

liable we are to do something we should not, and—let us all study on that half an hour, some day, and see what we can make of it.

He had two teachers, the priest and the military professor. It seemed as if everything was to be learned. There was arithmetic, he learned to make figures. A round, blue dot stands for one. Five of them make five, and 00000-0 (five and one) is six, and in that way it runs up to ten. If he wanted to say "twenty" he made a flag, and for forty he made two flags.

Just imagine such a multiplication table as this: Five times four is one flag. Flag times flag is one plume. Flag times plume is one purse! Let's see; a purse, then, would equal 8,000. Yes, and if he wanted to write 4,000 he would draw only half a purse. All the examples in their arithmetic were worked by such tables as these.

Then there were lessons in time. He had to learn that five days make a week, four weeks make a month, and eighteen months make a year; and as all that footed up only three hundred and sixty days, they threw in what they called the five unlucky days that belonged to no month, to fill up before they commenced a new year. And then he found another arrangement for doing what we do with our leap-year, for, once in fifty-two years they put in twelve and one-half extra days, which is something like setting the clock ahead when you find it is too slow by the town bell or the fire alarm.

He learned that this kind of calendar had been in use a long time, and was the result of careful study and calculation by the wise priests of the olden times; and, when he wanted to know how long, he counted up the bundles of reeds which represented centuries, and found that it had been in use over four hundred years. And all this, you must remember, was before San Salvador was discovered by Columbus. Then he had to study all about the naming of the years and the cycles. How, if this year was "one rabbit," next year would be "two cane," the third "three flint," the next "four house," and these four elements, representing air, water, fire, earth, would be thus repeated up to thirteen, and then they would commence at one again, so that the fourteenth year would be "one cane," &c., and in four of these cycles of thirteen they would reach a cycle of fifty-two years, or, as they called it, a "bundle," and as the twelve and one-half days additional would end one cycle of fifty-two years, at midday, and the next at midnight, they bundled two of these together and called it "an old age." The number fifty-two was an unlucky number, and these old Mexicans believed that at the end of a cycle of that number of years, at some time, the world would be depopulated, the sun put out, and, after death and darkness had reigned awhile, it would all begin afresh with a new race of people.

So, when a cycle or bundle was completed, all fires were extinguished and not rekindled during the five unlucky days. Household goods, which could no longer be of any service, dishes, household articles, etc., were broken; every one gave up all hope, and abandoned himself to despair while awaiting the expected ruin.

On the evening of the fifth day of sorrow, the priest gathered the people together in a procession and marched to a temple, about two leagues from the city. Here they would sit like bumps on a log until midnight, and then, when the constellation which we call the Pleiades came exactly overhead, the danger was over. Two sticks were rubbed together over the breast of a captive who had been selected for the sacrifice, until fire was produced by the friction, the funeral pile was lighted, the body burned, and messengers, many of whom could run long distances at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour, would light their torches and spread the joyful news of danger averted, while carrying the "new fire" into all parts of the empire. Then would follow a regular old-fashioned frolic, something like a centennial—a jollification few had ever seen and most would see but once in a lifetime. There must be no drunkenness, however; this was a high crime, in some instances punished by death. If the intemperate party, man or woman, was over seventy years of age, however, no notice was taken of it—they were old, and had rights and privileges not granted to younger members of the community.

Master M. had much to learn about deities. At the head of these stood one, infinite, supreme ruler, the "unknown God," and next beneath him came Tezcatlipoca, the "son

of the world," supposed to be the creator of the earth. Huitzilopochtli was the god of war, a sort of Mars, but with very much more name. Then there was a god of air, Quetzatcoatl, who controlled vegetation, metals, and the politics of the country. Here is something Master M. was taught to believe of him:

When this god, whom we will call Q., was on earth, vegetation was so wonderfully prolific that a single ear of corn was all a man could carry. Everything the people needed grew spontaneously. Cotton grew more beautifully tinted than the dyes of the present time could color it. Richest perfumes loaded temperate breezes, and everywhere the gaudiest-colored birds filled the air with most entrancing harmonies. Q. had some little difficulty, however, with the rest of the gods, and was obliged to leave his little paradise. When he embarked in his wizard snake-skin canoe on the shore of the gulf, he told his friends that his descendants would one day return and bless the land as he had done, and that they would be like him—tall, fine looking, with dark hair, white skins and flowing beards. Alas! this belief was in no small degree the cause of their ruin; for the invading Spaniards quite nearly answered this description of Q.'s descendants.

