be a little more cast down than I am. May He be blessed by all His angels! He has treated a child like a child; I did not paddle; I carried only my own baggage, except three days at the portages, when I carried a little package that some one offered me because one of our Indians was ill... We arrived at the (Allumette) Island on the eve of St. Ignatius (July 30th); our peas having given out, we bought some Indian corn. This corn lasted us until we reached here."^[10] Evidently God was waiting His own good time; the young missionary would soon have other opportunities of suffering

and thus make amends for the easy journey to Georgian Bay.

Garnier reached Huronia on the 13th of August and went direct to Ihonatiria; there Chastelain had arrived the day before. Both men had gone to devote their lives and labours for the salvation of the Hurons, and naturally were received with joy by Father de Brebeuf and his brethren already living there.

Unhappily, this joy was short-lived and threatened to turn to sorrow. Early in September, 1636, a mysterious illness, which the *Relation* called “purple fever,” attacked the village of Ihonatiria and incapacitated both whitemen and Indians. As we saw in a previous chapter, Father Isaac Jogues, also a recent arrival in the country, was the first victim and nearly succumbed; the next was Chastelain who received the last rites of the Church.

Father Garnier was a witness of this domestic affliction, and although occupied with the exercises of his own yearly retreat, he asked to be allowed to interrupt them so that he might aid the patients. His physical strength, however, was not equal to his charity; he, too, was seized with the fever, and for the nonce the little residence at Ihonatiria was turned into a hospital. The sufferings of the sick, occasioned by a lack of skilled medical attention and the accompaniments of poverty, were severe. “If a bed of feathers,” wrote Father Le Mercier to Le Jeune, “often seems hard to a sick person, I leave it to Your Reverence to imagine what it was to rest upon a bed which was nothing but a mat of rushes spread over some bark and at most a blanket or a piece of skin thrown over it.” Yet “one and all were never more cheerful; the sick were as content to die as to live, and by their patience, piety and devotion greatly lightened the little trouble we took for them night and day.” Blood-letting, the panacea for so many ills in the seventeenth century, was freely resorted to, and presently the sick missionaries recovered and were able to continue their work among the Indians.

Ihonatiria was the first really permanent mission the Jesuits had in Huronia; it was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of what is now Todd's Point, in Simcoe county,^[11] and had been established two years previously, in 1634, when a large cabin serving as chapel and dwelling had been built. The Fathers had gained the sympathy of the Hurons, and were actively occupied in catechising them there. The location, however, was not deemed central enough, and it was decided to go elsewhere at the first opportunity.

Ossossané, the principal village of the Bear clan, appeared to Brebeuf to be a more favourable center for a mission. He had already marked the spot, but the frequent changes of the sites of Huron villages, prompted usually by scarcity of fuel, poverty of the soil, or stress of war, prevented him for the

moment from making the transfer. Although Ossossané never moved far from where it originally stood, it had already changed its site three times, and Brebeuf did not care to risk the expense involved in the construction of a church and house which might after all be only temporary. When, in the Spring of 1637, he suggested to the Hurons of that village his project of migrating thither from Ihonatiria, not merely was the proposal accepted, but the Indians even offered to build a cabin for the Fathers. So rapidly were the building operations carried out that, a month later, Brebeuf could write; "Since my last letter (dated May 20th), a new residence of the Immaculate Conception has been established and we began to occupy it on the feast of SS. Primus and Felician, martyrs, June 9th... Forty or fifty Indians, men and women, came to Ihonatiria to fetch our grain and our few pieces of furniture.^[12]" Ossossané, also called La Rochelle by the French fur-traders from some fancied resemblance to the seaport of that name in France, became a center of immense missionary activity, and remained such during its short existence, that is, until the completion of the central residence, Fort Ste. Marie, in 1639.

In a letter, a year later, to his brother Henry, a Carmelite friar in Paris, Father Garnier wrote: "I must tell you how the time was spent since I wrote you last year. I was at that time at the little village of Ihonatiria; I came hither a few days after Corpus Christi... There are forty Indian lodges here, and ours bears the name of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady."^[13] One of his letters to his father, in the same city, gives us a lively description of Ossossané. "You must know," he wrote, "that we are here living in a fortress which has nothing like it in France. We are encircled by a wall quite different from that of the Bastille. Yesterday we completed one of the towers, and we stand less in dread of Spanish cannon than you do in Paris. But I fear that some cunning fellow will be ready to tell you that it is because cannon can scarcely be brought nearer here than some three hundred leagues. Our ramparts consist of an enclosure of posts, ten or twelve feet high and half a foot thick, and the posts that our tower is made up of, some thirty odd, are planted at one angle of the ramparts so as to command two of the sides of the enclosure. Another will be built to defend the other two... It will be enough to put you on your guard against eavesdroppers if I tell you that the Hurons admire our fortification, and imagine that those in France are modelled on about the same pattern. You see how different their ideas are from ours. This is why I have gained much by leaving France where you used to twit me for not having any beard, for the Indians on that account think me handsome."^[14] The witty word or joyous comment, denoting Father Garnier's sprightly character as well as his desire to give a moment of pleasure to dear ones beyond the sea, was frequently displayed in his correspondence. And yet the letters from his pen which have been preserved for us breathe a sweet resignation amid sufferings that were

acute, and amid dangers that were always imminent.

The arrival of new labourers in the vineyard urged the Jesuits to extend their activities and carry the Word of Life as soon as possible to the neighbouring settlements. They established themselves at Teanaostaye, the chief town of the Cord clan; they went from village to village, instructing and baptizing children and adults in danger of death; and they would have continued to do so indefinitely had not the incursions of the Iroquois become more frequent and threatening, and obliged them to provide for their own security and that of their neophytes who were gradually increasing in numbers. A strongly fortified residence, where they could retire in the hours of danger, was considered necessary, but the funds to build it were evidently lacking. The French Government was indirectly appealed to, nor was the appeal made in vain, for we learn from a letter written by Paul Le Jeune to Mutius Vitelleschi, General of the Jesuits, in 1642, that Cardinal Richelieu, at the request of his niece, the Duchess d'Aiguillon, granted thirty thousand livres from the Royal treasury for the construction of a fort in Huronia strong enough to withstand the attacks of hostile savages. This fort, known as Fort Ste. Marie, the foundations of which are still visible after nearly three centuries, was built on the east bank of a little stream^[15] connecting Lake Isiargui with Georgian Bay. When it was completed in 1639, it became the headquarters of the Huron missionaries; Ossossané was abandoned and the Fathers and their effects were transferred to their new home.

Meanwhile the desire to extend the influence of the Gospel was uppermost with the Jesuits, and a couple of tentative expeditions were made to sound the dispositions of the neighbouring tribes. Brebeuf and Chaumonot spent the winter of 1640-1641 with the Neutral nation southward along Lake Erie, while Garnier was taken from Fort Ste. Marie and sent, with Jogues and Pijart, in a westerly direction to the Petuns, or Tobacco, nation, who dwelt on the peninsula lying between Nottawasaga Bay and Lake Huron. But the ill-success of both attempts showed that the time was not yet ripe for extension. "Last year," wrote Jerome Lalemant in the *Relation* of 1641, "we undertook a mission to the Petuns, but we have deemed it more expedient to concentrate our energies and not continue our labours among those more distant peoples until nearer tribes have been won over, more especially when we take into account the small number of our men."

The only fruits reaped during Father Garnier's visit to the Petuns were the baptisms of a few children and adults in danger of death. The mass of the population resisted the grace so freely offered to them; they accused the missionary of sorcery and cruelly drove him away. But God did not allow His faithful servant to go unavenged. "The town of Ehwae, the principal town of

the mission,” continued Jerome Lalemant, “whence Father Garnier had been driven last year, underwent every conceivable misfortune before the close of the twelvemonth. Most of the lodges were burnt by the enemy three months later; many inhabitants died of hunger, cold and smallpox; others perished in the waves, and numbers were taken by the enemy. In fact, the matter appeared so extraordinary that the captain of a neighbouring village could not help noticing it, and attributed the desolation of the village to no other cause than the refusal it made to hear the preachers of the Gospel last year.”

Ill-success, however, could not daunt the courage of the young missionary. Father Garnier had now several years’ experience in Huronia, and he was ready to fill any position in the field, chiefly on account of his complete mastery of the Huron tongue which gave him a remarkable ascendancy over the tribe. Father de Brebeuf, himself an excellent judge in this matter, writing to the General in 1637, asserted that the missionaries in Huronia were in every way extraordinary workers, who combined in an unusual manner, eloquence and union with God with a burning zeal for souls. “So persistent and studious are they all,” he wrote, “that in only one or two years they have gained a truly wonderful proficiency in a language still rude and not reduced to grammatical rules. However, in this regard,” he added, “Father Garnier ranks first.” “He mastered the language of the Indians so thoroughly,” wrote Ragueneau, in his turn, twelve years later, “that they themselves were astonished at him.” An indefatigable labourer and replete with every gift of nature and grace, he became an accomplished missionary.

A more fruitful field than any yet offered him, where he should find ample scope for his zeal, was now allotted to him. This was Teanaostaye, the largest village of the Cord clan, where for six years he spent himself with all the devotedness and self-sacrifice of which he was capable. From 1640 to 1646 he laboured in season and out of season, instructing the dusky Hurons in the truths of religion, rooting out their superstitions, teaching them to recognize the one true God, urging them to pray to Him, conferring baptism on them, following them on the chase, strengthening their souls with the sacraments, and burying them when they were dead. So thorough was his knowledge of the Indian character, so deeply did he penetrate their hearts, and so powerful was the eloquence of his example that he drew the Hurons to him. His face, his eyes, his gestures, even his smiles, proclaimed his holiness; his very presence raised Huron hearts to God. The *Relation* of 1650 tells us that several were converted to the faith at the very aspect of his angelic face, and all who came in contact with him took away with them the liveliest impression of his virtue. “The love of God,” wrote Ragueneau, “which reigned in his heart animated all his movements and made them holy.” This interior perfection of soul was,

after the manner of the saints, sustained by a rigid penitential life. Father Garnier's self-imposed bodily mortifications were many and severe. His bed, a combination of saplings and bark, was hard and uninviting; every time he returned from his mission journeys he sharpened the iron points of the belt which he wore next to his naked flesh; his only food was that of the Hurons themselves, that is to say, "the least the most miserable tramp could hope for in France." And thus this holy man preached the kingdom of God both by word and example to his people at Teanaostaye for six years.

During the alarms caused by the visits of the cruel Iroquois, and especially during the pestilence that raged several times in Huronia, when the missionaries were treated as sorcerers and when all doors were closed against them, Father Garnier went fearlessly from village to village and cabin to cabin, wherever he knew there was a soul to save; his zeal and charity always found the means to break through the obstacles placed in his way. He had little to do with mere human prudence, and had recourse to the Angels whose powerful aid he always invoked. In fact, some Hurons whom he went to assist at the hour of death asserted that they had seen him accompanied by a young man of rare beauty and majestic brilliancy.

In October, 1646, Father Garnier handed over to Father Daniel the flourishing mission of St. Joseph, at Teanaostaye, and betook himself with Father Garreau to the Petun nation whence he had been driven out six years before as a sorcerer. It was the Petuns themselves who now asked for missionaries to instruct them in the Christian religion, and to establish centers among them. Two large villages, Etharita in the Wolf clan, and Ekarenniondi in the Deer clan, were chosen as the most favourable sites for missionary activity, and the missions of St. John and St. Mathias were founded.^[16] In this fresh field Garnier found an outlet for his devouring zeal. In a letter to the General of the Jesuits, April 25th, 1647, he wrote, "Good Father Garreau and I are nearly always separated, for he makes a stay of ten or twelve days in one village and I in the other. Then he will come to join me and I him, and after spending two or three days together he will go to the village where I had been previously and I to the village where he had been. Thus we live without companionship save that of the good Angels and that of the souls we are instructing."

Isolation among savages was one of the hardships which had to be borne patiently, and Garnier evidently carried this cross joyously. But other crosses were appearing on the horizon. The Iroquois had already proved that they were bent on the effacement of the Huron nation, and until that end was attained they would show no mercy to those who fell into their hands. The destruction of his old mission at Teanaostaye in July, 1648, and the violent death of Father

Daniel, his successor there, gave Garnier food for serious reflection, but it did not dampen the ardour of his zeal among the Petuns at Etharita. Encouraged by his own success and that of Garreau, his companion at St. Mathias, he entertained the hope that the Iroquois would limit their destructive activities to the Hurons proper and would leave the Petuns undisturbed. In this, however, Charles Garnier was to meet with a cruel disappointment.

After the invasion by the enemy in the Spring of 1649, when the mission centers among the Hurons were destroyed, only Fort Ste. Marie still stood intact. During the rest of that year bands of Iroquois savages remained prowling around the country, seizing and slaying all who fell in their way. The Petun village nearest to their haunts, and necessarily the most exposed, was Etharita, Father Garnier's own mission, containing five or six hundred families. Spies had been sent to watch the movements of the enemy, and anticipating an attack, a body of Petun warriors went out on December 5th, 1649, to meet them, leaving the village quite unprotected. But the astute Iroquois, always on the alert, avoided their advance, took a roundabout way, and seizing two straggling Petuns, learned from them of the absence of the warriors from Etharita and the desperate straits of the women and children left behind. Losing no time, the dreaded enemy appeared before Etharita at three o'clock in the afternoon of December 7th, 1649, and attacked the defenceless inhabitants. Some sought safety in flight; others were slain on the spot; others were taken prisoners; but the Iroquois, fearing the return of the absent warriors, hastened to complete their sanguinary work and then retreated precipitately, putting to death all who could not keep up with them in their flight.

Father Garnier was one of the victims of this hideous massacre. When the enemy appeared he was instructing the people in their cabins. At the first alarm he went straight to the chapel where he found some Christians.^[17] "We are dead men now, brothers," he said to them; "pray to God and escape by whatever way you can; but keep your faith as long as life remains, and may death find you thinking of God!" He gave them his blessing and then left hurriedly to help other souls. The whole village was in despair; defense was useless. Several about to flee implored Father Garnier to go with them, but he refused; and unmindful of self, he thought only of the salvation of the unfortunate victims around him. Urged on by his zeal he hastened hither and thither, giving absolution to the Christians whom he met. In the burning cabins he sought the children, the sick, or the catechumens, and over them, even in the midst of the flames, he poured the waters of baptism, his own heart burning with no other fire than that kindled by the love of God.

It was while engaged in this holy work that he met his death. A musket ball

struck him, penetrating his body a little below the breast; another from the same volley, tearing open his stomach and lodging in the thigh, brought him to the ground. His courage, however, was unabated. The Iroquois savage who had fired at him stripped him of his cassock, and leaving him weltering in his blood, went in pursuit of other fugitives.

Father Garnier, a short time after, was seen to clasp his hands in prayer; then, looking about him, he perceived, some feet away, a poor man who, like himself, had received his death wound, but who still gave signs of life.^[18] Murmuring a few words of prayer, the dying missionary, in whom zeal for souls was stronger than death, struggled to his knees, and, rising with difficulty, dragged himself as best he could toward the sufferer, in order to assist him. He had made but three or four steps when he fell again, somewhat heavily. Raising himself a second time, he got once more upon his knees and strove to approach the wounded Petun, but his body, drained of its blood which was flowing abundantly from his wounds, was not equal to his heroism. After advancing five or six steps he fell a third time. "Further than this," the *Relation* adds, "we have not been able to ascertain what he accomplished. The good Christian woman who faithfully related all this to us, saw no more of him, being herself overtaken by an Iroquois, who struck her on the head with a war-hatchet, felling her upon the spot, though she afterwards escaped. The Father, shortly after, received from a hatchet two blows upon the temples, one on either side, which penetrated to the brain. To him it was the recompense for all past services, the richest he had hoped for from God's goodness. His body was stripped, and left entirely naked where it lay."^[19]

A remnant of fugitive Christians, all covered with blood, arrived hurriedly at Ekarenniondi, twelve miles away, and gave the news of the massacre. Fearing that a similar misfortune was in store for them, the night of December 7th was one of continual alarm for the people of St. Mathias. However, early on the 8th, it was ascertained that the enemy had retired, and Fathers Garreau and Greslon set out at once for Etharita. A sad spectacle awaited them. They encountered only dead bodies heaped together, some almost consumed by fire, others lying in the deluge of their own blood. The few who still showed signs of life were all covered with wounds, but looking for death and blessing God in their wretchedness. After investigation, the two missionaries found the body of Father Charles Garnier completely covered with blood and ashes. They buried him in the spot where his church had stood, for there remained no longer any trace of the building, the fire having consumed all. "It was truly a rich treasure," we read in the *Relation* of 1650, "to deposit in so desolate a spot the body of so noble a servant of God; but that great God will surely find a way to reunite us all in Heaven since it is for His sake alone that we are thus

scattered both during life and after death.”^[20]

Two days later the Petun warriors who had gone to intercept the Iroquois returned to Etharita, only to find their village in ashes, and the dead and mangled bodies of their wives and children. For half a day they maintained a profound silence, seated after the manner of savages on the ground, without lifting their eyes or uttering a sigh, like marble statues without speech, without sight and without movement. The loss of the pastor and his flock was another heavy blow to the Huron mission, but “the missionaries adored the Divine hand and disposed themselves to accept all that He willed even to the end.”

