ASAHIANA TO DATE

The boy stood on the backyard fence,
Whence all but him had fled;
The flames that lit his father's barn
Shone just above the shed.
One bunch of crackers in his hand,
Two others in his hat
With piteous accents loud he cried,
"I never thought of that!"
(A bunch of crackers to the tail
Of one small dog he tied,
The dog had sought the well-filled barn,
And 'mid its ruins died.)

The sparks flew wide, and red and hot;
They lit upon that brat;
They fired the crackers in his hand,
And eke those in his hat.
Then came a burst of rattling sound—
The boy! Where had he gone?
Ask of the winds that far around
With fragments strowed the lawn.
Fragments of clothes, and knives, and toys,
And nails, and bullets, and jam—
The relics of that dreadful boy
That burned his father's barn!

Atironta, a Huron Brave.

[K. A. Hennessy, in the Messenger of the Sacred Heart.]

It was a clear, crisp night early in April, and the moon shone in radiant splendour upon the village of Ihonatiria, where a pleasurable excitement prevailed, and many Huron men and women, both young and old, could be seen wending their way to Sawenhohi's cabin, whither they had been bidden to a wedding feast. Atastase, Sawenhohi's only daughter, and in fact his only child, had pledged her faith and love to Atironta, a gallant young man from Ossannne, upon whose stalwart form the eyes of many a Huron maiden had dwelt in unfeigned admiration; and on this lovely night, when even the elements seemed to smile upon his good fortune, he was to be assigned a seat at Atastase's side in her father's wigwam.

Within the spacious cabin there crackled a cheerful fire, and its fitful flickerings revealed the expression of pleasant anticipation that lit up the swarthy faces of the guests as they entered and took their places. Presently their chatter ceased, and all eyes were turned upon Oendraka, who quietly arose, and, taking Atironta's hand, led him forward to the rush mat, on which her daughter sat. Atironto's dark eyes reflected the happiness of his heart as he held in a close embrace the modest gentle Atastase, whom others had wooed in vain. Then, as if suddenly remembering the presence of their friends, he relinquished his tender clasp and took the seat of honour beside his bride. Strange espousals, and yet how deeply significant in their simplicity!

Sawenhohi had been a calm but unmoved witness of the scene, and great tears trickled down his dusky cheeks as he gazed affectionately upon the newly-made man and wife. It was not strange that he had taken no part in the ceremony, because a Huron man claimed no authority at his own fireside. If the forest was his kingdom the cabin was that of his wife, and therein she reigned supreme. If hospitality were to be accorded she took the initiative, and when a son-in-law was to be assigned his place in the family circle, hers was the duty to provide it. Well, indeed, might Sawenhohi and his good squaw be proud of their daughter, for she was one of Ihonatira's happiest beasts, while Atironta was an honest, guileless Huron—a tribute that could be paid to few of his thieving, lying race.

And now the merry-making began. The roomy cabin resounded with the boisterous cheers of the assembled guests, and the fire's ruddy glow displayed fantastic shadows on the birch walls as the Huron men and maidens skipped through the grotesque figures of the festive dance. At length the repast was served, and all did ample justice to the sagamite, smoked fish, roasted cakes, and dried berries, lavishly dispensed by Oendraka's liberal hand. Indeed, a truly mirthful feast it was, and the first streaks of dawn were visible ere the last guest had departed.

Now that Atastase's wedding feast was a thing of the past, the next subject to be discussed in Ihonatirian circles was that of the approaching fishing season, and in more than one wigwam the men had assembled to argue the merits of the various rivers, streams, and lakes, and to agree upon what routes they had best take. The housewives, too, were busy preparing their husband's outfits and helping them darn nets, mend canoes, make new spears, sharpen old arrows, pack provisions, and so forth.

The spring fishing excursion, being an annual occurrence, was looked upon by all as a matter of course, but to some it meant a considerable sacrifice, as, for instance, to Atastase and Atironta, who could ill brook so early and long a separation. However, it required but few words from the loving bride to dissuade her husband from joining the party, and when, on the first of May, a goodly force of Ihonatiria's men started out upon their long expedition and Atastase saw so many women take a reluctant leave of their husbands, she felt unusually happy in the protection of her strong young bridegroom.

