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John de la Lande

VICTIM OF THE IROQUOIS

October 19, 1646



Published by THE CANADIAN MESSENGER, Montreal, Can.

Distributing Agencies:

THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF MARTYRS, Auriesville, N. Y., U. S. A.
THE CANADIAN MESSENGER OFFICE, 1075 Rachel Street East, Montreal
CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY OF CANADA, 67 Bond Street, Toronto, Ontario
CATHOLIC LITERATURE LEAGUE, 316 LaGauchetiere Street West, Montreal
CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY OF MANITOBA, Columbus Hall, Winnipeg, Man.
And other Canadian and Foreign Catholic Truth Societies.

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Cum permissu Superiorum.

Nihil obstat:

Die 28a februarii, 1917

CAROLUS LECOQ, Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur:

Die 18a martii, 1917

† PAULUS, Arch. Marianopolitanus.

JOHN DE LA LANDE

VICTIM OF THE IROQUOIS

THE martyrdom of John de la Lande, the saintly companion of Father Jogues, which took place in 1646, on the banks of the Mohawk river, is one of those incidents which left their impress on the early history of the American missions; it recalls the age when the ferocious Iroquois, the sworn enemy of the French missionaries, were spreading terror throughout New France. Those savages occupied the picturesque and fruitful valleys and uplands which extend from the headquarters of the Hudson river to the Genesee, in the present State of New York, and roamed far and wide on their warlike expeditions. An unfortunate encounter with Champlain,¹ in 1609, on the shores of the lake which bears his name, first taught the Iroquois the efficacy of firearms, weapons which they easily procured from the Dutch who were soon to settle on the banks of the Hudson; in a very few years they had discarded their bows and arrows for powder and shot. This first act of hostility, in which several Iroquois were slain, became a source of alienation from the French during the rest of the seventeenth century. The Dutch fostered the bitter-

¹ *Œuvres de Champlain*, (Québec, 1870), Bk. II, ch. ix, pp. 193-196.

ness between the French and Iroquois by instilling into the minds of the latter their own religious prejudices which they had brought with them across the Atlantic; and, as the sequel proved, their insidious manœuvring had serious consequences for the

French and Iroquois

French missionaries who went to labor among those savages in later years. As yet the Iroquois had not come in contact with the Jesuits, but what they learned from the followers of Calvin excited their ill-will against a religious system which aimed at exterminating their sorcery and pagan customs. The poor aborigenes readily accepted as true the testimony of their white allies; it justified them in their belief that the famine and pestilence and other misfortunes which visited them from time to time were the work of the missionaries. Inspired by the evil counsels of the Dutch as well as by their own superstitions, the Iroquois grew to hate the doctrines of the Catholic Church and to despise and fear those who taught them. Father Jerome Lalemant wrote in the *Relation* of 1649, "The Iroquois have an intense hatred of our holy religion." The circumstances attending the martyrdom of Brébeuf, Jogues, Goupil, and others, amply prove that, while some of the savages dreaded even the objects devoted to

Intrigues of the Dutch

Catholic worship as sources of evil, others, more daring, scorned the sacraments and practices of our holy religion, and they were fully disposed to do away with those who labored to propagate it. All this ignorance and prejudice recoiled in time on the

heroic French missionaries who paid the price in tortures and death.¹

But the French and their missionaries were not the only objects of Iroquois resentment; those savages extended their hatred to the native tribes who had been converted and were friendly to the French, and their geographical position made their warlike incursions against the French allies a comparatively easy task. The valley of the St. Lawrence and its tributaries were well within their reach through Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario, over whose waters they could move in large war parties, to carry devastation into the French settlements of Quebec, Montreal and Three Rivers, and from the western fringe of their territory they could advance quickly over Lake Erie into the present Province of Ontario and attack the allied Indian tribes in their own domain. Profiting by these advantages and by their desire for vengeance, they destroyed the flourishing missions among the Hurons on Georgian Bay, killing or capturing several thousand of these unfortunate savages with their missionaries; they ravaged the Montagnais settlements on the Lower St. Lawrence, the Neutrals along Lake Erie, the Algonquins on the Ottawa, and the Attikamegs, a peaceful nation living on the Upper St. Maurice. A punitive expedition directed by the French, in 1665, reduced the Iroquois for a time to inactivity, but during the rest of the century they remained what history tells they had always been, a cruel, sullen

1 Cf. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 of this series.

and treacherous race, in whom all humane feelings were dormant. Prisoners taken by them were subjected to fiendish tortures; their scalps and fingernails were torn off; their flesh was cut away piecemeal and eaten before their eyes; and when the victims survived these ordeals they were usually burned at the stake or condemned to imprisonment and slavery worse than death.

