

THE COUNTY SCHOOL

Characters—Miss Phillips teacher; Mr. Johnson supervisor; Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Jones; Scholars—Sarah Smith, Eliza Parker, Susie Jones, Pat Smith, Mary Johnson, Henry Brown, Jimmy Harris.

Act I—Scene I

The scene is in a county school-house. It is the first day of school and there is a new teacher. There is only one door to the room, through which the children all try to come at once. The teacher is neatly dressed and well cultured. She is much shocked at the way the children behave.

Teacher—Will the class come to order, please?

Jimmy—We ain't never had no order yet.

Teacher—I will now get your names and classify you. What is your name?

Sarah—Sarah Anne Elizabeth Alexandria Smith.

Teacher—My heavens! How old are you?

Sarah—I wuz eight years old the middle of last March and I will be nine years old the middle of next March.

Teacher—Naturally you will, and how old are you?

Eliza—I'm six years old.

Teacher—You are too young to be in this class.

Eliza—No, I ain't neither, my ma said if I wuzn't left in this here class that you wouldn't be here long.

Class—(All speaking at once and making a great noise). Yes'mum she's in this class. You'd better let her alone cause her ma, she's a cutter.

Teacher—Oh well, I suppose it doesn't matter.

Now, what is your name?

Susie—My name's Susie.

Teacher—Susie, what? What is your maiden name.

Susie—What made my name? Well now I ain't never heard 'o that before.

Teacher—I mean your last name.

Susie—Well if you must know my name's Susie Angelline Annabelle Jones. I wuz named fer my pa's ole sweetheart.

Teacher—You are next, what is your name? Something dreadful I know.

Pat—Saint Patrick Eliza Paul

Peter Smith. I wuz borned on St. Patrick's Day; that's where I got part of my name.

Teacher—What is your age?

Pat—I'm jest a dozen.

Teacher—This class may take their seats. Will the arithmetic class please come forward? Won't the class please be quiet, I cannot keep my mind on my work.

Pat—Who ever heard of anybody keeping their mind on their work? I try to keep mine in my head.

(The class all giggles at this)

Teacher—You need not try to be so smart.

Pat—Well now, jest listen at her. My ma and pa tells me to be as smart as I can.

Teacher—Now that the class has quieted down perhaps I can understand you. How old did you say you were?

Mary—I ain't never said yit.

Teacher—Tell me your age.

Mary—I think I'm a quarter of ten ain't I Pat?

Pat—Be blessed if I know. Why don't you keep up with the time?

Mary—(Crying) Teacher make him tell 'cause he knows. Ma told him 'fore we left this morning.

Pat—She didn't neither. There you go telling more stories on me.

Teacher—You children, be quiet. I shall not allow this noise in the school rooms.

Pat—But pa lets us fight it out at home.

Teacher—Be quiet, your name next.

Henry—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Brown. Pa named me that 'cause he said I'd be a great man some day.

Teacher—Oh dear! I will take the algebra class next. Susie, what do you know about algebra?

Susie—I don't know nuthin'.

Teacher—Then what are you in this class for?

Susie—Cause grandpap said you must know algebra if ye had a good education.

Teacher—Mary, do you know anything about algebra?

Mary—Nuthin' except it's a whole mess of N's and Y's and there ain't nuthin' to none of 'em.

—Teacher—That will do. I see that you children have never had much training. You may have your recess now.

Scene II.

This is the last day of school and the children are all dressed in their best clothes, which are very old and comical looking. They are to present a program.

Teacher—If there is anyone here who wishes to examine the children they may do so.

Mr. Johnson—I should. Will the arithmetic class come forward please? (after much confusion the children take their places) Mary, what is a fraction?

Mary—It is two numbers, one on top of the other with a line in between.

Mr. Johnson—Sarah, name the terms of a fraction.

Sarah—Summer and winter.

Mr. Johnson—You well know that is wrong; you should not be in this class.

Mrs. Smith—How dare you? My Sarah's as smart as the rest of 'em younguns.

Mr. Johnson—Oh alright, I didn't mean to offend you. Susie, how do you subtract fractions?

Susie—Take away one from the other.

Mr. Johnson—Yes, but explain the process.

Susie—Aw, I don't use no process I work 'em in my head.

Mrs. Jones—See, I told you my Susie wuz smart.

Mr. Johnson—That will do. I will now take the history class. Who discovered America Pat?

Pat—George Washington, of course.

Mr. Johnson—Fine, now who was Sir Walter Raleigh.

Jimmy—Aw, I don't know but I think he wuz the first man to sail around the world.

Mr. Johnson—Your efficiency in answering my questions shows that you have had excellent training. We will now hear the recitations.

Teacher—First we will have a "welcome" by Eliza Parker.

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