Thus ended the mission of St. John, at Etharita, and the heroic Charles Garnier. No trace has yet been discovered of this once flourishing Petun village. While the site of St. Mathias has undoubtedly been located, owing to its proximity to Ekarennondi, or Standing Rock, a monumental landmark, forty feet high, still to be seen in Simcoe county, Etharita, where Father Garnier was interred under the ruins of his chapel, has not been yet discovered. Data given in the *Relations* place it four leagues in a southwesterly direction from Standing Rock. Possibly the presence of ash-beds and refuse-heaps, the only sure sign of ancient village sites, may be traced some day in that neighbourhood and thus renew even greater interest in Father Garnier’s life and labours.^[21]

It must be said, however, that the memory of this Jesuit is one of the most highly cherished in Canadian missionary annals. His youth, his patrician birth, his abandonment of worldly prospects, his untiring zeal, his tragic end, have all provided topics even for writers of fiction. A couple of these writers have in recent years woven details entirely unauthentic into his early life and thrown a glamour of romance about his name and his career. Suffice it to say, the imagination of novelists will find very little promising material to work on in Garnier’s life.

Father Paul Ragueneau, who was his spiritual adviser for twelve years and who knew all the secrets of his heart, pays an admirable tribute in the *Relation* of 1650 to the holiness of Garnier. “His great aspirations after sanctity,” he wrote, “had grown with him from his infancy. I can truly say that in those twelve years I do not think that, save in sleep, he spent a single hour without these burning and vehement desires of progressing more and more in the ways of God, and of helping forward in them his fellow-men. Outside of these considerations, nothing in the world affected him, neither relatives, nor friends, nor rest, nor hardships, nor fatigues. God was his all; and apart from this, all else was to him as nothing.”

The Cause of his Beatification, begun in 1886 and now happily ended, is a fitting tribute to the heroism of this attractive young missionary who lost his

life in the wilderness of New France.

[1] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 119.

[2] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 145.

[3] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 121.

[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 217.

[5] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. VIII, p. 219.

[6] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. IX, p. 247.

[7] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. IX, p. 277.

[8] This was an Algonquin reserve in the seventeenth century. The name “Petite Nation” is still preserved.

[9] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. IX, p. 251.

[10] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XII, p. 129.

[11] Lot 6, Conc. xx, xxi, Tiny Township. (Cf. Jones: *Old Huronia*, pp. 28-31).

[12] CARAYON: *Première mission des Jésuites au Canada*, Paris, 1864, p. 161.

[13] Garnier’s Letters, p. 38.

[14] Garnier’s Letters, p. 26.

[15] Now known as the Wye river.

[16] A third mission, St. Matthew, was founded among the Petuns, or Tobacco, tribe, in February, 1649, and placed in charge of Blessed Noël Chabanel, who was to shed his blood, a few months later.

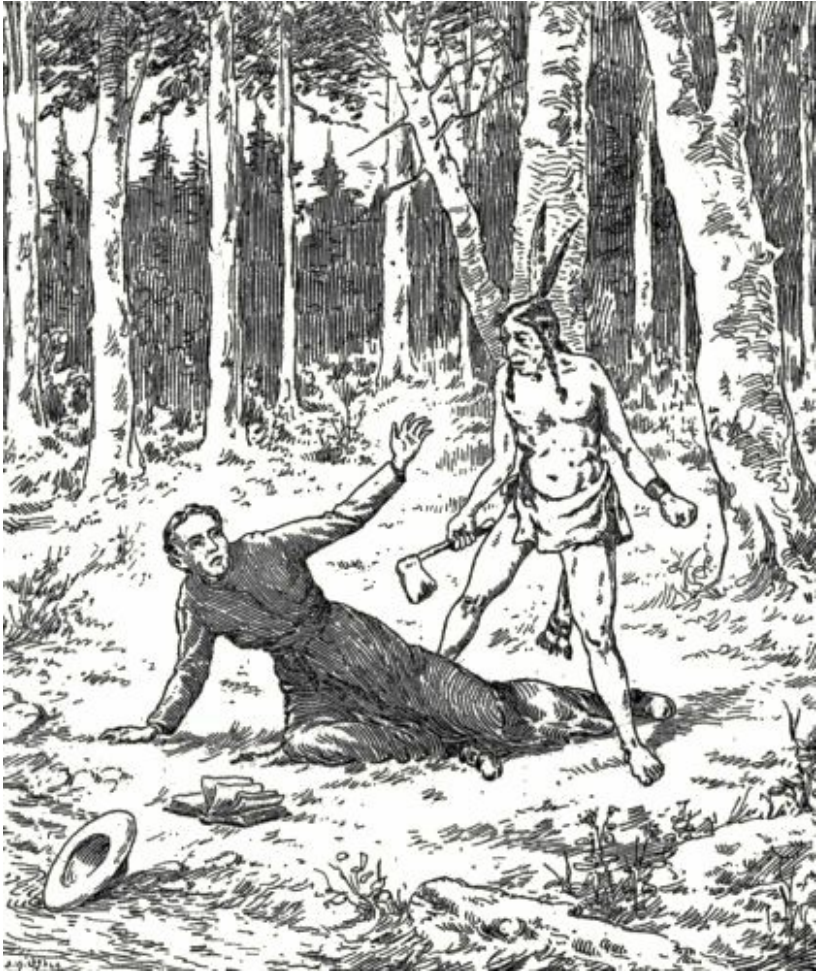
[17] The account of Blessed Charles Garnier’s death is found in the *Relation* of 1650, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 111 and seqq.

[18] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 113.

[19] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 115.

[20] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 117.

[\[21\]](#) Cf. Jones: *Old Huronia*, pp. 260-261.



BLESSED NOËL CHABANEL.

CHAPTER VI

BLESSED NOËL CHABANEL

Birth and Early Years—He becomes a Jesuit—Starts for New France—Trials Met on the Voyage—Sad State of the Colony—Welcomed by his Brethren—Huron and Algonquin—The Iroquois Terror—Chabanel Starts for the Huron Country—His first Impressions—Hardships of the Ministry—A Bloodless Martyrdom—Resolved to Persevere—Lives with the Algonquins—His trials and Temptations—Makes a Vow of Stability—Starts for the Petuns—Presentiments of his End—The Iroquois Massacre—Is Waylaid and Slain—The Assassin Confesses—A Cherished Memory.

The diocese of Meade in the department of Lozère, in France, now a restless hive of human industries, presented a very quiet and rustic aspect in the first years of the seventeenth century. Its numerous hills, open to the bright sunshine and balmy air of southern France, were wooded with forests, thick and dark, the undisturbed growth of ages; its valleys furnished pasturage for immense flocks of sheep whose wool formed one of the staple products of the country; its soil was fertile; minerals were found in abundance; in a word, Nature had given Lozère all the resources that made for the peace and happiness of its peasant population. Unhappily, those good people were still feeling the after-effects of the religious wars waged by the Huguenots. A few years previously, those turbulent sectaries had destroyed the splendid cathedral of Mende, which had been built by the Bishop, François de la Rovere, afterwards Pope Urban V; in the name of freedom of conscience they overran the country, invaded private homes, killed the inhabitants and spread desolation throughout the diocese.

Peace, it is true, had been restored between the Catholics and the Huguenots, but echoes of the former stormy years were still occasionally heard in and around Mende, when Noël Chabanel was born there on February 2nd, 1613. The name of the town or hamlet where this illustrious martyr first saw the light of day has escaped the chroniclers of his life. The only detail preserved to us of his early years is the fact that he decided to consecrate

himself to God in the Society of Jesus, long before he entered the novitiate at Toulouse, on February 8th, 1630. The spirit of God had spoken early to this favoured soul, for Noël was only a boy of seventeen when the new epoch in his career began. Two full years were given up to the study and practice of the Rules and Constitutions of his Order and to the cultivation of humility and abnegation of self, two virtues which were to be so conspicuous in his after-life.

Noël Chabanel pronounced his vows and bound himself to God and the Order in 1632. After studying philosophy at Toulouse, he was appointed in 1634 to teach grammar in the Jesuit college in the same city. He spent five consecutive years in the professor's chair, advancing yearly with his pupils into humanities and rhetoric, until 1639, when he was sent to pursue his theological studies and prepare for the priesthood. After his ordination in 1641, he again taught rhetoric at Rodez, and in 1642 passed through his third year of probation, the final stage in the formation of the members of the Jesuit Order. Noël Chabanel had now reached the age of thirty and was ready for any field of labour.

The desire to devote his life to the Canadian missions had evidently haunted him for a long time—or as the *Relation* of 1650 puts it, “God gave him a strong vocation for these countries”^[1]—and on May 8th, 1643, he boarded a French vessel for the voyage to Canada, a formidable undertaking which was to last ninety-six days. In this age of ocean greyhounds and floating palaces it would be impossible to conceive the hardships and actual physical sufferings transatlantic travellers had to endure during a three months' voyage in the seventeenth century. The poverty of space on the sailing ships, the huddling together of all classes, the lack of sanitation, the difficulty of securing fresh food and water, were ordeals that only the stout-hearted could face.

Even a hundred years later, when the French king's vessels had begun to ply regularly between France and Canada, conditions showed little signs of improvement. One of Noël Chabanel's successors, Father Luke Nau, a Jesuit missionary in Canada, writing in 1734, gives us a glimpse of an eighty-day passage from La Rochelle to Quebec, in a French man-of-war, *Le Ruby*. “We were packed into the dismal and noisesome hold like sardines in a barrel,” he writes. “We could make our way to our hammocks only after sustaining sundry bumps and knocks on limbs and head. A sense of delicacy forbade our disrobing, and our clothes in time made our backs ache. The rolling and pitching loosened the fastenings of our hammocks and hopelessly entangled them. On one occasion I was pitched out sprawling on a poor officer, and it was quite a time before I could extricate myself from the ropes and covering... Another disagreeable feature was the company we were thrown in with day

and night... A third was the stench and vermin. We had on board a hundred soldiers or so, freshly enrolled, each one of whom carried with him a whole regiment of picards (vermin), which in less than a week migrated in all directions...^[2]” Father Chabanel suffered all these inconveniences during ninety-six days and he hailed with unbounded satisfaction the end of such a tedious voyage.

The affairs of the colony in 1642 were in a pitiable condition. Supplies were anxiously awaited from the mother country; the season was advancing, and the non-arrival of the vessels from across the sea made the colonists fear that a disaster had taken place. It was not until the middle of August, on the Feast of the Assumption, that the welcome news spread that ships were rounding Point Levis. “As we were about to begin Mass,” wrote Father Bartholomew Vimont, in the *Relation* of 1643, “two sails appeared, a league distant from our port. Joy and consolation filled the hearts of the inhabitants, but it was very greatly doubled when a ship’s boat put off and brought us the news that Father Quentin was on board, with three worthy workers, religious of our Society, Fathers Léonard Garreau, Gabriel Druillettes and Noël Chabanel.”^[3]

The arrival of these three recruits, men whose names were to live in our annals, was a welcome addition to the missionary forces already at work, for the Jesuits were anxious to carry a knowledge of Christianity into fresh fields. Up to this time the sedentary Hurons had absorbed most of their energies, whilst other tribes, notably the Algonquins, were asking for missionaries. Unlike the Hurons, the Algonquins were nomadic; they roamed over the vast territory watered by the Ottawa river and Lake Nipissing. In the seventeenth century they had a few settlements in the valley of the Ottawa, the largest being on the island now known as Allumette Island. The fact that the route to the Hurons lay almost exclusively through the country occupied by those Indians brought them in contact with the French missionaries from the first years of the colony, but owing probably to their wandering habits, no effort had been made to establish missions among them.

The time had come, however, to make a move in that direction, and reasons were not wanting why it should be made as soon as possible. While the Algonquins had always lived on more or less friendly terms with the Hurons, they had been for several years looking askance at the growing trade relations between the latter and the French. The Algonquins claimed control of the Ottawa river, and the passing up and down before their very doors of Huron flotillas laden with furs and other supplies, was causing a coolness which might any day develop into open conflict. Eleven years before, in 1633, the Algonquins of Allumette Island did not hide their mistrust of the missionaries

whose influence was bringing the French and Hurons together, and they even threatened, to do them violence. Years of calm had intervened, however, but no one knew how long peace would last, and it was evidently in the interests of the Jesuit missionaries to prevent any disturbance which might close the route to their missions on Georgian Bay.

Another cogent reason for fostering friendly relations between the Algonquins and the Hurons was the obligation of being prepared to resist the common enemy of both. The relentless Iroquois were terrorizing not only the French, but also the other Indian tribes. They were keeping incessant watch along the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa rivers to intercept both Hurons and Algonquins and to slay pitilessly all who fell into their hands. The route to Georgian Bay was practically closed; no flotilla had reached the colony in 1643; and the critical state of the missionaries who depended on Quebec for supplies was causing anxiety to the superiors of the Jesuits. Besides, the lives of the missionaries in Huronia might be in danger; letters from them had been intercepted by the Iroquois, and no news had been received from them for over a year. The prospects looked so dark that a council was called by Governor de Montmagny, before the return home of the vessels which brought Chabanel from France, and it was decided to ask the mother country to send out military aid in the following spring.

Owing to all these dangers and alarms Chabanel and Garreau were detained in Quebec during the Winter of 1643-1644, preparing themselves for their future arduous labours. But they were fortunate in having with them a veteran in the field, Father Jean de Brebeuf, who was then convalescing in the colony and whose counsels were invaluable to the young and inexperienced missionaries. Brebeuf had been over sixteen years among the Hurons; he knew their language, their laws, customs, superstitions, the dangers as well as the consolations of the ministry among them, and his frankness on other occasions, for instance, in his admirable letter of instructions to young missionaries, published in the *Relation* of 1637, leads us to surmise that he withheld no information from the two recruits who arrived in 1643.

The winter passed slowly away, and with the opening of navigation in the spring of 1644 an attempt was made to carry succour to the Jesuits in Huronia. Father Joseph Bressani started in April, but the Iroquois, already on the alert, seized him and hurried him into captivity. Four Huron flotillas, however, succeeded in running the blockade and reached Quebec safely. Three started back immediately with supplies, but they were captured on the way. Meanwhile, the soldiers appealed for in the previous Autumn had arrived from France, and the fourth flotilla which left the colony later in the Summer of 1644 was able to advance westward in safety under military protection. After it

had started, Vimont wrote, "The governor gave more than a score of brave soldiers from among those whom the queen sent over this year to this country. They have gone to the Hurons to winter in their villages and to serve as an escort to them next year when they come down to Kebec."

On their long and lonesome journey to Huronia, the strange but picturesque sights which met the eyes of those French soldiers and missionaries at every turn, helped them to overlook the intolerable heat of Summer, the fatigue of incessant paddling, the trudging over portages, the annoyance of insects and vermin, and the sleeplessness which was the result. The Ottawa route, destined to be famous for a couple of centuries in missionary and fur-trading annals, was still in its primeval wildness. Nature left to herself had covered the banks of the Ottawa and French rivers and Lake Nipissing with pine and maple, and the only sounds heard echoing through those thick forests were the splashing of paddles and the chattering of Indians, novel scenes surely for eyes and ears fresh from the cities of Old France. The Ottawa valley has changed its face in the past two centuries, and likewise the facilities which travellers enjoy who go through it on their way westward to the Great Lakes; but in the middle of the seventeenth century conditions were primitive indeed, and the journey from Quebec to Georgian Bay was a formidable undertaking. However, despite the hazards of the way the flotilla arrived safely at Fort Ste. Marie on September 7th, accompanied by three missionaries, Father de Brebeuf, who had been absent three years and whose return was welcomed by all, Father Léonard Garreau, who was to labour among the Algonquins at Enderahy, in the Parry Sound region, and Father Noël Chabanel who was to begin the study of the Algonquin language and prepare himself for work among the members of this tribe who were living among the Hurons.

We may gather from a perusal of the *Relations* that Father Chabanel's first impressions of missionary life were evidently of a mixed character. Although arrived in Huronia under military guard and amid the alarms of war, he had not yet met the Iroquois, but he knew full well that they were lying in wait for him and his brethren, ready at the first opportunity to cleave his head open with a tomahawk. It did not need immediate contact with this tribe of savages, whose ferocity and notorious deeds were well known in France, to bring home to his sensitive and timorous nature the extent of the sacrifice he had made in quitting his native land. Besides, the wild aspect of the new country, with its half-naked population, its bark cabins, its poverty and squalour, made a profound impression on him, and we may infer from the story of his life that his heart often travelled back to the peaceful class-rooms in Toulouse and Rodez.

As the months rolled by, the prospect of long years among Canadian

savages came before his mind more vividly; it began to dawn on him that his life henceforward was to be an unbroken chain of cares and disappointments —“a bloodless martyrdom” he himself calls it; but he had put his hand to the plough, and with the help of Him who strengthens the weak, he was fully resolved not to turn back till he had reached the end of the furrow. The *Relations* do not hide the fact that as a missionary Chabanel had from the very outset many personal drawbacks to contend with. Although gifted with talent, as is evident from the number of years he successfully occupied the chairs of classics and rhetoric in France, his progress in the study of the barbarous Huron and Algonquin idioms was so slow that at the end of the first Winter (1644-1645) he could hardly make himself understood “even in ordinary matters.” The Winter of 1645-46 passed by with similar non-success, and this to him was a subject of great mortification. It was, in fact, something more than this; it was a serious obstacle to the work he had come to do in Huronia. Without a knowledge of the language he was useless; he could not preach or catechize or enter in any practical way into communication with the tribe.

