

voyages of the French to the New World, there is nevertheless ample traditional evidence that they made several distant expeditions before the discoveries of the Portuguese and Spaniards. The Basques and the Bretons had for several centuries the monopoly of the whale and cod fisheries, and it is remarkable that Sebastian Cabot, on discovering the coast of Labrador, should have found there the name *Bacallaos*, which in the Basque language signifies cod-fish.

Abbe Faillon¹ writes that long before Jacques Cartier's time, the sailors of Normandy, Brittany and the Basque provinces, had given names to several ports on the Atlantic seaboard and the shores of the Gulf, and Father Charles Lalemant, writing home from Quebec in 1626, drew attention to the fact that the Indians of the country called the sun "Jesus", a name which, he believed, they had learned from the Basques who formerly dwelt there.²

Lescarbot, indeed, went so far as to say that, so long and so intimate had been the intercourse between the Basques and the aborigines of Newfoundland and the Gulf shores, that the language of the latter had come in time to be half Basque. If such a development of any native American tongue had really taken place, it would give to the theory of Basque-American affinity a ratification that would be welcome to its advocates. As yet, however, the statement of the versatile Lescarbot has not received that verification which would alone give it any value.

We have, it is true, ample evidence, after the beginning of the sixteenth century, of the enterprise and energy with which the Basques pursued their calling as fishermen in Canadian waters.³

It appears, however, that the intercourse of the Basques with the Indian population was confined, for the most part, to such communications as were called for in the pursuit of their chosen industry. They seldom made any long stay on land, and still more rarely did any of them decide to settle in the New World.⁴ The early colonists of New France were mainly from Normandy, Perche, Anjou, Poitou, Brittany and Saintonge. The mass of them were from north of the Loire. If the Basque provinces furnished any at all, they were extremely few. The Basque sailors and fishermen crossed the Atlantic, not as colonists, but as traders. Their ambition was to make a little fortune and return home to their own land. When they did emigrate, it was not to Canada but to Mexico and to South America that they directed their course. If, therefore, it were proved beyond any suspicion of doubt that the Basques had obtained a knowledge of the northern portion of America even before the time of Columbus, our interest in them would not so much lie in that fact, which has had but a trifling influence on our national evolution, as in

¹ *Histoire de la Colonie Française en Canada*, i. 1.

² *Relations des Jésuites*, 1626, p. 4.

³ That what the Basque fishermen and others who visited this continent in comparatively recent times found so easy a task, was equally practicable in ages more remote, has been clearly brought out by Sir Daniel Wilson in his paper on "The Lost Atlantis," in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* for 1886. On the same subject may be consulted Wilson's *Prehistoric Man*, ii. chaps. 19, 22 & 24; Humboldt's *Kosmos*, ii. 601-612; Bancroft's *Native Races of the Pacific States*, v. 102-129; *The North Americans of Antiquity*, by John T. Short, chap. iii; *Histoires des Grands Voyages*, by Jules Verne, i. 1-150, chaps. i-vi; *Les Normands sur la Route des Indes*, by Gabriel Grayier; Rafin's *Antiquitates Americane*, and essays by Messieurs E. Beauvois, Paul Giffarel, Luciano Cordeiro, etc., on the Voyages of the Phenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Welsh, Irish, Northmen, Portuguese, etc., in the *Comptes-Rendus of the Congrès des Américanistes*, etc.

⁴ Frontenac had Basque blood in his veins.