

There's no use dreading frost this year. Winter hit us the last part of July. It just didn't get cold or defoliate the trees. What we are waiting for now is the temperature change. The growing season is over, and has been for two months. This is actually nothing more than an uncomfortable intermission between the seasons.

I did overlook reporting a weather change in September. On the afternoon of the 24th, a big dark brown whirlwind passed through and around the backdoor of the ranch house. Bread wrappers were scattered in the yard; inside of the house was so thoroughly invaded that dead grass was hung on the light fixtures and stuck in the cobwebs in the ceilings.

The lady that cooks for us thought the cowboys had tracked the grass in her kitchen. Without preparing a case, I pointed out to her that the lecture she gave them last year for tracking in mud and corral residue had made them more careful of cleaning their boots than those far eastern folks are of taking off their sandals before they enter their holy temples. Under ordinary circumstances, I wouldn't bet that a cowhand could be trained to hang a dish towel back on a 20 penny nail, but I happened to hear the cook tell them about cleaning their boots and I knew they hadn't forgotten that session.

I never have been one to sell the power of women short, cooks or non-cooks. The reason I think that Miss Emily Post got in the table manner teaching racket was because she had had some luck as an amateur at bluffing some old kids into using a napkin instead of the back of their hands.

I have heard but not believed that men make the best school teachers. If that is true, then the scars along the back of my neck from taking too many cuts from straight edge ruler in the third grade must be my imagination.

I know after I got married to Child Who Sits in the Sun, I got another education. She gave me several pointers in conduct that had been omitted in my school years.

Indian squaws, like I've told you before, speak in parables and act out messages. For example, when it came time for her to tell me that playing pool until midnight was unacceptable, she sawed a straight mark in the butt of my cue at the exact place that my right thumb hung against the wood. During the night (and it was on the same night) she painted an angry red gash on my thumb that matched the mark on the cue.

In those days, I was slow to catch on. One more time I stayed out late, the next morning. On the mirror above the lavatory in the bathroom, there was an imprint of an open hand with the thumb severed at the lowest joint. From then on, I don't guess I've seen the lights come on over a pool table, unless I was away from home.

Speaking of her reminds me that last week was her birthday. Nowadays she celebrates birthdays the same as her white-eyed buddies do, but even with the new customs, the savage in her will surface.

I had no chance of remembering it was her birthday. The big roping up at Post, Texas was barely over, the posters were already up for November steer roping in San Angelo, and Goat Whiskers the Younger had invited me on an elk hunt. What I'm trying to say is that I was a mighty busy man.

As important as all that was it wasn't an excuse for forgetting her birthday. I was sitting at a typewriter exactly like I'm sitting at the typewriter now when she slipped up behind me and threw a blanket over my head. She spun the desk chair so fast that I fell to

the floor. Last I remember she was kicking me in the ribs and rolling the blanket tighter at the same time.

So you can say what you want to about men making good teachers. I am going to get that old gal yet. But as a little insurance against the falls, I am going to mark her birthday on the calendar. I sure wouldn't call that a fair way to fight, would you?