

## The Rockwood Review.

### GRANDFATHER'S CORNER.

#### AT CARACAS AGAIN.

In our last extracts from the letters of our Canadian correspondent in South America, we left him in his Boardinghouse in the city of Caracas, whence he had graphically described the people of Venezuela, and promised to tell more of their characteristics and doings. He resumes with an interesting account of his present residence:—

On being first located in this house, so strange and outlandish seemed the surroundings, that we feared that we should never feel at home. I have already told you that through fear of earthquakes, but few houses have more than one storey. But the ground floor is extensive enough to afford ample accommodation. A small fortune is expended in the construction of a well-to-do establishment, and in a southern way, each is lavishly decorated. As an example, take that in which we have found our home. It was built over half a century ago, by a wealthy man whose family portraits still remain in a good state of preservation upon its walls. In fact every square foot of available mural space is frescoed with portraits, landscapes and historical paintings. Twenty rooms constitute the house, all but two, which we occupy, being upon the ground floor. Here are a dozen servants, negroes, mulattoes and Venezuelans. The principal street of the city passes our door, and a trainway threads its whole length. The street is fourteen feet wide, with high sidewalks three feet in width. The openings which we call windows, are large and deep, furnished with heavy shutters but destitute of glass. A cage-like construction projects about a foot upon the narrow sidewalk, between the bars of which the pretty señoritas look out upon the passers by. More frequently they shake hands with them, and talk, or even kiss. Really, the man outside can hardly

avoid running against their painted noses, and if courageous enough, would find no difficulty in touching their lips with his own by a simple turn of his head. Of course, I speak only of possibilities. Permanent window-seats are placed there for eternal use of somebody or other, and the elbow cushions for the window-sill are rich and gaudy. A wide double doorway, hung with monstrous doors of wood and iron, admits you to a corridor magnificently paved with tessellated mosaic, with frescoed walls and ceiling garish yet grand. The hall is wide, and leads to an inner doorway, which unfolds to the patio or inner court, again luxuriously paved with mosaic. The centre of this small plaza is open to the sky to the extent of twenty or thirty feet. Around the sides, a ceiling or verandah runs, with tiled roof and handsome pillars. Within the patio, plants of tropical beauty bud and bloom perpetually. This patio is for the lighting and ventilation of the house, the rooms of which all open here, and on no other side. It is used too as a flower garden, and is brilliant in odor from year's end to year's end. The parlor is in the front of the house, but is entered solely from the patio. It is about twenty feet square, and richly painted. The furnishings, however, are very bare, and consist of a few chairs, and hard ones at that, a stand or table, and a cold cement floor. No sofas, no carpets, none of the comforts of our northern homes meet the eye. But what few things by way of ornament are to be found in this parlor cost thousands of dollars, I am told, and am inclined to believe. The mosaic pavement in the patio alone cost over five thousand dollars. In rear of the patio is the dining-hall, open to the free, fresh air of heaven—a thing one soon learns to appreciate at full value in this tropical climate—and in rear of that again is another patio surrounded by apartments which open to it. This is the kitchen patio,