"Mis' Brennan's Kid"

By... Ceceily Allen

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The entire neighborhood had long since decided that Mrs. Brennan's youngest hopeful would close his earthly career through the unwelcome attentions of the proverbial hangman. Maggie Brennan, aged fifteen, was a popular employee at Johnson's cigar factory. Young Dan was a district messenger boy, and even little Jennie earned odd pennies by caring for the neighbors' children when the latter were called away to christenings, funerals and weddings.

But from the day that the "Kid," at the tender age of nine months, had fallen from the fire escape to the areaway, striking three clothespins en route, and had set up, howling, elsewhere, his mother, the young life had been marked by a succession of stirring, and frequently fatal, incidents. Once he had been run over by a truck, another time he had swallowed a button, and on still another occasion he had been discovered in the act of cramming a handful of matches into his mouth. Each and every one of these episodes had been duly recorded in the family annals, and the "Kid" had become a marked character.

Mrs. Brennan, who was a widow, had struggled heroically to support her family, and had succeeded fairly well, but the task was a hard one, and she was frequently obliged to spank a child, or scorch linen, when she would have preferred to do something else. Consequently, when the "Kid"