But these were not the only crosses Noël Chabanel had to carry. Notwithstanding his evident vocation to live and labour in the missions of New France, a vocation he himself never questioned, his repugnance to Indian life and Indian customs grew with the months he spent amongst the natives. So opposed was his natural temperament to their gross ways and manners that he saw nothing in them to please him; the very sight of them, their conversation, all that concerned them, was extremely irksome to him; residence in their filthy cabins did such violence to his entire nature that he found therein nothing but the bitterest hardship, without the intermingling of any form of consolation. When the Jesuits visited villages where no permanent churches were established, they had to lead the Indian life and follow Indian customs closely. They slept on the bare ground at night and lived all day in cabins filled with smoke. In Summer, the conditions were not so bad, for life in the open was a luxury all could enjoy; but during their visits in the Winter months they had to dwell in cabins where they suffered from the unbearable heat from the fireplaces in the beginning of the nights, and near the end suffered just as much from the piercing cold. In the morning they found themselves covered with snow which had drifted in through holes and crevices in the bark walls. Stench and vermin abounded in the Huron cabins; every sense was tormented night and day. Father Chabanel could not accustom himself to the food of the country, the best prepared being usually a paste made of Indian corn boiled in water. Although so poorly nourished, he strove incessantly for mastery of the stubborn language, even while visiting the villages; but there was no seclusion, no privacy, no room or other apartment where he could retire to study; no spot which was not open all day to the gaze of a mob of Hurons; he had no light but

that furnished by the smoky fireplaces, and while reading his breviary or writing notes he was surrounded by ten or fifteen persons, children of all ages, who screamed, wept and wrangled.

This is a faithful picture of the missionary life led by Chabanel, and although the *Relation* mentions only casually his physical sufferings and inconveniences, we are left to infer that, had not God strengthened this holy man, his courage would have failed him. Grace from Heaven as well as a strong human will was required to give stability to the resolution of a man of culture like Chabanel to live and die amid the conditions we have described.

Heaviest cross of all! God hid His presence now and then from him, and left the holy missionary not merely a prey to all the repugnances of nature but overpowered with desolation of spirit. There are trials too severe for ordinary virtue, and the love of God must be intense in a human heart that can rise above them; supernatural courage must be strong indeed, not to fail utterly amid such spiritual abandonment. And yet we know that God never withdrew His presence from Father Noël Chabanel for a long period. Consoling graces were showered upon him to strengthen him and make him realize that he was not working alone, that the Supreme Consoler was watching him and would be his exceeding great reward. Amid all this, Chabanel felt his own unworthiness and his failure as a worker in the vineyard, but on the other hand he was inspired and uplifted by the example of his fellow-missionaries. Through weary weeks and months he persevered in the ungrateful task of trying to learn an Indian language and to assimilate Indian ways and customs, and left to God and His own good time the task of lightening the crosses which were bearing heavily upon him.

Meanwhile, he witnessed the beginning of a new era. In September, 1644, Paul Ragueneau replaced Jerome Lalemant as superior of the Huron Mission. The letter received from the General of the Order in Rome, sanctioning this change, had been intercepted by the Iroquois, but an unofficial communication from Quebec had reached Fort Ste. Marie, informing Lalemant that he had been promoted to the superior generalship of all the Canadian missions, while Ragueneau was to replace him in Huronia. The latter took up his burden immediately, but the season was advanced, and as no opportunity offered for a passage to Quebec in 1644, Jerome Lalemant had to wait a whole year before he could return to the colony to assume the new and more important duties imposed upon him.

This change of superiors did not affect the rank and file of the missionary forces in Huronia. The visits to the Indian villages went on as usual, the natives were instructed, the number of converts were increasing, the Fathers were as steadily employed in Summer as in Winter; village missions became

residences, chapels were enlarged, cemeteries blessed, processions were held, interments made according to the rites of the Church, and crosses were set up and solemnly venerated. The progress of the work was extremely consoling. "Of the seven churches in Huronia," wrote Jerome Lalemant, May 15th, 1645, "there are six with residences attached; the first at Ste. Marie; the five others at the five principal towns of the Hurons, namely, the Conception, St. Michael, St. Ignace and St. John Baptist. The seventh church, that of the Holy Ghost, is made up of Algonquins who this year, together with a number of other nations, winter about twenty-five leagues from us on the great lake of the Hurons." Three missionaries, Claude Pijart and René Menard, in 1642, and Léonard Garreau in 1644, visited the Algonquins, and for months at a time followed those homeless nomads whose peripatetic propensities and love of wandering brought many a strange vista to the meandering gaze of the missionaries who followed them with unflagging footsteps into the depths of the wilds, or, as an old document puts it, "into the woods and on the rivers, over rocks and across lakes, having for a shelter but a bark hut, for a floor nothing but the damp earth or the surface of some rough rock which served as table, chair, bed, room, kitchen, cellar, garret, chapel and all."

Noël Chabanel was also engaged with the same tribe in 1644, but some difficulty is experienced in following his career in the years 1645, 1646, and 1647. While Jerome Lalemant was superior in Huronia he was a faithful chronicler of events; in his *Relations* he gave the names of the men and the places they visited, and made easy the work of following the movements of the missionaries; but his successor, Paul Ragueneau, was not so considerate for posterity. Although as assiduous as his predecessor in recording the details of the work done in the vineyard, he rarely gave the names of the workers; for this reason we are left to conjecture the whereabouts of Noël Chabanel in the years just mentioned. It is presumed therefore that he continued his labors among those Algonquins who selected a site close to the Hurons of Fort Ste. Marie in order to profit by the protection of the French against the Iroquois. We find traces of him in the Winter of 1647, when, after a short stay at Ossossané, with Father Simon Le Moyne, he returned to the Algonquins and remained with them till the Spring of 1648, when they dispersed to their Summer haunts.

Four years had now passed away in Huronia, during which Father Chabanel's slow progress in acquiring a knowledge of the Indian tongue had placed him at a disadvantage, and had been an obstacle to his success as a missionary. None felt his position more keenly than he. He began to feel that he was a worthless member of the community, a drone among busy men; his fidelity to his vocation for the savages was thus put to a severe test. His deep

sense of his uselessness overpowered him so completely that the temptation came to him to abandon the field and return to France. The arch-enemy of souls represented to him that by going back to his native land he would have the comforts and the satisfaction which he formerly enjoyed, and would there find employment better suited to his talents and character, employment in which so many saintly souls were practising the virtues of charity and zeal, and spending their lives for the salvation of their fellow-men. Why could he not do in France what so many others were doing? Why spend his life fruitlessly in a barbarous land? The reasons were plausible and the temptation was strong; but Noël Chabanel had nailed himself to the Cross, and he would not now ask God to take him down from it. In order to link himself to Huronia without hope of recall, and to forestall similar temptations in the future, he bound himself by the following vow, on the feast of Corpus Christi, 1647, to remain in the Canadian missions till death.

“Jesus Christ, my Saviour, who by a wonderful dispensation of Thy paternal Providence, hast willed that I, though altogether unworthy, should be a fellow-helper of Thy holy apostles in this vineyard of the Hurons; impelled by the desire to obey the will of the Holy Spirit regarding me, that I should help forward the conversion to the faith of the barbarians of this Huron country; I, Noël Chabanel, being in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament of Thy Body and Thy Precious Blood, which is the tabernacle of God among men, make a vow of perpetual stability in this mission of the Hurons; understanding all things as the Superiors of the Society shall explain them and as they choose to dispose of me. I conjure Thee, therefore, O my Saviour, to be pleased to receive me as a perpetual servant of this mission and to make me worthy of so lofty a ministry. Amen.”^[4]

The heroic act was done and it was irrevocable; Chabanel had burned his ships behind him; and though rebellious nature continued to tax his virtue, grace prevailed. We shall see that God granted him the perseverance he so ardently desired.

The continual inroads of the Iroquois had obliged the Jesuits to abandon their isolated residences for more populous settlements where they should be better able to defend themselves. One of the residences thus affected was St. Ignace which was transferred to within two leagues of Fort Ste. Marie. Chabanel aided Brebeuf in this work in the Spring of 1648, and became his companion and assistant at the neighbouring hamlet of St. Louis. In February, 1649, having received orders to quit St. Ignace and proceed to the Petun Nation, he was succeeded by Gabriel Lalemant who, a month later, was seized, cruelly tortured for eighteen hours and then put to death.

This opportunity of suffering for Christ, so near at hand and so quickly

lost, was keenly felt by Father Chabanel. In a letter to his brother Pierre, a Jesuit in France, he revealed his humility, his holy desire to suffer, and his disappointment that another had wrenched from him the martyr's crown. "Judging from human appearances," he wrote, "Your Reverence came very near to possessing a brother a martyr, but alas! in the mind of God, the honour of martyrdom requires virtues of another stamp than mine. The Reverend Father Gabriel Lalemant, one of the three whom our *Relation* mentions as having suffered for Jesus Christ, took my place in the village of St. Louis, a month before his death, while I, being more robust of body, was sent upon a mission more remote and more laborious, but not so fruitful in palms and crowns as that of which my cowardice has, in the sight of God, rendered me unworthy. It will be when it shall please the Divine Goodness, provided I strive to realise in my person *martyrem in umbra et martyrium sine sanguine*. The ravages of the Iroquois in this country will perhaps some day supply what is wanting, through the merits of those saints with whom I have the consolation of living so peaceful an existence in the midst of turmoil and continual danger." But the saintly man would not have long to wait for the crown he sighed for. Before the year 1649 was ended the opportunity to suffer for Christ would come; the glorious destiny he envied Father Gabriel Lalemant would also be his own.

The Petuns, whither he was to be sent, occupied the large territory, now so peaceful and prosperous, known as Nottawasaga township. Three missions, St. John, St. Mathias and St. Matthew, had already been established there, the largest being St. John, at Etharita. This village had a population of five or six hundred families and Father Chabanel was named to supplement the labours of the zealous Charles Garnier. While he was still at Fort Ste. Marie preparing for his departure, numerous and well-defined presentiments began to crowd in upon him that God's designs in his regard were on the eve of fulfilment. And when bidding farewell to Father Chastelain, his confessor, he remarked to him, "My dear Father, may it be for good and all that this time I give myself to God! May I belong to Him!" These words, uttered with emphasis and with a countenance beaming with true sanctity, made such an impression on Chastelain that he was visibly affected, and happening at that hour to meet a third person, he could not refrain from exclaiming, "Truly I am deeply moved. Father Chabanel had just now spoken to me with the voice of a victim who is about to be immolated. I know not what may be God's designs, but I see that in this Father, He is fashioning a great saint." And Chabanel himself also remarked to one of his intimate friends, "I do not know what is going on within me, but in one respect I feel entirely changed. I am naturally very timid, but now that I am going to a dangerous post, and it seems to me that death is not far off, I no longer have any fear; and yet this frame of mind does not come

from myself.”

Obedience had undoubtedly allotted a dangerous post to this holy man; God was leading him to the sacrifice. Events were developing so rapidly that his words written to his brother in France, a few months before, began to assume a prophetic meaning that could be easily understood. “I entreat Your Reverence to remember me at the holy altar as a victim doomed, it may be to the fire of the Iroquois, that with the help of the saints, I may obtain a victory worthy of the struggle.”

Time and circumstances showed that this was not an idle request. Fifteen Huron villages had already been devastated and the inhabitants dispersed in thickets and forests, on lakes and streams, and on islands unknown to the enemy. Many of them had sought refuge even among the Petuns. Only Fort Ste. Marie was left standing in the terror-stricken region; but as this “home of peace” was no longer a refuge, the Jesuits resolved to destroy it also, so that it should not fall into the hands of the Iroquois, and then to seek elsewhere a safer and more advantageous shelter. On May 15th, the whole establishment was given over to the flames by the missionaries themselves; a month later they built rafts and crossed over to St. Joseph’s Island where three hundred families, refugees from the enemy, were already settled.

The Iroquois who had roamed on the outskirts of the Petun territory all through the winter of 1648-1649, were threatening the villages of that nation during the following Spring and Summer. The Petuns, however, owing to their isolation from the Hurons proper, hoped that the enemy would pass them by. But this hope was vain; Huron captives had already assured Father Ragueneau that the Iroquois were on the point of attacking the Petun villages. This information excited his fears; the prudent superior felt that, in the crisis at which the affairs of the mission had arrived, it would be unwise to expose the lives of the two Fathers, Garnier and Chabanel, at Etharita, and he sent an order to the latter to return at once to St. Joseph’s Island. Chabanel set out on December 5th; two days later, as we have seen, the Iroquois swooped down on Etharita while the main body of the Petun warriors were absent; they slaughtered Father Garnier and most of the inhabitants, and reduced the town to ashes.

Evidently unaware of this catastrophe, the heroic Chabanel continued on his own journey. While passing through St. Mathias he remarked to Father Garreau, “I know not why obedience calls me back, or whether I shall be permitted to return to my post; but whether or no, I shall persevere and serve God even unto death.” Accompanied by six or seven Christian Hurons, he quitted St. Mathias on the morning of December 7th, and travelled six long leagues over a difficult road. Nightfall found the party in the thick of a forest,

and while his fellow-travellers were asleep and resting, Chabanel remained awake and prayed. Towards midnight he heard a noise, accompanied by songs and shouting which evidently proceeded from a party of Iroquois jubilant over their great victory at Etharita and from the Petun captives who were singing their customary war-songs. He aroused his companions who fled at once into the forest or returned quickly to one of the Petun missions. Later, they reported that the holy man had accompanied them a certain distance, but then undoubtedly through sheer exhaustion, he fell on his knees, remarking to one of them, "It matters not whether I live or die, this life is of small consideration. The Iroquois cannot rob me of the joys of Heaven."

Here the thread of events is broken. Nothing further is known of the missionary's movements. He probably rested a short time and started again at daybreak, December 8th, to continue his journey to St. Joseph's Island. A Huron who met him on the bank of the Nottawasaga river gave out the news later that Father Chabanel, in order to make his walking easier, had thrown away his hat, blanket, and the bag containing his writings.

The saintly missionary was no longer seen alive. At first it was uncertain whether he had fallen a victim to the Iroquois who had slain thirty persons in the neighbourhood, or whether he had lost his way and perished from cold and hunger in the December snow. "After all," says the *Relation* of 1650, "it seems to us most probably that he was murdered by the Huron who was the last to see him alive." Suspicion fell on this Indian who was well known as an apostate of Etharita; it being surmised that after he had killed the missionary and robbed him, he threw his body into the little river. Sufficient evidence, however, could not be obtained to convict the assassin, and in the general misery of the moment the Jesuits judged it wise to smother their suspicions. If the Huron were guilty it was enough to know that God's purposes had been served, and that He would avenge His servant in His own good time.

This was the story of the disappearance of Father Chabanel, as given in the *Relation* of 1650. After it was written and sent to France for publication, Paul Ragueneau received information that the apostate Huron, Louis Honareannahak, the man on whom suspicion rested, had really done away with the Father. The assassin himself confessed his crime and added that he did it out of hatred of the faith, seeing that he and his family had met with all kinds of misfortunes and adversities from the moment that they embraced the Christian religion. This information is given in Ragueneau's own handwriting in a document compiled in 1652, which is still unpublished and kept in the archives of St. Mary's College, Montreal.

God did not allow the death of his faithful servant to go unpunished. Misfortunes still greater than those referred to by himself soon overpowered

the unfortunate Huron apostate. His mother, Genevieve, once a fervent Christian, became an impious wretch and followed her son's footsteps in crime and deviltry. The whole family fled southward to the Neutral nation where, in less than two years, they were destroyed by the Iroquois. Some perished by fire, others by the tomahawk, while others were carried into captivity. And thus did God avenge his heroic servant who in season and out of season, in trials and tribulations, kept his vow of stability, and persevered to the very end.

Chabanel is one of the eight names which always stands out prominently when we recall the heroic age of the Canadian missions. He was only thirty-six years of age when he died, and had spent six years among the Indians. The "shadow of martyrdom" followed him closely during those years, but the reality overtook him at last. His assassination perpetrated out of hatred for the faith, according to the testimony of the criminal responsible for it, was the strongest motive for trying to keep his memory green until the Infallible Church put a final seal to the reputation for sanctity that this servant of God enjoyed amongst us for over two centuries and a half. "Chabanel's death," wrote Charlevoix, the historian of New France, "while less striking in the eyes of men, was not less precious in the eyes of God, who judges us according to the dispositions of our hearts, and who keeps as strict an account of what we would like to have done as of what we have really done and suffered."

[1] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 157.

[2] *The Aulneau Letters*, pp. 22-23.

[3] *Jesuit Relations*: Clev. edit., Vol. XXIII, p. 287.

[4] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 154.



BLESSED ISAAC JOGUES.

CHAPTER VII

BLESSED ISAAC JOGUES

His Birth and Early Years—Vocation Confirmed—Arrives in Canada—Serious Illness—The Erection of Ste. Marie—Sent down to Quebec—Seized by the Iroquois—Cruelly Tortured—Reduced to Captivity—His Zeal for his Fellow-Captives—His Escape—Return to France—Yearning for the Mission—Back in Canada—Ambassador to the Iroquois—Presentiments—Treatment by the Mohawks—Treacherously Assassinated—Looked upon as a Martyr.

This heroic missionary who shed his blood for Christ, and who has left an illustrious name in our annals, was the son of a pious couple, Laurent Jogues and Françoise de Saint-Mesmin. He was born at Orleans, in France, on January 10, 1607. While he was still young, his father died, leaving him exclusively in the care of her whom he was pleased in after life to call his honoured mother and who had the privilege of directing his early footsteps in the paths of virtue. In 1617, the boy began his studies in the Jesuit college which had recently been founded in his native city, and had reached the class of rhetoric when he heard the call of God; at the age of seventeen he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus, in Paris, October 24, 1624.

A desire for active service on foreign missions had already begun to reveal itself in the generous soul of the young novice. At first, the arduous field of Ethiopia appealed to him and he asked to be sent thither; but prudent counsel turned these holy aspirations in another direction. His spiritual director told him that work among the natives of New France would amply gratify his ambition for trials and sufferings; the savage Iroquois and the Hurons would be worthy objects of his apostolic zeal. The novice bent his head in acquiescence; henceforward the missions beyond the Atlantic became for him the longed-for goal. Meanwhile, as several years of preparation would necessarily intervene before the young man could exercise his ministry, he set actively to work to acquire those virtues which would prepare him for his future apostolate.