And yet, in those strenuous years of the seventeenth century, there were Jesuits brave enough to go among the Iroquois, along the Mohawk river and the lakes of central New York, to live with them and preach the Gospel to them. The first of these heroes of the Cross was Father Isaac Jogues, whom a tragic accident threw into the hands of those ferocious savages for the first time in 1642. While on his way to the Huron mission on Georgian Bay, whither he was returning with supplies for his famine-stricken brethren, he fell into an ambushade of Iroquois, a few miles west of Three Rivers, together with two Frenchmen, René Goupil and Guillaume Couture, and a score of Hurons. All were cruelly beaten and tortured and then carried off as prisoners to the Mohawk valley. Father Jogues' companion, Goupil, was slain six weeks later, September 29, 1642,¹ while only after thirteen months of degrading slavery did the Jesuit succeed in making his escape. The holy missionary has left us a vivid narration of the trials he had to undergo during this captivity. Two years

¹ Cf. No. 7 of this series.

later, in 1644, another Jesuit, Father Joseph Bressani, was seized. Three pathetic letters written by this servant of God have been preserved and give details of the tortures inflicted on him which, after nearly three centuries, still cause a thrill of horror in the reader. The Iroquois, he pathetically relates, began by obliging him to throw away all his writings, their superstition fearing that some malicious charm was attached to them, and "they were surprised," he

**Tortures of
missionaries**

remarks, "to witness how sensitive this loss was to me, seeing that I had given no sign of regret for the rest." After incredible hardship and fatigue the unhappy captive reached the Mohawk country where he was received by the tribe in a cruel fashion. He was stripped of his clothes and obliged to run the gauntlet between two rows of howling savages who showered blows on him with sticks and iron rods. With a sharp knife they split his fingers open and nearly severed his hand in two. Covered with blood he was forced to mount a platform in the middle of the village, where he became the object of their jeers and insults. This, however, was only the beginning of his sufferings. He was taken from village to village and in each tortured by fire, his captors' favorite method being to light their calumets and then push the victim's fingers into the bowls. Eighteen times they applied fire to his lacerated hands until at last they were a mass of festering wounds. These tortures were usually inflicted at night, during which he was securely tied to stakes and forced to lie uncovered on the bare ground. The poor sufferer

tells us that, when finally he was condemned to be burned at the stake, he wished to die, but he begged the ruthless Iroquois to despatch him in any way but by fire. "Taken prisoner while on his way to the Hurons," writes the historian Bancroft, "beaten, mangled, mutilated; driven barefoot over rough paths, through briars and thickets; scourged by a whole village; burned, tortured, wounded and scarred, he was eye-witness to the fate of his companions who were boiled and eaten; yet some mysterious awe protected his life."¹ Father Bressani himself acknowledged that he received this protection from God and His Blessed Mother. He was given into slavery and remained in that condition until, like his predecessor Father Jogues, he was humanely ransomed by the Dutch at Fort Orange. These two examples will suffice to show us what kind of savages the Jesuits had to deal with in their work of spreading the Gospel. In blood and tears the devoted men tried to impress the Divine Master's message on

**Work among
the Iroquois**

souls steeped for centuries in superstition and the most degrading sorcery. Jogues and Bressani carried the marks of their heroism in their mutilated members till death. One of them, as we shall see in a moment, not satisfied with what he had already suffered among the Mohawks, returned with his companion, John de la Lande, when both of them offered up the sacrifice of their lives.

