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The recent stir in scientific circles, over the definite possibility of determining a baby's sex prior to birth, reminds us of strategy once confided to us by Dr. Harvey Wadsworth.

He had a sure fire method. When an expectant mother first came to his office, he would predict that her offspring would be a boy. Then he would make a notation on her card for his files, which she of course didn't see, that indications were it was going to be a girl.

If the baby turned out to be a boy, the good doctor smiled knowingly, and if the infant happened to be a girl, he told the mother she must have misunderstood him, and showed her the notation on the card.

Another of our favorite New Bern physicians of the past, Dr. Oscar Kafer, was also an interesting fellow to chat with. Noticing his infant son, Bill, with his paw rammed in his mouth, we asked Oscar what kind of advice he gave parents who came to him with a thumb-sucking problem. "Firs'," he said, "I hide Bill behind the door."

During one of our bull sessions, Dr. Kafer recalled how, very early in his career, he made the mistake of practicing dentistry. Answering a rural call, he found the man who summoned him agonizing over a very painful tooth. The tortured patient begged Oscar to yank it out, and fetched a pair of pliers.

The kind hearted physician against his better judgment, finally gave in. Imagine his dismay when the man, now sporting a conspicuous vacancy in the midst of his choppers, said, "Thank you Doc, but you got the wrong one."

It just goes to show you that some of the problems confronting those trained to ease and heal aren't fully covered in medical school. Doctors are paid handsomely for their services, or so it seems to us, but like some of their patients they are subjected to a lot of unpleasantness.

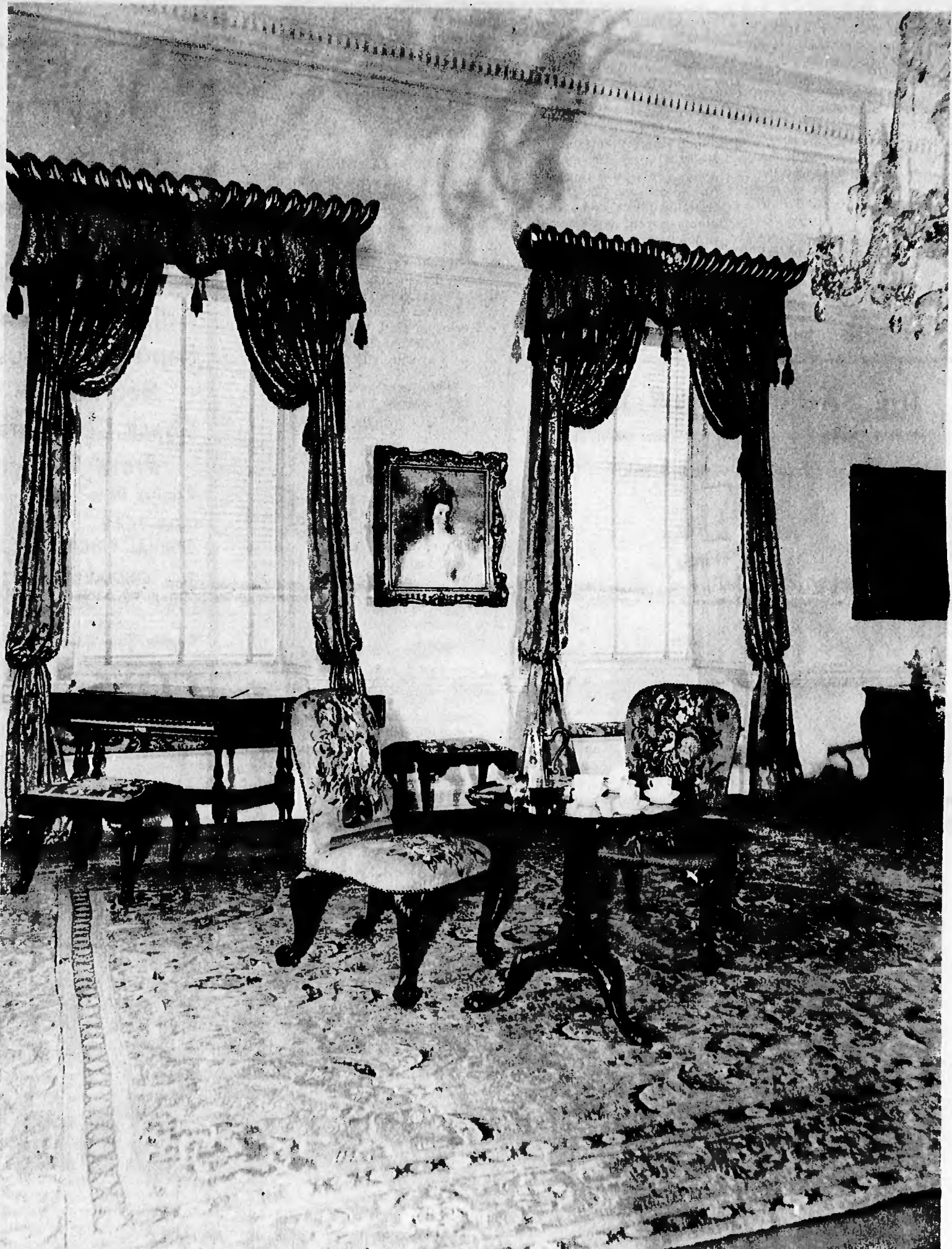
Particularly offensive are a good many of the intoxicated individuals brought into emergency rooms after they have sustained minor, less frequently, major injuries in automobile accidents. The typical mean drunk, they use objectionable language and are insulting to doctors, nurses and orderlies trying to help them.

We have great admiration for New Bern doctors, living and dead, who have impressed us during our 40 years as a newsman with their handling of accident cases. The general public will never know the shining hours it was necessary for a single physician to give quick assistance to several seriously injured persons.

It is simply impossible for Craven County hospital to have immediately available at all hours of the day and night a staff of doctors sufficient to cope ideally with a major tragedy involving a large number of victims. No other small town institution can do it, and even the largest hospitals have a grave problem if catastrophe strikes.

This inescapable situation is just one more reason why

(Continued on Page 8)



EVERYONE ADMIRES IT — Tourists visiting New Bern's Tryon Palace always comment favorably on the parlor, with its priceless authentic furnishings of the Colonial period. The spinet, waiting for the touch of a musician's fingers, was fashioned by Thomas Hitchcock in England, back in 1720. The parlor, of course, is just one of many beautiful rooms that greet the eye within the carefully restored structure, and for those intrigued by lovely gardens the Palace

grounds are a sight to behold. Since completion in 1959, the historic reminder of North Carolina's early days has attracted 303,877 visitors from the 50 states and 46 foreign countries. That total, through 1968, is mounting daily. Even so, thousands of New Bernians, some of whom insisted that the Palace would never hold appeal for outsiders, are yet to darken its doors. Such local apathy for landmarks is common throughout America.