There were thirteen of the principal deities, as Master M. learned, each of whom required sacrifices more or less horrible. For instance there was the "soul of the world," I forget his other name. He must be propitiated now and then. A year before the fatal day, a tall, beautiful, well-formed, unblemished captive was selected to play the part of his god for one year. He must have all these qualifications to make the resemblance as perfect as possible. He was now treated as a god. Everything he could wish, everything it was thought could possibly conduce to his pleasure, comfort, or happiness, was furnished without stint. He slept on the softest of couches in the most gorgeous of chambers; his raiment was profuse and expensive, and the whole surroundings were, as far as possible, in keeping with his high and holy estate. Birds and music, flowers and rare perfumes pleased every sense, and everything, save liberty, was his. This happy-go-lucky sort of life continued until the day fixed for the sacrifice. Then joy gave way to sadness, pain, death! Stripped of his costly raiment, he was taken by a procession of priests to a royal barge, thence across a lake to a temple about a league from the city, where, as he mounted the weary steps of a huge edifice, he flung aside the garlands of flowers and broke the musical instruments which had been a joy to him in his past days. At the summit of the temple, in full view of the assembled multitude below, he was barbarously put to death by a priest, in order to propitiate the cruel god to whom the temple was dedicated. And Master M. was taught that the moral of all this savagery was, that human joys are transitory, and the partition between sorrow and happiness is a very thin one, or words to that effect.

Master M. learned that there were many other inferior gods, each of which had festivals, sacrifices, &c., proportioned to his rank and power; that nearly every hour of the day was dedicated to some god or other; but I cannot tell you all he learned of these strange deities.

He studied the history of the temples, and learned why they were four or five stories high with the stairs on the outside, and why he had to go entirely round the temple to find the next flight of stairs as he went up and down; and why each story was smaller than the next lower, and learned that some of these buildings were over one hundred feet square and as many feet high, and had towers forty or fifty feet high on their summits; and all about the everlasting fire which burned on the tops of these temples, and that there were so many of these that the whole country for miles round was always brilliantly illuminated.

I must pass over a long period in the life of Master M. with the mere remark that he graduated in both his military and religious classes with the highest honors, and acquitted himself to the most perfect satisfaction of both the alfalqui, or priest, and the teachcahs, which is nearly the same as our word teachers.

Master M. had, for a long time, cherished a hope that some day he might press the throne as king of Mexico. So, like the Yorkshire lad who begged salt of a stranger eating eggs near him, so as to have the salt ready in case any one should ask him to accept an egg, he prepared himself fully for

the possible emergency, and became not only a military general, but a leading alfalqui.

And then he married. I have not room to give you the whole picture, but here is the way it was done.

A lady whose position in society required her to negotiate the match, having previously made all the necessary arrangements, one evening hoisted the happy damsel on her back, and accompanied by four young women (I have drawn only one) each bearing a torch, headed the joyous procession and marched to the house of Master M., where she dropped her cargo of precious humanity. Then the alfalqui asked them if they were mutually agreed on matrimony, and of course they said "yes," when he proceeded to tie their clothes together. Then two old patriarchs and two good old grandmothers (one of each of which I have copied for you) delivered little sermons, suited to the occasion. The new couple walked seven times round a blazing fire, partook of a feast with their friends, heard a final sort of a "ninety-ninthly, and to conclude" parting word from the four old people, and then, just as all married people do, went to housekeeping, and having their own way as much as possible. One thing they could not do. There was no law of divorce to appeal to then; death was the only judge who could entertain the question of separation.

Master M. will now disappear, to re-appear as the Emperor. In the year "ten rabbits," or A.D. 1502, the monarch died, and the electoral college selected Master M. to supply his place. In the household of each monarch there was an electoral board of four nobles, whose duty it was, on the death of the ruler, to elect his successor from among the sons and nephews of the crown. Having done this, and so notified the successor, they selected four nobles to fill their own places, and vacated their electoral chairs. Master M. when waited upon to be notified of his election to fill his uncle's place, was very busy sweeping down the stairs in the great temple dedicated to the god of war!

Four years after becoming emperor, Montezuma, to appease the gods, made a sacrifice of a young gentleman captive by transfixing him with arrows. This, you see, was in the year "one rabbit." It is recorded that in this year the rats overran the country so completely that the inhabitants had to stand guard at night with blazing torches to prevent their devouring the grain sown in the fields.

With the last picture I take pleasure in introducing you to Master M. in his new position as Emperor of Mexico, seated in the royal halls.