Between the years 1642 and 1644 the Iroquois

¹ *History of the United States*. Bk. II, p. 793.

grew so daring, and their incursions so numerous, that the French colony became alarmed. Peaceful farmers were seized while working in their fields; Savages were often seen hiding under the very shadow of the settlers' dwellings; war-parties were constantly prowling along the Ottawa river and on the Lower St. Lawrence, waiting like tigers for their prey. They had blocked the route to the Huron country, and menaced not merely the fur-trade but the very existence of the Jesuit missions on Georgian Bay. Matters had reached such a pass in 1644 that the French governor Montmagny felt that something had to be done. Hoping to put an end to the Iroquois depredations and to the reign of terror which was paralysing the colony, he suggested a treaty of peace with the Confederacy. The suggestion was received favorably; delegates were appointed on

The Jesuit both sides, and conferences were held
Ambassador at Three Rivers in the summer of 1644,
at which Jogues assisted.¹ Certain stipulations were agreed to by both French and Iroquois, and everything foreshadowed a brighter and more peaceful era. However, the treacherous savages had so often given evidence of bad faith that some unusual measure was thought necessary by the French to prevail on them to keep their pledges. Two years later an embassy to the Mohawks was proposed and Father Jogues was chosen as ambassador. His long captivity among them, in 1642, and his ready knowledge of their tongue, would

¹ This missionary was sent to France by the Dutch after his release from captivity. He returned to Canada in 1644.

make him a valuable agent to urge the savages to ratify the articles of peace. We learn from his correspondence that the holy missionary started on this second journey to the Mohwaks with some trepidation. He carried out the mandate entrusted to him, and while he was not entirely successful, as the sequel showed, his visit to the cantons made a very deep impression on his mind. The abominable superstitions he had witnessed during his thirteen months' captivity were as rife as ever, and he was disconsolate at the thought that those abandoned savages, who bore the image of God on their souls, should be allowed to live and die in their wretchedness without some effort being made to help them. The Redeemer, he pleaded, had shed His precious Blood for the poor, untutored Iroquois, as He had for the rest of men, and he resolved to repay them for their former cruelties to him by returning as soon as possible to preach God's law to them and help them to save their souls. So fully determined was he to resume his apostolic labors among his former persecutors that, in order to save himself the worry of double transportation, he left in the care of a Mohawk family a box containing church vestments and a few personal effects.

When the heroic man laid the project before his superiors at Quebec he received their entire appro-
De la Lande bation; in fact, the Jesuits had hoped
chosen that this would be one of the results
of Father Jogues' embassy. And yet
while his energy and zeal were equal to the task
ahead of him, the holy man did not minimize the

danger. He even had presentiments that the great sacrifice of his life would be demanded of him, as we learn from a letter he wrote to a friend in France, but he joyfully began his preparations for the journey. His first care was to choose a companion, a layman who should be animated with the same sentiments as he himself was, one in whom self-sacrifice and entire devotedness excelled, and who would be ready to yield up his life if he were asked to do so for the sake of souls. Father Jogues found these admirable qualities in a young man, John de la Lande, a native of Dieppe, in Normandy, who had been in the French colony only a short time, and had been remarked for his piety and his zeal in the service of the missionaries at Quebec. When the opportunity of sacrifice in the Mohawk country was proposed to him, he gladly offered himself for the enterprise, looking only to God for his reward.

In thus choosing a layman to accompany him, Father Jogues was observing a custom already adopted by the missionaries. This was a necessary precaution, owing to the conditions of the people and the country

The difficulties in which they were forced to live.
of travel It is not an easy task, in this age

of comfort and easy transportation, to form a true idea of the difficulties and hardships the early Jesuits on this continent had to contend with in their apostolic wanderings. In the seventeenth century canoes and baggage had to be carried on shoulders over rapids and rocky places; long days of weary trudging on foot, or handling the paddle, had to be undergone if one wished to make

any progress over the vast solitudes of land and water. Needless to say, the services of a devoted layman were a welcome solace in the fatigues of those dreary journeys. The missionary's scanty meals of ground corn boiled in water were prepared by his companion, who gathered the wood and built the camp fire, thus giving him leisure to recite his breviary and go through his other devotions. When darkness obliged him to halt at the foot of some rapid or hill, the lay companion cut the cedar branches which formed his bed for the night; and in the early morning when the missionary set up his portable altar in the forest and celebrated Mass, it was his lay companion who assisted him. But it was in the permanent missions already established far from French posts, that the services of those devoted laymen were appreciated. Like their neophytes and converts, the Jesuits had to depend on fishing, hunting and the cultivation of the soil for their daily food; they could not rely on the charity of inconstant savages; they needed the help of men fully devoted to them to provide for their temporal wants. For this purpose they organized a class of lay helpers, men of unblemished character who were willing to labor for the love of God and look to Him alone, as the missionaries did, for their reward. These helpers were known as *donnés*, or oblates, that is, men who made the oblation of themselves and their services to the missionaries. There were few lay-brothers of the Order in New France, and besides, as Jerome Lalemant admits, the oblates were preferred to lay-brothers for the reason that they could

do all the latter could do and much that they were debarred from doing; for instance, the carrying of firearms, an important detail in those strenuous