At the end of his term of probation in 1626, Isaac Jogues was sent to the college of his Order at La Fleche, where he spent three years in the fascinating study of philosophy. In 1629, we find him occupying a professor's chair in Rouen, whither he had gone to begin the term of teaching which usually forms part of a Jesuit's career. Shortly after his arrival there, he had the consolation of meeting Father Jean de Brebeuf, Charles Lalemant and Ennemond Masse, three of his brethren who had been driven back to France when the English seized Quebec, and who had gone to Rouen to await the outcome of Champlain's negotiations to regain the colony.

The presence of those three pioneers of the Canadian missions in the college of Rouen and the young professor's daily contact with them, especially with Father de Brebeuf who had spent several years among the Hurons, undoubtedly strengthened his missionary vocation and inspired him to be their generous rival in the coming years. In 1632, he returned to the college of Clermont, in Paris, to study theology and prepare for the priesthood. He was ordained early in 1636 and started for Canada in the Summer of the same year.

After a wearying voyage of eight weeks the young missionary stepped ashore at Quebec, determined to give the best years of his manhood—he was only twenty-nine—to the service of God and souls. His first duty on landing was to inform his mother in Old France of his safe arrival in the New. "I do not know," he wrote her, "what it is to enter Heaven, but I do know that it would be hard to feel in this world a joy more intense or more overpowering than I felt when I set foot in this New World."

Father Jogues did not tarry long at Quebec. He had been named for the missions on the Lower St. Lawrence, but the call for more labourers in the Huron country changed the decision of his superiors in his regard. He was one of those chosen for Georgian Bay, and he set out immediately for Three Rivers to join the flotilla of canoes which was soon to start. At that fort, recently built at the mouth of the St. Maurice, he had his first glimpse of what missionary life meant when he beheld the arrival from Huronia of a brother Jesuit, Father Antoine Daniel, barefooted, broken with fatigue, his cassock in tatters, his breviary hanging from his neck by a cord. But the sight of the intrepid Daniel, haggard and wayworn, did not chill the ardour of the young priest; rather it spurred him on to similar sacrifices. Jogues bravely stepped into a Huron canoe, waved farewell to his friends on shore, and started westward on his long journey.

The trip to Georgian Bay was the first great trial of a Huron missionary, a sort of initiation in the physical hardships of his future life. In Father Jogues' case, however, the journey was remarkable, not so much for the trials he had to endure as for the rapidity with which it was accomplished. "I quitted Three

Rivers on the twenty-fourth,” he wrote to his mother, “and such haste did we make that, instead of twenty-five or thirty days, which the trip usually takes, only nineteen were required to reach the spot where five of our Fathers were stationed.”

His brethren at Ihonatiria gave him a joyous welcome; unhappily their joy was soon turned into the gravest anxiety. The *Relation* of 1637 informs us that Father Jogues arrived in good health, but a week had hardly elapsed when he was seized with a dangerous fever which threatened to cut short his missionary career. The crushing poverty of the place, with its lack of medical aid and physical comforts, helped to aggravate his condition until his life hung by a thread. His illness at last developed such alarming symptoms that blood-letting was resorted to, the patient himself acting as his own surgeon. A change for the better ensued, the fever gradually left him, and his health continued slowly to improve. Before the winter set in he had begun to apply himself to the study of the language without which his presence in Huronia would have been useless. He accompanied the missionaries, future martyrs like himself, on their rounds through the neighbouring villages, baptizing little children in danger of death, and imparting religious instruction to the sick and dying.

These first essays in the ministry among the Hurons gave the young missionary much consolation and helped to excite his zeal for further conquests. However, neither he nor his fellow-Jesuits were without apprehensions, and in their letters to France they did not exaggerate the difficulties and dangers of their situation. They were living and labouring in the midst of superstitious savages, who, while willing to receive the attentions of the Blackgowns, dreaded what they thought was their preternatural power, and attributed to their influence the evils which had begun to visit the nation.

Father Jogues had been hardly a year among the Hurons when a pestilence broke out which carried off hundreds of the tribe. The Indians blamed the missionaries for this disaster and in their terror resolved to do away with them. Fearing that the unhappy wretches might carry out their murderous design, and feeling it to be his duty to acquaint his brethren in Quebec of the danger they were incurring, Father de Brebeuf, as we have already seen, wrote a farewell letter in which he and his fellow-missionaries revealed a complete resignation to whatever fate God had in store for them. This interesting document, which has been preserved for us in the *Relation* of 1638, was signed by all the Fathers at Ossossané, Brebeuf adding in a postscript, “I have left at the residence of St. Joseph (Ihonatiria) Father Peter Pijart and Father Isaac Jogues, who are animated by the same sentiments.”

Ihonatiria had been the scene of Jogues’ labours during the first two years of his sojourn in Huronia. It was there he studied the intricacies of the Huron

tongue, there he accustomed himself to the discomforts of life among the Indians. When that residence was abandoned in 1638, he was sent to Teanaostaye, and in November of the following year, he started with Father Garnier to visit the Petuns, or Tobacco tribe, on the first missionary expedition made beyond the Blue Hills. Unhappily, superstitious and ill-disposed Hurons had preceded them and had sown distrust in the minds of the Petuns. When the two Jesuits arrived, they were received as dangerous sorcerers, and treated as such. The Indians refused to listen to them and finally drove them from their country.

Fort Ste. Marie, the central residence planned by Father Jerome Lalemant for the Huron missionaries on the Wye river, was then nearing completion. The main edifice, the erection of which was superintended by Father Jogues, was opened in the Autumn of 1639, but various additions were made in the following three years to provide a home for the French in the service of the mission, as well as a rendezvous for the Huron neophytes who were invited to come and renew their piety within its walls. During those three years it was Jogues' privilege to welcome not merely the Indians whom he and Father du Peron had converted in the neighbouring villages, but also those who came from the villages in the interior. In this important office he had the consolation of witnessing the results of the work of his fellow-missionaries.

In September, 1641, a native ceremony, known as the "feast of the dead," brought to Fort Ste. Marie Indians from the various nations bordering on Huronia. Among the delegates were a number of Sauteux, members of a tribe dwelling along the river which links the great lakes Huron and Superior. No Blackgowns had as yet gone so far west, and a pressing invitation to them to make the journey was gladly accepted. As a result, Father Jogues, accompanied by Father Charles Raymbault, set out in a bark canoe; and after seventeen days' paddling they reached a village situated on or near the present site of Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. The two missionaries were given a generous welcome by those pagans, and they would gladly have remained with them had not their services been needed nearer home. Other members of their Order took up the work of evangelization among this branch of the Algonquins in after years, but history records the fact that Jogues and Raymbault were the first whitemen who set eyes on Lake Superior; or as the historian Bancroft puts it, "Thus did the religious zeal of the French bear the cross to the banks of the St. Mary and the confines of Lake Superior, and look wistfully towards the homes of the Sioux in the valley of the Mississippi, five years before the New Englander Eliot had addressed the Indians within six miles of Boston harbour^[1]."

However, while the Jesuits were extending their horizons and gathering in

the fruits of their ministry, the situation in Huronia was far from encouraging from a temporal point of view. Owing to the hostility of the Iroquois, who had blocked the Ottawa route, no communication had been held with the French colony for a couple of years, and the missionaries were reduced to the direst need. As something had to be done to relieve the situation, it was decided in the Spring of 1642 to attempt to reach Quebec. A flotilla, under the leadership of Father Jogues, quitted Huronia and was successful in running the Iroquois blockade. The missionary laid before the authorities at Quebec the desperate plight of the men on Georgian Bay, and canoes were soon on their way back laden with supplies.

Father Jogues hoped to be as lucky on the return journey as he had been on the downward trip, but he had not calculated with his crafty enemies. He had reached a spot thirty-one miles above Three Rivers when the flotilla was waylaid by a band of ferocious Iroquois who were awaiting its return. Several Hurons were killed outright in the skirmish that ensued; the rest, with the Jesuit and two young Frenchmen, René Goupil and Guillaume Couture, were seized, beaten with clubs, tightly bound with thongs, flung into canoes and then taken up the Richelieu river over Lake Champlain and Lake George, to the village of Ossernenon in the Mohawk country, where Father Jogues and his companions had to submit to other tortures.^[2]

Shortly before his departure from Huronia, while kneeling alone in the chapel at Fort Ste. Marie, he begged God to grant him the favour to suffer for His glory. He heard an interior voice telling him that he would be heard, and counselling him to be strong and patient. The answer to his prayer came in the first days of his captivity at Ossernenon. The barbarous Iroquois showered blows on him with sticks and iron rods, plucked out his beard, tore off his finger-nails, and then with their teeth crushed his bleeding finger-tips; a squaw sawed off the thumb of his left hand; the little Indian children applied to his flesh burning coals and red-hot irons.

The Huron prisoners fared worse still. They were hurried from village to village, notably Andaragon and Tionnontoguen, in each of which they were tortured anew and forced to mount platforms where in their pitiable state they were exposed to the ridicule and insolence of the barbarians. The poor missionary was spared the persecution of this journey, but he had meanwhile, notwithstanding his bleeding wounds and his intense pain, to submit to the cruel ordeal of suspension between two posts by cords tightly wound around his wrists.

Goupil and Couture had also their share in these various tortures which happily, in Goupil's case, were soon to end. Three blows from a tomahawk, September 29, 1642, six weeks after his capture, gave the saintly young man

the reward he so heroically purchased. This tragedy deeply impressed Father Jogues, and led him to expect a similar fate in the near future. He had, in fact, been warned that his end would soon come, and he would probably have been slain had not some Dutch traders from Fort Orange (now Albany) intervened when they heard of his captivity and sufferings.

The sympathetic fur-traders succeeded in saving the missionary's life, but they did not secure his release from captivity. Already he had been formally adopted as a slave by one of the Mohawk clans, in which capacity he had to undertake the most degrading menial works; carrying burdens on his back over rough trails from village to village, following and serving his masters on the hunt and during their fishing expeditions, meanwhile bending under their blows when his efforts did not win their approval. While at home in Ossernenon he was allowed to wander freely through the village, but the eyes of his masters were continually watching him. Although he had been warned that his life would be in danger if he passed beyond the limits of the village, yet he escaped frequently to the neighbouring forest to kneel before a cross he had carved in a large birch tree, there to pour out his soul in prayer to God, "whom he alone in that vast region adored^[3]." Perhaps the greatest torture the heroic sufferer had to endure was the desolation of spirit and mental anguish with which he was frequently overwhelmed. These trials he bore with unconquerable patience, but God often rewarded him by flooding his soul with sweetness and light. In these moments of ecstasy his physical sufferings lost their poignancy, and he offered himself to his Heavenly Comforter to suffer even more for the glory of His Name.

Weeks and months passed away in this rigid captivity, during which time he had been given up for dead by his friends in France and Canada. At last came the news that he was still alive, relieving their anxiety and causing them to take measures to free him from his unhappy lot. The Dutch at Fort Orange were also moved to sympathy and sought occasions for him to escape, but much to their surprise the holy man's zeal would not permit him to run away from a field of labour where there was still something to do for the souls of the Christian Hurons who had been seized with him.

Jogues looked upon his slavery as a special disposition of Providence in their regard. Writing to his superior in France, in the Summer of 1653, he asked who would, in the event of his release from captivity, remain to console and absolve his fellow-captives? who would keep the Hurons attentive to their duties? who would teach the new prisoners, fortify them in their tortures, and baptize them before they went to the stake? and who would look after the dying children of the Mohawks, and instruct the adults? In a letter which he sent to the French governor at Quebec, thirteen months after his capture, he

wrote, "I have taken a resolution which grows stronger every day, to stay here as long as it pleases our Lord, and not to seek my freedom, even though the occasion present itself. I do not wish to deprive the French, Huron and Algonquin prisoners of the help which they get from my ministry. I have given baptism to many who have since gone to heaven."

In the same letter he notified Montmagny that an attack was projected on the new fort which had recently been built by the French at the mouth of the Richelieu. This warning, which had been sent secretly, made the Iroquois suspect treachery somewhere; it put Father Jogues' life in such danger again that Keift, the Dutch governor of Manhattan, gave orders to the commandant at Fort Orange to secure his freedom, if possible^[4]. When this fresh effort on his behalf was made known to him, the holy Jesuit once more refused to listen; not unless it was plainly the will of Heaven, would he throw off his shackles. On this occasion, however, he spent a whole night in prayer asking God to inspire him what to do; whether it was the Divine will or not that he should remain a slave.

After mature deliberation and evidently with a clear conscience, he decided to make a strike for freedom, and shortly afterwards, while his captors were off fishing in the Hudson, he disappeared. Fled to Fort Orange, he lay hidden, in constant danger of being apprehended by the Indians who were furious at his escape. After six weeks of exciting adventures he succeeded in boarding a vessel which brought him down the Hudson river, accompanied by Jan Megapolensis, a Calvinist minister, who proved himself a sincere friend of the Jesuit. Six days later he reached New Amsterdam (New York) where he received a warm welcome from the governor. His arrival caused a sensation in the Dutch settlement, the marks of his tortures, plainly visible, and his wretched poverty exciting the sympathy of all. One of the colonists fell at his feet and kissed his mangled hands, exclaiming, "Martyr of Jesus Christ"; a testimony which echoed the sentiments of the whole Calvinist community.

Father Jogues had no alternative left now but to return to France; to retrace his steps to Canada through the Mohawk country meant certain death. After a month's delay in New Amsterdam the opportunity of a voyage to Europe presented itself^[5]. A bark of one hundred tons weighed anchor in Manhattan harbour and sailed down the bay to the Atlantic, with the Jesuit on board. Clothes had been given to him to replace the rags of his captivity, but he suffered much hardship and penury during the voyage. Being without money to pay his passage or to procure the necessaries of life, he had to depend on the charity of a Calvinist crew who were not as indulgent as their brethren in Manhattan. After seven weeks the coast of England was sighted, and on Christmas Day the bark ran into Falmouth harbour, in Cornwall. Even there ill-

luck and misery pursued the poor missionary. While the sailors were ashore, robbers entered the vessel and snatched the coat and hat which had been given him by the Dutch to shield him from wintry weather. However, a French brig brought him across the Channel, and the day after Christmas he landed on the coast of Brittany in the direst distress, with hardly clothing enough to cover his weak and emaciated body. He would have perished from cold and hunger had not a charitable merchant helped him to pay his way to the Jesuit college at Rennes^[6]. There Father Jogues met his brethren in religion who made him forget for the nonce all his trials and sufferings.

The *Jesuit Relations*, published in France every year and read so extensively, had made the Iroquois well known in that country and had given them an unenviable notoriety. When the news spread about that a missionary had arrived who had been a victim of their cruelties, Father Jogues was looked on as a confessor of the faith, and sympathy and veneration were shown him on every side. In Paris, the Court of France wished to see and speak with the servant of God. When the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, saw the marks of his sufferings and when she heard from his own lips the tale of his captivity, she was moved to deep compassion, and remarked that this was a case where truth was stranger than fiction. All these expressions of esteem and sympathy grieved the humble missionary, and he sought to hide what were in reality the tokens of his heroism.

Meanwhile his health continued to improve; the gentle care lavished on him in his homeland gave him a new lease of life. There was one cross, however, which he had still to carry; if that were lifted his happiness would be complete. Owing to the loss of an index finger, and the mutilation of the others, he was deprived of the privilege of saying Mass. This was an impediment which could only be removed by the Sovereign Pontiff, and a petition was accordingly sent to Rome. Urban VIII graciously granted the holy man permission to officiate at the altar again, remarking at the same time that a martyr of Christ should not be prevented from drinking the Blood of Christ. *Indignum esset martyrem Christi non bibere sanguinem Christi.*

While a six months' sojourn in France had had a salutary effect on the health of Father Jogues, it had also given him new courage and spurred him on to further sacrifices. The foretaste of martyrdom which he had received among the Iroquois had inspired this athlete of the Cross with a desire to drink deeper of the bitter cup, but he knew that he could never quench that thirst in his native land. The lure of the Canadian missions had seized him again; he was ready to face another voyage across the Atlantic to reach them. In the Spring of 1644 he sailed from La Rochelle for the land "where the fragrance of his virtues refreshed and comforted all those who had the happiness of knowing

and conversing with him.”

Montreal, then in the second year of its existence, was the first scene of his ministry after his return from France. Sieur Chomedey de Maisonneuve was the guiding genius of the little colony begun under the auspices of Mary at the foot of Mount Royal, and Jogues lent his aid to the founder to strengthen the souls of those brave pioneers whose communal life recalled the fervour and simplicity of the primitive Christian Church.

Montreal was then the western outpost of civilization in New France. Being nearest the Iroquois, it was necessarily exposed to their raids, although Quebec and Three Rivers, further down the St. Lawrence were also frequently in danger. In fact, no spot in the French colony was safe from those roving savages, and Governor de Montmagny was at a loss to know how it was all going to end. The affairs of the French were at a low ebb; their military strength was well-nigh exhausted; their Huron allies were demoralized; the fur-trade was waning; the colonists lived in dread of the Iroquois who were constantly prowling around the settlements and along the waterways. The governor of the colony knew well that he was powerless to either punish those daring enemies or dictate terms of peace to them; his only fear was that they were aware of his precarious situation.

On the other hand, De Montmagny had learned from prisoners and others that the Iroquois were also showing signs of weakness as a result of the long struggle, and a hope arose within him that perhaps some sort of treaty might be concluded with the Confederacy. From among the prisoners whom the French still held, the governor selected a Mohawk chief whom he sent back to his canton to feel the pulse of the nation and learn whether or not his fellow-countrymen would be willing to “bury the hatchet.”

