

Mother Joe

HE had four children and a baby in arms. The names and ages of the children were respectively Anna Maria, aged 7; Minnie Kate, aged 6; Albert, aged 4½; Maud Harriet, aged 3, and the baby, Sarah Ellen, just turned 1 year.

He himself rejoiced in the name of Joseph Webber, and believed himself to be about 8, but his mother was never quite sure. They all lived at the top of a narrow, tumble down house, and Mrs. Webber always spoke of herself as a "widder." Her first husband had died "in 'ole Hengland," the second here.

Mrs. Webber got her living by charring, and as long as she was sober always managed to secure enough work, but she was an improvident, thriftless woman, and any extra money she might secure either went for drink or was spent on indigestible food, such as tinned salmon and pineapple or shell fish, which often made the poor baby ill for weeks later. She took little interest in her family, save now and then for a fit of maudlin sentiment over her orphans, but on the other hand was seldom violent except after an extra heavy bout of drinking, when the children carefully kept out of the way, being taken in and given shelter by kindly neighbors.

Her one idea of responsibility was to try to lock her family in before starting off for her work, "to keep 'em out of mischief," as she said, "for she wasn't goin' to have her Jimmy's children, rest his soul, brought up on the streets an' cap'n' low company!"

But since Joe had been 5 years old he had nearly always evaded this maternal forethought, which was not difficult, as his mother slept heavily, and before she could open her eyes and

"Well, sadly, "there'll be no one to mind yer if she does."

"Yah! oo wants mindin'? Go and put yer 'ead in a bag and keep it there! Come along, Annermiria, let's go for a walk in the park. We'll 'ave a good ole time, won't we?"

"Yer won't get a bit for yer dinner if yer do. But don't upset yerselves; there'll be more for Albert an' Maudie, 'Arriet and me!"

"Yah! bury yerself!" was the polite retort, as the young ladies disappeared round the corner. But Joe did not really feel uneasy, as he was convinced they had no real intention of stopping away from school.

"I won't let ma beat you. I'll bite 'er legs if she do!" a little voice said by his side. He looked down gratefully. It was Maudie Harriet.

"Yer allus was a good little un," he said; then added, with precocious knowledge, "but, then, they gen'rally is good when they's kiddies. It's when they gets older they gets so rough. I mind Minnikite and Annermiria jest like lambs."

"Like me?" asked Albert, looking up from his mud ples.

"Now, yer're jest a fat puddin' 'ead. Put yer cap on at once or I'll soon milke yer mind!"

The baby began to whimper, and he folded her close in his arms and kissed the little shriveled face. "Shoo, go ter sleep, Salrey Ellen," he whispered softly, "it's a long time 'fore yer'll grow up and git rough and saucy."

Some hours later and the children sat shivering at the top of the drafty stairs for their mother to come home and unlock the door.

"She's lite to-night," Anna Maria said, leaning over the broken down rail. But even as she spoke a heavy step came up the stairs. The children listened anxiously, and Joe at last observed:

"She 'asn't 'ed much. Guess we'll be 'er orphans to-night."

In a few moments a woman's heavy, bloated face appeared, followed by an unwieldy body.

"Lite ter-night," she said, rather thickly, feeling for her key. "O, well, turn over noo leaf ter-morrer."

When she had lit a lamp on the table, she sat down on the one sound chair and began to cry.

"Gimme me biby," she said at last; "me little orphan biby—me Jimmy's chile."

She fell to kissing it, and it woke with a feeble, peevish cry.

With an oath she pushed it from her, and Joe just caught it as it almost fell from her lap.

"Take it," she said, "there'll be better company ter-morrer."

He walked up and down until the child slept again with its tiny head against his neck, while the woman snored heavily in her chair. The early winter light was just filtering through the unshuttered window when Joe awoke and sat up. His mother had not slept in the bed. He blinked his eyes and looked towards the chair, but it was empty. With a little cry he sprang out of bed and rushed towards the door, but she had outwitted him this time, and it was locked.

That morning went slowly by, while the children fought and wrangled and the baby wailed and would not be comforted. Towards evening Joe was leaning out of the window showing the baby some sparrows fighting on an opposite roof, when there was a shrill scream behind him. He turned, and, to his horror, saw Albert standing shrieking, with a lighted newspaper in his hand.

