

GRANDFATHER'S CORNER.

FIFTY YEARS AGO.

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS:—

Shall I tell you something of what I knew of Upper Canada fifty years ago? On the 23rd of June, 1844, I, a young fellow in my eighteenth year, full of hope and high resolve, first set foot upon its soil, at a small village dignified by the name of Port Robinson, on the Welland Canal. I was born in an eastern county of Old England, in a sleepy and ancient city, built by the Romans, established by the Britons, possessed by the Saxons, captured by the Normans, won and lost, again and again, as the fortune of war determined, by the people and contending factions springing from these various elements, and, after an active life for several centuries, dozing away its existence until the free trade of the nineteenth century gave it a renewed vitality and energetic re-awakening. From this semi-Roman, semi-Medieval city, to a land unknown to the civilized world until the early days of that old city were almost lost in the fogs of the "good old times," seemed to be a great step, but the change was, in many of its main features, more one of imagination than of reality. What the old land had acquired through centuries of experience became the property of the new country, in greater or shorter time, and to make a home in the Niagara district, in the forties, was to find it speedily surrounded by a state of things, in so far as mere necessary comforts went, not very far behind that existing in the old world beyond the huge Atlantic waves. But there is a greater difference between the Canada of to-day and that of half a century ago, than there is between the England of the Nineties and that of the Forties. On dress, homes, travel, education,

food, speech—on every particular of daily life, in fact—the stamp of progress has been put. Often and generally, this change is for the better; in some matters its value is dubious. The world has truly moved onward, dark places have been made bright, and modernity has done its effective work.

"I am not, however, about to deal with the present: I sit down to tell you a little of the past. Let us begin with the Dress of fifty years since, and take the ordinary farmer of that day as our lay-figure. Heavy full-cloth satinette, coarse linsey-woolsey, all of home manufacture, comfortable, strong, and serviceable, formed the staple of his wear. Stoga boots and straw hats generally completed his costume. In winter his head dress was often a cap of fur, the trophy of some victory over a denizen of our forests, and for the season re-placed the almost universal straw. Home-made wincey and flannel, with a calico dress, and a black orleans or alpacha for "best wear," were the pride and ambition of the farmer's wife. Canadian tweeds were unknown, fine store bought flannels were little used, a black silk dress was a rarity. Woollen hoods in winter, a straw hat or sun-bonnet in summer, with a go-to-meetin' hat or bonnet, formed the head-gear of our gentle country cousins. Plug hats were a rarity, producible at funerals, and were regarded as a venerable remnant of old country finery. Broad leaved hats of felt were the outcome of the visit made to America by Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, some years later. Town folk made a near approach to European fashions, but they were often a year or two behind the mother land. Food, which is ever regarded as at least next in importance to dress, partook of a similar simplicity. Salt meat, eggs and potatoes were the staple