

I. THE ABENAKI MISSION.

This mission was chiefly in Maine and Acadia, and on Cape Breton Island. The Abenakis (or Abnakis) were a strong but mild-mannered Algonkin tribe, settled in villages or cantonments; but, like others of their race, in the habit of taking long semi-annual journeys,—each winter to hunt, and each summer to fish. We have seen that the French Jesuits, Biard and Massé, were in the field as early as 1611, soon after the establishment of Port Royal; their predecessor being the secular French priest, Fléché, who had been introduced to the country by Poutrincourt, the patentee. Biard and Massé met with many discouragements, chiefly the opposition of Poutrincourt's son, Biencourt (sometimes called Baron St. Just), who had been left in charge of the colony. Nevertheless the missionaries learned the native language, and made many long journeys of exploration, one of Biard's trips extending as far as the mouth of the Kennebec. They were later joined by a lay brother, Du Thet, and by Fathers Quentin and Lalemant. Joining the new French colony on Mt. Desert Island, in the spring of 1613, the establishment was almost immediately destroyed by the Virginian Argall. In the skirmish, Du Thet was killed.

In 1619, a party of Récollets, from Aquitaine, began a mission on St. John River, in Acadia, but five years later, as we have seen above, abandoned the task, the survivors joining the Quebec mission of their order. Other Récollets were in Acadia, however, between 1630 and 1633, and later we have evidence of a small band of Capuchins ministering to French settlers on the Penobscot and Kennebec;