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A newspaper editor learns to take every imaginable sort of telephone call in stride. At any hour he is apt to be confronted with indignant condemnation, ill-disguised flattery, suggestions that this or that enemy of the caller is a likely subject to crucify in print, or confirmation of a wild story going the rounds.

Just the other night, a woman called us and wanted to know if so and so had committed suicide. "I promised not to tell who told me," she said, "and please don't mention my name." As for the "victim" who was supposed to have fire a slug in his own brain, we're certainly not going to name him, but he happens to be one of our readers.

Although doubting the rumor, we did what every newsman does under such circumstances. We checked responsible sources — not his home, of course, and determined in three or four minutes that the story had no foundation.

Then we called the woman who had called us, got her straightened out, and asked her to telephone the woman who had misinformed her. "Ask her to put a stop to the story by making a second call to everybody she has told it to," we suggested. Naturally, we didn't expect her to do it, but at least we got the remark out of our system.

This was by no means an unusual case, it happens all the time. Not long ago we walked into a certain local business establishment and the proprietor informed us that one of the town's leading citizens had dropped dead. Dubious, since it's our business to keep close tab on tragedy, we said, "Well, there's one way to find out in a hurry." Picking up the telephone, only inches away, we rang the "dead" man's phone. He answered quite cheerfully on the very first ring, so we hung up for want of something to say.

Less than ten percent of the stories we hear tossed around by persons who don't bother to check their facts are true. Any newsman will agree he spends as much time determining that stories have no foundation as he does writing about things that actually happen.

The next time someone tells you something sensational, ask him where he got his information. If he or she hedges, or you have the feeling that the informer is reckless or foolish or both, get confirmation before you pass it along.

This little poem might get you in the right frame of mind:

GOSSIP TOWN

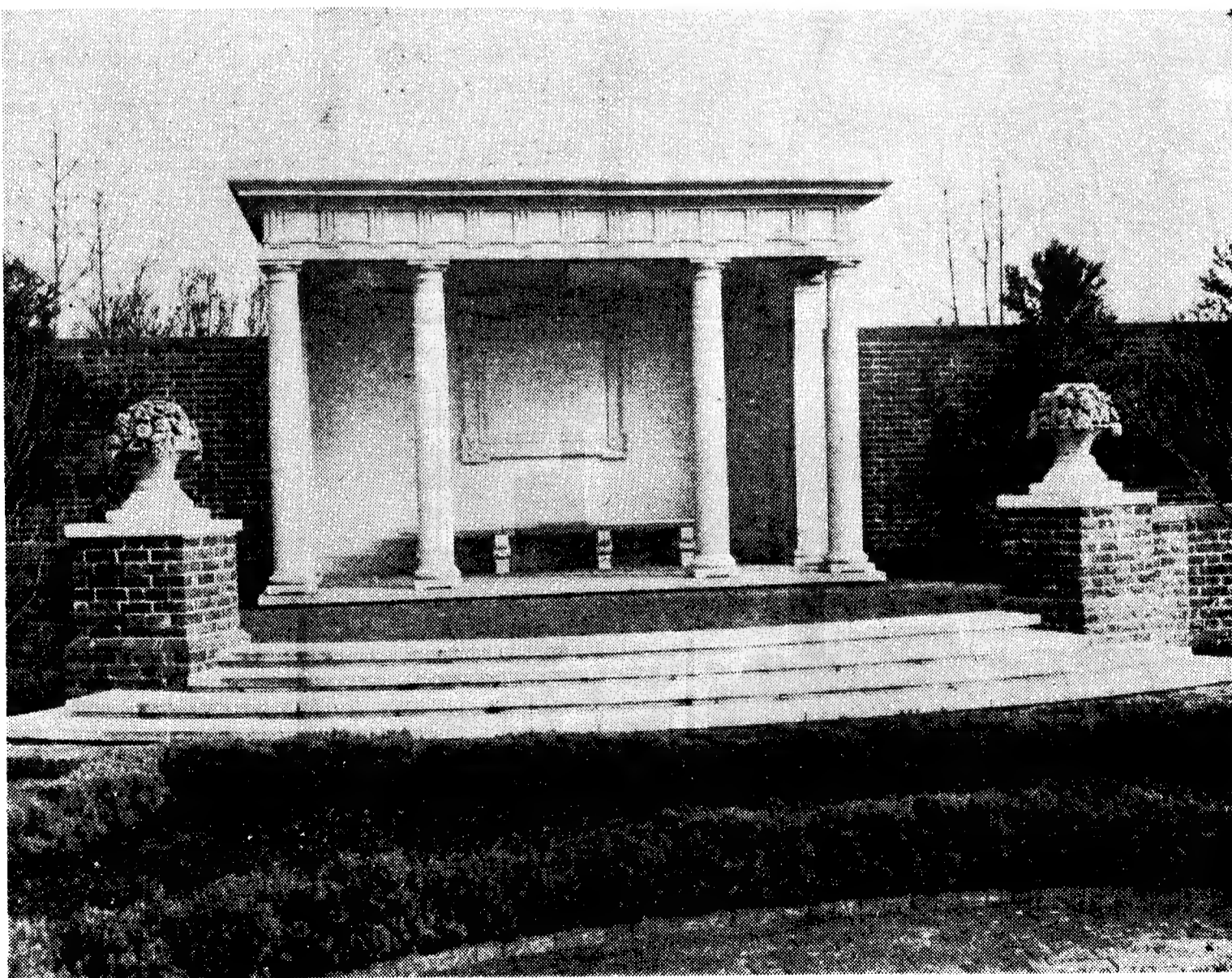
Have you ever heard of Gossip Town,
On the shores of Falsehood Bay,
Where Old Dame Rumor, with rustling gown,
Is going the livelong day?
It isn't far to Gossip Town,
For people who want to go,
The Idleness train will take you down,
In just an hour or so.
The Thoughtless road is a popular route,
And most folks start that way,
But it's steep down grade: if you don't look out,
You'll land in Falsehood Bay.
You glide through the valley of Vicious Folk,
And into the tunnel of Hate,
Then crossing the Add-to-bridge, you walk
Right in to the city gate.

The principal street is called They-Say,
And I've Heard is the public well,
And the breezes that blow from Falsehood Bay
Are laden with Don't-You-Tell.
In the midst of the town is Telltale Park,
You're never quite safe while there,
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TAKING NO CHANCES—Pictured here is one of New Bern's enterprising squirrels. Right now, winter seems a long way off, but he is fattening up for the cold days ahead, and storing up all the food in sight. Judging by his frenzied

activity, we can look for low temperatures on many a frigid morning before spring time arrives once more.—Photo by Billy Benners.



IMPRESSES VISITORS—Tourists are intrigued by everything they find when they roam through historic Tryon Palace, but their enthusiasm isn't confined to the Palace itself. They consider this memorial in the Maude Latham

Garden a fitting tribute to a native New Bernian whose generosity made the famed restoration possible.—Photo by John R. Baxter.