

heavy borrower of trouble tortured herself thus: "Ten sessions this week—forty-eight children—four hundred and eighty chances for tardy-marks—Oh me!"

It was much the same among the children. "I dreamed I was late and *they all looked at me!*" sobbed a little girl one night, as she woke in a fright; and less sensitive youngsters dreaded that look, especially when it was accompanied by the pointed and energetic singing of "Oh, where have you been, Tardy Boy, Tardy Boy?" or "Tardy Tommy came to school."

"All here but Batty McLean," said Miss Dixon, on this December morning. "Can any one tell me about him?"

"He's 'way down by the bridge, but he's a-running," announced Charley Cole, who sat by the window.

"Only two minutes more!" sighed Miss Dixon.

"The scholars in Number Nine do be all the time singing:

" 'Number Eight,
, Always late,' "

scowled Nora Kelly.

"I've heard something like:

" 'Number Nine
Feels so fine,' "

on this side the fence," smiled the teacher. The children smiled back. "It's

" 'Number Ten
Can't do it again,' "

they said; and then they all watched the door where Batty would enter in silence.

The minutes went by, and the great bell struck nine and ended hope. Three seconds later Batty McLean threw himself at the stairs, and somehow reached the school-room door with a pounding heart and an aching chest.

He was twelve years old, and small for his age. He had shaggy red hair, quick blue eyes, and a plucky, freckled face. He was an odd little figure, in his outgrown belted jacket and new, long trousers which allowed a size or two for growth; but he did not look at all like the limp creature who usually trails behind occasion.

"Well, Batty?" demanded the teacher.

"Had to go to some place!" panted Batty.

"I'm afraid you did not get up early. Wouldn't rising half an hour earlier have brought you back from your place in season?"