

PIERRE ESPRIT RADISSON

corporated with Canada, but the company which now trades as a private corporation still retains one-twentieth of its entire grant.

The vastness of the territory over which it once extended its sway may be estimated by what it gave up in the controversy about Oregon, when the United States uttered the war-whoop, "Forty-four fifty or fight." It included not only the present States of Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and parts of Montana, but extended north of what is now the International Boundary to the limits of the Yukon. From there its dominion stretched over the whole north of the Continent, back to where it began in the Bay. The originator of this mighty empire was the little boy Radisson whom Father Poncet rescued from the Mohawks in 1656. Had it not been for that meeting, perhaps there never would have been a Hudson Bay Company. As events turned out, he had not only no share in the wealth which it accumulated, but was the victim of misrepresentation, calumny, and injustice both before and after his death. He was most maligned by his own people, but until positive proof is adduced to the contrary, Pierre Esprit Radisson has a right to be considered a Frenchman and a Catholic. He was the innocent and unconscious tool of underhand and unscrupulous state-craft.