

began to assume a home-like air. How pretty the flowers looked in the vase, and how much the bright scarf improved the tone of the whole room. When the signal sounded for the pupils to enter, each boy and girl who crossed the threshold of the seventh grade received a smile and a nod of welcome as if the teacher had known him always. Looks of satisfaction began to creep into the eyes of the children, and one irresponsible whispered to his chum, "you bet she's a daisy."

Miss Firmlover made her pupils a nice little talk, at the close of which she asked how many had been neither absent nor tardy during the previous session. Two pupils rose. How brightly she smiled at them, and then she went on: "Our superintendent wishes to be very careful to have our attendance as good as we can possibly make it. Do you know, Charlie, how many days you attend school in the year?" "One hundred and eighty," answered Charlie.

"Yes, but how many solar days?" She showed them how to figure it out, and soon they learned that they could spend in school only ninety real days; that is, for every day they were in school they were out of school three days. She showed how much a day lost meant, and she did it in such a kind way that every pupil knew she meant it, and yet no one thought of her as scolding. "I am very anxious to have Superintendent Wiseman pleased with our room, and somehow I feel sure each one of you is going to help me to win his favor. How pleased I should be to have our room stand as high as any in the building in point of attendance."

The last thing she said at the close of school was: "How many of you will promise me that you will be sure to be here before the last bell rings to-morrow morning? If you are sick or obliged to be absent, please send me word, so I shan't be uneasy about you. I've something special to tell you in the morning." It had been such a happy day that everyone made the promise, and left school feeling that the year was to be bright and prosperous. Four boys hung bashfully around to offer to carry home Miss Firmlover's books; six girls made excuses to walk home with her. When Superintendent Wiseman met the merry group it did not take more than a passing glance for him to see that one of his new teachers had struck a responsive chord in the hearts of her pupils.

The next morning every seventh grade pupil was present except one, and this one was found to be sick. In large letters Miss Firmlover wrote on the board: "September 22. All on time. All present except Mattie Linn, who is sick."

"Now," with a smile, she said, "I want you pupils to help me keep the attendance roll. I shall

report to you every day, and when the superintendent comes in to know how we are getting on I'm going to call on Harold or Gertrude or some one else to tell him. We'll show him it is a partnership affair with us. I'm sorry Mattie is sick, but so glad we have not one tardy and only one absent. It will make me happy all day, for to confess a bit of secret to you, boys and girls, a tardy scholar always spoils the whole day for me; it makes me so sad I just can't get over it for a long time.

"That reminds me of what I was to tell you this morning. It is a story that begins in the good, old-fashioned way, 'Once upon a time.' Well, once upon a time, many, many years ago, a gallant knight rode up to a blacksmith shop; it was 8 o'clock, but the smithy was not opened. As the knight strode impatiently to and fro the smith appeared, doffed his cap and begged his Lordship's pardon for being five minutes late." But I have not the time to tell you the story, nor can I reproduce it with the skill and grace she told it; 'twas the old rhyme, you know:

For want of a nail the shoe was lost,
For want of the shoe the horse was lost,
For want of a horse the rider was lost,
For want of a rider the battle was lost,
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost,
And all for the want of a horse shoe nail.

She held the breathless attention of the class; when she closed you could have heard a pin fall in the room, and her words sounded positively solemn as she added; "See, my dear boys and girls, what came from the fact that one man was late in arriving at his post of duty. Only five minutes late, and yet what a calamity it brought upon his country."

Maybe you think she then pointed the "moral that adorned the tale," but she didn't. No, she was too wise for that. The regular programme was taken up, and nothing more was said of the story till ten minutes before school closed, when she asked a thoughtful boy what he meant by character; his definition led to a discussion, which under the teacher's guidance soon showed how character was built and the importance of good habits. You see how nicely she then brought in punctuality and the reason for the story told in the morning, but you cannot see how earnestly she looked into the eyes of her pupils as she told them how the tardiness of a single one would grieve her, as she showed that a teacher's duty was to help pupils build up a symmetrical character, that this was her aim.

Then she took from her desk some letters out from gilt paper; "I have here," she said, "a golden sign. See what it says: No tardy pupils in this room this year. Who will help me put it up this afternoon?"