This proposal, accompanied as it was by substantial presents, was received with evident satisfaction, for the Mohawk returned shortly afterwards with other chiefs to discuss terms of peace. Conferences were held at Three Rivers, in which Father Jogues was summoned to take part; his knowledge of the Iroquois tongue and the experience gained during his captivity making him a valuable interpreter as well as prudent counsellor. There was much talk but little progress during those parleys, but in the end mutual promises of peace and good-will were made, and the Iroquois delegates returned to their cantons. The French, however, were not enthusiastic over the results of these deliberations; they had had such painful experiences of the double-dealing and treachery of the Iroquois that they did not put much confidence in their profession of future peace. Still it would have been impolitic to reveal these suspicions, and two years later, the governor suggested the sending of delegates from Quebec to show how satisfied he was at the happy outcome of

the negotiations. A French delegation would flatter the Iroquois and might possibly impress them.

Father Jogues was chosen as one of the number. This new task called for courage and abnegation; it meant going back to the land of his tortures and his thirteen months' captivity. At the first intimation he received of this new mission a moment of fear and hesitation arose in the bosom of the heroic man. "Would you believe that on opening Your Reverence's letter," he wrote to Jerome Lalemant, his superior at Quebec, "my heart was as it were seized with dread.... My poor nature quailed when it recalled the past, but our Lord in His goodness has calmed it and will continue to do so." A patriotic duty called Jogues to make this new sacrifice, and stifling all sentiment of fear, he set out on May 16, 1646, for the Mohawk canton, accompanied by Jean Bourdon, one of the chief citizens of the colony.^[7] His instructions were not merely to express the governor's feelings regarding the future peace between the French and the Iroquois, but also to secure the adhesion of the other four cantons which had held back on the plea that they had not been invited to the conferences at Three Rivers.

In this mission Father Jogues was not entirely successful. At an assembly which he convoked at Ossernenon in June, only the Mohawks and a few Onondaga delegates were present. The other Iroquois cantons were so little interested in the peace proposals of the French governor that at that moment they were hidden here and there along the Ottawa river looking for the scalps of French, Huron and Algonquin stragglers. Even the Mohawks themselves, then the most powerful unit of the Iroquois Confederacy, were divided. The Wolf and Turtle clans were willing to stand by the treaty of Three Rivers, but the Bear clan refused to be bound by barriers of any kind; they were resolved to go to war when their interests called for it. However, Father Jogues had secured the adherence of the majority—a pyrrhic victory at best—and after an absence of six weeks he was back in Three Rivers.

Although undertaken for reasons of state, this second visit to the "land of his crosses" had revealed anew to the future martyr the spiritual destitution of the unfortunate Iroquois. It excited his zeal for the conversion of his former persecutors and he promised himself an early return to them, perhaps in the Autumn. So confident was he that no opposition would be offered in the colony to this project that he left in the safe-keeping of the Indians a box full of religious objects, probably his portable altar, in order to avoid the annoyance and expense of double transportation. His plans fully met the wishes of his superiors who desired nothing better than that the new era of peace should be employed in spreading the Gospel among the Iroquois. The Jesuits determined to attempt the establishment of a mission in the cantons

along the Mohawk river, and Father Jogues was the man to undertake it.

And yet, notwithstanding this decision and his own heroic abnegation, the holy man had his presentiments of danger. He wrote to a friend in France, “My heart tells me that if I have the blessing of being employed on this mission, *ibo et non redibo*, I will go but shall not return. But I will be happy if our Lord be willing to finish the sacrifice where He began it, and if the little blood which I have shed in that land be a pledge of what I would willingly yield from every vein in my body.”^[8]

In giving expression to these grave words Father Jogues was prophesying better than he knew. After his return from the peace parley in the previous June, a change in public sentiment in his regard had taken place among the Mohawks. A pestilence had broken out and had carried off many victims; the crop of Indian corn had been ruined by worms, and the superstitious Indians, seeking a cause for the disaster, laid the blame on the box which the Blackgown had left behind him in their care. The box, they said, concealed an evil spirit which was spreading the contagion and causing their people to die.

It had, in fact, become an object of suspicion from the moment it had been confided to their care; they feared that its presence in their midst would bring them some misfortune. Now their fears were more than realized; they were persuaded that the evil spirit concealed therein was carrying out its master’s mandate to destroy their nation. It did not take the Iroquois long to come to a decision. Without daring to open the box, they threw it into the river, and during the whole month previous to the missionary’s arrival, the Bear clan spread bitter reports against him.

These calumnies greatly excited the Mohawks, and as it had been well known that he intended to return, they determined to add very little to the warmth of his welcome. Why should they welcome one who was showing himself to be a public malefactor? The more reasonable, however, among the Wolf and Turtle clans, those especially who had known Father Jogues during his captivity, counselled moderation; they wished to give him an opportunity to explain the contents of the box. He had already done this for them when he left it in their care, but the subsequent pestilence and the visitation of the worms evidently called for further explanations. The more petulant members of the Bear clan refused to listen to this wise advice, and they craftily used the incident as a pretext for continuing war against the French whom they accused of having sent Father Jogues among them. They did not wait for his arrival before they took action; two parties raised the war-cry among their kinsmen and immediately set out in the direction of Canada.

Quite unconscious of this change of public sentiment among the Iroquois, the holy missionary was at Three Rivers preparing to go and live among them.

And yet, even had he known of the threatening danger, it is doubtful whether the nearness of death would have alarmed him or caused him to put off the beginning of so great a work. After having said farewell to his brethren, he set out on September 24, 1646, with a companion, Jean de la Lande, and a few Hurons, and paddled southward towards Lake Champlain. After that date he was seen no more by whitemen. He had crossed the lake and had reached the lower end of Lake of the Blessed Sacrament, when he was met by one of the Mohawk war-parties. The hostile attitude the savages assumed caused such alarm that the timid Hurons, realizing what it meant for them if they were taken prisoners, fled in terror, leaving the missionary and his companion at the mercy of the Indians. With fiendish delight those wild savages pounced upon the two men, robbed them of their baggage and began to belabour them with blows.

It was learned later that Feather Jogues had arrived at the village of Ossernenon on October 17th, when the wretched barbarians hardly gave him time to reach his cabin before they seized him, stripped him of his clothing and cruelly beat him.

“You shall die tomorrow!” one of them exclaimed, “but do not fear; you shall not be burned, you shall fall under our tomahawks.”

The humble victim, now completely at their mercy, tried to make them realize the enormity of their crime. He reminded them of the treaty of peace entered into between the French and themselves. He came to them as a friend, to live with them, to show them the way to heaven. He feared neither torture nor death; why seek his life? Did they not fear the vengeance of the Great Spirit?

These words, however, were received with derision. The only response the treacherous Iroquois gave him was to cut off bits of flesh from his arms and devour them before his eyes. In the evening of the following day, October 18, 1646, a couple of savages accompanied him to his lodge, where a traitor armed with a tomahawk was in hiding behind the door. The unhappy missionary had hardly crossed the threshold when a blow split his head open and he fell lifeless to the ground, bathed in his own blood. He was decapitated and his head placed on a picket. The next day his body was thrown into the stream running nearby.

News of the murder did not reach Quebec until June of the following year. A letter from Keift^[9], the Dutch governor, to De Montmagny, announced that Father Jogues had been assassinated shortly after his arrival in the country of the Iroquois, the only reason given for the atrocious deed being that the missionary had concealed an evil spirit among some clothes which he left in their custody. This spirit, it was asserted, had spread pestilence in the country,

and caused their crops of corn to fail. A second letter from the same quarter gave the details of the murder which we have just cited, and added that it was the Bear clan that put him to death.

The tragic event created a painful sensation in the French colony and showed what little reliance could be placed in the promises of the treacherous Iroquois. The Jesuits on their side were deeply moved. "We have honoured this death as the death of a martyr," wrote Jerome Lalemant; "although we were in various places, several of our Fathers, without knowing ought from one another, because of the distance between those places, could not resolve to celebrate for him the Mass of the dead, but instead have offered this adorable Sacrifice by way of thanksgiving for the blessing that God had extended to him. The laymen who knew him intimately and the religious communities have honoured this death, feeling more inclined to invoke the Father than to pray for his soul."^[10]

Father Jogues was the first priest of the Jesuit Order to be slain by the Iroquois. His death was looked upon as a triumph; all were convinced that this victim of savage hatred had gone to heaven; the blood shed for Christ had won him an eternal crown; both missionaries and colonists looked upon him as a martyr for the faith. This verdict given in the seventeenth century has been the verdict of posterity. Not merely has the name of Jogues been in American history a symbol of heroic endurance in suffering, but he himself has always been considered a martyr as well. The veneration with which his name has ever been surrounded culminated in a desire to see him granted the honours of Beatification, a desire which has at last been gratified.

[1] BANCROFT, *History of the United States*, II, p. 790.

[2] Ossernenon, on the south bank of the Mohawk river. A Jesuit mission was established in the neighbourhood in 1667 and lasted for seventeen years. The exact site of this famous village has been identified in recent years as that of Auriesville, Montgomery Co., New York, where a shrine has been erected to recall the memories of the Blessed Martyrs Isaac Jogues, René Goupil and Jean de la Lande, slain by the Iroquois there in the middle of the seventeenth century.

[3] BANCROFT: *History of the United States*, Book II, p. 792; *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXXIX, 209.

[4] At the solicitation of the Queen Regent of France, an order was sent to all the commandants of New Belgium, to secure the deliverance of the

captive from the Iroquois (Cf. *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXIX, p. 266).

[5] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXI, p. 99.

[6] The pathetic details of Father Jogues' arrival at Rennes are given in the *Relation* for 1647 (Clev. edit., Vol. XXXI, p. 103 and seqq.)

[7] The Algonquins, seeing that a Father was embarking, gave him warning not to speak of the Faith at the very first; "for there is nothing, said they, so repulsive (to the Iroquois) as our doctrine which seems to exterminate everything that men hold most dear; and because your long robe preaches as well as your lips, it would be expedient to walk in shorter apparel". This warning was heeded, adds Jerome Lalemant. It was considered necessary to treat the sick as sick and to behave among the impious as one does among the heretics. (*Jes. Rel.*, Vol. XXIX 48-49).

[8] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXI, p. 113.

[9] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXI, p. 115.

[10] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXI, p. 119.



BLESSED RENÉ GOUPIL.

CHAPTER VIII

BLESSED RENÉ GOUPIL

Piety of his Early Years—His Spirit of Zeal and Self-Sacrifice—The Missions of New France—Arrives in Quebec—His Activities in the Colony—A New Career opens Up—He Starts for Huronia—Captured by the Iroquois—Cruelly Tortured and carried into Captivity—Pronounces the Jesuit Vows—Among the Mohawks—Suffers Fearful Tortures—Attempts made to Ransom Him—Threatened with Death—Cruelly Slain at Last—Respect for his Relics—Considered a Martyr.

René Goupil, the Jesuit lay-Brother, was a worthy companion of the heroic missionaries who shed their blood for Christ in Canada in the seventeenth century. Apart from the fact that he was a native of Anjou, in France, and that he was born about the year 1607, the documents which we possess tell us very little about his early years. We are indebted to Father Isaac Jogues, his fellow-prisoner among the Iroquois, for the few details which have come down to us concerning this zealous labourer in God's vineyard who was destined to receive a martyr's crown.

Goupil was evidently the child of pious parents, for when he was old enough to appreciate the value of his soul, and to weigh his own spiritual responsibilities, he decided to give himself entirely to God in the religious life, and turned to the Society of Jesus as the goal of his desires. "In the bloom of his youth," wrote Father Jogues, "he urgently requested to be received into our novitiate at Paris^[1]." While there, he gave great edification by his strict observance of the rules and regulations which are imposed on all those who would become followers of St. Ignatius. But although his fervour was constant, his physical strength was not equal to the strain put upon it, and the young novice was forced in consequence to abandon the hope of persevering in the Jesuit Order, or of consecrating himself to the life of study which the Order called for. However, he did not murmur at this upsetting of his plans, submitting without question to the will of God who would easily find other ways of carrying out His eternal designs in his regard. Suffice it to say that the

short time which the young man spent in the novitiate at Paris had a decided influence on the rest of his career.

Returned to the secular life, René Goupil applied himself thenceforward to the study of surgery. Yet, while he was hard at work at this branch of human knowledge, the fire of zeal and self-sacrifice still burned in his generous soul; the desire to serve God more intimately had undergone no change. He regretted that the priestly career had been closed to him; however, if it were not the wish of the Great Master to accept him for His service at the altar, he did not despair of serving Him elsewhere in a humbler sphere. At this time the Indian missions in New France were attracting the attention of the people of the motherland. The labours of the French Jesuits were bearing fruit; rich harvests of souls were being gathered in beyond the sea: thousands of converts to the faith were the reward of the heroic men who had abandoned home and country to labour for Christ and suffer for His Name. Their works and sufferings were known and appreciated in the mother country through the publication of the *Relations*, a series of remarkable documents begun in 1635, and continued until 1673, and about which, owing to their influence on the after-life of René Goupil, a few remarks here should not be out of place.

Every Summer the missionaries sent in from various parts of the Canadian mission-field detailed reports of their operations, notes on the tribes they lived with, their customs, their superstitions, the record of individual conversions, even the virtues practised by the neophytes. The superior at Quebec, in his turn, made a summary of these reports, sometimes using the missionaries' own words, at other times changing them to give harmony to the style, and when this task was completed he sent the manuscript to France. For forty years a little volume bound in vellum appeared in Paris yearly; it was read by thousands; it kept the missions well in the public eye, and rendered other valuable services to the new French colony beyond the sea. A recent writer claims even that the *Jesuit Relations* saved the colony to the Motherland, "The avarice of the fur-traders was bearing its natural fruit," he writes, "and the untiring efforts of Champlain, a devoted, zealous patriot, had been unavailing to counteract it. The colony sorely needed the self-sacrificing Jesuits, but for whom it would have undoubtedly been cast off by the mother country as a useless burden. To them, Canada indeed owed its life; for when the king grew weary of spending treasure on this unprofitable colony, the stirring appeals of the *Relations* moved both king and people to sustain it until the time arrived when New France was valued as a barrier against New England."^[2]

But these valuable documents produced other beneficial results as well. Besides exciting the zeal of future apostles, many of whom got their first notions of sacrifice from the perusal of their pages, they aroused the

enthusiasm and prompted the generosity of pious and wealthy Catholics in France, and were the occasion of endowing Canada with institutions, which after nearly three centuries are still doing God's work. For example, it was the reading of the *Relations* that urged Madame de la Peltrie to consecrate her personal service and her fortune to the establishment of the Ursulines at Quebec. The Duchess d'Aiguillon, niece of Cardinal Richelieu, and Mademoiselle Jeanne Mance, also impressed by their reading of the little volumes, gave their noblest efforts to help the sick and unfortunate in New France; and the hospitals of Hotel Dieu in Quebec and Montreal are monuments still flourishing that bear testimony to the influence the *Relations* had on those two heroines of charity. Another institution which traced its origin to the same source was the Algonquin mission established at Sillery, in 1637, through the ample generosity of Noël Brulart, Chevalier de Sillery.

Owing to Goupil's environment in Paris and his constant personal contact with his former spiritual masters, it is difficult to believe that these human documents did not also fall under the eyes of the young surgeon, or that the perusal of them did not speak eloquently to his soul, and convince him that despite his setback there was work waiting for him on the other side of the Atlantic. Here was a field in which, if he could not work directly in the apostolate for souls as he wished, he could at least help those who did. Such noble aspirations were not permitted to lie dormant; the young man set about realizing his plans; and acting under the advice of the Jesuits, with whom he remained intimately united, he decided to give himself to the missions of Canada. "When his health improved," writes Father Jogues, "he journeyed to New France in order to serve the Society there, since he had not the blessing of giving himself to it in Old France."^[3]

René Goupil reached Canada about the year 1640, and from the moment of his arrival devoted himself entirely to the service of the missionaries. "Although he was fully master of his own actions," writes Jogues, "he submitted himself with great humility to the superior of the missions who employed him for two whole years in the lowliest offices of the house." Goupil was only one of many zealous men who aided the Jesuits in a similar way. The Canadian missions had in their employ a certain number of lay helpers whose modes of life will be described in a coming Chapter. They were known as *donnés*, or oblates, who gave their services without wage and looked to God for their reward, the Fathers on their side guaranteeing to provide for their needs until the end of their days.

This was the class to which René Goupil was admitted when he arrived in Canada. The taste of the life he had led during his few months of novitiate in Paris, and the principles he imbibed there, had given him the desire to do all he

could for God in this humble sphere. There was sufficient scope for him in Quebec to exercise his skill as a surgeon; the college with its teachers and students, the flourishing Algonquin mission at Sillery, the seminary at Notre-Dame-des-Anges, all three were more than enough to keep him employed. But his busy life in these institutions did not prevent him from being active elsewhere. Father Jogues informs us that the Hotel Dieu, then at the beginning of its long career of public usefulness, profited by the young surgeon's professional skill. Assiduous in serving the sick and wounded there, like so many saints before him in the history of the Church, Goupil saw our Lord in His suffering members and treated them with all the patience and charity which he would have shown to the Master Himself.

He had now been two years in Canada, and was witnessing the growth of the French colony both in population and in importance. Among the various tribes the Jesuits were giving proofs of feverish activity. They were very successful in the missions along the St. Lawrence, but at that moment they were much concerned about their brethren among the Hurons on far-off Georgian Bay, no word having reached Quebec from that quarter for two Summers. Watchful Iroquois were prowling along the Ottawa, making communication with that distant field almost impossible. The fears expressed at Quebec that the missionaries were in dire straits and were lacking the necessaries of life, had indeed a solid foundation. "Their clothes were falling to pieces," writes Bancroft, "they had no wine for the chalice but the juice of the wild grape, and scarce bread enough for consecration."^[4] In fact, so critical had the situation become among the Huron missionaries that in the Spring of 1642 it was decided, notwithstanding the perils of the route, to attempt the journey to Quebec and bring back supplies as quickly as possible. Twenty-five stalwart Hurons started from Fort Ste. Marie on June 13th, in four large bark canoes, accompanied by Father Jogues and Father Charles Raymbault, the latter returning to Quebec to die. By clever manœuvring they succeeded in running the Iroquois blockade on the Ottawa and after thirty-five days' paddling they reached Three Rivers. A few days later they were in Quebec, gathering in supplies for their return journey.

