

1640. to its operation. Their prayers and other exercises of piety were made in common and at fixed hours, and there were few who did not approach the sacraments at least once a week.¹

Life of the
mission-
aries.

The frequent cures effected by the remedies which the missionaries liberally distributed gained them still more credit; the medicine-men lost much of theirs; and this led to the abolition of many bad customs, superstitious practices, and indecent ceremonies. One religious always remained in the house to keep school, to lead the public prayers at the fixed hours in the chapel, and to receive the visits of the Indians, who are extremely importunate. Towards the close of the day all assembled to hold a kind of conference, where each proposed his doubts, communicated his views, explained difficulties arising as to the language. They animated and consoled each other, measures were concerted to advance the work of God, and the day closed with the same exercises which began it.²

Their man-
ner of in-
struction.

Besides the instructions regularly given to the neophytes and proselytes in the chapel, there were occasionally public ones for all. Before commencing them, one of the missionaries went around, bell in hand, like St. Francis Xavier, not only through the whole village, but also through the neighborhood, and endeavored to induce all he met to follow him. These instructions were often made in the form of conferences, where each one was at liberty to speak. Among the Indians this never leads to any confusion. They rarely left these assemblies without making some conquest. In fine, besides these public conferences, there were private ones, to which only the chiefs and other persons of rank were invited. Here certain articles of religion were carefully discussed which it was not deemed wise to explain so soon to the multitude; but

¹ Letter of Father Francis du Péron, April 27, 1639; Carayon, Documents Inédits, xxii., p. 177.

² Relation de la Nouvelle France, 1639, p. 52; Creuxius, Historia Canadensis, p.