"Let go, yer fool!" he shouted. The child let go his hold, and the lighted paper fluttered against some rotten clothing hanging against the wall, and the next moment the whole room seemed full of smoke and flames. Joe sprang to the door and kicked with all his might, but it would not yield to his puny efforts, and the smoke stifled him. There was no water in the room, and the woodwork had already caught and begun to crackle. He ran to the window and gazed out. By the side of the window on one side there was about four feet of broken stone ledge about a foot and a half wide; on the other side it had crumbled away.

"Git out of the winder on to this!" he shouted to Minnikite. She climbed on to the stone work as best she could and clung to the side like a little rat. Anna Maria followed, and Albert holding Maudie between them. There was no room for more.

A crowd had gathered below, and a man was trying frantically to kick down the stout oak door, which old Ell Mathews, the only other then inmate of the house, always locked when he went out. Joe watched him with a sickening fear in his heart and moistened his lips. The heat of the fire inside was scorching him, and black smoke came belching out above his head.

"I'm fallin'!" shouted Minnikite, shrill with agony. "I'm fallin'. O, Joe! Joe!"

The crowd heard her, and yelled hoarsely: "Hold on! The ladders are coming! Don't move! Hold the little one up!"

Albert and Maudie crouched huddled up together on the ledge, and kept their eyes fixed in almost despairing trust on Joe's face. Their breath came and went in quick, convulsive sobs.

"O, Joe! O—Joe!"

"It's all right," he said steadily. He had the baby in his arms, with a shawl well wrapped over its head to keep out the smoke. Next moment there was a yell from the crowd below.

"The hook an' ladder! Here it comes!"

"O, Gawd!" said Joe, between his closed teeth, "O, Gawd!"

But even as he spoke there came a blinding burst of smoke and flame, followed by one shrill scream of agony, when he could see distinctly again the whole ledge had broken away, and disappeared into the crowd below. He drew in his breath. The baby's shawl was already ablaze, and one of his legs had been scorched black in the fire. He clambered on to the sill while the crowd shrieked to him in despair.

"O, Gawd," said Joe. "If yer can, will yer ketch us? O, Gawd! O, Gawd!" and he hugged the baby closer.

"Leastw'y it's better'n burnin'," he whispered, and jumped.

But he with whom not "a sparrow falls to the ground without their father," had given his angels charge over them to keep them in all their ways, and they brought them to him. —Chicago Tribune.

LIFE IN THE SEA.

The Curious Things that Thrive in an Aquarium.

Mr. Spencer, the superintendent of the New York Aquarium, a few days ago was busying himself by picking a lot of sand fleas from a dipper and dropping them into a jar of anemones. As they fell into the water they straightened themselves out and then slowly dropped to the bottom, kicking as they fell. A few of them alighted on the body of an anemone, which promptly closed up. One, unfortunately, found himself, when he had settled, on the tentacles of one of the anemones. These began to serve the purpose for which they were bestowed upon the anemone, and the flea, or scud, suddenly found himself inside the capacious maw of the anemone, and the life was soon squeezed out of him.

"All is grist that comes to our mill," quoted Mr. Spencer. "These were on a lot of mussels which came in a little while ago I thought I would save them. There is life everywhere in the water. Look at this!" He held up a dozen mussels, held together by what appeared to be a vegetable growth. "That is an animal growth, known as sertularia," said he. "In this bunch you will find all sorts of animal life. There are scuds, or sand fleas, and rock crabs. Look!" He held up one of the valves of a mussel shell. On it was a sea anemone. "Notice that reddish coating, part of which has flaked off. Look at it closely. Doesn't it look like lace-work? That is the bryozoa coral, the lowest form of mollusk coral. You will find life on nearly everything that comes from the sea. Here's one of the rock crabs." He took out of the nest of mussels a little crab, about the size of one's finger nail, and dropped it into a jar of water. —New York Tribune.

"LOST MONDAY."

Popular Fete in Belgium the Origin of Which is a Mystery.

