

they are, on the whole, smaller than most of the other Indians of Canada, but there are none braver in all the continent. They have long made a fierce war on the Esquimaux; and in order to attack them in their caverns and on their rocks, they do not hesitate to paddle their bark canoes thirty or forty miles by sea. In the sequel of this history we shall see them, with their neighbors, under the name of Abenaki nations, join the French in Newfoundland and New England, and acquire an ascendancy over the English of America which they still preserve, although reduced to a small number of warriors.

1611.

The Indians  
of Acadia.

They have not only never been cannibals,<sup>1</sup> but have been always remarked for their mildness and docility. Hence they had little difficulty in accustoming themselves to our manners, a point they have in common with the other tribes of this southern coast of Canada. Polygamy was permitted among the Acadians; but the privilege was rarely exercised by any but the *sagamos*, as they termed their chiefs.<sup>2</sup> The dignity of sagamo was elective, and the choice generally fell on one at the head of a more numerous family. All the youth were under the orders of this chief; and all, before being married, could work only for him. The married, even, having many children, paid him a kind of tribute which was rigorously exacted. Each town had its sagamo, independent of the others; but all kept up a kind of correspondence with each other, which closely united the whole nation in one.<sup>3</sup> They spent a good part of the fair season in visiting and holding councils, where general affairs were discussed. If any difference arose between families, or even individuals, it was the duty of the chief of the town to effect a reconciliation.

<sup>1</sup> Biard in Carayon, Documents Inédits (xii., p. 84), implies that they had been.

<sup>2</sup> Biard, p. 13. Biard found that Cacagous, the Christian sagamo of Port St. Jean, had eight wives; and

another Christian considered monogamy good only for the French. He makes polygamy general. Lettre au P. Balthazar, in Carayon, Documents Inédits, xii., p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 11.