This visit of Father Jogues to Quebec proved the turning-point in the career of René Goupil. The young man met the missionary, and heard from his own lips the conditions of life on Georgian Bay, the crushing poverty of the Jesuits there, and above all the need there was of medical aid among the Hurons. Jogues spoke out of the fulness of his own experience; he himself had been brought to death's door in 1636 when he was forced to act as his own surgeon. Besides, the frequent recurrence of contagious diseases which were thinning out the Indian population, made the presence of one who could treat the

Hurons professionally an absolute necessity. The young man was won over. He was aware that his departure would deprive Sillery and Quebec of his precious services, but other and higher considerations prevailed. The greater good for the greater number was a motive that appealed to him; it would be easier to replace him at Quebec than it would be to get a volunteer for Georgian Bay, and he therefore offered himself for service in the Huron mission, if the superior were willing to let him go.

Jogues petitioned Father Vimont to allow the young surgeon to accompany him to Huronia, and greatly to the satisfaction of both, the permission was granted. "I cannot express the joy he felt," writes Jogues, "when the superior told him to prepare for the journey." The missionary did not conceal from Goupil the perils he might encounter. He impressed upon him that the Iroquois were at war with the French and were lurking along the Ottawa, ready to seize both French and Huron whom they met on the way. But these apprehensions had no effect on the mind of the heroic young man; his decision had been made and it was irrevocable. Meanwhile, the flotilla was preparing to start; supplies had been laid in the canoes; clothing, church ornaments, house utensils, books, and—touching detail!—several bundles of letters and messages for the missionaries in Huronia, which had just arrived in the ships from friends and relatives in Old France.

The first halt was made at Three Rivers. Although only ninety miles from Quebec, this post was one of the westerly limits of French civilization in the year 1642. It had been founded eight years before by Sieur Laviolette and the fur-traders, its favourable site at the mouth of the St. Maurice making it a fitting meeting-place for the numerous Indian tribes who assembled there to barter their furs. Jogues and Goupil reach the trading-post on July 31, in time to celebrate with their brethren, Buteux and Poncet, the feast of the founder of their Order. On the following day, the twenty-two Hurons held a council, as was their custom in critical circumstances, during which they encouraged one another bravely to face the common enemy, should they chance to meet him. There were still pagans in the Huron party, but the greater number were fervent neophytes who did not fail to pray God for a safe return to their country. And the tone of their speeches revealed a complete submission to the will of Divine Providence, although they hoped that as they had made the downward journey safely, the Iroquois would let them go back in peace.

On August 2, the entire party manned the canoes and set out. During the first day nothing happened that would presage an interrupted journey. Jogues and his companions had paddled thirty-one miles, and had camped for the night on the shore opposite an island in Lake St. Peter. Early next morning freshly-imprinted human tracks were discerned on the sand, and a moment of

hesitation and doubt intervened. However, whether these traces of human passage were made by friend or enemy, they were few in number, and the travellers decided to proceed. But here again the craftiness of the foe was in evidence. A mile or two further west the flotilla fell into an ambush of seventy Iroquois who had been hiding in the long reeds and wild grass that lined the borders of the lake. The enemy quietly waited until the canoes were within firing distance, when they rose from their crouching position, uttered terrifying war-whoops, and fired on the unsuspecting Hurons. A couple of the latter were wounded, and the Iroquois bullets pierced the canoes. When these frail vessels began to leak, the occupants turned their prows shoreward and leaped out. Some disappeared quickly in the forest; others, less agile, were immediately surrounded by the enemy.

Among the latter were Father Isaac Jogues and René Goupil. Notwithstanding the yells and wild gesticulations of the blood-thirsty Iroquois, the dozen Hurons who had not escaped decided to sell their lives as dearly as possible, and they were valiantly resisting when they perceived a new contingent of forty Iroquois hastening across the river to aid their captors. The struggle was now hopelessly unequal; several Hurons who were still able fled to the woods, leaving behind them the Frenchmen and a few faithful neophytes who heroically stood their ground and refused to abandon the missionary. While the Iroquois were pursuing the fleeing Hurons, René Goupil threw himself at the feet of Father Jogues, made his confession, received absolution, and then offered himself in sacrifice to God. At that critical moment of his life, his virtue revealed itself. In a sublime act of resignation he turned to his priestly companion and exclaimed, "Father, may God be blessed! He has permitted this; may His holy will be done! I accept this cross; I desire it; I embrace it with all my heart^{[5]!}"

Meanwhile the Iroquois had returned with the unhappy Hurons. Seizing Goupil they tore off his finger-nails, crushed his bleeding fingers between their teeth, stripped him of his clothing, and showered blow after blow on him with their fists and knotty sticks. Notwithstanding the excruciating pain he was enduring, the young man showed great fortitude and presence of mind. Amid his agonizing tortures he called the attention of Father Jogues to an aged Huron whom the Iroquois were about to despatch with a tomahawk, and he also helped the missionary to instruct a Huron captain not yet baptized, but who was begging to receive the sacrament.

Preparations for the departure to the Mohawk country were begun at once. The Iroquois bound their wretched prisoners tightly with cords and flung them into their canoes. Then they started across Lake Saint Peter and halted only when they had reached the mouth of the Richelieu river. There they divided

among themselves the supplies which were destined for the needy missions on Georgian Bay. As they opened the various parcels—"the riches of the poor Hurons and things very precious to us," exclaimed Jogues—their shouts of joy echoed throughout the surrounding forests. "All these things have fallen into the hands of the barbarians," wrote Father Vimont after the news of the catastrophe had reached Quebec. "The poor Fathers will regret the loss of their letters. The Iroquois scattered them here and there on the bank of the river, and the waters carried them away."

The mournful convoy with its score of prisoners then started up the river and over Lake George, a journey which was the occasion of new tortures for the unhappy victims. They lay tied and crouching at the bottom of the canoes without food or sleep, exposed to the excessive Summer heat and writhing with the pain from their still fresh and bleeding wounds. In a letter to France shortly after this tragic capture, Vimont further wrote, "Of the twenty-three taken some were massacred while others were garrotted and carried away to the country of those barbarians, who will perhaps make a more bloody meal of them than hounds do of a stag. God be praised for the courage he has given to the Father (Jogues) and for the piety he has inspired in the two young Frenchmen (Goupil and Couture). If those tigers burn them, if they roast them, if they boil them, if they eat them, they will procure for them sweeter refreshment in the house of the Great God, for whose love they have exposed themselves to such great perils. A number of the captured Hurons are Christians. Perhaps they will convey a good impression of the faith." Father Jogues, on his side, ignoring his own sufferings, tells us later that what caused him the greatest pain on that journey was to see among the prisoners some of the oldest and worthiest Christians of the Church in Huronia. Their plight drew tears from his eyes, in the fear "lest the cruelties they endured might impede the progress of the faith still incipient there."

Isaac Jogues and René Goupil were evidently in the same canoe, for the missionary informs us that while on the road Goupil was always occupied with thoughts of heaven. When he spoke, his words and discourses all plainly showed his entire submission to God's holy will. "He accepted the death that God was sending him," wrote the Father, "offering himself in sacrifice many times, even to be reduced to ashes, and seeking only to please God in all things and everywhere." The two had been a few days on their dolorous way when the young man confided to his companion the secret of his life. "Father," he said, "God has always given me a great desire to consecrate myself to His service by the vows of religion in His holy Society. Up to this my sins have rendered me unworthy of this grace. Nevertheless I hope that our Lord will be pleased with the offering which I now wish to make to Him by taking in the

best way I can the vows of the Society in the presence of God and before you.”^[6]

The influence of his few months in religion was revealing itself in the life of René Goupil. He had learned in the novitiate in Paris, that while actions done without obligation of doing them might be more pleasing to God than corresponding actions done under obligation if the former proceeds from a more intense love of God; yet he had also learned that, other things being equal, actions done under the sanction of religious vows have more merit than those done without this sanction; and he was wise enough to wish to profit to the full by his present sad plight. Father Jogues sympathized with the pious desire of the holy young man, and allowed him to take the vows which admitted him into the Order. This new obligation bound him closer still to God and gave a double merit to the sufferings he was then undergoing for His sake.

The canoes had been on the road eight days and were still on Lake Champlain, when two hundred Iroquois were sighted. It was a war-party of Indians encamped on an island during a halt on their way to attack the colony. The arrival of a score of prisoners was hailed by them with shouts of fiendish glee, it being considered a good omen if they had an opportunity of exercising their cruelty before going to war. The prisoners were released from the cords which bound them and were taken ashore where they were forced to run the gauntlet between two rows of Iroquois, who amused themselves by plucking out the hair and beard of the Frenchmen and tearing the tender parts of their bodies with their finger-nails, which, the *Relation* informs us, were extremely sharp. After this new ordeal René Goupil presented a pitiable sight. He was covered with blood, and he staggered under the blows which his inhuman tormentors showered upon him. But the saints have the secret of returning good for evil. One of the Iroquois fell sick and Goupil employed his surgical skill in opening a vein for him, with as much patience and charity as if he were performing the act for a friend.

On the tenth day they had reached the southern end of Lake George from whence the captives made the rest of the journey on foot and by portaging to the Mohawk canton, thirty or forty miles away. Although weak from hunger and loss of blood, the unfortunate men were forced to carry on their backs the parcels which should have gone to the Huron mission on Georgian Bay. Mile after mile they trudged over the Indian trails, staggering under their burdens, and urged on by the blows and the insults of their captors. Finally, on the thirteenth day, eve of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, about the twentieth hour, “they arrived at the river which flows past the village of the Iroquois.” After having crossed this stream and climbed the hill they came to the village itself, Ossernenon, fortified by double palisades and containing

about six hundred inhabitants.

The whole population, armed with clubs and iron rods, were on foot to welcome the visitors. Two ranks were formed along the trail, and as the prisoners passed between them, they received a shower of murderous blows from men, women and children. Goupil was horribly disfigured, and when he reached the gate of the enclosure he fell to the ground, a bruised and bleeding mass of wounds. Describing his sad condition,^[7] Father Jogues wrote: "Having fallen under a shower of blows from clubs and iron rods with which they attacked him, and being unable to rise, he was carried half-dead, as it were, on to a scaffold raised in the middle of the village, in so pitiable condition that he would have inspired compassion in cruelty itself. He was all bruised with blows and in his features one distinguished nothing but the white of his eyes. But he was so much the more beautiful in the sight of the angels, as he was disfigured and similar to Him of whom it was said, 'We have thought Him, as it were, a leper; there was no beauty on Him, nor comeliness.' Hardly had the barbarians granted him time to breathe when they gave him three other blows on the shoulders with a heavy club. They then cut off his right thumb at the first joint. This torture caused the heroic Goupil to heave a sigh and to call on 'Jesus! Mary! Joseph!' for strength to bear the pain. At night he was tied to stakes planted in the ground, and while he lay on his back, the Iroquois children amused themselves by throwing burning coals and cinders on his bare breast. However, during the time he was at the mercy of all who wished to wreak their cruelty on him, Goupil showed admirable gentleness and resignation."

Two days were spent in this fashion at Ossernenon, after which the Huron prisoners were hurried to Andaragon where their tortures were repeated, then to Tionnontoguen, finally to a fourth village the name of which is not fully identified in the *Relations*. Father Jogues and René Goupil were taken to Andaragon, but they were spared the rest of this sorrowful Way of the Cross, their weakness being so great that they were unable to walk. The Huron prisoners were publicly notified that they should meet their death by fire, "news assuredly full of horror, but softened by the thought of the Divine Will and the hope of a better life." The dread sentence was carried out on several of them in the various villages. They went to the stake giving examples of that savage stoicism which their training on Georgian Bay had changed into Christian courage and resignation. Jogues and Goupil were not condemned to this frightful death; their sentence had been put off for the moment, and having been brought back to Ossernenon they were allowed a certain amount of freedom within the limits of the village.

Meanwhile the news that whitemen had been seized and were being held as

captives among the Iroquois had reached the Dutch at Fort Orange, and had aroused their sympathy. The commandant, Arendt Van Corlaer, with two interpreters, came to Ossernenon to intercede for them and treat for their ransom. Van Corlaer offered two hundred and sixty dollars, an offer which was haughtily refused. Father Jogues remarked that the Dutch envoys spent several days in consultation, offering much but obtaining little. Not wishing to offend their allies, the wily Indians promised that they themselves would conduct their prisoners back to the French colony.

These efforts to free the missionary and his companion were frowned on by the Iroquois, and made them more wary. Meanwhile the two men usually retired outside the village walls where they could be alone with God and their devotions. But even there they were not alone; spies were watching all their actions, while their fervour and the length of their prayers excited the fury of those enemies of God.

René Goupil had become the special object of their hatred, and the reason for his assassination is given in detail by Father Jogues in the document quoted so often in these pages. One day a little child, three or four years old, entered Goupil's cabin while he was at prayer. With an excess of devotion and of love for the Cross, and with a simplicity which in the circumstances, Father Jogues avers, was not prudent according to the flesh, he removed the cap from the child's head and then made a great Sign of the Cross on the little one's brow and breast. Unfortunately the grandfather of the child, a superstitious old pagan, witnessed this scene. He had heard from the Calvinists of Fort Orange that the Sign of the Cross was a hateful sign, and fearing some misfortune from the action of the Frenchman, he became enraged at him, and commanded a young Indian who was about to start for the war, to kill him. The savage took the order to heart and eagerly awaited the first opportunity to perpetrate the foul crime.

Unconscious of these dangers and yet wishing to give no cause for complaint, Jogues and Goupil kept aloof from the others in the village, living in close companionship and performing their spiritual devotions together. It was six weeks after their arrival in Ossernenon, when they were walking in the neighbourhood of the village reciting the Rosary, that a couple of young Indians approached and ordered them to return to their cabins at once. Father Jogues had some presentiment of what was going to happen and remarked to Goupil: "My dear Brother, let us recommend ourselves to our Lord, and to His good Mother the Blessed Virgin; I think these people have some evil design."^[8] The same Father tells us they had with much fervour offered themselves to God shortly before, beseeching Him to receive their lives and their blood, and to unite them to His Life and His Blood for the salvation of the Iroquois.

Accordingly, they returned towards the village reciting the Rosary, and had said the fourth decade when they reached the gate. There they paused to listen to what the young men were saying, when one of these drew a hatchet which he had kept concealed beneath his blanket, and dealing a blow with it on the head of René Goupil, felled the victim to the ground. Goupil was still conscious, however, for he recalled at that moment an agreement he had made with Father Jogues to invoke the Holy Name of Jesus in order to obtain the indulgence.

Expecting a similar end, the Jesuit knelt to receive his blow, but the murderer told him that he had not permission to kill him, as he was under the protection of another family. Jogues then regained his feet, and pronounced a last absolution over the unfortunate young man who was unconscious but still breathing. Two more blows of the hatchet completed the murderous deed; and the soul of the heroic Goupil winged its flight to its Maker.

“It was on the twenty-ninth of September, feast of St. Michael,” wrote Father Jogues later, “when this angel of innocence and martyr of Jesus Christ gave his life for Him who had given him His. They ordered me to return to my cabin where I waited the rest of the day looking for the same fate. It was fully their purpose to kill me; but our Lord did not permit it. The next morning I went to enquire where they had thrown the blessed body, for I wished to bury it at any cost. Certain Iroquois said to me, ‘You have no sense. Don’t you see that they are seeking you everywhere to kill you, and still you go out? You are looking for a body already half destroyed, which they have dragged far from here. The young men will kill you if they find you outside the stockade.’ That did not stop me; our Lord gave me courage enough to wish to die in this act of charity. With the aid of an Algonquin prisoner I found the body. After his (Goupil’s) death the children had stripped him, and putting a rope about his neck, dragged him to a ravine which is near the village. The dogs had mangled him, and I could not keep my tears back at the sight. I took the body, and with the aid of an Algonquin I put it in the water and then weighted it down with stones so that it might not be seen. It was my intention to come the next day with a mattock, when no one was looking, to dig a grave and place the remains therein. I thought the corpse had been well concealed, but perhaps some of the young men had perceived me. During the night it rained, and the water in the ravine rose to an uncommon height. I borrowed a mattock from another cabin the better to conceal my design, but when I reached the spot I could not find the blessed deposit. I went into the water and sounded with my feet to see whether the torrent had not carried it away. I could find nothing.”^[9]

The kind-hearted missionary reluctantly abandoned the task, but he learned later that the young men of the village had dragged Goupil’s body from the

ravine into a little wood nearby where it became the food of wild animals. In the following spring, on his fourth attempt to recover the venerable remains, he found the skull and a few half-gnawed bones. These he buried with the intention of carrying them back to Three Rivers should he succeed in gaining his liberty. “Before placing them in the ground,” he remarked, “I kissed them very devoutly several times as the bones of a martyr of Jesus Christ. I give him this title not only because he was killed by the enemies of God and His Church, and in the exercise of an ardent charity towards his neighbour by placing himself in evident peril for the love of God, but especially because he was killed on account of prayer and notably for the Sign of the Holy Cross.”^[10]

Thus ended one of the most pathetic incidents in the history of the early missions of America. Within recent years the site of Ossernenon, where René Goupil met his tragic death in 1642, with the ravine into which his body was cast, has been located near the present village of Auriesville, on the banks of the Mohawk river, about forty miles from Albany.