The first Monday after Epiphany is a fete day throughout Belgium. "Lost Monday" it is called here; exactly why no one seems able to explain. The origin of the fete is lost in the legends of the middle ages, but the modern acceptance of the day is certainly lost to no one here. Like Mardi Gras, Lost Monday is a day of general merrymaking; every cafe and restaurant in Brussels keeps "open house," and free fare is on hand for all patrons of the establishment, and as a matter of fact for many others as well who are not regular patrons.

On Black Monday, then, as it is ironically called by some of King Leopold's subjects not overenchanted with the day, the streets of Brussels are given over to the people, and the adventurous foreigner who, ignorant of the country's customs, ventures out is apt to find that the Belgian populace is no respecter of persons. On this day the shopkeepers, sighing behind their counters, find themselves compelled to hand over to their customers' servants a forced contribution, amounting to a certain percentage of the year's purchases, while the bakers, too, have a contribution to offer in the shape of cakes specially made for the occasion, and offered as gifts to their clientele.

In this manner, says the Brussels correspondent of the New York Times, the unique fete is perpetuated, though the calendar does not note in any particular manner the first Monday after Epiphany.

MAP OF SCANDINAVIA AND FINLAND.



SHADED PORTION SHOWS THE AREA AFFECTED BY FAMINE.

Wooden Menagerie Of an Ohio Man.

"Menagerie Farm," near Columbus, O., looks like a scene out of "Alice in Wonderland."

Hugh E. Jones is the owner and operator of the farm, and for years he has been hard at work with jackknife, saw and plane fashioning strange and wonderful creatures. Snakes that can not crawl, giraffes that have never looked behind them, wild boars with legs they can not bend and tails they dare not move, elephants with no taste for peanuts—such are the animals to be seen at Menagerie Farm.

Mr. Jones frankly admits he is responsible, but has no apologies to offer. Although he has come within speaking distance of 80 years, he keeps right on whittling, sawing and planing, always adding animals to his menageries. When he wants an elephant he does not correspond with his agents over seas. He hunts up a good thick stick for a body, a shapely root for a trunk, a smaller one for a tail, small straight sticks for tusks and legs, some broad pieces for ears, and, going into his "studio" in the woodshed, soon turns out an elephant that cannot be bribed with a barrel of peanuts. To turn out a good, respectable looking snake requires a little more research, for roots shaped in snake fashion are not found every day. But once in hand, Mr. Jones can turn out of such a root a snake with more real characteristics than would be supposed. Mr. Jones readily makes wild boars when he has the material. A body with no frills about it, a coal-scuttle-shaped snout, legs like a saw-horse, a pair of faulke ears, a brace of wooden tusks and an apology for a tail and there it is. Giraffes are not hard, either; a little more root and patience, and there the beast is, more or less life-like.

But Mr. Jones has not confined himself entirely to animals in his so-called artistic career. Occasionally he carves a man, and although he cannot be said to have improved on the original design, he has developed some points that might be desirable in the real article. One of his men is "Oom Paul," mounted over the entrance to Menagerie Farm. He is associated with the American eagle and a plebian rooster on lookout duty at the farm. The gate is plainly labeled with the distance to Columbus and Lockbourne, in addition to other information about the postal service in that region.

Mr. Jones gets almost as much fun out of his "farm" as do his visitors. In shirt sleeves and overalls the old man welcomes the visitors to Menagerie Farm and points out the different animals scattered about over the lawn, relating the peculiarities and history of each. He allows the little ones to ride the wild boar, but draws the line at letting them climb the neck of the giraffe. Older persons are allowed to sit on the baby elephant's back and fan themselves in the shade of the trees.

Mr. Jones was born on board his father's ship when about three miles off Alexandria, Egypt, and he had an adventurous youth in the Holy Land. That may not be responsible for Menagerie Farm, but the stories Mr. Jones tells of those days are interesting. It is forty years since he came to America and set up his "farm" in Ohio. —New York Tribune.

STATE CHURCH OF RUSSIA.

Obtaining a Strong Foothold in Various Parts of the Continent.

Russian orthodox churches in the United States are not as scarce as many people suppose. A new and handsome edifice for the use of the subjects of the Czar who have taken up their abodes here was dedicated in New York recently, a fact which indicates

the importance of Russian church missions in the East, an importance which has arisen in comparatively recent years and which has led to the provision of a residence of the Russian Bishop Tikhon in New York for a large part of the year. When Alaska was a Russian possession the seat of the bishop was at Sitka, but with the sale of the territory to the United States the Russian garrison and officials went away and the orthodox church was left with but a handful of native adherents. The bishop moved his residence to San Francisco, visiting from there the missions along the coast and occasionally coming to the east.