According to the established Huron custom, Atironta was to dwell for a time in Sawenhohi's cabin, but many were the fanciful pictures which he and Atastase drew of days to come when they would sit together at their own fireside in the village of Ossasane, where Atironta's friends were many, and where he was looked upon by young and old as a very paragon of wisdom and prudence.

The severity of a Canadian winter was making itself keenly felt and the ground was covered with a mantle of immaculate sparkling snow, but Ihonatiria, though arrayed in so fair a garb, was sad at heart because of the woes of her grief-stricken people. The biting frosts and relentless cold they could readily have borne, their brawny frames and vigorous constitutions being well inured to the harshness of the elements, but a foe irresistible and terrifying had attacked their peaceful village, made many a cabin desolate and laid low numbers of valiant Hurons as effectively as if they had been smitten by the wily Iroquois, whose glory it would have been to wipe them off the face of the earth. Yes, Ihonatirians, less than a year before happy and prosperous, were now suffering miseries untold from the ravages of the plague.

All through the summer and autumn it had wrought merciless havoc, and now, when its fury might be thought to have been spent, it continued to mow down victims regardless of beauty, rank, or age. Sawenhohi and his worthy squaw Oendraka were already numbered with the dead, and Atastase, who, contrary to their expressed wishes and those of her husband, had attended them unto the last, had at length fallen a prey to the malignant disease, and, though Atironta had resorted to all known remedies, they proved powerless to effect her recovery, and she grew steadily worse.

In vain Tehoronhaegnon, the sorcerer and medicine man, had followed the dictates of his dreams and subjected his body to the discomforts of a sweat; in vain Atastase's friends and neighbours had showered her with the presents she desired, and indulged, by night in boisterous, senseless carousals, and, by day, in grotesque and fiendish masquerades, after which they hung their masks above Atironta's cabin door, seeking thus to frighten away the malady. These, and every other supposed remedy that Indian superstition could suggest, had failed to produce the desired effect.

Atironta, always so calm and dauntless even when confronted by fiercest danger, was now well-nigh distracted. What would life be to him without Atastase, the pride of his heart, the sole object of his manly love, for, unlike others of his tribe, he lavished upon one wife the affection which other Hurons were wont to divide amongst as many women as were willing to share it. Was it any wonder then that he constantly watched beside his dying bride, listening anxiously for any word that might fall from her parched lips, and eager to do the slightest bidding?

It was about dusk one afternoon, and Tehoronhaegnon had just departed from Atironta's cabin, his exhibition of juggiery and boisterous incantations having only served to irritate the sick woman, who lay upon her rush mat helpless and exhausted, when suddenly, she feebly put out her feverish hand and sought to draw her husband closer. Then, as he bent his ear to her lips, she said in a hoarse whisper:—"Atironta, last night whilst I slept a little, I dreamed that a Black gown could make me well, and, oh! if I could only live!"

At the mention of the Black-gown Atironta winced. Had these palefaced men no been the objects of his undisguised scorn, and, though he had done them no violence, had he not hated them for coming amongst his people and introducing religious forms and practices which he was sure had brought upon the village the scourge from which it now suffered? Was it not only Atastase's pleading that kept him from vehemently denouncing them in council, when their death was so fiercely voted for? And now, why should she make so strange a request? Perhaps her mind was wandering; he would see. "And would my love anger her good Manitou by allowing a Black-gown to enter our cabin? Would she insult the great Areskoue, who has ever befriended her Atironta on the warpath?" and so saying, the young Huron tenderly stroked the sick woman's feverish brow. "But, Atironta, must I not obey my dream?" she asked, faintly. He answered not, but leaned his chin upon his hand and, from the pained expression that overspread his countenance and the firm setting of his lips, Atastase knew that her cause was lost. "Then, good-bye, Atironta," she softly murmured, and great tears stood upon her long, black lashes, "much hast thou loved thy Atastase, and tenderly has she loved thee, but now thou wouldst sooner see her die than receive new life through the saving water which the Black-gown can pour upon her brow."

