

school-room reached, Mildred's courage began to depart with uncomfortable speed. Scattered in groups about the grounds were such handsomely dressed boys and girls, that her own clothes, which had seemed so excellent, suddenly became shabby; but worse than all were the words she had just overheard from two of her school-mates. Fortunately the school bell soon rang, and after a while Mildred became so interested in the lessons, the pain at her heart was somewhat deadened. But when the luncheon bell rang and the other children trooped out to enjoy their lunch and games under the trees, she remained at her desk swallowing her bread and butter and a few tears at the same time.

As the hour for final closing drew near she thought, with an intensity of pain which only a child's uncalloused heart can feel, if she could only in some way escape the prying eyes of the whole school, how happy she would be. Those wretched patches on the little boots that no amount of blacking would conceal were the most trying things to bear. At last the dreadful moment came when she had to take her place with the rest and march out of the school-room. Once outside, her agony was intensified; for the girls stood in groups apparently waiting for her.