This spot rendered sacred by so many venerable souvenirs—for there also Jogues and De la Lande met their fate four years later—has been set aside as a place of pilgrimage where a shrine has been erected. Large numbers of the faithful assemble there every Summer to recall the tragic happenings of the seventeenth century and to implore the intercession of the young martyr whose blood, shed for the Sign of the Cross, has hallowed the soil. Blessed René Goupil’s gentle disposition, his zeal in the service of God, his fortitude and resignation in his suffering, crowned by his heroic death, have given a halo to his memory which time has not obliterated.

[1] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXVIII, p. 117.

[2] *The Jesuit Missions*. By Thomas Guthrie Marquis (Chronicles of Canada Series). Toronto, Glasgow, Brook and Co., 1916, p. 14.

[3] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXVIII, p. 117.

[4] *History of the United States*, Vol. II, p. 788.

[5] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXVIII, p. 119.

[6] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXVIII, p. 121.

[7] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXVIII, p. 125.

[8] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXVIII, p. 127.

[9] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXVIII, p. 133.

[10] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXVIII, p. 131.



BLESSED JEAN DE LA LANDE.

CHAPTER IX

BLESSED JEAN DE LA LANDE

French and Iroquois—De la Lande accompanies Father Jogues—The Difficulties of Travel—The “Oblates” of New France—An Example of their Charity—Praised by Ragueneau—Symptoms of Trouble—De la Lande Seized by the Mohawks—Inhumanly Tortured—He suffers Death—News Reaches the Colony—The Virtues of the Young Martyr.

The martyrdom of Jean de la Lande, the saintly companion of Blessed Isaac Jogues, which took place in 1646, on the banks of the Mohawk river, is another of those incidents which left their indelible impression on the early history of the American missions.

In a former chapter mention was made of the third, and what was destined to be the last, journey of Jogues to the land of his sorrows. Previous to his starting out, his first care was to chose a suitable companion, a layman animated with the same sentiments as he was, one in whom self-sacrifice and entire devotedness excelled, and who would be ready to yield up his life if he were asked to do so for the sake of souls. Father Jogues found these admirable qualities in a young man, Jean de la Lande, a native of Dieppe, in Normandy, who had been in the French colony only a short time, and had been remarked for his piety and his zeal in the service of the missionaries at Quebec. When the opportunity for sacrifice in the Mohawk country was proposed to him, he gladly offered himself for the enterprise, relying on a bountiful Providence for his recompense.

In thus choosing a whiteman to accompany him, Father Jogues was observing a custom already adopted by the Canadian missionaries, by way of precaution, owing to the conditions of the country and of the people with whom those devoted men were forced to live. It is not an easy task, in this age of comfort and rapid transportation, to form a true idea of the difficulties and hardships the early Jesuits on this Continent had to contend within their

apostolic wanderings. In the seventeenth century, paddling over long stretches of water was the ordinary means of locomotion; canoes and baggage had to be carried on shoulders over rapids and rocky places; long days of weary trudging on foot were necessary if one wished to make any appreciable progress over the vast solitudes of land and water.

Needless to say, the services of a vigorous and devoted layman were a welcome solace in the fatigues of those dreary journeys. The missionary's scanty meals of ground corn boiled in water were prepared by this lay companion, who gathered the wood and built the camp-fire, thus giving him leisure to recite his breviary and attend to his other devotions. When darkness obliged him to halt at the foot of some whirling rapid or tortuous hill, the layman fixed the tent and cut the cedar branches which formed his bed for the night; and in the early morning while the missionary set up his portable altar in the forest, it was his lay companion who served his Mass.

But it was in the permanent missions already established far from French posts that the services of those laymen were most appreciated. Like their neophytes and converts, the Jesuits had to depend on fishing, hunting and the cultivation of the soil for their daily food; they could not rely on the charity of inconstant Indians; they needed the help of men fully devoted to them to provide for their temporal wants. For this purpose they organized a class of lay helpers, men of unblemished character who were willing to labour for the love of God and look to Him alone, as the missionaries did, for their reward. These assistants were known as *donnés*, or oblates, that is, men who made the oblation of themselves and their services for life to the missionaries. The Jesuit lay-Brothers in New France were not numerous, and besides, as Jerome Lalemant admitted, the oblates were preferred to them, for the reason that they could do all the latter could do, and much that they were debarred from doing; for instance, the carrying of firearms, an important detail in those strenuous years of Iroquois inroads and barbarities. In the missions the oblates taught the native converts how to build cabins and how to till the soil profitably; during times of pestilence they acted as surgeons and nurses to the sick. Jerome Lalemant also tells us that they were skilful in bleeding sick Indians and in preparing medicine for them. Father de Carheil, writing from the Iroquois country a quarter of a century after Lalemant, praised his oblate companion who was able to mix medicine, dress wounds, treat the sick, and render himself useful in various ways. "Would to God," he exclaimed, "that we had a man like him in every mission!"

The oblates made themselves all things to all men, and rendered valuable services to both French and Indians. An interesting story is related of one of them, Robert Le Coq, known as Robert the Good, whose activity among the

Fathers on Georgian Bay missions is described at length in the *Relation* of 1640. While in the wilderness on one of his journeys over the Ottawa route to Quebec, Le Coq met a poor Huron Indian, who, owing to illness, had been abandoned by his companions. Touched with compassion he resolved to save the Huron's life. He built a cabin for him, and having covered him with his own clothing, started out to fish and hunt to provide food for him. For several days he remained with him in the forest and served him with so much charity that the Indian was restored to health again. A year later, while travelling over the same route, Le Coq himself was seized with smallpox, a malady then prevalent in the neighbourhood. In a few days his body was covered with the loathsome disease. His Huron companions, overcome with horror of him and feeling that his end was near, took away his clothes and his canoe, and left him to perish on a bare rock on the shore of Georgian Bay. For twelve or thirteen days the unhappy man struggled with death, in the primeval solitude, but gained his reward eventually when, by a happy coincidence, the Indian whom he had succoured the year before happened to come along. At first, Le Coq was not recognized in his disfigurement, but the Huron had not forgotten the sound of his voice; and moved to compassion in his turn, at the memory of the services that had been rendered by Le Coq to himself, he carried the sick man on his back for four days till he reached a spot where assistance was to be had.

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Kind acts like these performed by the laymen in the service of the missions, created bonds of sympathy between the Indians and the Jesuits, and made the work of the latter all the easier. And yet notwithstanding their evident usefulness, the institution of the oblates did not meet with the approval of the Order. Some of these young men had been allowed to take vows of devotion and to wear a religious habit, an innovation the General objected to; it resembled too closely a Third Order for which no provision had been made in the Constitutions of the founder. Mutius Vitelleschi ordered its dissolution in 1643 and counselled his brethren in Canada not to revive it in future.^[2] However, if superiors believed that the labours of those lay helpers were essential to the welfare of the missions, he instructed them to modify the conditions of their admission and their after-life. This was cheerfully done during the following year, and the oblates continued to work as before, with much fruit and edification. The verdict that one must draw from the reading of the *Relations* is that these laymen rendered priceless services to the Canadian missions and contributed greatly, by their devotedness and self-sacrifice, to the success obtained by the Jesuits in the New World. In 1649, the year of the destruction of the Hurons settlements, there were twenty-seven oblates in the service of the missions on Georgian Bay, we learn from a letter of Paul Ragueneau to Father Vincent Caraffa, General of the Order. "They are all

chosen men,” he wrote, “most of whom have resolved to live and die with us; they assist us in our works and industries with a courage, a fidelity and a holiness that assuredly are not of earth. Consequently they look to God for their reward, deeming themselves only too happy to pour out not only their sweat, but if need be their blood as well, to contribute as much as they can towards the conversion of the barbarians.”^[3] “Without being initiated members,” wrote Bancroft, in his turn, “they were chosen men, ready to shed their blood for their faith.”^[4]

Jean de la Lande, it would seem, belonged to this chosen class of auxiliaries. When the invitation came to him to accompany Father Isaac Jogues on his apostolic mission to the ferocious Iroquois, he did not stand to reckon the cost of the sacrifice he was about to make. “Although he was aware of the danger,” wrote Bressani afterwards, “he faced it courageously, without hope of any reward but Paradise.”^[5]

Preparations having been completed, the two quitted Three Rivers on August 24th, 1646. A few sturdy Hurons who were going to visit their captive relatives accompanied them, and after crossing Lake St. Peter the entire party began to paddle rapidly up the Richelieu river on their way to Lake Champlain. They usually kept near the shore where strong currents were avoided and where easy landings could be effected when fatigue overcame them. Father Jogues’ mutilated hands, relics of his captivity undergone four years before, prevented him from using the paddle, but he was generously aided by Jean de la Lande whose willing arms did double work, thus forestalling any signs of discontent among the Hurons who wanted everyone to do his share while on the way. When night came on and the canoes were pulled ashore, it was De la Lande who built the fire and prepared the evening meal of *sagamité* for the missionary. The two men recited the Rosary together and then lay down on their bed of branches for a few hours’ rest. At dawn, after their morning prayers and breakfast, they started off to cover another section of their journey, portaging their canoes over the rapids in the Richelieu river and finally entering Lake Champlain. During those long painful days De la Lande proved himself a true friend to Father Jogues, looking after the personal needs of one who had only the partial use of his hands, and taking care of the baggage, which must have been considerable, seeing that the two men were resolved to spend the winter in the “land of crosses,” as the Jesuits appropriately called the Mohawk country.

Meanwhile, events were taking place among the Mohawks which were to have dire results for De la Lande and his priestly companion. As we saw in a previous chapter, both were met by a Mohawk war-party at the lower end of Lake of the Blessed Sacrament, now Lake George,^[6] seized, and cruelly

beaten. Father Jogues had already had more than his share of this treatment; he carried on his frail body the marks of former tortures; but the new experiences must have been a thrilling one for Jean de la Lande. However, he did not falter. "This good young man," we read in the *Relation* of 1647, "saw the danger into which he was going when he started on the perilous voyage, but he protested at his departure that the desire to serve God drew him to that country where he felt that death was awaiting him."^[7]

The hour had come when his aspirations were to be fulfilled, when his virtue was to be put to its supreme test. He was to taste at last the bitter cup which God presents to the lips of His martyrs before He gives them their heavenly crown. But the young oblate knew well, too, that "the souls of the just are in the hands of God and the torments of death shall not touch them," until He gives the word. Jean de la Lande resigned himself to the will of his Heavenly Father; while he was beaten, and stripped naked by his captors, he possessed his soul in peace.

A few miles had still to be covered before they sighted the first Mohawk village, and two days later the Iroquois made their triumphal entry into Ossernenon with their prisoners. The village was familiar to Father Jogues who had spent his thirteen months' captivity there, but it was a terrifying sight that now met his gaze. Men, women and children, howling and gesticulating, and wild with joy over his capture, hurled menaces against him of torture and death. Jean de la Lande shared these insults and barbarous treatment with his saintly companion. Wild threats were echoed from mouth to mouth by the savage Mohawks, and to show the two prisoners how deeply in earnest they were, they began to cut bits of flesh from their ears and, as usual, devour them before their eyes.

And yet, amid those horrors the two men had a few friends among the Wolf and Turtle clans, who sympathized with them, and wished to save them. But the members of the Bear clan would not listen. They ignored the pledges taken at the treaty of Three Rivers and clamoured all the louder for vengeance; only the death of the two whitemen would placate them. Higher interests, however, had to be safeguarded; the treaty was an accomplished fact; the present affair affected the welfare of the whole nation; and as private vengeance urged by the hostile Bear clan was not officially recognized, it was decided to convoke an assembly to discuss the situation at Tionnontoguen, another of the Mohawk villages, ten or twelve miles away. There the promoters of peace and leniency had the upper hand; it was decided that Father Jogues and De la Lande should be given their liberty. This decision was a setback to the designs of their enemies who were intent on their destruction, and who would not be easily done out of their prey.

Fearing that the assembly would take the means to protect the prisoners, the blood-thirsty wretches of the Bear clan determined to take the affair into their own hands and commit the crime secretly. Before the delegates had time to return to Ossernenon, Father Jogues had been assassinated. As related in a previous chapter, a blow with a tomahawk aimed by a cowardly savage had split his skull open. His sacrifice was at last accomplished. This crime took place on the evening of October 18th, 1646.

Lack of details prevent us from following the movements of Jean de la Lande during the few hours subsequent to the assassination of Father Jogues, or of sounding the sentiments which must have animated his soul throughout the long night that followed. Alone with his fiendish enemies and completely at their mercy, he evidently expected the same fate as his companion, and he prepared himself for it. God does not abandon his servants in such solemn moments; He undoubtedly inspired the young man to renew the offering he had so often and so generously made since his departure from Three Rivers, and He gave him the courage and fortitude to make the supreme sacrifice. "This frame of mind," we read in the *Relation* of 1647, "enabled him to pass into a life which no longer fears either the rage of barbarians, or the fury of demons, or the pangs of death."⁸ Next morning De la Lande was seized by savages, and put to death with a blow from a tomahawk, as his companion had been the evening before. The heads of the two martyrs were detached from their bodies and placed on pickets in the palisade facing the road by which they had entered the village.

When the news of this double assassination was bruited about, it created a profound impression among the Mohawks. Those who had dealings with the French, either as peacemakers or as prisoners, were loud in their denunciation of the crime, claiming that the blows of the tomahawks that killed Isaac Jogues and Jean de la Lande would bring down misfortunes on the tribe. Kiotsaeton, a powerful Mohawk orator who distinguished himself at the peace conferences at Three Rivers, hastened to condemn the foul deed. He was so outspoken against the treachery of his kinsmen that he was suspected of showing too much partiality to the French. Another who deplored the crime was a prominent Mohawk, known as "The Shepherd." He was moved to sympathy by the fact that he had once been seized by the Algonquins and condemned to die at the stake, but had been freed through the intervention of the French governor. A Mohawk captain who had a Huron prisoner in his keeping was so incensed that he gave him his liberty to go and tell the French how much he deplored the act of his countrymen. However, these regrets came too late to be effective.

The report of Jean de la Lande's death, with that of Father Jogues, reach

the French colony only in 1647. In the same year a Mohawk prisoner taken at Three Rivers volunteered further information that, after the assassination of Father Jogues, whom he tried to save, he became the protector of the young Frenchman who accompanied him. He warned De la Lande not to wander far from his cabin, as his life was not safe. But the young man, having gone to get some object which he had brought with him from Three Rivers, was slain with a tomahawk by those who were watching him.

Thus ended the short but tragic career of Jean de la Lande. It is not surprising that for two and a half centuries he should be looked on as a martyr, or that his name should be linked with those of his fellow-martyr, René Goupil, and the Jesuit missionaries who yielded up their lives for the cause of Christ between 1642 and 1649. When the *Relations* mention the young man's name it is only to extol his piety and his charity in the service of the missionaries. De la Lande was gifted with a profound faith in the truths of our holy religion and with a firm hope in God's promises. These admirable virtues inspired him with strength and courage to meet every trial, and when the moment arrived he faced death willingly, in order to share not merely the sacrifices but also the merits of the missionary life. As a reward for his generosity, God gave Blessed Jean de la Lande the greatest prize that He can bestow on man here below, the palm of martyrdom.

[1] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XIX, p. 196. Robert Le Coq was killed by the Iroquois at Three Rivers in 1650.

[2] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXI, pp. 293 and 318.

[3] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIII, p. 75.

[4] *History of the United States*, Book II, chap. 20.

[5] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIX, p. 237.

[6] A name given to it by Blessed Isaac Jogues, (*Jesuit Relations* Vol. XXIX, p. 49); afterwards changed to Lake George in honour of the King of England.

[7] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXI, p. 123.

[8] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXI, p. 123.



THE MARTYRS' TRIUMPH.

CHAPTER X

THE FINAL TRIUMPH

End of the Heroic Missionary Age—Memory of the Martyrs Preserved—Testimony of Ragueneau, Lalemant and Bressani—Further Light on Indian Superstition and Hatred—First Steps towards the Beatification of the Martyrs—Petitions to the Holy See—The Canonical Enquiries—Rome's Final Decision—End of the Process—The Solemn Ceremony of Beatification.

The deaths of Father Isaac Jogues and Jean de la Lande, in 1646, closed the Iroquois country against Jesuits for twenty years. During the peace that followed the treaty of 1667 many noble victories were gained for the faith in the cantons, for the blood of martyrs there as elsewhere had become the seed of Christians; but the heroic age had ended. In after years, brave missionaries who have left their names in American annals toiled and suffered in the mission-field of New York State, but none of them were called like Jogues to shed their blood. In the Huron country, farther north, the end came with the dispersion of the Hurons in 1650. In a very few years the land occupied by those Indians along Georgian Bay went back to its primitive wildness. The spots rendered venerable by the labours of Jean de Brebeuf and his four companions, Lalemant, Daniel, Garnier and Chabanel, disappeared under a thick forest, which was to remain undisturbed for over a hundred and fifty years; but the memory of the heroic men themselves and of their sacrifices in New France was not allowed to be forgotten.

During the remainder of the seventeenth century and the two hundred years that followed, the conviction was strong in the minds of the French, both at home and abroad, that the Jesuits whose lives have been sketched in the preceding chapters had been slain for the faith. And the testimony given by their contemporaries, who looked upon them as martyrs, always had great weight with authors who wrote about the early missions of Canada, not merely because it came from those who knew the martyrs personally, but also because

the writers of the *Relations*, in which the testimony was to be found, were intelligent men who knew the meaning of words, and took the responsibility for using them.

