

The early history of the place is almost entirely lost, inso-much that it is supposed by some to be the ruin of old Fort Frontenac. It was, so far as existing data go to prove, commanded by the French about the year 1760, then fell into the hands of the English with the French possessions, and was finally captured during the war of 1812 by a party of Americans under command of one Hubbard, an ex-Revolutionary soldier, who found this once large and important fortress under the immediate command of two women and three invalids; an Ichabod of forts, its glory had departed from it. The women and invalids were vigorously attacked, and, after a slight resistance they capitulated; the poor old fort, as if to accelerate its already progressing ruin, was fired, and the Americans, with their prisoners, retired to the mainland, where they were received with salutes, cheers, and the music of the Cape Vincent band,—one fife and a drum.

Without doubt, the place was once of considerable importance. The fortress has been built in the most elaborate manner, after the system of Vauban, and exhibits a skill of the very highest order in the art of constructing defences. The fortifications in the rear are semicircular in form; the trench, four feet deep and twenty broad, is cut through the solid Trenton limestone, the glacis, which is approached by a gradual elevation, being constructed of the same material to the height of four feet. Directly on the river-front, it is naturally impregnable, and at the precipitous side was probably defended merely by a stockade.

On the night of May 28, 1838, the notorious "Bill Johnston," with half a hundred fellow-ruffians, in alleged retaliation for the burning of the "Caroline" on the Niagara, captured the steamer "Sir Robert Peel," at Wells Island, on the St. Lawrence. The passengers were driven ashore in a stormy night, and the steamer, one of the finest on the river, was pillaged and set on fire. Johnston and his gang eluded pursuit amid the labyrinth of the Thousand Islands, and, on the 7th of June, landed on Amherst Island, near Kingston, and plundered several farm-houses. A company of British soldiers and sailors scoured the Thousand Islands, and dispersed the pirate crew.\*

In the early spring, when the shallows of Eel Bay or other

\* Withrow's History of Canada, 8vo edition, chap. xxix., p. 387.