

The Free Press Short Story

THE ROLLING PUMPKIN

MARY E. DAMPOND

ABNER PIERSON had built the little house with his own hands. It was the only house that Cella and he had ever owned.

Every evening the walk home grew shorter for Cella; every morning when she left for work she would joke about where on the road she would meet Abner and the house that evening.

One night the little yellow house just reached the edge of town. It was a new boy for them that it had stopped for the night near a lamp post.

"I won't take more than a couple of days before we reach our lot the mover says," observed Abner.

"There were Nellie!" said the mover kindly. "Oh, I ought to be there this minute!" the woman sobbed.

"Oh, I ought to be there this minute!" the woman sobbed. "Oh, mother, mother! We never ought to have left them!"

"There now!" said Cella pityingly. "Maybe your mother will live a long time yet. I've known folks to live years after a stroke."

"We ought never to have left her and father!" sobbed the mover's wife hysterically. "Oh, we've got to move back there right off!"

"Hush, Nellie, hush!" said the distracted mover. "You're going on the morning train!"

He turned desperately to Abner. "I know it's an awful thing to ask you," he said rapidly, "an awful unbusinesslike thing."

But in the winter when the hard rains wet Cella through Abner worried. "We ought to move into town," he said.

Colla made light of the matter, but as one winter succeeded another it grew hard to hold her umbrella against the storms and to drag her rubber-soled feet through the mud.

One spring Abner insisted that the place should be put into the hands of a real-estate man in town. No one knew from Abner's words how he dreaded selling the little house that he himself had built.

"I'm real silly!" he chided himself. "Even if I did build this house, I needn't feel as if it were part of me! I wouldn't have Cella know how I feel about it!"

"Now you hush," said Abner. "Tain't so. You haven't had any stroke!" Nevertheless his voice softened.

"We've got a right, a legal right!" Abner repeated loudly. "Legal rights ain't always kind rights," retorted Cella.

"Might as well have it look straight in!" he said. "It makes me nervous, pecking at me through that hole! Seems like an eye looking at me."

"Let's go back to them!" said Cella boldly. "Let's, Abner! Just think how glad that mover will be if you tell him you'll change places again and he can pull in back!"

"Not a bit," replied the agent cheerfully. "They want that corner where your house was for their barn. This house doesn't come into the trade at all."

"But," cried Cella, bewildered, "what are we going to do with the house? We shouldn't have a lot in town nor out here either. We can't sit in the road!"

"I've got several lots in town that folks have put into my hands for sale. You can get your cash down this week for your old place. You can buy a lot in town and have more than money enough left over to pay the mover to take the house there."

"The mover jumped into the air like a boy. 'Glory! I'll get you back to those neighbors so quick you'll surprise them! Man alive! You don't know the kindness you've done me! Heaven bless you!'"

"The mover raised his eyes quickly. 'You'll do it?' he asked. 'I'm just looking forward to the ride back home,' he said.

"The mover and his helper proceeded to start the yellow house back along the road over which it had recently travelled. There was no street light to bother them so they didn't sleep to-night."

Colla kissed him good-by and started for the place at which she was to move. She was glad for the mover, yet she thought of the rains next winter and how wet she should be when she walked home from town.

"The mover made haste to arrange the legal papers and sell the town lot to his cousin. 'Now I'll be able to go south no more broke, thanks to you!' he said to Abner."

He left the work of moving the house to his partner, a stalwart Negro-Canadian who had several sons. "I'll never forget your kindness," said the mover as he bade good-by before leaving for the South.

Next day the McAlliffes heard that Abner and Cella were coming back, and Mrs. McAlliff came down the road to welcome the little house as it rolled on its return journey.

"I'm so glad you're coming back!" said Mrs. McAlliff. "It's been so long since you look over at your place and not see your house! We'll have a regular house waiting for you!"

Daily the yellow house creaked onward, and longer and longer grew Cella's walks home at night. "I shan't have to make tea beside the road many more nights," she declared one evening.

While they were eating supper a rap sounded at the door. Cella opened it. There stood the real-estate agent to whom, before any exchanges had been made between Abner and the mover, the selling of the old place had been intrusted.

"Well," said the agent, "who owns the place out here now, you folks or the mover?" "We do," said Abner.

"So I heard," said the real estate man. "Well, at last I've got a good offer for it. I've a couple of men, partners, who want to buy your place, cash down. They want it for a pigeon farm. Seems there's a big market for squabs up in the city, and these men calculate the squabs every morning and take them in their car to that early three o'clock train. They've been in the pigeon business before somewhere. They are going to put up a big barnlike build-

WARNS ALL PAST 40 TO HEED THESE SIGNS

From the Issue of The Free Press of Thursday November 16, 1910

There are now 186 inmates at the reformatory farm at Guelph. Just a taste of winter this week. There will be some fine mild weather yet.

You may go to Toronto any day next week but Monday for \$1.25, good to return until Monday. Acton Choral Society was organized on Monday evening, with some sixty members, and Prof. Gildrick, of Guelph, the conductor.

Carry Brown, the well known apple dealer and caretaker of the farm, are remodeling the loss of a \$1,500 automobile, which was destroyed by fire on Tuesday afternoon on the Guelph road.

Rev. Gen. Purser, M. A., Archdeacon of Hamilton, paid an official visit to St. Alban's Church last Wednesday evening as representative of His Lordship Bishop Ed. Moulton.

"That ain't we cheating them to ask just the same for the place without the house?" "Or are they taking the house?" asked Cella.

"Not a bit," replied the agent cheerfully. "They want that corner where your house was for their barn. This house doesn't come into the trade at all."

"But," cried Cella, bewildered, "what are we going to do with the house? We shouldn't have a lot in town nor out here either. We can't sit in the road!"

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"The mover raised his eyes quickly. 'You'll do it?' he asked. 'I'm just looking forward to the ride back home,' he said.

Colla nodded. "The mover made haste to arrange the legal papers and sell the town lot to his cousin. 'Now I'll be able to go south no more broke, thanks to you!' he said to Abner."

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The "National" is in service again between Toronto and Winnipeg, leaving Toronto 9:30 p.m. daily arriving Winnipeg 8:45 a.m. second morning after.

Information and reservations from any Canadian National Agent.



TIME TABLES AT ACTON

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

Table with 2 columns: Train No., Schedule. Includes routes like No. 26-Daily, except Sunday...

Table with 2 columns: Train No., Schedule. Includes routes like No. 31-Daily, except Sunday...

Table with 2 columns: Train No., Schedule. Includes routes like No. 29-Daily, except Sunday...

Table with 2 columns: Train No., Schedule. Includes routes like Daily—except Sunday...

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Radio Fans When it's late at night and you're listening to the radio - you'll enjoy it ever so much more with a cup of Red Rose Tea to sip. Try it! RED ROSE TEA "is good tea" is Two Qualities -- Red Label & Orange Pekoe

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