It had caused her a supreme effort thus to speak, and she closed her eyes as if to shut out from view her husband's troubled look, but her words were quick to take effect, and, hastily rising, he went over to the cabin door and said a few hurried words to a young Indian who squatted there. In a moment the lad had disappeared, and Atironta heaved a sigh of relief as he returned to his wife's side and told her that he had sent for Echon. A sweet smile broke upon her dusky face, and she warmly pressed her husband's hand, whilst she looked the gratitude that she could not otherwise express. The interval that followed was one of intense anxiety for Atironta, who noted but too plainly Atastase's ever-increasing weakness; but the fleet-footed Ondakont had accomplished his errand, and, at the end of an hour, reappeared with Echon, the Black-gown, whom he had found ministering unto some Christian neophytes who were in the throes of death.

The priest was astounded at being called to Atironta's cabin, and he at once became a prey to the most horrible suspicions. Might he not be about to become the victim of base Indian treachery? Had Atironta not always been one of his arch enemies, and might this sudden summons not be a ruse for the perpetration of some infamous design? However, he must not hesitate; he must brave taunts, insults, sufferings of any kind—yes, even death itself, rather than lose an opportunity of winning a soul to Christ. Such were Father Brebeuf's musings as he trudged steadily on through the untrodden snow, till, at length, overtaking the swift young guide who had sped on ahead of him, he found himself at the entrance to Atironta's lodge. Arming himself with the sign of the cross, he went in.

Upon seeing him, Atironta drew to one side, his arms being folded upon his bosom and his swarthy face wearing an expression of stern repose; but the severity of his aspect haunted not the saintly missionary, who quietly approached the dying woman. She was sleeping, and he was about to lay his hand upon her burning forehead, when Atironta fiercely called out:—"Touch her not. For her sake I agreed to tolerate thy presence here; but dare not to lay thy loathsome hand upon her."

These abusive words caused Atastase to awaken with a start, but when her eyes fell upon the priest her face beamed with joy, and, endeavouring to raise herself upon her elbow, she feebly gasped:—"O good Black-gown, pour the saving waters upon my head! I die, I die!" . . . A strange, unnatural expression settled upon her features, and Father Brebeuf, seeing that the last moment was not far off, raised his crucifix and prayed aloud in the Huron tongue:—"O Jesus, who didst shed the last drop of Thy precious blood to save all mankind, permit Thy child Atastase to live; spare her to Atironta, that she may be his comfort and his joy."

Whilst the missionary prayed, Atastase's agony began, and Atironta, realizing it all, resolved that she should not die without having her desire fulfilled; so, in a tone of utter despair, he besought the priest to do anything in his power to help her. Father Brebeuf felt her pulse and listened for the heart-beats that grew fainter and fainter. To be sure, she had begged for baptism, but, perhaps, like many other Hurons, she looked upon it merely as a health-restorer; and still, could she speak, he might learn that her views were nobler and more spiritual. At any rate, the end was almost at hand, her speech was gone, and in a moment or so it might be too late to act. Gently placing his crucifix upon the sufferer's breast, the missionary drew from his pocket a small bottle, and, pouring its contents upon her brow, pronounced the potent words that made Atastase a Christian and an heir to the kingdom of Heaven.

Atironta stood by, his wistful, anxious gaze riveted upon the well-nigh lifeless form of his wife, and even when the missionary, having concluded the brief ceremony, sank upon his knees to continue his supplications to the Almighty, the disconsolate husband remained perfectly motionless, as if fearing that his slightest movement might disturb the peacefulness of his loved one's last moments. After the lapse of a few anxious minutes, which, to the two watchers, had seemed like so many hours, the sick woman heaved a deep sigh, and opening her beautiful, dark eyes, the light of which Atironta had despaired of ever seeing again, cast a wondering glance around her. In a trice Atironta was beside her, and, without any apparent effort, she raised herself to a sitting posture and held out her arms to him. "I am cured, my husband," she cried, in a voice both strong and joyous; "the God of the Black-gowns has saved me. See," and, with her usual sprightliness, she rose to her feet, "the cruel plague no longer enslaves thy Atastase; she is thine still."