Russian emigration to this country, while not large in members of the Russian church, has, nevertheless, brought to this country enough of them to form churches in a number of eastern manufacturing centers. These are in charge of missionary priests sent out from Russia, and Bishop Tikhon finds it necessary to spend as much time in the east as the west. The church in New York was therefore built, money being subscribed in Russia for the purpose, in order that the church might have eastern headquarters.

The building is of a distinctively Russian style and of a character different from any other in New York. The auditorium is almost square and very high, extending into a central dome 100 feet or more above the floor. A sanctuary screen from Russia is to be placed between nave and chancel. The building adjoining the church is the residence of the priest in charge and contains apartments for the bishop.

MODESTY AND TITLES OF HONOR.

Few Entitled to Use "Esquire"—English View of Practice.

Can we not come to some working agreement on the use of the suffix "esquire?" From dictionaries you may make up a list of the people who are entitled to it—the eldest sons of knights, and their eldest sons in perpetual succession and so on to justices of the peace and bachelors of law. But in modern practice it may be said that every one who wears a collar is addressed as "esquire." Yet there is a curious modesty among Englishmen. Scores of stamped and addressed envelopes lie upon our table every day (in case of rejection), says the London Chronicle. The superscription is invariably plain John Smith or George Robinson. There are two courses open to us. We must write "esquire" after John Smith's naked name, or we must accept the hint and suppress a suffix which current misuse has made valueless.

A correspondent writes: "I am one of those persons who occasionally send you contributions with an addressed cover in case of rejection; and though I am legally entitled to one of the minor titles of honor, I always address to my 'naked name' and do not expect you to add anything. I do this because it is unbecoming to brandish one's self titles that others properly give one. Thus I talk of the lord chancellor, but that dignitary signs himself merely 'Halsbury, C.' A barrister is by convention always 'learned' as an officer is 'gallant'; but neither would so describe himself on his cards. I once tried to persuade a lord mayor of London that he should not himself use the word 'Lord,' though others should so style him, and I quoted the example of the lord chancellor. I was unsuccessful, but he was a little shaken when I pointed out that his official decrees were headed simply 'Jones, mayor.' I have always doubted the propriety of a clergyman styling himself 'reverend,' and have been sure of its impropriety ever since the court's decided (in the case of the nonconformist minister's tombstone) that 'reverend' was not a title of honor, but merely a laudatory epithet."

Some men find it easier to raise whiskers than the price of a shave



"YER JEST TRUSJ JOE."

struggle to her feet in the morning the children were all up and away, taking with them enough money from her purse to pay for their dinner.

In vain she swore and thrashed them at nights when she remembered; it was no use, and the same little scene was enacted every morning. The first thing Joe did on ushering his little brood into the open air was to take them to a covered passage leading into a little blind alley; here they sat down and shared the bread and "scrape," or sometimes the bread without the scrape, which he had prepared. The baby had its milk, and then they finished up their repast with a drink of water—alas, never a wash.

After this the serious work of the day began for little Mother Joe. How to get the girls to school, and with the least amount of friction; that was always the puzzling question. When they were younger threats always served him, but now they were long eared and nimble and shrill, and he had to resort to bribes and cunning.

"It's nigh yer time, ain't it, Minnikite?" he remarked blandly, this particular morning, as he wiped the baby's mouth with his sleeve, "and I know yer'll want to be punkshall and beat that Eddie Cox with her reg'lar attendance."

Minnikite leant back and smiled at him with long wicked green eyes, and then she slowly put out her tongue. "I 'appens to know," he continued, with weary patience, and dusting the baby's head as he spoke, "that there's noo law pest 'bout children's bein' sent prison for not goin' to school reg'lar."

"What price, boys?" asked Anna Maria, with her head on one side.

"I allus go when I can," he replied, sitting on the cap where it was meant, and you know I goes every time Mrs. Beet 'as no washin' and can mind the beet."

"Well, ma ses she'll wallop yer ter death nex' time the 'spector comes arter 'er 'bout you. So now."