Usefulness of years of Iroquois inroads and barbarities. In the missions they taught
the oblates

the native converts how to build cabins and how to till the soil profitably; during times of pestilence they acted as surgeons and nurses to the sick. Jerome Lalemant tells us that they were skilful in bleeding sick savages and in preparing medicines for them. Father de Carheil, writing from the Iroquois country a quarter of a century after Lalemant, praises his oblate companion who was able to mix medicine, dress wounds, treat the sick, and render himself useful in various ways. "Would to God," he exclaimed, "that we had a man like him in every mission!"

The oblates made themselves all things to all men and rendered valuable services to both French and savages. An interesting story is related of one of them, Robert Le Coq, known as Robert the Good, whose activity among the Fathers on Georgian Bay missions is described at length in the *Relation* of 1640. While in the wilderness, on one of his trips over the Ottawa route to Quebec, Le Coq met a poor Huron savage who, owing to illness, had been abandoned by his companions. He was touched with compassion and resolved to save the Huron's life. He built a cabin for him, covered him with his own clothing, and then started out to fish and hunt to provide food for him. He stayed with him in the forest and served him day and night with so much

charity that he restored the savage to health again. A year later, while travelling over the same route, Le Coq himself was seized with small-pox, then prevalent in the neighborhood. In a few days his body was covered with the loathsome disease. His Huron companions, overcome with horror of him and feeling that his end was near, took away his clothes and his canoe, and left him to perish on a bare rock on the shore of Georgian Bay. For twelve or thirteen days the unhappy man struggled with death when, by a happy coincidence, the savage whom he had succored the year before happened to come along. At first, Le Coq was not recognized in his disfigurement, but the Huron had not forgotten the sound of his voice; and moved to compassion, in his turn, at the thought of the services that had been rendered himself, he carried the sick man on his back for four days till he reached a spot where he could call for assistance.¹

Kind acts like these performed by the laymen in the service of the missions, created bonds of sympathy between the savages and the Jesuits, and made the work of the latter all the easier. And yet, notwithstanding their evident usefulness, the innovation did not meet with the entire approval of the General of the Jesuits. Some of the oblates had been allowed to take vows of devotion and to wear a religious habit, and besides this class resembled too closely a Third Order for which no provision had been made

¹ *Jesuit Relations*. Clev. edit. xix, p. 108. Robert Le Coq was slain by the Iroquois at Three Rivers, in 1650.

in the Constitutions of the founder. Mutius Vitelleschi ordered its dissolution in 1643 and counselled his brethren in Canada not to revive it in future. If the labors of those lay-helpers were essential to the welfare of the missions, he instructed the superiors to modify the conditions of their existence. This was cheerfully done the following year, and the oblates continued to work as before with much fruit and edification. The verdict that one must draw from the reading of the *Relations* is that these laymen rendered priceless services to the Canadian missions and contributed greatly, by their devotedness and self-sacrifice, to the success obtained by the

Praised by Jesuits in the New World. In 1649,
Ragueneau the year of the destruction of the
Hurons, there were twenty-seven

oblates in the service of the missions on Georgian Bay, we learn from a letter of Paul Ragueneau to Father Vincent Caraffa, General of the Order; "all chosen men," he writes, "most of whom have resolved to live and die with us; they assist us in our labor and industries with a courage, a fidelity and a holiness that assuredly are not of earth. Consequently they look to God for their reward, deeming themselves only too happy to pour out not only their sweat but, if need be, their blood also, to contribute as much as they can towards the conversion of the barbarians."¹ "Without being initiated members," writes Bancroft, in his turn, "they were chosen men, ready to shed their blood for their faith."²

¹ *Jesuit Relations*. Clev. edit., vol. xxxiii p. 75.

² *History of the United States*. Bk. II, ch. 20.

