

them recite the catechism, and then gave them a little explanation of it, usually adding some pious story that one of the Savages repeated. In the evening, they made their examination of conscience; they confessed and received communion every two weeks, and would have done so oftener if [150] we had permitted them. They showed their devotion by often visiting the most holy Sacrament, by saying their rosary several times a day, by singing spiritual canticles, which have succeeded their barbarous songs,—in short, by fasting throughout the sacred forty days, for those who could do so. A poor lame man and two blind women recently baptized, when we told them about Lent,—not to induce them to fast during the whole period, but only a few days,—responded that they wished to do all that the Christians did; in fact, they fasted as we did.

“A good old woman, hearing that persons of her age were exempt from this law, said that she had enough strength to keep it; and her fear that we might not have her fast like the others made her begin Lent two days before Ash Wednesday. In vain the Nuns told her that it was not yet time to fast; if the Father had not assured her of it, she would not have eaten except at noon, although she had not yet regained her strength [151] from a sickness that had greatly weakened her.

“I will say here, by the way, that one of these two blind women, whom I have just mentioned, had a little daughter only two years old. This child led her mother, and warned her in her childish jargon of the rough places where she might stumble.”

What I am about to tell is taken from the letters that the Mother Superior has written me.