

Neighborhood Grocery

Robert Bill

In my eagerness to get out of a cold, blowing, autumnal rain, I pushed open the grocery door without first pausing to look through the rattling pane. The door swung wide, bumping into a inconveniently-placed carpenter, a carpenter so interested in getting the measurements to cut down an old board to fit the last spot in a new vegetable shelf, that he took no notice of me but, reaching for pencil and saw hurried on in an attempt to finish his almost-completed task. Stumbling against something I looked down and found baskets full of macaroni and mustard, dog-food and bird-seed scattered all over the floor. I picked my way to the meat counter and clanked two empty milk bottles on the case in a futile attempt to attract attention. As I waited, I looked curiously about the neighborhood grocery and meat market. Once again the supplies were being rearranged and the walls were taking on a new color. Mr. Tule leaned between empty shelves and smeared strong-smelling green paint over the plaster backing, while Mrs. Tule stood in the back room, arguing with the colored delivery boy. I decided to leave and return later; I picked my way back to the rainy sidestreet.

On my return trip I edged in behind a bent old man; I found a place to stand and turned to watch this aged customer. With well chosen steps, he found his way to the bread case, felt for a fresh loaf, and looking over his spectacles, glanced about for Mrs. Tule. Nodding childishly, he picked out the correct change and placed it in her hand. He then drew

his sweater more closely about him and went his way, back into the wet street.

As I watched Mrs. Tule grope in the old-fashioned icebox for my milk, I noticed a large woman standing at the meat counter. I had been attracted by her deep masculine voice. It was necessary to look closely to determine that the plump Irish grocer-butcher was not talking to himself. Instead he was listening thoughtfully and administering excellent service, something unusual for Mr. Tule.

The delivery boy chugged up to the curb in the store's dilapidated truck, as I shut some shavings in the door and splashed along the slippery sidewalk.

Oldest House In Town

Marthana McWhir

We often visited the stately and dignified "oldest house in town." Its ancient red brick was slowly crumbling; its weather-beaten window and door casings were flaking away, and its high old dormer windows stared sorrowfully on the rushing world beneath them. On the inside, one was greeted by the very large, dim hall, lighted only by the long, narrow stained glass windows. Deep lavenders and greens blended with the golden yellows to cast a cathedral-like glow over the interior. A massive, dark-grained oak staircase (which matched the other woodwork) lined one side of the hall, with "cubby corners" built in beneath it. At the end of the hall a gold-framed mirror stretched from floor to ceiling, lending to the unusual room an atmosphere of both