John de la Lande, it would seem, belonged to this chosen class of auxiliaries. When he was invited to accompany Father Isaac Jogues on his apostolic mission to the ferocious Iroquois, he did not stand to reckon the cost of the sacrifice he was about to make. "Although he was aware of the danger," wrote Bressani afterwards, "he faced it courageously, without hope of any reward but Paradise."¹

Preparations having been completed, Father Jogues quitted Three Rivers on August 24, 1646. A few sturdy Hurons who were going to visit their captive relatives accompanied the missionary and de la Lande, and after crossing Lake St. Peter they began to paddle up the Richelieu river on their way to Lake Champlain. They usually kept near the shore to avoid the strong current, and they landed to rest when fatigue overcame them. Father Jogues' mutilated hands, relics of his captivity four years before, prevented him from using the paddle, but he was generously aided by John de la Lande whose willing arms did double work, thus forestalling any signs of discontent among the Hurons who wanted everyone to do his share while on the way. When night came on and the canoes were pulled ashore, it was de la Lande who built the fire and prepared the evening

De la Lande meal of *sagamité* for the mission-
aids Jogues ary. The two men recited the rosary together and then lay down on their bed of branches to get a few hours' rest. At dawn, after their morning prayers and breakfast,

3 *Jesuit Relations*. Clev. edit., vol. xxxix, p. 237.

they started off to cover another section of their journey, portaging their canoes over the rapids in the Richelieu river and finally entering Lake Champlain. During those long painful days de la Lande proved himself a true friend to Father Jogues, looking after the personal needs of one who had only the partial use of his members and taking care of the baggage which must have been considerable, seeing that the two men were resolved to spend the winter in the "land of crosses," as the Jesuit appropriately called the Mohawk country.

Meanwhile events were taking place among the Mohawks which were to have dire results for both Jogues and de la Lande. After the departure of the priest in the previous June, a pestilence had broken out in that nation and had made many victims. In addition to this, a worm had attacked the roots of the Indian corn and threatened to ruin the crop. Famine and death stared the superstitious

**Symptoms of
trouble**

savages in the face and, according to their custom, they sought a reason for the disasters which threatened them. They laid the blame on the box of church goods which the missionary had left behind him at Ossernenon. This box had, in fact, become an object of suspicion from the moment it had been confided to their care; they feared that its presence in their midst would bring them some misfortune. Now their fears were more than realized; they were persuaded that Jogues had concealed therein an evil spirit which was carrying out its master's mandate to destroy their nation. It did not take the savages

long to come to a decision. Without daring to open the box, they threw it into the river, and during the whole month previous to the missionary's arrival, the Bear clan spread bitter reports against him. These calumnies greatly excited the Mohawks, and as it had been well known that he intended to return, they did not promise to add much to the warmth of his welcome. The more reasonable, however, among the families of the Wolf and Turtle clans, those especially who had known Father Jogues during his captivity, counselled moderation; they wished to give him an opportunity to explain the contents of the box. He had already done this for them when he left it in their care, but the subsequent pestilence and the visitation of the worm evidently called for further explanation. The more petulant members of the Bear clan refused to listen to this wise advice, and craftily used the incident as a pretext for continuing war against the French whom they accused of having sent Father Jogues among them. They did not wait for his arrival before they took action; two parties raised the war-cry among their kinsmen and immediately set out in the direction of New France.

Quite unconscious of this change in public sentiment, Jogues, de la Lande and the Hurons were slowly paddling southward. They had crossed Lake Champlain, and had reached the lower end of the Lake of the Blessed Sacrament,¹ where they were met by one of the war parties. The hostile attitude

¹ A name given to it by Father Jogues; now called Lake George.

the savages at once assumed caused such alarm that the timid Hurons, realizing what it meant for them if they were taken prisoners, fled in terror, leaving the missionary and his companion at the mercy of the Mohawks. With fiendish delight these wild savages threw themselves on the two men, robbed them of their baggage, stripped them naked, and began to belabor them with blows. Father Jogues

**Seized by the
savages**

had already had his share of this cruel treatment; he carried on his frail body the marks of former tortures; but the new experience must have been a thrilling one for John de la Lande. However, he did not falter. "This good young man," we read in the *Relation* of 1647, "saw the danger into which he was going when he started on the perilous voyage, but he protested at his departure that the desire to serve God drew him to that country where he felt that death was awaiting him." ¹ The hour had come at last when his aspirations were to be fulfilled, when his virtue was to be put to its first heroic rest. He was to taste at last the bitter cup which God presents to the lips of His martyrs before He gives them their heavenly crown. But the young oblate knew well, too, that "the souls of the Just are in the hands of God and the torments of death shall not touch them" until He gives the word. John de la Lande resigned himself to the will of his Heavenly Father; while he was beaten, stripped naked and led in that condition by his captors to Andagaron, he possessed

