

## REMINISCENCES OF COL. CLAUS.

By MR. ERNEST CRUIKSHANK.

## III.

General Dearborn, the American commandant at Niagara, was in feeble health, and repeated disasters made him timid. For several weeks he did not venture to send even a patrol more than a mile beyond his entrenchments. After Bœstler's defeat in the Beechwoods, the opinion was seriously propounded that his army should retire from Canada, but a council of war, summoned to consider this question, decided to remain, although boats were kept in readiness to provide for a retreat in a sudden emergency. Fort George was strengthened in every possible way, and the camp adjoining was surrounded by earthworks, palisades, and ditches. Yet Dearborn must have known that his force outnumbered that of his opponent in the proportion of at least two to one.

A letter from his army dated on the last day of June, printed in the New York *Evening Post* of that year, thus describes the situation:—"Our army, numbering 2,000, is entrenched on the right of the fort. Fort Niagara is garrisoned by about 400 men. Our pickets and foraging parties are constantly harassed by the loyal militia and Indians. Every night there is a skirmish. They keep our troops under arms during the night, which exhausts and wears them away very fast. Our force has decreased very much. The enemy's fleet plague our troops very much. It has been making demonstrations off Niagara for near two weeks. The weather is very wet. It rains at least half the time."

The next thing recorded in the letter-book is a General Order dated from Kingston, the 6th of July, 1813, thanking the Indians for their services, especially at the Beechwoods, and directing that a liberal donation should be made to them when they took their departure for their homes, and a double allowance given to the wounded and the families of the slain. A few days later, Gen. DeRottenburg