

Family Reading.

The Blue-Bottle Fly.

Buzzing and gay in the early dawn,
Fresh from a nap on the parlor wall,
Out for a flight over garden and lawn,
Fearing no tumble and dreading no fall
Came a fly:
A lively, frolicsome, blue-bottle fly;
And his feet
Were as neat,
And his style
As complete,
As his brain
Was replete,
With the mischief that laughed in his
eye!

"What glorious fun I'll have to-day,
When the baby's asleep and the nurse
away;
When Rover lies by the kitchen door;
I'll waken them both and make them
roar!
Oh, what larks!"
Cried the rollicking, reckless blue-bottle
fly;
"What a cry,"
Said the fly,
"There will be
After me,
When I've done
With my fun!"

And he wickedly winked his wee eye!
"Then I'll go and dance on grandpa's
head,
While he struggles to brush me away;
And tickle his ear till he'll wish I was
dead!
And over the table at dinner I'll play
Back and forth,
And feast on crumbs from a freshly-
baked pie!
And I'll sip
From the lip
Of each glass
That may pass,
All sweet things
Dinner brings!"

Quoth this riotous blue-bottle fly,
But, alas for the plans he had laid!
And alas for the day just begun!
For this fly soon lit in the grateful shade
To escape the hot rays of the sun;
And to dream
Of the sights that should soon greet his
eye;
When unseen,
From the green
Of a limb
Above him
On his head,
By a thread,
Fell a spider,
Who coolly devoured that blue-bottle
fly.—*Christian Union.*

How our Hens helped to make me
a Dressmaker.

(A true story.)

BY MRS. H. F. LANE.

"What skillful fingers!" I exclaimed,
as my friend Mrs. Larkins helped me
'make over' an ugly, ill-fitting dress
into a tasteful comfortable garment.
'Who taught you the art of dress-
making?'
A ripple of mirth played for an in-
stant about the firm mouth and threw a
brilliant light into the deep-set eyes, as
she answered,—
'The hens on father's farm in Dux-
bury were the means of making me a
dressmaker.'
'The hens!' I exclaimed. 'Who
ever heard of such a thing? tell me
their system.'
'A fish lent a helping hand, I was
going to add. It was after father died,
you know, that little Nannie began to
droop. I think we all loved her too
much. Mother did all she could and
then sent for the doctor.
'Take her to Boston for a change of
scene; it will do her more good than
medicine,' was his advice. 'But to
have it amount to anything you must
start at once.'
Duncan was the brother who was
doing all a boy could do to fill father's
place, and when he heard what the
doctor said, he exclaimed, 'Why, mother
can't go, for I am to have eleven men
here next week to work on the new barn
and in the field.'
'Can't isn't the word to use in this
case, young man,' said the doctor, and
Duncan was convinced of the truth of
his words when our Nannie had a faint-
ing-spell as mother was putting her to
bed.
'Brother Dan was at work in Boston,
but his wife was at her father's, a mile
or so away; and when Duncan went
and stated the case to her, she promised

to come to the farm and stay until
mother got back.
'We all helped and got mother
started off in a few days. I wish
Jane was here,' she said as she left the
house, 'but she will come down after
the morning's work is done up, I
guess.'
'There were no cars then to Dux-
bury, and as Nannie could not bear the
jolting of the coach, mother went up
in the packet.
'I think they had hardly rounded the
point before Jane's father came to tell
us that she was sick in bed and could
not come. Duncan tried to find some
one to help me, but every one was busy,
so he said, 'Poor Bett, I don't see but
you will have to worry along through it
with Lucy's help.'
'I was then just sixteen, and Lucy
was nine. I already had Duncan,
Robbie, a hired boy, and Lucy to work
for, and then these men were to be
added to my family. The men all
came, and among them was 'Chowder
Jim,' a man famous for his skill in
cooking all kinds of fish, and especially
for making chowders. He was always
in great demand when there was a clam
bake or fishing picnic.
'You know that men are very apt to
bungle, the best of them, and certainly
Duncan did when he brought me a
great fish to boil for that first dinner!
I hated fish, and it made me sick to be
anywhere near one, and there lay the
creature just as they took him from the
water.
'I forgot,' said Duncan, 'you shall
have Jim to dress and cook it.'
But Jim was busy, and my pride
refused to allow Duncan to send him.
I took the fish out doors and down at a
rock where the wind would take the
smell out into the bay, and there clean-
ed him in tears and disgust. This rock
was a place we used often to come to,
and look over to Plymouth and up to
the hill where Captain Standish lived,
and talk over the Pilgrims and their
hard life. I remember saying that day
to Lucy, as I scratched the scaly back
of my fish, 'I wish the old Pilgrims had
never landed.' There were no cook-
books in these days, to help and confuse
the ignorant, so I tried to recall just
how mother managed. I knew the
process, but how long it would take
such an extra quantity to boil was the
puzzle. I gave much anxious thought
to the subject, with the fear of 'Chow-
der Jim' before my eyes.
'I had the dinner on the table
promptly at twelve, my potatoes hot
and mealy, drawn butter gravy just the
right thickness, so I hoped. Still I felt
that the dinner was a failure, so I fled
to mother's bed-room when the men
came in. My heart beat fast when the
noise of knives and forks began to be
heard. Nothing was said for a time,
then 'Chowder Jim' passed up his
plate, remarking, 'This is about the
best biled-fish dinner I ever sat before.'
Then I heard brother tell that I had
cooked it, 'and only sixteen.'
'Smart gal,' responded Jim heart-
ily.
'When I saw Duncan he said, 'You
gave us a splendid dinner, sister. I'm
proud of you. Now I am going to give
you all the eggs that are laid while
mother is away.'
'This was quite a large gift in those
days. The day before mother was ex-
pected I went to the store and ex-
changed my eggs for a calico dress for
Lucy, and stuff to make Robbie some pants.
But mother did not come in the packet.
'Coming next week,' said the captain.
We were disappointed, so I told Lucy
I would help her make her dolly, Phoebe
Jane, a dress that evening, because I
did not feel like doing anything else.
'What a nice fit!' said Lucy heart-
ily, when Miss Phoebe Jane tried on
her new frock. 'You are a real good
dressmaker, sister.'
'That set me a-thinking, and now
that some of the men had gone, I ven-
tured to try and cut Lucy's dress. I
grew anxious and hot over the fitting
and made poor Lucy stand a long time,
but the attempt was a success. I
worked every moment I could get on it,
and it was done three days before
mother could possibly reach Duxbury.
Success made me courageous, so much
so that I had Robbie in his new pants
as well as Lucy in her dress, ready to re-
ceive mother and little Nannie.
'Mother was surprised, and, of
course, delighted, and called me her

