

1613. by these Indians, whom we now know under the name of *Malecites*, and who are reduced to insignificance.¹

Description
of Penta-
goët.

The mouth of the Pentagoët River (44° 20' N.) is quite wide, forms a delta, and can admit vessels of three hundred tons. The environs are very agreeable, and the soil highly productive.² Besides the trees which we have in France, as the oak, beech, ash, maple—here of very fine quality—you may see pines sixty feet high, the grain of which is not very coarse, any more than that of four kinds of fir, of which I speak elsewhere. On which the Sieur Denys remarks, that the further south you go, the better adapted the trees are for masts, and that those of New England equal any produced by Norway. He prefers the latter, nevertheless, and in general the timber of cold countries to that of the more temperate, like this part of Acadia, which extends from la Haive to the St. Lawrence River.³

Observa-
tion on
masts.

He then seeks the physical cause of this difference ; and after laying down as a principle, that the closer the grain of the tree the better it is fitted for masts, he pretends that in warm countries, where the firs grow on elevated spots and dry soil, the heat of the sun dries up the superfluous humor of these trees, and prevents the grain from becoming coarse by holding it closer and giving it a more internal union. In the north, he adds, the cold produces about the same effect : it closes up the wood, so that the sap does not give it enough nourishment to make the grain increase ; but in temperate countries, nothing prevents the swelling of the grain, so that the wood is weaker and breaks more easily.⁴

¹ Champlain says the Kennebec Indians were Etechemins (ed. 1632, p. 66). Their language differed from the Micmac. Biard, p. 37. The name Abenaki seems to have applied to all between the Sokokis and the St. John. The language of these tribes, the Abenakis or Kennebec Indians, the Indians on the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, being almost the same. The dictionary of Father Rale preserves the fullest vocabulary for its study.

² Biard in Carayon, xii., p. 72.

³ Denys.

⁴ Ib.