

Through
THE
Looking
Glass

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Anyone who reads The Mirror knows that we adore Neta Whitty, Mattie Turnbull and Ethel Cook. Together, since childhood, they've shared collectively 250 years of youthful living.

Maybe you're supposed to treat people with gentle dignity when they're well along in their eighties. For the life of us, we can't behave in a subdued manner around these gals. It's more fun, for them and us, to kid with the three incessantly.

We'll defy you or anybody else to produce a man, woman or child with a keener sense of humor than theirs. Instead of dreading Father Time, they impishly wink at that solemn gentleman, and would, we dare say, like to engage him in a game of leap frog or hide and go seek.

At a recent bull session with the vivacious trio in Williams Restaurant, Ethel and Mattie were teasing Neta about her fairly recent trip to Craven County Hospital for surgery.

"She behaved something awful after the operation," Ethel tattled while her warm brown eyes sparkled like a neon sign. "Bless goodness, she told Dr. Charlie Hall Ashford he wasn't as smart as he thought he was, and who did he think he was anyhow?"

Mattie confirmed this report on Neta's post-surgery condemnation of the physician. Neta actually has no recollection of the tongue lashing she administered, but in our presence she readily pleaded guilty as charged.

"I've been apologizing to him ever since," she said. "I've got nothing but praise for him, and everything I said about him is just opposite from the way I really feel."

Incidentally, if you think we're telling tales out of school, Neta gave us permission (with no arm twisting) to share the story with you. Her willingness is characteristic of her limitless capacity to laugh at all things, and most especially at herself.

You may be sure that Dr. Ashford took no offense at the brisk verbal spanking. He is used to unusual behavior when patients are ill. Besides, Neta has been a friend of his since he wore his first pair of diapers.

Mattie, during the aforementioned bull session, admitted that she too had an out of the ordinary experience when she was a hospital patient some time ago. It consisted of a dream that hasn't faded yet.

"I could see Frank Ballard (Willis-Ballard Funeral Home) standing by my bed with a casket. I told him I was still breathing, and said I hated to make him wait but I wasn't ready to go. I asked him to just be patient."

It had to be a dream. Frank (one of our dearest friends) shares with us the fervent hope that not only Mattie, but Neta and Ethel, will live forever and a day. So far the odds look pretty good.

Newspaper editors pick up an assortment of enemies from the millions of words they write, but fortunately they also acquire some wonderful friends who forgive them for human fallings.

Believe us, there aren't enough enemies in the world to offset the rare privilege of

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BEAMING A MESSAGE—Girl Scout Troop 190, sponsored by New Bern's Centenary Methodist Church, made sure that everyone within range bought cookies during the organization's annual sale. Smiling their thanks are (front row) Sheila Buck, Princess Haddock, Elaine English, Angela Haddock, Betty Rakes, Louvenia Brinkley, Karen Stocks, Joni Howard, Vickie

Harrell, Deborah Romanus, Betty Ann Cox and Janet Anderson. Back row, Victoria Saretto, Leah Boyd, Jeannie Brite, Carter Willis, Catherine Holt, Ruth Anderson, Mrs. James Brinkley (Leader), Rhonda Walker, Sharon Schyser, Vickie Potter and Wendy Marie Wetherington. Susan Aster and Lisa Courter were absent.—Photo by Wooten-Moulton.



GRAND OPENING—Spring brings flowers everywhere, but in no town are they appreciated more than in our mother city of Bern, Switzerland. The attractive window display seen here, supplemented by frescoed figures on the exterior wall, is duplicated along many

streets. Like New Bern, the Swiss capital has rivers and bridges, and a clock tower. And like New Bern, it blends the old with the new—preserving history and seeking progress.