¹ *Jesuit Relations*. Clev. edit., vol. xxxi, p. 123.

his soul in peace. A few miles had still to be covered before they sighted the Mohawk village; two days later the Iroquois made their triumphal entry into

**Inhumanly
tortured**

Andagaron with their prisoners. The village was familiar to Father Jogues who had spent his thirteen months' captivity there, but it was a terrifying sight that now met his gaze. Men, women and children, howling and gesticulating, and wild with joy over his capture, hurled menaces against him of torture and death. John de la Lande shared these insults and barbarous treatment with his saintly companion. "You shall both die to-morrow," the chiefs exclaimed; "your heads will fall under our tomahawks and will be placed on our palisades to show your brethren what fate awaits them." These wild threats were echoed from mouth to mouth by the savages, and to show the two prisoners how deeply in earnest they were, they began to cut bits of flesh from their arms and devour them before their eyes.

And yet, amid those horrors the two men had a few friends among the Wolf and Turtle clans of the Mohawk nation who sympathized with them and wished to save them. But the members of the Bear clan would not listen; they ignored the pledges taken at the treaty of Three Rivers and clamored all the louder for vengeance; only the death of the two whitemen would placate them. Still higher interests had to be safe guarded; the treaty was an accomplished fact; the present affair affected the welfare of the whole nation; and as private vengeance urged by the hostile Bear clan was not officially recognized, it

was decided to convoke an assembly to discuss the situation at Tionontoguen, the largest of the Mohawk villages, ten or twelve miles away. There the promoters of peace and leniency had the upperhand; it was decided that Father Jogues and de la Lande

Their fate is discussed should be set at liberty. This decision was a setback to the designs

of their enemies who were intent on their destruction and who would not be easily done out of their prey. Fearing that the assembly would take the means to protect the prisoners, the blood-thirsty wretches of the Bear clan determined to take the affair into their own hands and commit the crime secretly. Before the delegates had time to return to Andagaron, a couple of savages invited Father Jogues to sup with them in their cabin. The holy man saw in this only a mark of friendship, and he readily accepted the invitation. He had hardly crossed the threshold when a blow from a tomahawk, which one of the cowardly savages had hidden under his blanket, felled him to the ground. His skull was split open; his sacrifice was at last accomplished. This crime took place on the evening of October 18, 1646.

Lack of details prevent us from following the movements of John de la Lande during the few hours subsequent to the assassination of Father Jogues, or of sounding the sentiments which must have animated his soul throughout the long night that followed. Alone with his fiendish enemies and completely at their mercy, he evidently expected the same fate as his holy companion, and he prepared himself

for it. God does not abandon his servants in such solemn moments; He undoubtedly inspired de la Lande to renew the offering he had so often and so generously made since his departure from Three Rivers, and He gave him the courage and fortitude to make the supreme sacrifice. "This frame of mind," we read in the *Relation* of 1647, "enabled him to

**De la Lande
suffers death**

pass into a life which no longer fears either the rage of barbarians, or the fury of demons, or the pangs of death."¹ Next morning the heroic young oblate was seized by the savages and put to death with a blow from a tomahawk, as his companion had been the evening before. The heads of the two martyrs were detached from their bodies and placed on pickets in the palisades facing the road by which they had entered the village.

When the news of this double assassination was bruited about, it created a profound impression among the Mohawks. Those who had had dealings with the French, either as peacemakers or as prisoners, were loud in their denunciation of the crime, claiming that the tomahawk strokes that killed Jogués and de la Lande would bring down misfortunes on the tribe. Kiotsaeton, a powerful Mohawk orator who distinguished himself at the peace conferences at Three Rivers, hastened to condemn the foul deed. He was so outspoken against the treachery of his kinsmen that he was suspected of showing too much partiality to the French. Another who deplored

¹ *Jesuit Relations*. Clev. edit., vol. xxxi, p. 123.

the crime was a prominent Mohawk, known as "The Shepherd". He was moved to sympathy by the fact that he had once been seized by the Algonquins and condemned to die at the stake, but had been freed through the intervention of the French governor. A Mohawk captain who had a Huron prisoner in his keeping was so incensed that he gave him his liberty to go and tell the French how much he deplored the act of his countrymen. However, these regrets came too late to be effective. The report of the **News reaches the colony** tragedy did not reach the French colony until the following year, when a couple of letters written by the Dutch at Fort Orange gave the meager details which were inserted in the *Relation* of 1647. In the same year a Mohawk prisoner taken at Three Rivers volunteered further information that, after the assassination of Father Jogues, whom he tried to save, he became the protector of the young Frenchman who accompanied him. He warned de la Lande not to go far from him, as his life was not safe. But the young man, having gone to get some object which he had brought with him, was slain with a tomahawk by those who were watching him.

