

VENERABLE



THE LILY OF

THE MOHAWKS

*Fairest flower that ever**bloomed among true men*

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THE SPIRIT OF PENANCE

In the prayer for the canonization of Venerable Tekakwitha a phrase occurs which may suggest difficulty to some, viz.: 'the spirit of penance.' Why should one so innocent have a spirit of penance? Yet we are told she was a penitent, regularly making her confession and bewailing her sins as if she had committed them, and as if they were very serious.

Quite frequently we read of Saints who committed little or no evil, but who considered themselves great sinners, and who were notable for their 'spirit of penance,' Saint Aloysius, for instance, who wept over a boyish prank as if it had been an evil enormity. The trouble is that we do not know or love God like the Saints. They have such a conception of His goodness, His justice, that they consider themselves unworthy to serve Him, and presumptuous to offer Him their worship. They love God so purely and so ardently that they look upon the slightest affection they show one of His creatures as rapine in the holocaust of their love. Extravagant, some will think? No, but quite rational and normal for them, as it should be for all human beings if they fully know and love God.

With this full knowledge and love of God Tekakwitha was blessed. To her He was present everywhere, in the chapel, in her cabin, in the fields, on the waters, in the very air she breathed, in her own person, as her fellow tribesmen felt when they wanted to kneel near her at the Communion-rail.

ALASKA WANTS THE STATUE

Is it strange that the first orders for the new statue of Tekakwitha should come from far-off Alaska? No, and the very active missionary there gives the reason (see page 3, col. 2). He wants his people to know that one of their race has been declared Venerable by the Church of God, and that it is possible for them also to be innocent and pure. He has in mind what happened when Tekakwitha died. When her people realized that they could become something like she was, there was a marvellous change in their lives. Men gave up their paramours, women sought to live chaste, young people took pride in avoiding dissolute habits. No, it is not strange. Father Fox knows his people and he knows his history. The Catholic missionary priest today is the same as he was hundreds of years ago, not content with mere acceptance of the faith, but insistent on something more, on holiness of life, on the actual performance of the virtues of a Christian life, and, in many instances, of the heroic virtue for which Tekakwitha has been declared Venerable.