

IV.—THE PORTLAND POINT SITE.

So far as he knows, the present writer is the first who has been forced to the conclusion that Fort La Tour was on the east side of the harbour, probably at Portland Point.¹ This view is based upon the following facts:—

(1.) Denys' description of the harbour shows that Fort La Tour could not have been at Carleton. Denys' authority on matters of fact of this kind has never been questioned. All writers praise his honesty and accuracy.² He was an eye-witness of nearly all he describes. He knew intimately both La Tour and Charnisay, had visited St. John harbour, and after La Tour's ruin had employed some of La Tour's men, as he himself tells us. He must have known then where Fort La Tour was. His entire reference to the subject is as follows: "The entrance of the river Saint John is dangerous of access, the shore ranging close up from both directions; the best entrance is on the starboard or right hand side, not approaching too near the shore. This entrance is narrow, because of a little island which is to larboard or on the left side, which being passed the river is much larger. On the same side as the island there are large marshes or flats which are covered at high tide; the beach is of muddy sand, which makes a point, which passed, there is a cove [or creek] which makes into the said marshes, of which the entrance is narrow, and there the late *Sieur* Monsieur de la Tour had caused to be made a weir [or dam, *ecluse*] in which were caught a great number of those Gaspereaux which were salted for winter; he several times caught there so great a quantity that it was necessary to break the weir and push them back into the sea, as otherwise they would have given the weir a stretch which would have been ruined by it. There were found there sometimes also salmon, alewives and bass, which is the *maigre* of La Rochelle, which serve all the spring as a grand manna for the inhabitants of this country.

"A little further on, beyond the said weir, there is a little mound where d'Aunay built his fort, which I have not found well placed according to my idea, for it is commanded by an island which is very near and higher ground, and behind which all ships can place themselves under cover from the fort, in which there is only water from pits, which is not very good, no better than that outside the fort. It would have been in my opinion better placed behind the island where vessels anchor, and where it would have been higher, and, in consequence, not commanded by other neighbouring places, and would have had good water, as in that which was built by the said late *Sieur* de la Tour, which was destroyed by d'Aunay after he had wrongfully taken possession of it,"—and so on as has already been quoted at the beginning of this paper.

We do not believe that any modern writer could condense into so few words a description of the harbour which would be more easily recognizable. Upon the larger

¹ It is true two other writers, Williamson, in his "History of Maine," Vol. I, p. 308, and Smith, in "America," Vol. IV, p. 143, have said that the fort stood on the east side, where the city now is, but neither give any authority for the statement. Probably the latter copied it from the former, who in turn took it from some of the old maps to which we refer below.

² See "America," IV, p. 153, which says: "He was a careful and observant navigator, but in its historical part it is confused and perplexing." This criticism does not refer to his relations of matters of fact with which he was contemporary, but to his discussion of older history. Note that Charlevoix says of him: "He tells nothing but what he saw himself."