

Batty considered a short space, smiling queerly. "Yes'm, p'r'aps."

That smile, with its faint suggestion of mockery, killed Miss Dixon's pity for the boy's evident exhaustion; and as Batty sank into his chair, she arose from hers and gave an eloquent impromptu address on the subject of punctuality. She pointed out to the children the dangers to which neglect of this virtue would expose them through life. She explained the reasons for the school rules, and dwelt upon the selfishness of letting the reputation of the school suffer through the neglect of one.

The children listened approvingly, and wondered what Batty McLean was thinking behind his elbow.

There was a reaction of pity for the culprit, however, when she wrote two lines of figures on the board :

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

and pronounced the horrible sentence, "Multiply the digits by the digits reversed, and prove the result."

"That is hard lines for careless Batty," reflected Miss Dixon, "but it's good practice for him, and I must make an example."

Still, she felt a little remorseful at recess when Batty, turning his back to the window which commanded the playground, ranged "the digits and the digits reversed" upon his sticky slate.

"You need not do it all now, Batty."

"I'd rather get it over," he said; and his pencil clicked until the other children came back rosy from their snowball frolic.

When Miss Dixon went home at noon, she left Batty still manfully doing battle with the digits and the digits reversed.

"I'd rather get it done," he again replied to her advice to seek the fresh air; and an uneasy memory of his flushed face haunted her home-ward walk, her hasty dinner, and the half-hour of "per centing" which followed.

And now comes the almost unbelievable part of this truthful story. It had never happened before; it never happened again. But on this fated day Miss Dixon, who had worked late the evening before and was very tired, fell asleep over her pile of corrected papers; and while she dreamed of discovering an infallible device for the Suppression of Tardiness, the town clock struck its deep note, and all the school-bells responded.

With this Miss Dixon awoke with a great start; and saw