

300-350 souls, nearly all resident at the Indian village of St. Francis, near Pierreville, Que. These people who are the only clan retaining the ancient intertribal appellation as a distinctly local term, are, together with their Penobscot kindred of Maine, the sole representatives of the once powerful nation which until the middle of the seventeenth century ranged the forests of New Brunswick and New Hampshire with but little hindrance from the whites. The Abenakis of Canada are the direct descendants, with some admixture of French and other blood, of the majority of the savages who escaped from the great battle of the Kennebec in Maine, where, on Dec. 3rd, 1679, the English general Bradford finally overthrew their tribe ¹). In consequence of this severe defeat more than seven hundred savages were killed or mortally wounded and the greater part of the survivors betook themselves to Canada where they began to arrive in Jan. 1680. A certain number of them almost immediately settled in the present village of St. Francis which they named *Arsikantekw*, lit. 'river where no human beings are' ²) probably owing to the fact that just before their arrival the Iroquois had massacred the former French inhabitants of the place. The modern Penobscots, who now live in a similar village at Oldtown, Me. on the Penobscot river, are in all probability the descendants of those of the early Abenakis who submitted themselves to the victorious English in 1679.

Fortunately for philologists the Abenakis accepted the Roman Catholic religion very early in their history, as

¹) TRUMBULL, *Indian Wars* pp. 96-7.

²) *Arsikantekw* is composed of the elements *arsi* 'empty'; *kan*, an infix which signifies 'cabin', and the suffix *-tekw* which always means 'river'; of *teyo* 'wave'. The modern form of the word is *Arsigontekw* which the Indians wrongly connect with *als* 'shell' and translate 'river where shells abound. *Als* appears, however, as *ess* in the older language. See on this subject. GILL, *Notes sur les Vieux Manuscrits Abenakis* pp. 13 ff. Montreal, 1886.