

1504.

year in snow, with nothing but fish, the value of which was not recognized then, where the people were unfriendly, not easy to reduce, and had no riches except the skins in which they were attired.

First voy-
ages of the
French to
America.

Be that as it may, from the year 1504, Basque, Norman, and Breton fishermen took cod on the great bank of Newfoundland and along the seacoast of Canada;¹ and I find in trustworthy memoirs that in 1506 John Denys, an inhabitant of Honfleur, traced a map of the gulf which now bears the name of St. Lawrence.² Vincent le Blanc relates, in his *Voyages*, that about the same time Velasco, a Spanish captain, went two hundred leagues up the river which empties into the gulf, and to which the same name has been given; that he then ran up along the coast of Labrador to the river Nevado, discovered, it is said, by Cortereal, but which is now unknown.

The statements of this author are, however, so confused and embarrassed, so destitute of dates, and of all that throws light on a relation, that we are often unable to find any thing on which to base even a probable conjecture. It is too mixed up with matters evidently fabulous, such as his account of the gigantic stature of the natives, that we are surprised to see similar tales in a work enjoying, nevertheless, some reputation. It is not enough for a traveller to be sincere; if he undertakes to supply from other memoirs what he has not seen himself, he cannot be too guarded in selecting.

In 1508 a Dieppe pilot named Thomas Aubert brought some Canadian Indians to France;³ but there is appa-

¹ Wytfliet, *Histoire des Indes*, p. 181; Lescarbot, Paris, 1618, p. 228; Biard, *Relation de la Nouvelle France, de ses terres, Naturel du Pays, etc.*, Lyon, 1616, ch. i.; Champlain, *Voyages* (ed. 1632), p. 9. Navarrete (vol. iii. 176-180), denies the French claim. (See ante, 25-27.)

² Discorso di un Gran Capitano, in Ramusio, iii. 359. This document, written apparently in 1539, gives also the name of Denys' pilot, Gamart of Rouen.

³ Biard, *Relation de la Nouvelle France*, Lyon, 1616, chap. i.; Davity, *Description du Monde*, 1660, vol. v. p. 26; *Histoire de Dieppe*, cited by Ferland, p. 12. According to the historians of Dieppe, Verazzano commanded one of Aubert's vessels.