Thus ended the short but tragic career of John de la Lande. It is not surprising that for two and a half centuries he should be looked on as a martyr, or that his name should be linked with those of his fellow-oblate René Goupil and the Jesuit missionaries who yielded up the lives for the cause of Christ between 1642 and 1649. When the *Relations* mention the young man's name it is only to extol his piety and

his charity in the service of the missionaries. De la Lande was gifted with a profound faith in the truths of our holy religion and with a firm hope in God's promises. These admirable virtues inspired him with strength and courage to meet every trial, and when the moment arrived he faced death willingly, in order to share not merely the sacrifices but also the merits of the missionary life. As a reward for his generosity, God gave him the greatest prize that He can bestow on man here below, the palm of martyrdom.

The death of John de la Lande added another name to the list of the victims of the Iroquois, namely, John de Brébeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Anthony Daniel, Charles Garnier, Noël Chabanel, Isaac Jogues and René Goupil. So deep was the conviction both in France and Canada that de la Lande and his seven companions had shed their blood for the faith that precautions were taken almost immediately by the Archbishop of Rouen, under whose jurisdiction the French colony had been placed, to preserve the memory of their trials and sufferings. Father Paul

**His memory
preserved**

Ragueneau, the superior of the Canadian missions, who had known the eight martyrs personally, testified under oath, in 1652, to the truth of the facts which had been published in the various *Relations* concerning these servants of God. Owing to the troublous times through which the Church was passing in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as the political changes which took place in

America, nothing further was done to revive the blessed memory of the men who shed such luster on the early missions among the Hurons and the Mohawks. The story of their lives, however, was preserved as a precious legacy by succeeding generations, and writers of every shade, even non-Catholics, while not always discerning enough to sound the motives that inspired the deeds of those holy men, were generous in their tributes to their heroism.

In the middle of the century, interest began to grow again in the victims of the Iroquois. The translation and publication of Father Bressani's Italian work on the early missions of New France in 1853, and the new edition of the Jesuit *Relations* published in 1858, quickened the public desire to see something done to rehabilitate the memory of the martyrs. In 1884 the first move was made to interest the Holy See in the Cause of their Beatification, when the Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore petitioned the Sovereign Pontiff to proclaim the martyrdom of Father Isaac Jogues and René Goupil who had shed their blood for the faith on what is now the soil of the United States. Other martyrs, however, merited the same honors, and two years later, the Seventh Provincial Council of Quebec issued a postulatum to the Holy See praying for the glorification of the missionaries who were put to death in Canada in the seventeenth century and who had always been venerated as true martyrs. In 1904 the Archbishop of Quebec instituted the preliminary canonical enquiry. Over two hundred sessions were

held and much pertinent testimony was gathered and forwarded to the Sacred Congregation of Rites relative to the virtues of the men whose lives were submitted to investigation. In 1909 the archbishops and bishops, assembled in Plenary Council at Quebec, sent a letter to Pius X, asking His Holiness to hasten the work already begun. This very pressing supplication was strengthened by others from a vast number of prelates and civic officials, and evidently hastened the examination of the testimony taken in 1904. In March, 1912, a Decree issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites certified that nothing opposed the further progress of the Cause. In August, 1916, the same high tribunal met to decide whether there was just reason to sign the Commission for the Introduction of the Beatification or the Declaration of Martyrdom of the servants of God who were put to death by the Iroquois in New France in the seventeenth century. The answer was in the affirmative and a Decree was ordered to be published to that effect. This document marks an important step in the intricate work undertaken in Rome. The Holy See doing its share for the honor of our martyrs; it remains for the Catholics of America to cultivate a devotion to those eight servants of God, and to hasten by their prayers the day when they shall receive the full honors of the altar.

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