

I spent ten minutes in a hopeless argument, and in the end took the loaf home, where we already had more bread than we could use.

\* \* \*

TWO nurses came in after cigarettes.

I offered them Camels—local breed—and was told they preferred to work in the hospital—not be carried in!

I could see Mrs. X waiting to be attended to by me. The hard word for something, I guessed.

"Oh, grocer," she gushed, "my son is returning from overseas next week and —"

"Yes, I know," I interrupted, "and you wanted to know if I had a spare pound of butter to make a cake."

"Two pounds if you could spare it," she replied.

I spent another ten minutes showing her the returns I had just prepared for the Rationing Office declaring butter on hand; amounts received; amounts sold to registered customers; leave coupons; emergencies and permits, even to the half pound.

"Now are you satisfied?" I asked triumphantly.

She picked up her bag and made for the door.

"Then how is it," she shot back at me, "my daughter can get all she wants from her grocer?"

Fortunately capital punishment does not apply to one's thoughts.

A stranger came in after tobacco. I offered him some which he refused with a cryptic remark about a horse. I reminded him that "Hobson's Choice" also referred to a horse. After trying every other shop he came back for it. "The last packet," I assured him, perhaps a little too cheerfully.

Just then I glanced up and saw Mrs. Y. coming across from the fish shop, so decided to get dinner ready. I deserved a break anyway.

However my luck was out. She demanded to see me.

"How is it?" she asked, "that you have no tobacco for my son? He has been away fighting for his King and Country for four years and he can't get a smoke."

I explained to her that we did not get any extra for the boys returning and asked her rather foolishly if she could suggest a remedy.

"Too right I can," she replied. "Why not give the returned boys the tobacco you keep for those who never went away?"

"A good idea," I said. "Let's start off by giving your own tobacco to your son!"

\* \* \*

I WAS interrupted a dozen times during dinner to tell people we had no honey. (Advertisers please note: If you want to make a line really unpopular keep on advertising it over the air when it is not procurable.)

The butcher brought in a parcel of meat to be sent up with Mrs. V's grocery

order. We had words. If the blanky butchers won't deliver why palm it on to us! In any case our delivery boy hates going to this particular place because he is afraid of the dog. However I weakened and took the parcel. It was heavy and being a Nosey Parker I had a peep inside. Bones for the dog!

Went through the accounts file and noticed that Mrs. O. did not pay last week's bill. Reminded by Jack that the Races were on.

A young woman came in with a parcel held at arm's length.

"Mum got three eggs from you on Friday and two were bad," she yelled at me.

"Just two bad," I replied sympathetically. "What shall I do about it?"

"Keep them for the Election," she said, and with that buzzed out again.

A pleasant interlude. I was now feeling a bit weary and when a customer came in and demanded tobacco otherwise his wife would deal elsewhere he was told where to go. He will get toasted tobacco there, I hope.

An inspector came in. I wondered what I had done wrong and prepared for the worst. He waited till I had finished serving, which confirmed my fears.

Tiredly I walked round the counter and asked him his business.

"Any smokes?" he inquired hopefully.

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