Atironta held his recovered treasure in a tender embrace, and, in the bewilderment of his new happiness, seemed forgetful of Father Brebeuf, who still remained upon his knees, though his prayer was changed from one of supplication to one of thanksgiving. His crucifix he held aloft, and he whispered fervent thanks to the Saviour, who had vouchsafed to thus miraculously restore the health of the young Huron woman, and the latter, upon being released from her husband's loving clasp, pointed to the image of the Crucified and passionately exclaimed:—"Atironta, hereafter the God of the palefaces will be Atastase's God!" "Echon," said Atironta, and, advancing, he laid his hand upon the priest's shoulder, "but for thee, my wife had now ceased to live. Forgive my words of scorn, and know that, henceforth, Atironta would rather cut off his right arm than wilfully do thee aught of harm, or, in time of danger, fail to defend thee."

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It was not alone Ihonatiria that had suffered from the ravages of the plague; Ossasane, Senrio, in fact all the settlements throughout the Huron country, had been visited, and their deserted streets, empty cabins, and generally neglected appearance, told more effectively than any words the story of misery and loss.

Arrived at Tiancharon's wigwam, they found Washaka being cared for by Kishik, a faithful old squaw, who hailed their coming with delight. Tiancharon had gone to Senrio, and, during his absence, Washaka had been taken ill, and now seemed at the very point of death, and Kishik bemoaned having been left alone. "She's been calling for Echon," were the old woman's first words upon beholding Atastase, "and we might risk bringing him here, since Tiancharon is miles away;" and so saying, she cast a pitying look upon the dying girl. "Yes, we should deny her nothing now," said Atastase, who had already taken in the situation, and saw that life was fast ebbing, and, turning to her husband, she continued: —"Thou, Atironta, will call Ondesoone (Father Jouges). Washaka has forgotten that Echon is at Ossasane." Without waiting to be urged, Atironta once more went forth into the sultry stillness of the summer night, and, as he hastened toward the lodge St Joseph, he could not but think of what would be Tiancharon's rage did he know of the present errand.

Ondessone answered Atironta's call, but told him that Echon who, only the day previous, had come over from Ossasane, was then attending an old Indian who had long desired to see him Atironta, delighted with the news, fled, rather than ran, to the old man's cabin, reaching there just as the aged Huron expired. There he lay in such filth and squalor that Atironta, who was familiar with the sight of it, yielded to a feeling of disgust, whilst Father Brebeuf, who had been born and reared in luxury, knelt there with as much composure as if his poor, weary knees rested upon the rich carpet of a royal bed-chamber. The soul of his spiritual charge having taken flight, his work was ended, and he readily acceded to Atironta's request.

Whilst on the way to Tiancharon's cabin, Atironta told the priest of what danger he would be in should the fierce Huron find him ministering to his child, but the warning seemed neither to amaze nor concern the man of God, who murmured: "My place is at her side, come what may." Upon nearing the wigwam, Atironta was surprised to behold Atastase standing outside, the soft moonlight that penetrated the thick foliage of the surrounding trees revealing an anxious expression upon her sweet face. When she spied her husband and his companion approaching she waved them back, and, then, giving a glance at the cabin, as if to make sure that her movements were not watched, she stole softly up to the two men, and implored them to come no further. "Tiancharon has returned," she explained, in breathless excitement, "and he is well-nigh distracted. Echon, retire, I beg thee; thy presence in the cabin may mean death to thee."

"Does Washaka still live?" enquired the priest.

"Aye, but she's failing fast."

"Then I must go to her, though it cost my life," he replied, with a firmness that Atastase and Atironta saw could not be withstood. "I shall proceed at once," he continued, stepping forward in the direction of the wigwam. "At least, wait till I will have smoothed the way for thee," exclaimed Atironta, at the same time placing himself directly in Father Brebeuf's path.

