

1646.

Their character.

His journey was long and painful.¹ The Abénaquis, as well as their neighbors, are indolent. We have never succeeded in inducing them to cultivate the ground, and they have even less forecast for the future than other Indians. The consequence is, that few more frequently suffer from hunger and a want of the merest necessities of life. But their affection for their missionaries, their good disposition, their sincere attachment to the French, the essential services which they have rendered to New France (which would perhaps not now exist had it not had these Indians to oppose to the Iroquois and English), and still more, their unshaken constancy in the Faith, have greatly lightened for the evangelical laborers the rigors of this painful mission.

Father Drenillettes welcomed by the Capuchins.

On the banks of the Kennebec, Father Drenillettes found some Capuchin Fathers, who had a hospice there. These religious had a house also at Pentagoët, and acted as chaplains, not only to the French settled on all that coast and that of Acadia, but also to those whom trade allured thither. They received the Jesuit missionary with great joy and all possible cordiality. They had long desired to see missions established among the Indians of those quarters, whom they deemed very fit for the Kingdom of God; and they had even themselves entertained the idea of visiting Quebec, to induce the Fathers of the Society not to leave any longer untilled a soil so well prepared to receive the seeds of the Faith.²

Father Drenillettes spent the whole winter and spring in visiting the different towns of that country, baptized many children and some dying adults, finding in all a great desire for religious instruction. Even medicine-men

¹ He apparently went up the Chaudière, and then made a portage to the Kennebec.

² As to the Capuchin missions, see Historical Magazine, vols. viii. and ix. Though the Superior (Father

Ignatius, of Paris) welcomed him at first, they were forced, apparently, by the Fishing Companies, to write to Quebec and ask that he should not return: Journal of the Superior.