

tions had brought spiteful retorts, followed sometimes by showers of tears. More than once the holy hush of the Sabbath had been broken when the calumniator had come face to face with the calumniator.

Except for Pastor Cragg, Amos Witherbee was the last of the class-members to emerge from the church on the glorious Sunday morning of which we write. He seemed at peace with all the world after the religious exercises in which he had participated and the memory of those evil years of which he had spoken with such solemnity a little while before did not seem to weigh heavily upon him. He shook hands with those neighbors who came in his way, hardly noticing that they seemed unusually restrained in their manner of returning his greetings. Then, as he descended the steps, he was suddenly arrested in his progress by seeing his grand-daughter, Amy, sitting on the bottom step, and sobbing as if her heart would break.

Now it was certainly an unheard of thing for Amy to be crying and most of all in such a public place. She was one of the cheeriest little women to be met with in a month's travel. Of course, she had been absurdly petted and pampered by Amos, but for all that she was a person of some importance in Clark's Corners. She had, in fact, a mighty dignity and prestige to maintain.

blank, uncheering failure. It soured the girl and it awakened bitter feelings in the hearts of her proud, ambitious parents. When Amy was appointed teacher of the home school and heiress to the honors and dignity which such a position carried with it, it was, perhaps, natural that Matty should feel keenly envious and that her parents should share her feelings. As Elvira Simpson was heard to remark, "A Bowers always wants to lead and dictate an' if they can't do it they want to import a stranger for the job."

But when on the Saturday just preceding the Sunday of which we have been writing, a handsome young man from the city, principal of one of the schools there, had come down to spend the day with Amy, and it had become noised abroad that they were engaged the Bowers' resentment was fanned to an angry heat. Poor Matty! She was so plain of feature and so uncouth in manner that, despite her father's money, even the youth of Clark's Corners gave her a wide berth!

When Amos Witherbee saw his daughter sobbing on the steps he had no idea that those tears were caused by the premeditated ill-will of any of his neighbors. He had no suspicions that there were any persons in Clark's Corners who would delight in causing his darling pain and in casting a shadow on her future.



A pretty view at the junction of the Skeena and Buckley Rivers

Was she not the teacher of the village school? Amos felt a great deal of pride in that. She had outstripped all the other pupils during the years when she herself had attended that school, and Amos had sent her to the city for a year to finish up. Then he had sent her to Normal school.

After Amy had become a full-fledged instructress, duly qualified, she sought for and obtained an appointment as teacher of the school at Clark's Corners. This appointment proved very satisfactory to the parents and even more highly satisfactory to the children.

In fact there was but one family which viewed with displeasure the progress being made by Amy. The Bowers did not like it. They didn't come out openly and say so, but Mrs. Bowers deplored, occasionally, the slow advancement of her boy, Hiram. Nelson, himself, used to declaim against the monopolizing of the teaching profession by "petticoats" and had often been heard to declare that in the school at Clark's Corners the strong discipline of a man was sadly required.

"Not that Amy Witherbee isn't doin' her best," he would add, "but the order in that school isn't what it should be, an' a school can't be run without order!"

There were some people in Clark's Corners who were unkind enough to believe that the attitude of the Bowers family was inspired by envy. Matty Bowers, a girl of about Amy's age, had for years been aiming at passing the examination required for a teacher's certificate. But she had studied for and faced examinations only to meet with

Putting his hand on her shoulder he said with tender concern, "Why, what's the matter, Amy? Are you sick?"

Amy turned a tear-stained face to him, looking at him with distended eyes, full of pain and misery.

"Oh, grandad!" she choked out, "Nels Bowers has been telling something awful about me! Everybody is talking about it! Allie Carr told me what he has been saying. Oh, grandad, it's awful! I can't tell you—but how could he (sob) make up (sob) such a lie?"

After she had grown a bit quiet, Amos, whose face had grown strangely dark and rigid, spoke to her with the same tender insistence.

"Come, dearie; tell me what he has been saying."

"Oh, grandad, I can't! I can't!" wept Amy. "He's told an awful lie about me and about Harold too. You know, before Harold took the train for the city last evening I took him into the school-house to show him where I work. Harold showed me on the blackboard how to teach a certain kind of upper grade arithmetic, and after that we had to run so that he could catch the train. Well, Nels Bowers says that when we were in the school-house he looked in through the window. Oh, grandad! how could he (sob); how could he (sob); how could he tell such a lie?"

Amos didn't say another word to Amy just then. He went straight over to the board fence where Nels Bowers was untying his horse, preparatory to driving



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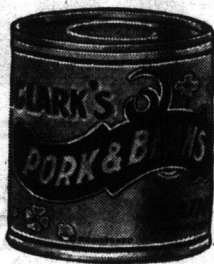
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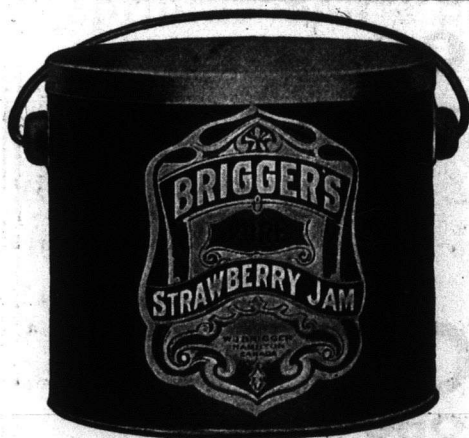


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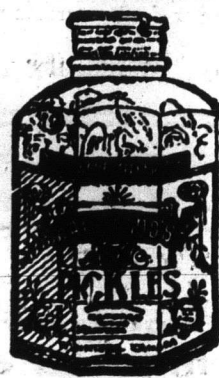
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