

The Mission of a Home-Made 'Phone.

(Belle V. Chisholm, in 'Christian Intelligencer'.)

'Helen, daughter, don't you think that there is such a thing as being over tidy—of—perhaps carrying one's ideas of neatness to such a state of perfection as to interfere with the pleasures of others?' asked Mrs. Morton, gently, after one of Helen's outbursts of temper over some of Jack's whims.

'Why, mother! You know how spick and span you love to keep things looking,' replied Helen. 'If I have an abnormal bump of the love of order, I certainly did come by it honestly. You hate "clutter," even worse than I do, and you know just where every article in this house belongs, and could lay your hand on it the darkest night that ever was.'

'Yes, my child, I do delight in a tasteful home—of having a place for everything and keeping everything in its place, but I hope I do not carry the fad to such an extreme as to interfere with any one's right to be happy in the home,' returned mother.

'But, mother, what right has any one to keep the house topsy-turvy from the beginning of one year to the end of the next?' insisted Helen. 'This is just exactly what Jack does. If it isn't one thing it is another, and what do you suppose it is now? Simply a telephone between his room and Ralph Morton's—a distance of a half a mile. You never saw such a confusion of rusty wires, old cans and screeching noises. I just couldn't tidy up his room with all that mass of stuff in the way, so I tumbled the whole thing out of the window, and now he's as mad as a hornet, and says he is going to put it up again. If he does, I'll pull it all down again. I'll let him see that is a game two can work at.'

'You've had your work, daughter; now please let him alone,' said the mother, gently. 'If it does make a litter, just you shut your eyes to it, and let him make just what he chooses. Boys must have some means of amusement, and this one seems such an innocent way, and cannot do anybody an injury.'

'Wait until the cans begin to scratch, with Ralph at one end and Jack at the other. Then, perhaps, it will not be so harmless as it seems at present,' said Helen. 'You never heard such noises as the combination produces.'

The mother sighed, but did not contradict Helen's assertion. Jack's 'phone was put in place again, though not without a protest from the sister, whose reputation as a little housekeeper was almost as well established among the neighbors, as was her ability to keep at the head of her class at school.

Dr. Maxton's office was in the village—a good half-mile from the pretty little cottage, clinging like a bird's nest to the side of the mountain. Besides this fourteen-year old daughter and her brother twelve, there were two little girls, Grace and Alice, six and eight years old, and the baby boy, Dixon, the pet and pride of the whole family.

Usually the mother and Dixon were both

alone during the day, the older children being in school, and the father at his office or out among his patients. One day, it was just the day before Thanksgiving, the mother was summoned hastily to the bedside of a sick sister, and much as she regretted keeping Helen out of school to take care of Dixie, it could not be helped.

Helen was a brave little woman, and she got along nicely during the long forenoon, while baby took his nap and had his romp, after waking up. Then they had their little dinner together, she and the baby, as neither father nor the children came home for luncheon.

About the middle of the afternoon, little Dixie began to cough croupy, and became very feverish. Realizing the danger, Helen ran to the medicine case for the croup medicine, but there was only half a teaspoonful—just one dose there. Then she prepared honey and lard, and coaxed him to swallow a dose or two of that, but instead of being relieved, he grew worse rapidly, and she knew that if he did not get help very soon he would choke to death in her arms. What could she do, away up there on the cliff, out of sight and hearing of a human habitation or voice? She looked out of the door hoping a stray traveler might chance to pass, but the long white road, winding up the mountain side, stretched out empty and hopeless before her. She thought of wrapping the baby up and taking him in her arms and racing down the cliff to her father's office, but she felt that would be a waste of very precious time, that she ought to be doing something to help the child struggling for breath, instead of exposing it to the cold wind that was blowing outside. And when almost ready to despair, the rattling of Jack's telephone cans, by a fierce blast of the wind, thrilled her with a new hope. The boys claimed they could hear each other distinctly, and if their voices could carry, why not hers. So she laid Dixie in the crib, and ran upstairs to Jack's room, and rang the bell of his 'phone, as she had seen him do.

'Hello,' she heard a moment later, 'Is that you, Jack?'

'No, Ralph, it is I, Helen,' she answered. 'Baby Dixie is choking to death with the croup, and I have no one to send for papa. Won't you please go to his office, and tell him to come home at once, and to bring some croup medicine with him, as there is not a drop in the house?'

'Certainly,' said Ralph, 'I'll go this moment, and he'll be home in a few minutes. Don't worry, Dixie will be all right.'

Helen ran back to her little charge, now breathing freer. She gave him a hot bath, wrapped him in a warm blanket, and then repeated the honey and lard mixture. Still the little one struggled for his breath, and the loud, hoarse cough grew more and more alarming. Several times during the brief waiting, she walked over to the window, hoping to see her father's trap winding up the long serpentine road to the cottage. She missed seeing him, however, and at the end of fifteen minutes was thinking of sending another message, when the door opened and her father came in.

He took the suffering child in his own arms, and inquired how long since he had been taken ill, and what she had done for

him. 'You have done nobly, my daughter,' he said, after hearing of the remedies she had applied. 'Now, bring me a little water and a spoon and I'll give him some of this medicine,' he added, taking a bottle of dark looking fluid from his pocket-case.

Helen obeyed, and together, father and daughter worked over the little sufferer, but more than an hour passed before there was any perceptible change in the baby's condition. At the expiration of that time, however, he began to grow less restless, and at the end of another hour, when the mother came home, he was sleeping very sweetly.

'I am thankful for a little daughter, who kept a clear head, and acted so sensibly in a trying emergency,' said the mother, that night, after father had pronounced Baby Dixie out of danger. 'What would have become of our dear little boy, to-day, if sister lost her presence of mind, and there was no older head to minister to him, and send for the doctor papa, who made such a noble fight for the precious life.'

'It is very sweet of you to say that, mother, dear,' returned Helen, 'but if it had not been for Jack's telephone I could not have reached father, and baby certainly would have died for lack of medicine and the skilful treatment father brought him. It makes me shudder to think what would have happened, if I had been allowed my own way in the destruction of Jack's home-made instrument.'

'Then, Helen, hereafter you'll be more considerate concerning the rights of all others,' replied her mother. 'Jack's tastes are very different from yours; he likes lots of noise and confusion, but, as you have learned, there is, sometimes, at least, a principle involved in his rough contrivances, and even if there were not, it is your business and mine, to try to make home happy for him and to keep it so very bright and cheery that he will not want to go elsewhere for his pleasures.'

'I understand now what you meant by "over-tidiness,"' replied Helen. 'I have been selfish in wanting everything my own way, but it was Jack's way—his old cans and rusty wires against which I had fought, that counted in the hour of need, and opened my eyes "to see myself as others see me."'

A Swarm of Bees.

(Adele E. Thompson, in 'Good Cheer'.)

'I suppose we might keep bees.' There was a little line of perplexity on Marietta Brewer's forehead, and her remark held a tentative accent.

'Bees!' cried her younger sister Alma, looking up from the pansies she was transplanting beside the doorstep where Marietta sat, 'bees!' her clear voice rising with a crescendo effect. 'Whatever put that idea in your head?'

'I think it was old Mr. Bice's bees on the apple blossoms in the orchard, that and the clover meadow opposite—clover is so good for honey, you know. Mr. Bice has made money with his bees, so have other people—other women—and I was wondering why we couldn't.'

Alma held up her hands as if in protest. 'Marietta, anything but bees an' you love me. I've a horror of that most in-