'brave, unselfish child'—praise that
was very dear to me.

'A fortunate journey,' said Duncan,
'for our Nannie got her health, and
Bett has found out how smart she is.'
I have two good trades, and never
learned either, but somehow I feel in-
debted to those hens for them.'

'Why not to the fish?' asks the
listener to my dressmaker's account of
herself.

'The hens, the fish, and Miss Phoebe
Jane all helped, but the real credit is
due my mother, for she taught us to
sew our 'baby rags' as nicely, and cut
all the doll garments as carefully, as if
we were doing it for 'live folks.' All
that has been of real good in my life I
can trace back to the influence of my
pious, home-staying mother; and as
time goes on, I set more and more
value upon her instructions and ex-
ample.'

Mrs. Wilkin's Twins.

'I really feel ashamed of my chil-
dren's baptism,' said Mrs. Wilkins to a
Baptist friend with whom, on other
than denominational points, she had a
cordial understanding.

'Ashamed of your children's baptism!
Well, I never expected to hear that
from so sturdy a Presbyterian as you.'
'Oh! but I don't mean what you
think I do,' said Mrs. Wilkins. 'Of
course I know that baptism, in apostolic
times, meant the immersion of a pro-
fessed believer; but I think that in the
exercise of a wise discretion, sprinkling
or pouring may well take the place of
immersion; and the consecration of
one's children unto God at the bap-
tismal font is so thoroughly in harmony
with the spirit of Him who said 'suffer
the little children to come unto me,' that
I don't see how any reasonable being
can object to it.'

'But if you are entirely satisfied that
it is left to your 'wise discretion' to
modify the commands of Christ, and
that your maternal instinct was not at
fault when you brought your little ones
to the font, why should you be ashamed
of your children's baptism?' queried
Mrs. Wilkin's friend.

'Why, you see,' said Mrs. Wilkins,
'I had made up my mind that no child
of mine should ever be baptized in a
private, unhand-dressed way, as if I was
ashamed of it. No! If God ever gave
me a little one, I would dedicate that
little one to God in the presence of the
great congregation. So, in expectation
of the advent of a little stranger, I had
prepared a beautiful christening robe.
I'll show it to you some time, if you care
to see it. It's never been used; for
you know, God was good enough to
give me twins, and what good was one
christening-robe for two babies—unless
we took one of them to church one
Sunday and the other the next, which
I didn't quite like to do. I had never
dreamed of such a complication before;
though, of course, it can't be that mine
was the first experience of that nature,
for what young mother would think of
adding to the little ward-robe of her
unborn babe two christening-robes?'
'Well, as soon as I got so as to use
my needle, I went to work on another
christening-robe for Tim; though I had
used up on Jim's pretty much all the
old lace at my disposal; and I confess
I hadn't much heart in the task. It
was all very well to dedicate one child
to God in the presence of the great
congregation. I had painted pretty
pictures of myself, pale and delicate,
bearing my little one up the aisle, while
my husband bent over me with many
solicitude. But owing to the inevitable
delay in the babies' baptism, I was
getting quite plump and rosy; and the
picture of both my husband and me
tugging a baby up the aisle wasn't
quite the picture that my fancy had
painted. It would have been all the
more interesting? Well, I was afraid
it would be a little too interesting to
some of our congregation. Still I
worked away, at odd times, on christen-
ing-robe number two, with the idea of
carrying out, at some time, the modified
programme that had been arranged for
me.'