So convinced were the Catholics of Old and New France that Brebeuf and his companions shed their blood for the Faith, that in 1652, three years after they had made the supreme sacrifice, the Archbishop of Rouen, under whose jurisdiction the French colony was then placed, took precautions to preserve the memory of their trials and sufferings, with a view to their future glorification by the Church. Father Ragueneau, the superior of the Canadian missions, who had been intimately acquainted with the eight martyrs, testified under oath to the truth of the facts which had been published in the various *Relations* concerning these servants of God. "I would gladly give Brebeuf and Lalemant the glorious name of martyr if I were allowed to do so," wrote Ragueneau in 1649,^[1] "not merely because the love and the salvation of their neighbour urged them voluntarily to expose themselves to death, and to a cruel death if ever there was such in the world, but rather because hatred for the Faith and contempt for the name of God were among the most powerful incentives which influenced the minds of the barbarians who practised upon them as much cruelty as the rage of tyrants obliged martyrs to endure. Not one of us could be prevailed upon to pray to God for them, for our minds were at once directed to Heaven where no doubt their souls are."

"It is the opinion of several learned men, and the opinion seems reasonable," wrote, in his turn, Jerome Lalemant, another superior of the missions in New France,^[2] "that he is truly a martyr before God who has given testimony in presence of heaven and earth that he valued the faith and the preaching of the Gospel more highly than he did his own life, protesting that he wished to die in order to make Jesus Christ known. It was with this object in view that Father Jogues yielded up his soul. Not only did he take the means of publishing the Gospel which caused his death, but we affirm that he was killed through hatred of the doctrines of Jesus Christ."

There two passages written shortly after the eight Jesuits were slain show that their contemporaries were convinced that hatred of Christianity and fear of the blackrobed strangers who taught its doctrines, were the two sentiments that prevailed among the Indians from the earliest years of missionary enterprise in New France. Tribal superstition, a legacy which had come down to those Indians from generations of ancestors, had them in a strangle-hold. Huron and Iroquois alike were victims of this paralysing nightmare, which influenced their every thought, word and deed, and any attempt made by the missionaries not merely to abolish its practices but even to weaken its grip, was strenuously resented.

To this blind superstition, already a heavy weight to carry, was added the religious fanaticism which whitemen had brought with them from Europe and which they instilled into the Iroquois, with whom they were continually in contact. Long before 1646, the Dutch Calvinists, living along the Mohawk river, had poisoned the minds of the Indians against the teachings of the French missionaries. The atrocious tortures inflicted on Jogues and Bressani, it is true, aroused their sympathies and urged them to effect the escape of the two Jesuits from the hands of their Mohawk captors. History has given the Dutch full credit for these humane deeds; but it is only fair to add that, if they did not at any time incite the Indians to actual deed of violence against the Catholic missionaries, their teachings prepared the way and provided motives that would justify the violence once it was done.

Bressani, in his *Breve Relatione*, published in Italy in 1653, throws further light on the reasons for the hatred which animated the savages of New France and urged them to shed the blood of those who were trying to make them children of God. Writing about the Iroquois, he tells us that long before those Indians came in contact with the Jesuits, they were filled with prejudices against the Catholic religion and against those who preached it.^[3] Huron converts who had been prisoners in the cantons asserted that they had heard the Dutch repeating many times that the Catholic missionaries were bad men, who had been banished from Europe, where they would have been put to death had they remained, and that they had taken refuge among the Indian tribes of America for the purpose of ruining them. Coming from the lips of whitemen, these assertions had a fatal influence on the minds of the ignorant Iroquois, gave a permanent bias to their character, and betimes urged them to commit crimes against the missionaries.

The Sign of the Cross made over the head of an Indian child earned for René Goupil the crown of martyrdom^[4]. The Dutch Governor, Kieft, in a letter to De Montmagny, the French governor at Quebec, confirmed the report that a box of church goods which was supposed to contain an evil spirit had been the occasion of the death of Isaac Jogues. "Our minister up yonder," he wrote, "has carefully questioned the principal men of this rabble concerning the wretched deed, but he could not obtain any answer from them except that Father Jogues had left a devil among some clothes which he had committed to their custody, who had caused their Indian corn to be devoured."

The hatred of the Cross and of Christian objects and practises,^[5] fomented by Europeans and fostered by the local superstitions of the tribes with whom the missionaries had to deal, was augmented by the tales spread throughout the cantons by Huron prisoners of war, pagans for the most part, who had been affiliated by the Iroquois. Those Hurons told their new masters, pagans like

themselves, what their own experiences had been with the missionaries along Georgian Bay, and they warned the Iroquois to be on their guard and not to be deceived as they had been. Jerome Lalemant, writing in 1646, informs us that the Huron captives were responsible for much of the hatred shown by the Iroquois. "Those captives," he wrote, "having seen us the reproach of their whole country on account of the contagious and other diseases, of which they made us the authors through our prayers which they called charms, have driven notions into the minds of the Iroquois that we carried demons and that our doctrines tended only to their ruin."

Sentiments like these were evidently uppermost in the minds of the Iroquois hordes when they made their onslaught on the Huron country in 1649. Their barbarous treatment of Jean de Brebeuf and Gabriel Lalemant at St. Ignace can be explained only by a hatred of the priestly character. A similar hatred was revealed when they killed Antoine Daniel. When the barbarians attacked Teanaostaye in July, 1648, they rushed upon this holy man "with as much rage as if he alone had been the object of their hatred." They stripped him and heaped upon his body a thousand indignities. There was hardly one who did not boast of having given him the final blow, after he was dead.

Christianity was such an odious thing in the eyes of the pagan Iroquois, that not merely the French but even the Indians who tried to live up to its precepts did not escape their wrath. Let one instance suffice. A fervent Algonquin convert, Onaharé, who had been seized and held prisoner by them, was thanking God one day that he had been found worthy to suffer for His name.^[6] The *Relation* of 1650 informs us that he prayed loudly and exhorted his fellow-captives to be brave and suffer their torments patiently. His captors forbade him to pray to God or to encourage the others to pray. But the Algonquin refused to listen and went on with his prayers, a circumstance which so enraged the barbarians that they threatened to inflict some new form of torture upon him if he did not cease invoking God. Incidents like these reveal the sentiments which inspired the pagan Iroquois, and proved that it was not because the Jesuits were whitemen, or French, that they were feared and despised, but rather because they were priests and missionaries who were preaching the faith of Christ. Onaharé's belief in the true God and his open confession of his faith earned for him and for those who were responsible for his conversion to Christianity the hatred of the Huns of the New World.

But it was chiefly among the pagan Huron clans along Georgian Bay, with whom the French Jesuits had been in contact from the beginning of their ministry in New France, that superstition had full sway and proved to be a serious obstacle to the spread of the Gospel. Although the Hurons were men of great physical endurance, men who were continually risking their lives in

expeditions and fur-hunting, they had a craven fear of death, and whatever seemed, even indirectly, to put them in danger of it, for instance, sickness or pestilence, was resolutely shunned. The Hurons claimed that before the arrival of the missionaries in their country epidemics were rare, or if they did appear they were of short duration and took small toll of life; after the Jesuits came epidemics were more frequent, lasted longer and wiped out whole families. When a convert died after baptism, it was this rite which was responsible; baptism, in the eyes of the pagan Hurons, was a passport to the other world.^[7] It happened sometimes that when both Indians and missionaries fell ill, the latter recovered their health while the former succumbed. The poor pagans then strove among themselves to learn whether or no the missionaries were evil spirits, seeing that they saved themselves and let their neighbours perish. If a death occurred after a visit of a missionary to a cabin or village, the unwelcome event was laid at the feet of the visitor.

Eclipses of the sun and moon were ominous events in the minds of the untutored aborigines.^[8] Since the Jesuits knew these events so well ahead of time that they could tell just when they would take place, why did they not also predict more pleasant things? Why could they not prevent evils? The Sacred Host which was reserved in the little chapels in Huronia was an evil spirit which occasioned misfortunes.^[9] A red cross which Father de Brebeuf had raised in front of his cabin prevented rain from falling and resulted in the failure of the crops of corn; the Hurons were appeased only after the cross had been painted white. A picture of the Last Judgment hanging in a missionary's cabin was an evil charm that brought misfortune to the tribe; the serpents portrayed on the canvas were demons of the pest, while the sinners about to be judged were the future victims. In their frenzied superstition, the pagan Hurons sometimes resorted to violence. In the village of St. Mathias, where the future martyr Charles Garnier exercised his zeal, the Jesuits had built a chapel and had furnished it with the fittings necessary for worship, with a belfry to summon the converts to prayer. The infidels became enraged at the sound of the bell and—the *Relation* informs us—acted as if they were possessed by the devil. During the absence of the missionary they broke everything to pieces, profaned the holy place, plundered and stole the furnishings of the little chapel. They carried around in triumph those spoils of the house of God, meanwhile uttering imprecations against the Jesuit owners, and, loudly proclaiming that they deserved death. It was a Huron apostate who gave Blessed Noël Chabanel his death-blow. The martyr had earned the hatred of his assassin because misfortune had dogged the footsteps of the latter after he had accepted Christianity.

And yet, notwithstanding the difficulties of the apostolate and the

opposition they had to meet, in spite of the superstitions of the Indians of New France, the martyred missionaries persevered in their work of conversion. During their fifteen years of service among the Hurons, from 1635 to 1650, divine grace helped them to score wonderful victories in a land that for centuries had lain in the shadow of death. Through their labours and sacrifices thousands of those Huron Indians were brought to a knowledge of the true God. Through the eloquence of their example, thousands practised the Christian virtues in an eminent degree, many of them rivalling the heroism of their blackrobed teachers in the constancy with which they faced death at the hands of their pagan countrymen.

After the spasmodic attempt made in 1652 to gather testimony for the Beatification of the Martyrs of New France, nothing further was done and the Cause rested in abeyance for two hundred years. Owing to wars and political upheavals, as well as to the troublous times through which the Church in Europe had to pass in the succeeding centuries—to which must be added the fall of France's American colony into British hands, the total suppression of the Society of Jesus, and the absence of persons interested in Brebeuf and his companions—no further effort was made to revive the memory of the men who had shed such luster on the early missions among the Hurons and the Mohawks. The story of their lives, hidden away in the *Jesuit Relations*, was preserved as a precious legacy by succeeding generations; and writers of every shade, even non-Catholics, who, while not always discerning enough to weigh the real motives which inspired the deeds of those French missionaries, were nevertheless generous in their tributes to their heroism.

In the middle of the nineteenth century interest began to grow in the victims of the Iroquois. The discovery of Fort Ste. Marie, on the River Wye, so closely connected with Brebeuf and his fellow-Jesuits, the identification a few years later, of the spot on the Mohawk river—Auriesville, in Montgomery County, N. Y.—where Jogues and his two companions suffered, and of many of the ancient villages in the Huron country, the translation and publication in 1852 of Bressani's Italian work on the early missions of Canada, and the publication in 1858 of the three-volume edition of the *Jesuit Relations*, produced a deep impression on the public and quickened the desire to see something done to rehabilitate the memory of the Martyrs of New France. So interesting were the few pages in the *Relations* referring to Jean de Brebeuf and Isaac Jogues that pressure was brought to bear on the learned Father Felix Martin, the translator of Bressani's *Breve Relatione*, to give more complete biographies of the one who was the "lion of the Huron missions" and of the other whom Urban VIII had called a "martyr of Christ." The formation of a commission for the purpose of taking testimony concerning the Martyrs of

New France was also projected, but apparently the Lives of Brebeuf and Jogues, published by Father Martin, were the only outcome of the interest excited in the martyrs in those years.

In 1884, the first move was made to interest the Holy See in the Cause of their Beatification, when the Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore petitioned the Sovereign Pontiff to proclaim the martyrdom of Father Isaac Jogues and the lay-Brother, René Goupil, who had shed their blood for the faith at Auriesville, in the State of New York. However, other missionaries, Brebeuf and his companions, merited similar honours, and two years later the Seventh Provincial Council of Quebec presented a request to the Holy See, praying for the glorification of the missionaries who were put to death in the Huron country in the seventeenth century and who had always been venerated as true martyrs.

In 1904, the Archbishop of Quebec instituted the preliminary canonical enquiry. In this commission the name of the youthful companion of Isaac Jogues, Jean de la Lande, was added to the list. Over two hundred sessions were held and much pertinent testimony was forwarded to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, concerning the virtue of the men whose lives were submitted for investigation. Five years later, the Archbishops and Bishops assembled in Plenary Council in Quebec, sent a letter to Pope Pius X, humbly asking His Holiness to hasten the work already begun. This very pressing supplication was strengthened by others equally pressing from a vast number of American and Canadian prelates, civic officials, and chiefs of Indian tribes, and evidently hastened the examination of the testimony taken in 1904. In March, 1912, a decree issued by the Sacred Congregation certified that nothing opposed the further progress of the Cause, and in August, 1916, the same high tribunal met to decide whether there was just reason or not to sign the commission for the introduction of the Declaration of Martyrdom of the eight heroic servants of God. Happily, the answer was in the affirmative and a decree was issued to that effect.

In 1920, an Apostolic Commission in session at Quebec spent many weeks taking testimony of experts in Canadian history. This testimony was also sent to Rome, and while it was undergoing a sifting process before the Sacred Congregation of Rites, a stream of prayer arose from thousands of lips in Canada and the United States, asking God to give it easy passage through the ordeal. The prayers of those thousands were heard. In November, 1924, the welcome news came from Rome that the Cause was won. Nothing remained but the final proclaiming of the triumph, which took place on June 21, 1925.

On that memorable day, which marks an epoch in the history of the Church in America, forty thousand pilgrims hailing from various parts of the world,

heard the decree of Beatification read and saw slowly descending behind Bernini's frame of glory, in the apse of St. Peter's basilica, in Rome, the veil which hid the life-size portraits of the eight victims of the ferocious Iroquois. It was a thrilling and consoling moment when the *Te Deum* of thanksgiving, mingling with the applause of the assembled thousands, filled the great temple. More thrilling and more consoling still was the scene which presented itself, a few hours later, when the Sovereign Pontiff himself, surrounded by his Cardinals, came to venerate the relics of the Martyrs. This august sanction, the homage of a prayer from the Vicar of Christ on earth, put the final touch to a great event; it proclaimed the triumph, too long withheld, of Jean de Brebeuf and his seven companions.

The debt the Christian world owed them has at last been paid, after two hundred and sixty-six years. The long and intricate process which had been before the Roman tribunals for forty years, and now happily ended, raised the veil which hid a heroic period in American annals and revealed in all their gruesome details the sacrifices those early missionaries had to make in order to spread the faith among the Indian tribes. Their Beatification was not merely a gracious acknowledgment of the rôle they played in the great cause, but it also showed the world how the Catholic Church, sooner or later, rewards those who distinguish themselves in the service of the Master. When soldiers of an empire perform brave deeds upon the field of battle, they are mentioned in despatches, they are raised in rank in their regiments, medals recalling their daring are pinned on their breasts, their names are honoured in bronze or marble, they are made to feel that they have earned the gratitude of their country. The martyrs are the heroes of the Church, they are the soldiers who prove their loyalty by shedding their blood in the service of the King of Heaven, and the Church does not permit their heroism to go unrewarded. Years may pass before their deeds are brought to her notice. It may take other long years before the whole story is told of their lives and sufferings and of their final sacrifices; but when at last the truth is fully brought to light and they are officially recognized as martyrs for the faith, the honours that a grateful Mother Church showers upon them eclipse all the honours that any State could confer upon its most devoted sons. No triumph ever accorded a Roman emperor can ever rival the splendour of the ovation which the Church gives her martyred children when she places them in the ranks of the Beatified. Nay more, worldly distinctions, no matter how eminent, have very little meaning beyond the boundaries of the State that grants them; those conferred by the Universal Church are heralded to the ends of the earth. Thus it is with our eight Martyrs who suffered tortures and died for the faith, three hundred years ago in the wilderness of New France. Rome has at last spoken, Rome had judged, and has attached to their names a glorious epithet, one that surpasses all earthly

dignities. Henceforth the world is entitled to call them “Blessed;” artists may encircle their brows with the halo which is the Church’s official pledge that those heroes fought the good fight and won. Their memories will live, their renown is now secure.

The triumph of the Jesuit Martyrs of North America is complete. Henceforth we may rejoice with them in their new-found status and—what is practical for us—invoke their intercession in our needs. Let us ask them to impart to us some of their character and strength of will to remain steadfast in the faith. Very probably we shall never be called upon to imitate them in their sacrifices, but it is well to know that there is another form of martyrdom, bloodless and less brilliant in the eyes of men, but a martyrdom nevertheless. Brebeuf and his companions suffered only a little while; the swift blow of a tomahawk or a few hours’ torture and all was over. But the martyrdom of years, the slow martyrdom of trials and tears, which is the lot of millions here on earth, when willingly accepted, has also its price in eternity. When the Recording Angel unfolds the scroll on the Day of Judgment, the cumulative values of life will play an important part in the verdicts rendered.

[1] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIV, p. 139.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, p. 119.

[3] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIX, p. 141.

[4] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXIX, p. 45; Vol. XXXI, pp. 55, 58.

[5] *Ibid.*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIX, 87. “But they particularly hate the sign of the Holy Cross which they have learned from the Dutch to be a veritable superstition; and on this account they killed the good René Goupil, a companion of Father Jogues.” Cf. *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 209.

[6] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXV, p. 223.

[7] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIX, p. 125.

[8] *Jesuit Relations*, Clev. edit., Vol. XXXIX, p. 139.

[9] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 129.

:: ACHEVÉ D'IMPRIMER ::
LE 31 OCTOBRE MCMXXV
PAR LA SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE
D'IMPRIMERIE ET D'ÉDITION
A SENS, POUR GABRIEL
: BEAUCHESNE, ÉDITEUR :
::::: A PARIS :::::

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *The Jesuit Martyrs of Canada* by E.J. (Edward James) Devine.]