

She also used her blanket in church to pray better :
“ After kneeling in some corner near the railing (for fear of distractions from those entering or leaving), she covered her face with her blanket and made an act of Faith in the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament . . . ” On other occasions the blanket also served as a shield for her. “ She could not bear anyone to say the least word in her praise, but immediately fled, or if she was unable to retire, she would hide in her blanket in order to conceal her blushing face. ”

Despite her innate shyness, despite her humility, and despite her poor health, even as a child she always wore a cheerful face !

A year after the Marquis de Tracy's punitive expedition of 1666 to the Iroquois Confederacy, Fathers Frémin, Bruyas, and Pierron were sent to the Indian cantons to confirm the peace granted to them by the French. It was Tekakwitha's first sight of the Blackrobes. Although she was only eleven years old, she was charged with the task of lodging the Missionaries and attending to their needs. “ The modesty and sweetness with which she acquitted herself of this duty touched her new guests . . . ”

Tekakwitha, however, was truly of her people. “ When she had nothing else to do, she amused herself with small jewels. I mean to say, she decorated herself as other little girls of her age, simply to pass the time away. She put glass beads around her neck, glass bracelets on her arms, rings on her fingers, and ornaments in her ears. She made ribbons and bands such as the Indians made from the skin of eels. These they color red and prepare efficiently for hair-ribbons. She wore large and beautiful belts which were called glass necklaces . . . ” Later on she regretted this wearing of glass, or more correctly wampum trinklets, the only “ sin ” with which she was able to reproach herself !

The years slipped by, and in 1675, when she was nineteen, she met Father James de Lamberville, the Jesuit who instructed and later baptized her. “ It was summer. While the other Indians were in the fields, Kateri was alone at her domestic duties, the Missionary was making his customary afternoon rounds of the cabins . . . He entered the cabin. Later he acknowledged that he was first captivated by the girl's countenance, so palpable was the modesty of her face and its shyness. The girl was



Kateri's portrait
by Father Claude Chauchetière, S.J.

(See June, 1956 issue of "Kateri.")