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After many years of public speaking, here and out of town, we're seldom surprised at audience reaction.

However, an eighth grade boy at Briarwood, one of New Bern's private schools, really got to us the other night, following a "commencement address" delivered to his class.

He walked up to us and said, "You made a good talk." Then he paused and added, "It wasn't half as bad as I thought it would be." Remembering our own distaste for graduation oratory, we understood the message.

Any oldster, who is called upon to speak to the young, faces a challenge. The one mistake you can't afford to make is to underestimate their intelligence. Some of them know almost as much as they think they know.

In contrast, the warmest and most appreciative reception we've ever experienced came from a convention of North Carolina senior citizens. They were obviously on our side from the beginning, God bless them.

Not that those delightful youngsters at Briarwood weren't responsive. As soon as they discovered that they wouldn't have to endure a weighty lecture, the rest of the way was easy going.

Kids, and they'll hate us for calling them that, don't like to be talked down to. If a speaker is to reach them, it has to be done on their level, not his. You have to do it naturally too, pretence won't accomplish it.

Some of the stuff we dished out to them was pretty far fetched, like telling them that it was our distinction to be the smartest one in the third grade, both years we were in it.

And we told how, all the way through school, this editor was the only member of his class who never got one of his drawings put up on the blackboard, the windows, or the wall.

When it was parents day, the classroom was adorned with crayoned tulips, turkeys, and Pilgrims, and what all, but ours never made it. No wonder we sought recognition as a writer shortly after learning the alphabet.

One morning, in the fifth grade, the teacher we had at Central School said, "Today, everybody is going to draw an orange. Everybody meant us too, but we knew in advance what the result would be.

She took up all the drawings, and graded. When we got ours back, it had a zero marked on it. "I don't think I deserved a zero," we told her. "I don't think so either," she replied, "but that's the lowest mark I could give you."

Then, fibbing, we told the Briarwood eighth graders about the time we got caught cheating in the fourth grade. "Tell me how you found out," we advised the teacher, "and I'll tell you if I was."

Agreeing, the teacher said she noticed that on the test our first five answers were exactly like the very smart little girl who sat in front of us. This aroused her suspicion,

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New Bern-Craven County Public Library



ONCE UPON A TIME—Our thanks to J. Harper Wetherington of Jasper, who has come up with this old photo of four well remembered physicians and the staff of trained nurses at St. Luke's Hospital. To your left are Dr. Raymond Pollock and Dr. Robert D. V. Jones. To your right are Dr. N. M. Gibbs and Dr. Joseph F. Patterson. Sorry, we can't identify the nurses, but, as it almost always happens, someone among the Mirror's readers will set us straight. Harper doesn't know the age of the picture, but our guess is it is between 50 and 60 years mild. Those white uniforms, extending to the

ankles, and those attached collars worn by Dr. Jones and Dr. Patterson, establish the photograph as a relic of the not too recent past. St. Luke's, in its day, was regarded as one of the better hospitals in eastern North Carolina although it lacked many of the facilities now available at institutions throughout the Old North State. As all New Bernians know, the building still stands at the northwest corner of Broad and George, and provides much needed space for various Craven County services.