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This has been a sad week for those of us who were privileged to claim Irvin Verrone as a friend. His death removed from the local scene a man who had contributed much to a community he had adopted years ago as his own.

Fate has a way of leading all of us into strange paths. But for World War II, and service in the Marine Corps for him, Irvin would no doubt have lived out his days without ever seeing New Bern, or probably even hearing of it.

Instead, he and his equally congenial wife elected to make our town their home. It has often been said that only those born in this historic city are ever classed as honest to goodness New Bernians.

Many outsiders—including some of the Marines who fought side by side on foreign soil with Verrone—have insisted that New Bern is a cold and hostile place. Irvin didn't find it so.

He wore no chip on his shoulder, when he moved into town unknown and uninvited. The most conspicuous thing about him, right from the start and to the very brink of the grave, was a smile as disarming as any we've ever been exposed to.

Verrone was breezy, and had a boyish enthusiasm that found expression in numerous worthwhile undertakings. Active in the scout movement, he was perhaps proudest of the fact that each of his three sons attained the rank of Eagle.

He loved sports, and it was his good fortune to have youngsters who distinguished themselves as athletes at New Bern High school. Nowhere will we miss him more on future nights than at ball games, here and in neighboring towns.

Masonry had a special place in Irvin's life. He was active in Doric Lodge, New Bern Scottish Rite Consistory, and Sudan Shrine Temple, and when we say he was active we mean he worked unhonored and unsung for the fraternal groups he was happily a part of.

This editor will remember Irvin Verrone for many things. Near the top of the list is the genuine affection and tender respect he had for his aging and ailing stepfather. Theirs was a truly beautiful association. Now they are both gone to that temple not made by hands, eternal in the heavens.

Knowing Irv as we did, we feel sure he would have jocularly scoffed at lines such as these that place him in a favorable light. Undoubtedly, the man had faults and failings, but somehow they escaped our notice.

His death shouldn't have been a shock to any of us. What made it so was the brave manner in which he had followed normal pursuits after recovering partially from critical illness. He simply made us forget that he was living on borrowed time.

Long ago, in a fifth grade speller, this writer read a saying that peculiarly remained in his memory. "Cowards die many times before their death," it reminded us, "the valiant taste of death but once."

To a small boy, not too well versed in the ramifications of seasoned philosophy, the meaning of the words wasn't exactly clear. If we hadn't learned their significance by now,

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WAY BACK WHEN—Here is another of The Mirror's rare photographs. Believed to have been the third grade class of 1898 at New Bern Public Schools, the group includes Charlie Coplon, Rodman Guion, John Watson and Lester Jacobs. If you're in your seventies,

you also may recognize yourself or someone else about your age. Judging by some of the mischievous expressions, converting these kids into model pupils was a real challenge.



THEY GOT HIM—Any Mirror reader who identifies these gallant gents and gracious ladies wasn't born yesterday. However, as is usually the case, somebody is bound to come up with most or all of the names. We looked at the ancient photograph several times

before we discovered that the couple standing in the foreground had a fox suspended in mid-air between them. You'll find it just below the little girl's beaming countenance.