

SOME LETTERS OF ROBERT NICHOL

BY BRIG.-GENERAL E. A. CRUIKSHANK.

Since my sketch of the life of Robert Nichol was published in Volume XIX of the "Papers and Records" of the Ontario Historical Society, Mr. C. M. Burton of Detroit has kindly called my attention to many letters from Nichol contained in Mr. Burton's valuable collection of historical manuscripts, now deposited in the Public Library of the city of Detroit. I have been most courteously permitted to examine and make transcripts of these and such other documents as throw additional light on his life.

A volume, originally a blank book, bound in pigskin, contains the inscription in his handwriting: "Robert Nichol,

"His Book,
"1791."

The inside of the cover bears the advertisement of "Foudrinier, Stationer and Copper-plate Printer, No. 20, the corner of Craig's Court, Charing Cross, London."

Nichol had partially filled it with "Definitions and Problems of Geometry," and at a later date with "Cases and Examples" in "Plain Sailing" and navigation, followed by a log of events in a voyage beginning on Thursday, February 9, 1792, taking "The Start" as his point of departure, and ending abruptly on Thursday, February 22, 1792, in Latitude 39°57' North and Longitude 45°57' West.

John Askin had used the numerous blank leaves remaining for keeping a journal, commencing on 23rd July, 1812, and ending on May 18, 1815, extracts from which have been published by Mr. Burton in Volume 32 of the "Historical Collections" of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, pp. 468-74.

The period and terms of Nichol's employment by John Askin, then, and for many years before and after, a leading merchant in the town of Detroit, are shown by the following document:

"Articles of Agreement, indented and concluded on the Eighteenth of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five Between John Askin, Esquire, of Detroit, Merchant, of the one party, and Robert Nichol of the same place, Gentleman of the other part. The said Robert Nichol for the consideration hereafter mentioned, doth hereby for himself, his executors and administrators, covenant, promise and agree to and with the said John Askin, his executors and administors, that the said Robert Nichol shall and will, during the space of three years, to commence from the date