

That Corner Drug-Store

By LILLIACE LORENE MONTGOMERY

ILLUSTRATION BY R. G. VOSBURGH



I WENT to the corner drug store the other day. No, there is nothing particularly astonishing about that; but it is strange to think that a drug store owner can live on any stray profits he happens to make.

First, a tall woman, dressed entirely in black, entered. Yes, she entered; she did not simply come in. She swept majestically up to the counter, and glanced at the clerk as one would at a worm on a fish hook.

"Will you kindly let me have the correct time?" she queried with an air of aloofness.

"Five minutes to two," was the reply, spoken to her back.

She did not even thank him, but calmly set her watch while she stared through the window.

As she opened the door to pass out, a tall man accompanied by a small and very muddy black dog, sidled in.

"Say, kin you tell me what date it is? My wife says it's the twelfth, 'n I say it's the eleventh."

After being told and shown the calendar to prove the answer, he stopped and discussed how he and his wife had come to make the mistake. As a matter of fact, it was the tenth of the month. He shuffled out, holding the door open to wait for the dog, who had stolen a long stick of licorice from the candy counter.

The store was quiet, in a business sense, for maybe five minutes. Then a little girl rushed in.

"S-a-a-y," she drawled, "when do pussy willows bloom?"

The clerk was not sure and the child turned away, pausing long enough to say:

"I was going to buy some stamps; but I shall do all my trading where I can find out a simple little thing when I want to."

The clerk smiled feebly and turned to wait on the old lady who had come in.

"I want some change for this dollar," she asserted. "And, say, I also came in to ask you-all whether a department store is a good place to buy specs. I know you-all don't sell glasses 'n you would n't have no reason to tell me wrong."

After receiving the advice asked for, as well as the change for the dollar, she ambled out, stopping on the way to look over the rack of postal cards, to finger the pictures, but not to buy any, you may be sure.

A richly gowned woman stepped from her limousine and entered the store, inquiring for a certain brand of scented toilet soap.

"I wish you would put aside a half dozen cakes for me," she said. "I'm going abroad for a few months and will not need them until I return."

"But, madam, why have such a small order put aside? We always carry the soap in stock."

"Yes, I know; but the tariff on imported soap has been raised and I want to be sure of getting it at the old price." And she swept out to her car.

A miserly old man was the next. He stopped and gazed at the picture postals. The druggist stepped forward and waited.

"How much be them postals?" bleated the ancient customer, although the sign was in plain view.

"Three for five," patiently responded the clerk.

"Wall, I only want to buy one. Will that be a cent?"

Upon being answered in the negative, he walked out in high dudgeon.

A fluffy, young girl minced in leading a toy poodle.

"Come, mother's lamb," she murmured as she waited for it to trot through the open door. Gliding up to the counter she asked for some stamped newspaper wrappers. When they were handed to her, she contemplated the clerk reproachfully:

"Won't you please wrap them?" she gurgled. "I do hate to take off my gloves. And I can't tie a good knot."

When the unprofitable wrappers had been concealed, she flitted out, dragging the poodle after her. There were muddy dog tracks all over the marble floor, and the clerk wiped them away with a woollen mop. While he was finishing, I, also, ambled out, because my car was coming.

I felt rather sorry for that poor drug store man; but did I buy anything? Oh, no, I was merely waiting until a man and two women ahead of me were through using the telephone!



"Five minutes to two," was the reply, spoken to her back.

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