

During the next six years, Father Frémin labored at Cap de la Madeleine and in the neighborhood. From time to time he used to go to Quebec, for instance when he served as a member of the welcoming committee for six Iroquois who visited Sillery in 1662. He was named superior of the cape in 1665, and he devoted himself to instructing the Montagnais and the Algonkins who wished to be baptized. He even dried a few aristocratic tears: in 1666, Daniel Rémy de Courcelle, on his way home from an unsuccessful campaign against the Mohawks, threw himself into the missionary's arms and cried out, "Father, I am the most unfortunate gentleman in the world, and you are the cause of my misfortune." It was not the first time nor will it be the last that a Jesuit has been used as scapegoat. Marquis de Salières, colonel in the Carignan-Salières regiment flatly blamed the governor for having neglected to furnish his men with the supplies and winter apparel essential in such expeditions.

That same year there was some talk of sending Fathers Frémin and Raffeix to the Cayugas. As New France was then sufficiently strong, Marquis de Tracy planned to invade the Mohawk Canton with eleven or twelve hundred men. The two missionaries patiently awaited the outcome of the campaign.

The following summer, the Mohawks and Oneidas sent a delegation to Quebec, requesting peace. From Trois Rivières, Father Frémin accompanied them to Quebec. To the cadenced flexing of their strong brown arms, the bark canoes devoured the miles that separated these Iroquois from the chief town of the land. Marquis de Tracy solemnly welcomed them, listened to them attentively and acquiesced to their requests: out of the kindness of his heart, he would permit them to keep their land although he could easily put it to wrack and ruin; better still, he would give them the missionaries they requested.

Following this decision, Fathers Jacques Frémin and Jean Pierron were appointed to the Mohawks while Father Jacques Bruyas went to the Oneidas. François Poisson and Charles Boquet, the latter a veteran of Ste. Marie of Ganentaa, were to accompany them. Before their departure, on July 6, 1667, Bishop de Laval blessed the three Jesuits and the Iroquois delegates.

They paddled up the St. Lawrence as far as the Richelieu river; then went up this second river as far as Lake Champlain. The fear of the Loups, bitter enemies of the Iroquois, retained them at Fort Ste. Anne until September 22, then off they went again. Each morning the



Little Tekakwitha took care of the Blackrobes.

three Jesuits along with the Indians took to the paddles like galley slaves — a task to which they were completely unaccustomed. The lake is dangerous. Already, at this period, several Europeans had drowned in its waters.

Having reached its southern tip, the Indians halted at the waterside to gather flints which were almost all cut into shape. At the same time, they rendered homage to a nation of invisible men who were said to dwell at the bottom of the lake and to prepare the flints for the passers-by provided the latter paid them their respects by offering them tobacco. The story was that these mysterious beings travelled in ca-

noes, as do the Iroquois, and when their head captain threw himself into the water to enter his palace, he made such a loud noise that he frightened all those who had no knowledge of this genie and of these "little men."

After ninety more miles of paddling, the Iroquois and the French arrived at the first Mohawk village, Gandaouagué. Its chief, the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha's uncle, welcomed them in the name of all the notables. He then entrusted the missionaries to the care of his little niece with the pock-marked face. All three would see much more of her in later years.