"No," answered the missionary, "even a moment's delay and I might be too late; Washaka's soul must not be neglected." Seeing that the priest was determined to carry his point, Atironta, who feared the consequences, insisted that Atastase should not return to the cabin, and flew on ahead, without even pausing to look behind, and see if the priest followed.

Tiancharon stood beside Washaka's mat, stolid and motionless, even the entrance of his friend not causing him to raise his eyes. Noiselessly Atironta approached him and whispered:—"Echon, is without. Washaka has asked for him; surely he may enter here?" Tiancharon turned a fierce look upon the speaker, his eyes flashed fire, and, clenching his fists, he fairly hissed the words:—"Whose foul work is this? Thine, Atironta? I had thought thee my friend." "And that I am," was Atironta's quick reply, "but I am likewise Echon's friend, and I beseech thee to do him no harm." "Harm, sayest thou? Ah! let him dare to enter here, and I'll bathe his pale face in his own blood. He shall see that there is one red man who fears not to open the veins of the prince of sorcerers." As Tiancharon uttered these threatening words, a gleam of bitter satisfaction shot from his malicious eyes, and instinctively he clutched the small tomahawk suspended from his belt. In talking, he had moved away from the door of his wigwam, and now stood with his back to his daughter's pallet; and, during the vehement outburst, Father Brebeuf had stolen within the cabin and proceeded to anoint the dying girl. She had lost consciousness, and, as the missionary administered the last religious rites, he was so rapt in fervent prayer as to seem entirely oblivious of impending danger. Then Tiancharon, who had not been aware of his presence, suddenly turned around, and, upon seeing the priest, reached him with a [illegible] bound. "Begone, wretch," he cried, shaking his fist at the unoffending man, "begone, I say, and woe to the traitor who brought thee here."

The missionary never flinched, but, looking straight into the eyes of the irate Huron, he calmly said:—"Yes, I shall go hence; my work is done, but, let us be quiet; we must respect the dead." "What!" shrieked Tiancharon, "my Washaka dead? Then thou hast killed her. Ah, yes! thy work is indeed done so take thy pay;" and, as he hissed the words, he laid hold of his tomahawk, but, just as he flourished it above the head of the priest, Atironta seized his arm and wrenched the weapon from him. "Be still, Tiancharon," he cried, "Echon has done thee no harm." Atironta's sudden movement had been too swift for Tiancharon to defend himself against it, but, clenching his fist, he shook it threateningly at the young Huron, exclaiming:—"Ah, traitor! thou, too, shalt feel my wrath." Then, springing toward Father Brebeuf, he grasped him by the throat, and would surely have strangled him but for the timely intervention of Atironta, who cried:—"Wreak thy vengeance on me, but harm not this innocent man;" and, raising the tomahawk, he brandished it in the air. But Tiancharon persisted in his dastardly work, and Father Brebeuf's face became livid, his veins swelling and his eyes bulging out as if they would burst from their sockets.

"Hold off!" shouted Atironta, raising the weapon; but, his words falling to take effect, he dealt Tiancharon a blow that split his skull. Instantly the cruel hands relaxed their killing grasp, and the would-be murderer fell lifeless to the ground. Father Brebeuf weak and speechless, fell upon his knees and bent low over the prostrate form but life was extinct, and true to his word, Atironta had not failed to defend Echon in time of danger.

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Eleven years had passed since Atironta had so nobly defended Father Brebeuf, but time seemed to have dealt kindly with the valiant young Huron and his good squaw, who looked but little older than when, on the beautiful night in Ihonatiria, they had pledged unto each other their fresh, young love. Life, since then, had not been all sunshine, and as we know, they have borne their share of suffering and cruel anxiety, but their strong, unwavering, mutual affection sustained them and lightened their every burden. Their esteem and respect for Echon had increased daily, and never had they lost sight of him save during the time that he had spent with Father Chaumonot in the Neutral Nation; but, even then, they had not forgotten him.