For further particulars, read "The Conquest of Mexico," by Prescott.

JOE'S PARTNER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BABES IN THE BASKET," &c.

(National Temperance Society, New York.)

CHAPTER VIII.—THE BUSINESS OF THE FIRM.

Four years had passed quickly away. Ben White was at home for a college vacation. At his father's country-seat near a pretty Northern village, he was established, as happy a fellow as ever a glad parent was privileged to welcome.

It was Sunday morning. The first bell for church was ringing cheerily. After a rapid walk, Mr. White and Ben were almost in the shadow of the slender spire.

"We are a little early, after all," said Ben; "suppose we sit down awhile, here under the elm. How many good times I've had on this old seat!"

On the broad bench they all sat down. There were three in their little party. Ben had brought home a classmate with him, not one of his special intimate friends, but a poor lad from a far-away home, whom Ben had been afraid to trust to the chance companions and occupations of a collegiate town in vacation. Ben had found him sinking into dissipation, and had given him a friendly right hand to draw him toward better things. Now with a promise of riding, fishing and hunting enough to satisfy anybody, he had attracted his guest, resolved to spend his own vacation to get his young classmate steadily walking in a safe path.

"There's a funny sight!" said the visitor; "just look at that queer little freckled-faced

man, with a high hat on, and his tall wife taking his arm as if he were a king. Why, there isn't a ruffle or a wrinkle on her clean calico dress; she must have ironed it Sunday morning. And just see that little couple behind, aping the father and mother, taking arms, too! That tall, round-faced girl is a perfect picture, and the boy, he holds himself like an officer. He really looks quite martial. I am almost afraid of him!"

This silly speech did not provoke the expected laughter.

"I reverence that woman," said Mr. White soberly, "and that little man, he gave me once a lesson which I trust I shall never forget all the days of my life."

Ben did not stay to hear his father tell Harry Barber's story to the young visitor.

"How are you, partner!" cried Ben, as he gave Joe such a shake of the hand as almost made him scream in the midst of his joy. Ben had been first in gymnastics the last term, and his grip was like a blacksmith's.

Such warm greetings as were exchanged! Such a smiling and shaking of hands!

When this was all over, Joe said with a significant glance at the visitor, "You brought him down with you."

"Yes, we must keep him out of mischief," was the answer; "and your boy, Joe, the big butcher's lad, how does he come on?"

"First rate," said Joe, eagerly; "you'll see him this morning, in the second pew from the door. We are going to sit there with him. He's as steady as—as steady as you, partner," concluded Joe with a smile.

"Then the business goes on well," said Ben. "Tell him I've brought down a lot of nice books with me, and one, all about mutton and beef and poultry, I'll make him a present of. Mind you don't forget that. Good-bye. I'll see you in the morning, at the store. Good-bye."

"The store" was the favorite place of meeting for the men of the village. No bar attracted them there. It was a temperance store, where almost everything could be bought but what the drunkard craves.

Behind the store was a little reading-room, well supplied with daily papers and a few carefully selected books—a cool resort in summer, and an attractive place in winter evenings, with its glowing stove, cheerful lights, and attractive little Joe, the clerk, to wait upon the readers. A hobby of Mr. White's, the objectors called it, but they had to own, nevertheless, that it was a blessing to the village.

Here, Harry Barber, in a new home far from his old associates, had been established by Mr. White, and here he was leading an honest, industrious, Christian life.

Harry rarely spoke of his old habits, but sometimes when he saw a young man being gradually led into temptation, he would tell him the story of his evil courses, and of that awful night, when his own life and the future of the sinner stood so plainly before him. Such an interview a young man never forgot.

As for Joe he was openly for temperance, he said, he didn't care who knew it.

He and his partner had that for their private and special business, and went hand-in-hand in all their plans.

Now, at the church door they had been exchanging a few words about those who were just then their peculiar objects of interest.

And Kate Barber? She did indeed take her Harry's arm as proudly as if he had been a king! She treasured up no remembrance of the days of his humiliation. He was to her the dear husband who had triumphed over temptation, the Christian friend and beloved companion with whom she was walking heavenward, with a glad and thankful heart.

THE END.

IN RESPONSE to a circular not long ago addressed to all the wardens of our penitentiaries asking "What is your opinion as to the connection between strong drink and crime?" the answers returned all looked one way. Mr. Pollard, of Vt., did but echo all the general sentiment, though he put it more sharply than most when he said: "My opinion is that if intoxicants were totally eradicated, the Vermont State prison would be large enough to hold all the criminals of the United States."