

that she, the stern foe of unpunctuality, would be at least ten minutes late at school, and without the shadow of an excuse!

Down the long, windy street hurried a guilty figure; past the deserted hill, so lately black with coasters; past the ice slide, freshly etched with nails of little boots; past the village centre where the row of waiting farm horses stopped browsing their posts to look, and the dogs came out from under the waggons to bark at her. Now, there only remained the gauntlet of School Street, with wondering eyes at the windows, which Miss Dixon did not see, because her own were fixed on the swaying tree shadows that crossed her path.

At last she climbed the school-house stairs, and stood before the door marked Number Eight.

"Poor Batty McLean!" she sighed, with her hand on the door-knob, "I suppose *I* am going to be looked at now."

Not at all. Here were long rows of young students so utterly absorbed in the pursuit of knowledge that not one seemed to be aware of her presence. Such intensity of application had not been seen in Number Eight before.

For a moment only; then a dimpling smile ran along the ranks, and fifty pairs of eyes asked Miss Dixon what she was going to do about it.

"I haven't a word to say for myself, children," she said. "What I said this morning was every word true. But I'm *very* proud of Number Eight." How the smile broadened at that!

A little talk followed about their ability to govern themselves and her trust in them. When it was over, Arthur Niles, who was a privileged character, raised his hand and said in his half-roguish, half-deprecating way:

"But, Miss Dixon, don't you think you ought to put down a tardy-mark?"

"Yes, indeed, Arthur, and you shall all stay while I learn—"

"No'm, we'll excuse you this time," chorused Number Eight, with a little laugh at the end.

"You always stay, you know," said Alice Miller. "Wouldn't it be a little more different to take us skating on the pond in the woods where the evergreens grow?"

"I think I shall remember, Alice, and I'm sure you will, but if the lessons go well, we will see."

Then Miss Dixon stepped from the bar to the rostrum, and Number Eight was itself again. But, at recess, she went to Batty McLean, who was engaged with the digits and the digits reversed, which still refused to "prove."