

1682-3. gators of various nations who, towards the close of the sixteenth century and in the course of the seventeenth, undertook to discover a passage to China and Japan north of America, several were aware of this great bay,¹ which communicates with the Christian Sea; but it is certain that it was Henry Hudson, an Englishman, who in 1611 gave his name to the bay and to the strait by which you enter it.² Nothing is known of what he did there, nor do we even know whether he penetrated very far into it. The pretended acts of taking possession of the whole country made at various times by Nelson,³ Thomas Button,⁴ and Luxfox,⁵ even were they as well attested as they are but indifferently, gave no stronger support to the claims made by that nation to this bay in the time we are treating of than the acts of Verazani, under the reign of Francis I., entitle us to claim Carolina, Virginia, and the other provinces of North America, which are now occupied by the British crown, since it is certain that the English possessed nothing on that bay when, in 1656, the Sieur Bourdon was sent there to secure its possession to France,⁶ a ceremony repeatedly renewed in subsequent years.

French and English claims to Hudson's Bay.

It is true that in 1663 two French runaways, named Medard Chouard des Groseilliers and Peter Esprit de Radisson,⁷ to revenge some affront that they had received,

¹ Cabot entered it in 1517.

² Ante, ii., p. 10.

³ Nelson discovered the river that bears his name, which was called by the Indians Paouriniouagaou, the Descent of the Stranger: Jeremie, Relation de la Baye d'Hudson, p. 320. The French called it Bourbon River.

⁴ Sir Thomas Button's voyage is described in Northwest Fox; or, Fox on the Northwest Passage, 4to, London, 1635, pp. 118-19.

⁵ Luke Fox. As to this voyage, see Northwest Fox, pp. 169-251.

⁶ De la Potherie, Histoire de

l'Amérique Septentrionale, i., p. 141. John Bourdon is said to have coasted all along Labrador in a vessel of thirty tons: Ancient Register of the Council of Quebec, cited in N. Y. Col. Doc., ix., p. 304.

⁷ Medard Chouart de Groseilliers was a native of Touraine and an experienced pilot. He was an early emigrant to Canada, where he married a daughter of Abraham Martin, king's pilot. He reached James Bay overland from Lake Assiniboin, and, returning, endeavored to induce the Quebec merchants, and subsequently the French court, to send ships to