

after you have had lunch with a friend, take a few minutes to sit down and tell grandmother some humorous incident or about your friend's new job. Of course, it won't help grandmother a bit if you perch on the arm of a chair with an eye cocked on the clock and hastily tell her that Mary is working at the telephone office. Give yourself ten minutes. Relax in a chair and tell her how Mary got the job and whether she says "Number, please" or takes dictation. You needn't feel any more "martyrish" about giving up ten minutes than grandmother did about waiting an hour for breakfast, because you will not be losing this time. You will enjoy watching grandmother laugh at your tale of woe about dropping the oranges on the bus. It will be a happier home for all if she sings out merrily, "Hope the buckle doesn't fall off," as you go out to the dance, instead of mumbling, "No one ever tells me anything."

Remember that old people have had a

lot of experience and have made mistakes which they see you making. They don't want to see you hurt and frequently can't resist offering a suggestion. This does not mean that old people are perfect nor that they aren't at times exasperating. It is only natural that we should resent their "Take your umbrella," and that we should recognize it as martyrdom when they say, "If it weren't for me you could go to the lakes this week-end." It is suggested, though, that there will be few excuses for an old person's martyrdom and for your resentment of them if, by putting yourself in their place occasionally, you see that they need only a little of your time and a voice in the family discussions to make them feel rewarded for the trails of their lives. When we make them a true branch on the tree and not a grafted one, we will begin to gain from their presence and they from ours for as Francis Bacon wrote, "... the virtues of either age may correct the defects of both."

The Village Store

BILL OSBORN

I sometimes wonder if my great-grandfather would recognize our village store. To be sure, the size and general shape of today's shop would differ little from the one he knew, but might he not be surprised to see the fire-engine red of the Coca-Cola signs plastered abundantly over the dark brown clapboards? I feel sure, Quaker that he was, that his sense of propriety would be greatly shocked by the pictures of girls in scanty clothing which the owner insists on displaying on the outside walls in the most prominent places. His advertising shouts and pleads with you

to buy his wares. Large, boisterous, multi-colored letters carry messages which claim nothing less than the superlative.

Let us examine more closely the outside appearance of the building. Strangely enough, its proportion is approximately that of the golden mean. It is about thirty feet long by nineteen feet wide. Like the Parthenon, it is not too large. A rusty pump is located west of the store with the usual chipped enamelware cup hanging from it by a stiff piece of wire. The bread box and two vacant windows with massive red shutters are in front.

Now we are ready to go inside. The screen door, which needs oiling, asks us in bold yellow words to take home a loaf of "West's Yum Yum Bread." To our left is the vingar barrel. In a hole in its top is the pump. This particular pump is made of a wooden cylinder and a plunger. A lively up-and-down motion of the plunger is required to keep a thin stream of the pungent liquid flowing. The margin of profit on this item is slashed horribly during this operation. In one way or another, about one-half a cup is spilled out of every gallon. As this is never mopped up, the sharp odor of the fluid is always in the air.

The coal oil drum is almost next to the vinegar. Only the feed scales separate them. An ingenious spout makes it possible to transfer the coal oil without any trouble at all. It is clear that necessity was the mother of invention here. The vegetable bins happen to be extremely close to the coal oil. Housewives would complain if they found their vegetables flavored with a few drops of kerosene.

Deliveries have not yet gained their pre-war regularity or frequency. Because of this the fruits, vegetables, bakery products, meat, and other perishables must be purchased in larger quantities than can adequately be handled. It is not uncommon for the owner to brazenly try to sell withered lettuce and cabbages. He can not always be believed when he says that his meat is fresh; in short, let the buyer beware.

The store carries many hardware items. Shovels, spades, pitchforks, sturdy axes, and hoes all lean against one wall in a stack resembling an upset box of giant

tooth picks. From the masculine point of view, it is a tragic sight to behold one of the fair sex leading her spouse to this department for a spade "so that John can break my flower beds for me in his spare time."

The most peculiar feature of the store, to me, is the contrast it offers between the old-fashioned and the modern methods of living. Horse collar pads in vivid yellow with streaks of red stitching, graceful lamp chimneys, corn cob pipes, and backbreaking washboards must not be completely outmoded. New shipments were received recently. By some twist of fate, the lamp chimneys have been placed by the light bulbs; filters for a very complicated separator are close to the horse pads.

I must mention the stove and the bench. The stove stands about four feet high. It cannot be described as ebony black or even black. In fact, it has rusted slightly so as to give an effect of delicate moss growing on a gumbo background. A swaybacked pipe connects the stove with the chimney. A wire hung from the ceiling and wrapped around the pipe tries unsuccessfully to keep soot from falling through the joints onto the merchandise. The bench was in a park at one time. Now it is placed at just the right distance from the stove. Without stretching, one can roast his toes in comfort from the bench. It is not a fine bench in any sense. The paint has been worn off the seat for quite some time, but it still is one of the best spots I know to hear a good story, a political argument, a tall tale, or perhaps all three spun by a master of those arts.