After the cruel plague had spent itself and the health of the people was restored, Atironta and Atastase took up their abode at Teanaustaye, where Fathers Brebeuf, Jogues, Ragueneau, and Le Moyne then resided, and later, when the missionaries abandoned the residence and that of Ossasane in order to establish the permanent mission of St. Mary's on the right bank of the River Wye, the young Huron and his wife accompanied them. But Father Brebeuf did not long remain in these new quarters, as his superior, seeing that the Neutral Nation was a broader field for the exercise of his apostolic zeal, concluded to send him thither with Father Chaumonot. Echon's departure was a cause of profound grief to Atironta, who, for a year, had been a devout catechumen, and who was loath indeed to part with his spiritual instructor. But the latter was much consoled upon learning that his pupil was perfectly willing to continue his religious course under any one of the Fathers remaining at St. Mary's, because this went far to prove the genuineness of Atironta's faith, and the strength of his purpose, as well as to show that his conversion was in no wise due to the strong personal attraction he felt toward Father Brebeuf.

Atastase was a fervent Catholic, and her example was edifying in the extreme, not only to the Huron converts and catechumens, but likewise to many of the Frenchmen who frequented the fort at St. Mary's, and who had been born and brought up in the Catholic faith. Moreover, she ruled her little domicile most admirably, and her influence upon the three children with whom she had been blessed, was one of such firm gentleness that Atironta's home associations were those of peace and happiness.

The eldest child, a boy of ten, was his father's constant companion, and, whilst Atastase was occupied with household duties, it was Atironta's delight to take the lad with him either to till the fields, fish in the neighbouring streams, or, true to Indian impulse, to teach him the skilful use of the bow and arrow. Then, in cold weather, when the fields were hidden beneath a coverlit of snow, and the streams solidly frozen over, Atironta would some times take the boy out into the forest, and endeavour to initiate him into the mysteries of hunting, although, owing to his tender years, he would not allow him to join the great hunt, which was often of three months' duration.

The quiet, prosperous life at St. Mary's was a delightful contrast to that of harrowing anxiety at Ihonatiria, but now, Atironta deemed another change advisable. Father Brebeuf had returned from his sojourn amongst the Neuters, and, with Father Gabriel Lalemant, had been assigned the care of the missions of St. Ignatius and St. Louis, and Atironta, whose three years' probation were at an end, decided to establish himself at the latter place, where he was to receive baptism at the hands of his dear old friend.

Accordingly, when the village of St. Louis was still in its infancy, Atironta moved there, and dwelt in a spacious new cabin, erected by his own hands. Fathers Brebeuf and Lalemant divided their time pretty evenly between St. Ignatius and St. Louis, the two settlements being only about a mile apart, and Atironta was one of the first catechumens to receive baptism in the new chapel at St. Louis, after which he and his faithful wife assisted at a nuptial mass to draw upon their union the blessing of the Church. They became Father Brebeuf's pioneer helpers in the new field of labour, and much of the success of his work was due to their good example and earnest cooperation, and even, indeed, did he thank God for the salutary influence of the lives of this truly Christian couple upon the rest of the community.

But this auspicious state of affairs was not destined to last, and the time was fast approaching when some of the Fathers were to reap the eternal reward for which they had so zealously labored.

The Iroquois, those human terrors, of whom the Hurons stood constantly in awe, had recommenced their incursions, and, every few days, some alarming report reached the good people of St. Ignatius and St. Louis. At length, on July 4, 1648, the mission of St. Joseph was attacked, and Father Daniel, who remained at his post, became a prey to the barbarity of the Iroquois invaders, and was the first to win the crown of martyrdom in the Huron country.

During the following months comparative quiet ensued, though the Hurons were ever alert, knowing but too well the crafty, subtle methods of the enemy, the victims of whose wily hostility they expected at any moment to become. However, when, on March 16, three poor refugees, who had narrowly escaped death that morning when St. Ignatius had been ruthlessly attacked, fled to St. Louis, and warned its people of the awful fate that attended them, the greatest consternation prevailed. The Huron men insisted that their wives and children should seek safety in flight, whilst they determined to remain on the scene, and defend their homes. They likewise urged the missionaries to flee, but this the latter positively refused to do, declaring that their duty was to stand by those in danger, and dispense to them the consolations of religion. Accordingly, Fathers Brebeuf and Gabriel Lalemant set to work, the former to hear confessions, and the latter to baptize catechumens.

