

## A Case of Arrested Development.

(A True Story, by Margaret Montgomery, in 'S.S. Times'.)

Joe McCarthy was the head of a family, and he was going to the bad! It was a sad case, for there were five children. It was sadder because this same Joseph McCarthy was only nine years old. At home the dishes were unwashed, but what difference did that make in a house where the table was always set?—if a table littered with soiled dishes and broken food could be called 'set.' All day the loaf of bread lay on the table, and, when any one grew hungry, why, then was meal-time for that one, at least, so long as there was a loaf from which to cut, and molasses in the cup to spread.

This plan of life saved a great many annoyances, such as undue trouble about coming to table in a tidy condition. Some people, the McCarthys knew, made a great deal of just such trifles; but they cherished a supreme scorn for 'sich fool notions.' Still, every one has his weak points, for the McCarthys were thought 'mighty particular' by their neighbors the Grulans, because the McCarthys would only let the cat eat at the table with the children, but drove the chickens away! On the other hand, there were the Cruchis, who thought the Grulans were lofty, because, though they did not mind the chickens, they almost always drove out of the kitchen the pet pig, while the Cruchis received the pig on terms of equality. The whole world is exclusive in its way.

But all the while that the Cruchis and the Grulans and the McCarthys are settling social distinctions, and Mrs. McCarthy is gossiping with her neighbors, and the four little McCarthy girls are growing up in their untidy, neglected home, Joe McCarthy was, as has been said more than once, going straight to the bad. And what was there to save him from it?

In some homes he would have had, at his age, a nurse to dress him, to curl his hair, and to take him by the hand, and lead him around the square on the sunny side of the street for a nice little walk.

At a quarter of seven Joe clutched a chunk of bread and molasses in one hand, and in the other his dinner-pail, which contained another chunk of bread and molasses, with the hollow lid full of cold tea, which his mother had put up for him the night before, that she might not have to get up early the next morning. Thus, eating his breakfast as the asthmatic whistle of Jameson colliery gave its seven hoarse blasts, Joe would go to his work in the big coal-breaker. He was a slate-picker in the Jameson Colliery?

Of course it wasn't right, and, of course the law forbade his working in the coal-breaker before he was twelve; but when Joe's father was brought home dead, (or, at least, a part of him was), and when the other children were nothing but girls, and when Mrs. McCarthy's speak-easy, (and who could object to a poor widdy woman with four girls selling a drop or two?) but when it was not a big-paying enterprise, from too much home consumption and other causes, and when Joe did not want to go to school, and did want to go to work in the breaker—the darlin' boy!—and when his mother went to the breaker-boss and swore that he was over twelve, but small of his age,—why, what was to be done? Breaker-bosses are not employed as detectives, and boys are not horses, whose ages can be read by their teeth. Besides, boys were

needed in the Jameson Colliery. So Joe McCarthy, as was said in the beginning and has been said all along, was going to the bad as fast as his baby feet could carry him. He prided himself on being able to swear with the best of 'em. The older men counted him a 'cute one,' to be able to take a drink or a smoke with any man around the works.

One night a new factor came into the life of Joe McCarthy. Attracted by the lights and singing, he walked into a hall filled with boys. A boy is such a gregarious animal, that it is no wonder Joe McCarthy looked around with delight as he saw hundreds of boys seated in the hall. It was such a homelike crowd, with so many faces which bore, like his own, that tiny rim of coal-dirt about the eyelashes that any ordinary scrubbing with soap and water will not take off, which is the unmistakable mark of the breaker-boy. Joe felt at home at once.

Upon the platform the most delightful things occurred—songs and recitations, with beautiful selections by a mandolin club. Then presiding over the meeting, and moving in and out among the boys, went a gracious woman, beautifully dressed, with a bunch of roses at her waist. 'The real thing! 'cause I touched 'em, to find out, when I was pretendin' to catch Jim Fadden!'

Joe listened with admiration and wonder. After the meeting closed, from a perfect babel of information he learned that 'This is the B. I. A.' 'The B. I. A.?' 'Why, that's us!' That there wasn't a dead-beat belonged. 'Every chap in it's got to work at somepin', sellin' papers, or pickin' slate, or somepin'.' 'That there lady what set up front, and did such a lot of smilin' at us boys, is our president. She's a regular up-an-up.' 'Her husband's attorney-general, but that ain't nuthin' to bein' the president of the B. I. A.'

