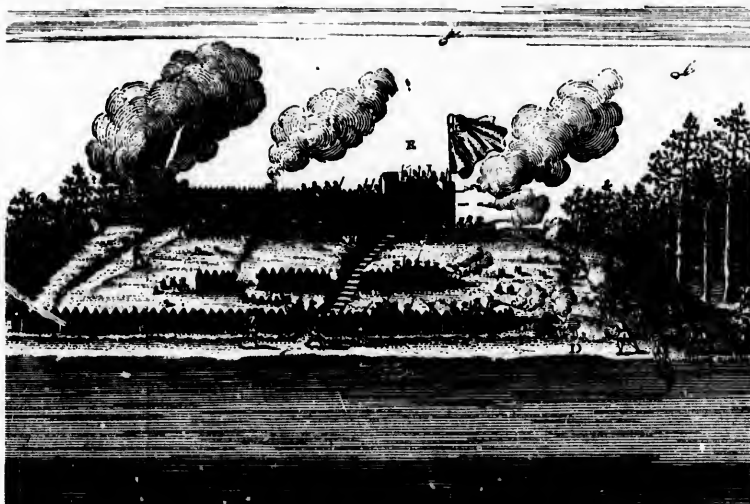


cantile operations, and the disputed rights and policy of this chartered company on the field of its activity and in the councils of government. One might naturally pause upon the almost grotesque disparity of proportions between the vast spaces of territory over which the privileges of the company extended and the smallness of its own representation. But another and a much more striking suggestion presents itself, which will be before us through the whole historical review of our subject. The territory which finally came under the jurisdiction of the company embraced substantially half of the continent of North America. During the period



FORT NELSON.\*

to be reviewed, we have set before us a contrast of events, uses, and experiences as happening upon the two respective halves of this continent, — that which is under the jurisdiction of the United States and that under the British crown, — a contrast which in sum and detail may well astound us. On the lower side of the boundary line the whole scene has been one of advance in enterprise, a steady, vigorous pushing forwards over mountains, plains, and valleys, of tilled fields, of thriving settlements, of sumptuous cities, and of millions of toiling, prosperous peoples. On the upper side a narrow, jealous, obstructive policy had shut out all intrusion upon a wilderness by any but stealthy trappers and the desolate wintering agents of a monopoly in the peltry traffic.

It may well be said that in addition to all the questions which might be

\* [Part of an engraving in La Potherie's *Hist. de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (1722), l. p. 105. The "Camp de Bourbon" was along the shore to the right. The bomb-shells seen in the air are from its mortars. — Ed.]