

THE ROCKWOOD REVIEW

GRANDFATHER'S CORNER.

MY SCHOOLDAYS.

(CONTINUED.)

My experience with the next teacher to whose care I was entrusted was a brief one. A clever, fresh colored, bright young fellow of generous disposition, great teaching ability and amiable character; who won the affections as well as the attention of every pupil, within a week after the opening of his school. He had taught for about three months when he was suddenly stricken down by small-pox, a disease which even then was a scourge of civilized communities, and carried off its victims in every rank. After a fortnight's wrestle with death he quietly succumbed, and no man was ever so sincerely mourned. His successor was a genius, and wonderful to relate, a practical and wonderful instructor. Thomas Cooper, poet and chartist, was no common man. Born in humble life, he worked as a shoemaker until twenty-three, in that town of Gainsboro loved so much and described so well, by George Elliott, as St. Oggs on the Floss. There he picked up a knowledge more or less thorough, of Latin, Greek, Hebrew and French, so that he fairly read and translated these languages, and even when he was conducting the school which I attended, received instructions in Italian while we boys were at play at the noon recess. Our schoolroom was as attractive as our homes, for its walls were decorated with numerous oil paintings, of small size, executed by a Gainsboro lad, who, another genius, had early burnt out the lamp of life and left these records of his love of art and unflagging industry. They were the heads of the apostles and biblical characters, and gave proof of wonderfully strong artistic ability. On brackets between the windows were

busts of Milton, Shakespeare, Byron, Cromwell, Cæsar and Homer, and upon the walls opposite the light, were numerous engravings, in copper and steel, and colored lithographs—then much more rare than now—and the purchase of them must have absorbed the savings of the struggling preceptor. A black-board above the fire-place was the first I had seen of this invaluable aid to teacher and pupil, and upon it were conveyed to us lessons which indelibly impressed themselves upon the youthful memory. Our hours in school were from nine, a. m., to noon, and from two, p. m., to five, and the days never seemed long, although the holidays, which we had from three o'clock on Wednesday, and the half-day on Saturday, were always welcome. At four o'clock on winter afternoons, school books were closed, and for an hour our teacher read aloud some interesting narrative, which from his excellent manner and intelligent choice of subject, held us truly spell-bound. Bonaparte's unfruitful campaign in Egypt, and the horrors of the retreat from Moscow, were thus made known to us; the graphic description from the pen of a French servant, telling of the mysteries of the Pyramids, was made common property; the changing fortunes of the fateful day at Waterloo were told in thrilling tones; and travels, adventures and discoveries daily trod upon the heels of the wonders of the preceding afternoon. The beauties of Milton, Shakespeare and Byron were in turn presented to us. We crossed the Sahara, scaled the Alps, followed Columbus across the Atlantic, heard the jubilant death cry of Wolfe, and stood by the rude grave of valiant Sir John Moore. The leaves of ancient history were opened to us, and we trod the soil of Italy, entered the Roman Amphitheatre, fought at Marathon and