The entertainment just given had been a repetition of the one given the week before by the young ladies of the First Church for the benefit of their mission band.

'Tell you what, Joe, the fellers that give the entertainments for us ain't no slouches! The regular swells, what get up things where ye'd be glad to git a chance to git in after yes dig up fifty cints or a dollar, comes up here, glad enough when they be's invited, and gives us the same show for nothin', 'cause ye see we fellers know how to appreciate 'em.'

Then there was the debating society, part of the organization.

'Tell you what it is, Joe; not one of the fine folks that come here can beat the B. I. A. in debate. That Mike Kilroy! he can talk like a house afire!'

'The B. I. A.'s great! A show every week, and two debatin' societies!'

'Better join, Joe. You can sign the constitution, and then, if you want to, you can sign the drinkin' book, an' the smokin' book, an' the swearin' book, that you won't do none of 'em no more.'

'Sign! Sign nuthin!' was Joe's reply, as he seized his cap and rushed out of the door. He, Joe McCarthy, sign that he would not drink nor smoke nor swear, when he prided himself on being the youngest tough in the whole city! He had long outgrown the small suburban ambition of being 'the toughest kid in Simpson's Patch.' As for really signing his name to anything, he could not have done that; for he did not know how to write, his entire education consisting of the first three lessons in the primer which had been thumped into him by various teachers during the inter-

vals of playing hookey, which had filled the two years when the state had his name upon its school-roll.

But then, if he could not sign his name, at least he could maintain his principles, and not be huncued into anything which could be construed into goodness. So it was that Joe grabbed his cap, and, as fast as he could go, went from the hall straight to McGurkle's saloon on the back road. There he received a most flattering welcome. Every sharp, impudent, or vicious speech, the child made was greeted with roars of laughter, and he was spurred on to further efforts by these cries of applause. That night, for the first time, Joe went staggering home.

After such a beginning, did Joe ever go back to the B. I. A.? Of course, he did. Night after night, at first on the back seat, with his cap tight in his hand, ready to flee for his liberty, if ever he should be asked to join the society. More than once, as the president started smilingly in his direction, he was not, for the street had him.

However, no boy so notoriously tough as Joe McCarthy could come to the B. I. A. night after night without those interested in the work knowing all about him, his reputation and his environment.

It need not be told how the president won Joe. It was enough that he needed her and the B. I. A. with all its blessed helpfulness, more almost than any boy who ever joined it. So all her efforts and those of her helpers, were brought to bear upon that one boy, till, one night, his bravado gone, he asked that he might be a member of the society. The grimy fist bore the pencil fairly through the paper as Joe McCarthy made 'his X mark,' to the simple pledge.

.....  
 : Realizing that the object of this :  
 : society is for my benefit, physically, :  
 : mentally, and morally, I, on my :  
 : part, promise to refrain from all :  
 : that will hinder, and to do all that :  
 : will help, toward the attainment of :  
 : that perfect manhood, the true type :  
 : of which was given to the world in :  
 : the character of Jesus Christ. :  
 : .....

It was a real surrender. Sanctification did not result that first night; but the saloon had him no longer. After a few months, Joe marched up to the front, and said firmly, 'Gimme them there swearin' an' drinkin' an' smokin' books. I'm goin' to sign the hull outfit, and be a tiptop B. I. A.'

It was not very pleasant for Mrs. McCarthy at first, for somehow the 'drinkin' book,' and 'the business,' which Mrs. McCarthy conducted with more or less success, did not work smoothly together. But, in the end, there was one speak-easy less in Simpson's Patch, and Joe, the little man of the family, had taken a big step forward in manliness.

Joe is now sixteen. He has just been elected president of the senior debating club of the society. Even Mrs. McCarthy, who for a long time resented the implied interference with her business, regards him with wondering pride.

'He writes just beautiful, and ye never heard such readin' as he does since he's been goin' to the night-school, of the B. I. A. An' the figerin'! Do you know, Mrs. McCarthy confides to her neighbors, 'he's a-workin' for a place on the engineer corps, and his teacher says he is sure to get it. I tell yez, blood will tell—an' it's a fine lad, is my own Joe. He give me every cent of his pay last month.'

It would all be a marvellous story, this change in Joe McCarthy, if it were only a