

The Rockwood Review.

GRANDFATHER'S CORNER.

R. D. C.,

PART FIRST.

Rockton is one of those completed Canadian villages of which so many have reached their majority, attained full growth, shouldered, carried and partly shaken off a more than fair share of municipal debt, secured the ordinary conveniences of light, sidewalks, fire protection, and so forth, and "settled down," not altogether without hope of further growth, but with no expectations of a very remarkable future. It has good schools, rival railroads, an excellent public library, five churches, a noisy brass band, an unbeatable lacrosse club, a champion football association, a covered rink, an electrically lighted public hall, a park of several acres, an abundance of fresh air, and a burglar-proof lock-up. You might readily bring yourself to believe that, in the not very distant, and now almost forgotten past—for time moves rapidly in Canada—some local Rip Van Winkle had, probably at the monthly meeting of the Rockton Temperance Society, solemnly elevated the social cup—of tea—and fervently said: "Here's your good health, Mrs. Rockton, and your family's good health, and may you live long and prosper," and that the wish had been granted. It was altogether a typical Canadian village, although not a perfect model, and yet it had a vague craving for something more. What further was needed to make it superlatively and permanently happy? No additional churches, certainly, for every member of the existing five thought that there were already four too many; not another hotel, for the railways had rendered much of the ample stable accommodation comparatively useless, not an opposition barber, for a trio of red and white poles decorated the public streets; not further Esculapian help, for Rockton proudly pointed

to several medical shingles, a pair of dentists, a farrier blacksmith whose famous horseshoes invariably cured corns and other pedal troubles of equine sufferers, and a genuine and duly licensed veterinarian; and not even an extra store, for half of its merchants were living upon the profits realized from the sacrifice of articles sold at prices twenty percent below cost. But in this world of many troubles, there is ever a craving for something we haven't got, and false desires too often open the Pandora box of many unknown evils. Rockton which as we have seen, apparently possessed everything that heart could desire, from an Agricultural Show to a Town Constable, experienced this unappeasable and Oliver Twistian desire for more, and while still longing, for it knew not what, had alas a visit from one of those comfort destroying and mercenary busybodies who go through rural parts at uncertain intervals, and temptingly tell of the beauties and possibilities of a great Esther Combination of Oratorio and Cantata, in which the Scripture story is set to music, and placed at popular prices, before an immense audience, wherein church going people are not only permitted to take part, but are expected to make up the majority. Rockton, let it be sadly confessed, had at last opened her arms to such a Mephistophelian tempter, and yielded more readily than did poor Marguerite. The well-known musical abilities of the united Rockton Choirs, the extraordinarily good looks of the young ladies of the thriving village, and the proverbial unity of the Church people when any great end was in view, were successively and successfully cited and appealed to, and not many days had elapsed before a club was formed for the production of the sacred drama upon an unexampled scale. Practices were commenced, and a date fixed for the event. As was meet and proper, the Instructor was