

THE ROCKWOOD REVIEW

GRANDFATHER'S CORNER. MY SCHOOLDAYS.

(CONCLUDED.)

Friday, to me, was the red-letter day of the week. This morning was occupied as were other mornings, but the afternoon was devoted to letter writing, and a weekly lecture, by our master, upon some subject selected by him as out of the ordinary course of studies. Aided by the blackboard or charts, he held us for sixty or ninety minutes, with a description of a mine, an explanation of the working of a steam engine, a graphic account of the construction, expansion, and ascension of a balloon, a diagram of the planetary system, a history of astrology and astronomy, an exposition of Egyptian religion, with its rites and symbols, or some similar subject of equal interest. Each Friday brought its own surprise and entertainment, and was looked forward to with expectation and supreme conviction that for an hour or more we could wander into a new world, to us much like fairyland, and hear about that of which our text-books taught but little. And then the hour of five or six brought the carrier's cart, from our native city conveying a small trunk for each lad, with the welcome complement of clean linen, and the still more welcome little presents from loving hands at home. Next to Friday in importance was Sunday. It broke up the monotony of daily life, brought out our best toggery, set aside our usual studies, and gave to us the extreme delight of seeing and being seen. After we had committed to memory several verses of the Collect of the day, we marched to church, two and two, occupied seats in the chancel, and listened with a fair amount of reverence to the prayers droned by the curate and the sermon, preached or read in orthodox style, by the

vicar. After dinner, we walked for some miles into the delightful country parts, and in the evening attended service in the village schoolhouse, which was led by the curate, and patronized by the smock frocked laborers of the locality and their wives. A tract was read instead of a sermon, and I distinctly remember that while its narrative opening attracted our attention and enlisted our sympathies, its application was unanimously voted an intolerable bore. Our spare hours were spent in reading. We had a library, well chosen if not extensive, and of its various volumes some of the most popular were the series of Peter Parley's works, which were well illustrated, and well fitted for boyish reading. On stormy Sunday afternoons, we listened to a pianoforte excellently played, or sang hymns with varying ability, and in fairly appreciative manner. As rewards for good conduct, correctly answered and well prepared recitations of our lessons, we received "tickets" of varying importance, but all possessing commercial value, because with them we could purchase a holiday. For so many hundred tickets, half an afternoon's vacation could be bought, and the holders of a superabundance of this cardboard currency were able to exchange it amongst their less fortunate companions for one of more substantial character. Such holidays were not frequent, but much more highly prized than the regular Wednesday and Saturday afternoon cessations from work. And once a month—generally on a Wednesday—we had still another holiday which we highly valued. For then a barber came from Lincoln, who cut the hair of all requiring his tonsorial attentions, and who brought with him a fresh stock of the sweetmeats most likely to be attractive to the boyish palate. Our weekly allowance of pocket