



TEACHIN' ARITHMETIC

THE kids are goin' back to school all over the country which, if I was a school teacher, would be reason enough to wonder if I was in a rut.

You see, a mama an' papa get older every year an' the kids do likewise. But if you are teachin' the third grade, every September you look out at 30 or 40 nine-year-olds just the same.

There they are, scrubbed an' hopeful. Maybe some are only hopeful they won't have to learn nothin', but if I remember right, when you are nine you are just plain hopeful, without goin' into particulars.

My missus' sister was a school teacher until she discovered that third graders wasn't gettin' any older an' she wasn't gettin' any younger. So she moved over to the parent side of the Parent-Teachers Association.

"Mildred," I say to this sister-in-law the other day, "how old is your boy, Pete?"

"Eight," Mildred tells me. "Nine next month."

I WENT out in the yard to talk things over with young Pete an' we fell to discussin' the educational system. He thinks there is room for improvement.

"Uncle Wally," Pete says. "I would like my teacher better if she knew what she was talkin' about!"

"How do you mean?" I ask him.

"Well, she will say, 'Now we will say our sixes,'" he explains. "Then we say six times one, six times two — just like that. The other day I asked her, six what?" Pete says. "An' she raps on her desk an' tells me to pay attention."

"I guess you got her rattled," I tell him.

"Well, I think when somebody says six times you ought to know what they mean, don't you?"

I am a little rattled myself by now but just then the back door flies open an' Mildred calls out: "Pete I've called you six times an' if you don't get in here—"

"See, Uncle Wally," Pete tosses over his shoulder as he starts movin', "when my mama says six times, we both know what she means. She means 'this is the last time before I come after you with a hairbrush.'"

— WALLY BOREN





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