

Communication

From 'A Matter of Fifty Houses'
By Walter Hard
Approximately 1950

Submitted for Bulletin readers because it encompasses two points of view so admirably.

BEHIND THE BARN

When Ezra Hopkins' barn burned, fortunately the stock were in the night pasture and he had only just begun his haying. What bothered Ezra as much as the loss was the stark staring fact that now he'd have to do the thing he'd always had in the back of his mind as the ultimate luxury he'd someday indulge in. Every discomfort he'd had to put up with and every new convenience he'd wanted and often needed, he'd put on one side with: "When I build me m' new barn." Now the dream would have to become a reality. To make it handier, he built the new barn right across the road from the house.

By the time Ezra had become so crippled with rheumatism that he had to give up and move to the village, the barn, weathered to a silver gray, was still the "new barn." The real estate agent had brought a man to see the place and Ezra had been pointing out lines with his cane. Sitting on the kitchen porch, the man asked Ezra about the water supply and the sugar bush.

Finally after hearing much of the history of the place the man turned to the agent and said: "Well, Mr. Edgerton, I guess this is the place we want. Can we go down now to your office and draw up the papers?" Ezra was stunned at the speed of the decision. He was more stunned

when they got up to go. Pointing to the "new barn" the stranger said: "The first job will be to tear down that old barn there." Ezra stared at the man thinking he had misunderstood. "Tear that barn down?" he said. "Why that's the best buildin' on th' place. I built that barn m' self not more'n thirty years ago." The man was looking off at the hills. "No, I cannot have that building there." Still incredulous Ezra persisted. "But I put it there appoose to have it handy to the house." He looked with affection at the building whose every timber he knew. "Just why'd you want 't' tear m' barn down? Tell me that." The buyer smiled indulgently. "Well Mr. Hopkins, I'm sorry, but it ruins the view." Ezra snorted. "View? View! Well let me tell ye, there ain't one damned thing behind that barn but some mountains."

Submitted by a community reporter.

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