



The Wampum Belt : 1677

## THERE KATERI BELONGED: A.D. 1677 by Claude Chauchetière, S. J.

PEOPLE began to recognize that neither person nor place contributed any to the fervor of the Indians, who, once they were alone, away from the French, were not worse Christians and were even better at the Sault than they had been at Laprairie. The relation which has been made and which speaks of it until 1679 shows that things settled down by themselves, because everyone desired to do well.

The regulations of that time concerned prayers on working days and holidays, those of the adults as well as of the children, the hymns, processions, benedictions, frequentation of the sacraments, marriages, the different states: of married people, of widows and of girls, and of all the rest. In this the Mission is as orderly as the finest parish in France. The law against liquor was observed also as you may see in the particular chapter dealing with this question.

This year will be remarkable because of the celebrated present which was sent from Lorette to the Sault. It was a 'preaching belt' which carried the voice of the Loretans to those of the Sault to make them accept the Faith for good, to have them build a chapel as soon as possible, and it also urged them to fight the different evil spirits which were plotting the ruin of both Missions. This belt was immediately attached to one of the beams of the chapel

which crossed above the altar so that the people would always see it and listen to its voice.

The devil, who had not been able to win over the spirit of the Indians by attacking them overtly, resorted to vile intrigues to make them succumb. Monsieur the Count de Frontenac, incited by troublemakers, took the resolution to hinder the erection of the chapel and did not succeed. He resolved to hinder the expansion of the Indians' fields, and, in fact, he did prevent that any land be given them above the Sault. He often resorted to threats of imprisonment and other measures, in a word, he would have been pleased had there been no Mission. The Iroquois also did all they could to starve the village of the Sault, passing there in throngs after hunting and, after having eaten much corn, they carried away a good provision of it, which showed that the earth yielded large crops. The number of transients which rose during the summer to 300 or 400 persons left the village short of corn during the winter and at the time of sowing. The success which they expected was not as good as had been hoped, for we see indeed that the village has considerably grown, poverty and famine being only a test which makes some of our Indians more sparing in their habits and Christianity at the Sault superior to all these different events. The fervor that they showed during this dearth won and attracted here many of their relatives.

*(To be continued)*