One young women refused to leave the village with the others. It was Atastase, who, with her three months' old babe strapped to her back, followed her husband hither and thither, aiding him in every possible way to prepare to meet the foe. In the course of a few hours the infuriated, bloodthirsty Iroquois reached St. Louis, and twice its valiant little band of inhabitants repulsed their attacks, but the enemy had the advantage, and, after a brave and courageous resistance, the Hurons found themselves surrounded by their cruel adversaries, and those who were not mercilessly slain were taken captive, and led to St. Ignatius. Amongst the latter were the two priests, who ceased not to exhort their fellow prisoners to be true to their faith. Atironta was also of the number, and his stout Huron heart well nigh broke as, when being dragged away, he looked back upon the mangled, lifeless forms of his wife and children, and beheld his beloved village enveloped in flames. "Courage, my son," whispered Father Brebeuf, near whom it was his consolation to find himself in the mournful procession to St. Ignatius, "each step brings us nearer Heaven"; and, despite Atironta's sad silence, the good priest could see that his words had not been uttered in vain.

But, when the dreary march was ended, what a lugubrious spectacle awaited the poor captives. Amongst the smouldering ruins of St. Ignatius scaffolds had been erected, and upon these the unfortunate Hurons were destined to be tormented to death. Father Brebeuf mounted that assigned him with the dignified composure of a monarch ascending his throne, and Atironta watched his every move, and strained his ears to catch each word that fell from the saintly, eloquent lips. Whilst the barbarians were fastening their victims to the stake, his benevolent glance travelled swiftly from one to another of his fellow captives, and it became ineffably tender when it rested upon the gallant young Huron, who had once saved his life, and who now stood heavily shackled awaiting his own doom.

Then the Iroquois began their fiendish work, and the heroic priest was subjected to the most excruciating tortures that their barbarism could suggest. Burning coals were applied to his sensitive flesh, a collar of red-hot hatchets was suspended from his neck, and insults the most revolting were heaped upon him; but he never flinched, and his words of comfort and encouragement consoled the hearts of the Christian Hurons, whilst his intrepid calmness spurred them on to suffer with patience. At length, his enemies observing the stimulating effect which his extortations took upon his converts, determined to prevent his further reassuring them, and, therefore, mercilessly cut off his nose and lips, and cruelly tore out his tongue. Deprived of the power of speech, he nevertheless remained calm and patient, and when the new and exquisite tortures which his tormentors devised, failed to crush his dauntless spirit, they decided to despatch him without further delay. Accordingly a ultra-cruel Iroquis opend the victim's side, and tearing thence the heroic heart—every pulsation of which had been, from early youth, one of purest love for God—hastened to divide it amongst a few companions, who eagerly devoured it, whilst others licked up the martyr's warm life's blood, thinking thus to imbibe somewhat of his heroic spirit.

At this frightful juncture, cries of bitterest anguish arose from the Huron converts, who, despite their innate power of endurance, fairly sickened upon beholding the awful fate of their loved Echon; but, above the din of their wailing voices, there was heard one agonizing shriek. It had escaped from Atironta, and a wily Iroquois who stood near by, raised his glittering tomahawk and muttered a fearful threat as he sprang toward the gallant captive. "Strike if thou will," cried Atironta, "thou hast kept me from defending Echon, but thou canst not withhold me from the Christian's God!" The words were scarcely uttered, when, with one well-aimed blow, the speaker was felled to the ground, and a noble soul was released from its earthly captivity.

Yes, together the master and his devoted follower had gone to receive their reward from the hand of the supreme Master, whose loyal disciples they had been.

Early next day, Father Gabriel Lalemant resigned his pure soul into the hands of its Creator, thus making the third priestly victim to whom the Iroquois had given a martyr's crown.

A very small list of books will serve to nourish a man's mind if he handle them well.—Thomas Carlyle.