

Ogenheratarihiens

He was violent and tender and led throughout his life by a deep love.

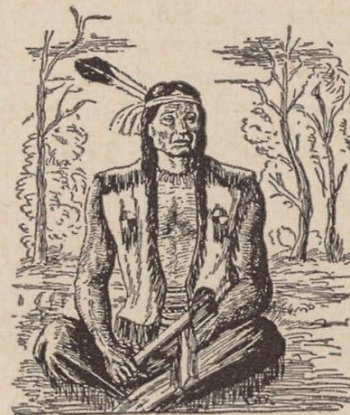
Hot Powder or Hot Ashes, Ogenheratarihiens in Oneida, from the early age of eight loved little Garhio—Beast-of-the-forest. Among the Iroquois, it was the custom of many families to bind themselves together in a close freindship by solemn agreements, which were further strengthened by the premature betrothal of little boys and little girls. Thus was the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, at the age of eight, engaged to a child no older than she, both it must be added, quite sensible and of about the same character. This engagement did not impress the one more than the other. Fundamentally it was a friendly match between the relatives of both concerned. For Hot Powder and Garhio, however, it was much more serious. They never wished to leave each another. Hot Powder with his fiery temperament and Garhio, sweetness itself despite her name, needed each other.

Soon enough Hot Powder became one of the chiefs of his village. The honor of it did not make him lose his head. He lived peacefully with his wife and his marriage was one of the good ones among the pagans of the period.

Father de Charlevoix and others after him claimed that Hot Powder was one of St. Jean de Brébeuf's executioners and they attributed his conversion to the prayers of the holy martyr. In a footnote of his *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France*, this author states: "M. de la Potherie says that he was an Oneida; but he was mistaken". In both cases, was it not Father de Charlevoix who was mistaken? Hot Powder was born about 1647: he was only two or three years old at the time of the heroic death of the great missionary of Huronia. The Saint would undoubtedly have suffered little enough at the hands of such an executioner.

His main shortcoming, his temper, set him at loggerheads with some of his companions. They accused him, obviously out of spite, of witchcraft. Later on, over the moving of the village, he quarreled

with another chief. In a rage, he went hunting, accompanied by his wife, Garhio, and his children. The chase and his wife's good humor would without a doubt have pacified him, had he not learned from a stranger the murder of a brother of his whom he particularly cherished. This grievous news threw him into a towering rage. As the bearer of this information could not tell where or by whom the crime had been perpetrated, Hot Powder was convinced the French were the guilty ones. That was enough: by way of vengeance he would go to Montreal and take a few scalps!



Before coming to his destination, he learned that the Whites were not responsible for his brother's death. On arriving at the large French island, doubtless about 1676, he resolved after thinking it over, to take up his abode at the Mission of St. Francis Xavier, the small village made up of Christian Indians on the south bank of the St. Lawrence facing Mount Royal. This decision sprang from the goodness of his heart: he was convinced if he returned to Oneida, that he would be obliged to revenge his brother's murder and thereby would be forced to draw all the braves of his canton into a vendetta.

He was well received at the Mission. The rhythm of its Christian life did not surprise him overmuch. Like Catherine Gandeaktewa, the foundress of the mission, his wife, Garhio, felt even more pressingly drawn to Christianity than he, and soon she was able to win him over to "praying". Of course, they had seen Father