'That christening-robe, however,
wasn't destined to be finished. Jim,
well as he is now, was a puny little
thing when he was little, and before he
was many weeks old, there came a night
when we thought we must lose him—
when we didn't expect he could live till
morning. Mr. Wilkin's father was
with us then—he is a clergyman, you
know—and he said to me, while the
child lay moaning on my lap, 'Polly,
wouldn't it be a comfort to you to have
the boys baptized? Now, of course
I'm not silly enough to think that it
makes any difference whether a little
one whom the Master takes to himself
is baptized or not; and if I'd had my
senses about me, I should have said
'No.' But I was half wild with anguish
at the idea of losing the child, and don't
know what I did say. At any rate, the
next minute—at midnight, in my own
house and not in the church, without any
christening-robe at all—the boys were
being baptized. And the worst of it is
—you know how much those boys look
alike; you can't tell them apart your-
self, you know you can't—in the con-
fusion of the moment, father Wilkins
actually christened Jim, Tim; and Tim,
Jim!'
'And is Jim Tim to this day?' said
Mrs. Wilkin's Baptist friend.
'Not a bit of it. As soon as I saw
the blunder, I had father Wilkins
change the names. The oldest was to
be called 'Jim' after his father, and
'Tim' he is; but it was the most ridicu-
lous performance you ever saw. Do
you wonder I'm ashamed of it!'
'Why, dear me,' said Mrs. Wilkins's
interlocutor, 'it strikes me as hardly
more ridiculous than a good many other
cases of infant baptism. The perform-
ance of the rite at midnight and in your
own house gives it quite a Scriptural
aspect. It reminds me of the Philip-
pian jailer. But, taken as a whole, it's
a very pretty offset to some stories we
hear about the inconveniences of immer-
sion, and I'm certainly going to send it
to *The Examiner*.'
'All right! Only no names, remem-
ber,' said Mrs. Wilkins. Accordingly,
I sign myself,

—*Examiner.*

I Love to Tell the Story.

BY MRS. ANNIE S. PRESTON.

I heard a good, large-hearted brother
tell this story in a rather dull prayer-
meeting one evening not long since.

'There are a good many friends here
to night, who have something to say.
They are willing and anxious to speak,
but some are afraid they shall not make
a good 'impression.' Others are ex-
cusing themselves from speaking from
the fear that what they might say
would do no good, perhaps harm,
rather.'

'I well remember getting behind one
of these excuses one evening at our
prayer-meeting, when I was young in
my Christian experience, and hiding
there for a long time. The meeting
dragged on, and at last I was on my
feet, and I talked longer and more
earnestly than I had any idea of doing
when I began. At last I saw, or
thought I saw, some of my auditors
smiling, and I sat down. I was not
quite sure they were laughing at me,
but Satan stood ready to tell me they
were, and I felt uncomfortable enough.
'I never felt so mortified over any-
thing. I kept saying to myself all the
way home, 'Why did I make such a
fool of myself? There were strangers
in the meeting, too, and what must they
have thought of me? I went to bed,
but could not sleep for thinking of it.
After a very uncomfortable night I
arose, ate my breakfast, and started for
business, fully persuaded, that at the
next prayer-meeting, if I spoke at all, it
should be only to quote a passage of
Scripture.'

'As I turned from a side street into
the main thoroughfare, I met a gentle-
man who looked at me steadily for a
moment, and then, lifting his hat,
politely said, 'I am sure, sir, you are
the one whom I heard speak in the
street church prayer-meeting last even-
ing.'
'I spoke there, certainly,' I replied
hesitatingly, 'and I never was more
embarrassed in my life, nor felt my
weakness so much.' I thought the
gentleman was going to console with
me for some blunder or senseless remark
I had made that my friends had not
dared to speak to me about for fear they
should hurt my feelings. But he said
earnestly holding out his hand:
'I want to thank you for pointing
out the right way to me by your hearty,

earnest, and convincing words. I have
been almost persuaded to be a Christian
for a long time, but have been kept
back by the attitude of Christians
themselves in regard to their religious
privileges. Now, when I see a prayer-
meeting go as hard as I fancied that
one did last night, when I first dropped
in, thought I, 'Well, these folks don't
believe what they profess to. If they
did, they would not sit and hesitate so
long to tell of their great joy and
blessed assurance. They can sing 'I
love to tell the story,' but if they really
loved to tell it, would they hesitate as
they do?'
'I was watching you. I thought
you were not going to speak, but when
you did get up, there was no hesitating
and clearing of your throat. You got
up as if you were glad of the privilege
and you made no excuses, but went
right on and told what the Lord had
done, and was doing for you, as if you
delighted to tell it. That was what I
wanted to hear: it was what I needed.
It did me more good than I can tell
you. I made up my mind then and there
that I would delay the all important
matter of securing my soul's salvation
no longer. In the next prayer-meeting
at my own home I shall make my
resolutions known.'

'I only wanted to thank you for
the great and good service you have
done me. Good morning,' and away
he went to the railroad station, and I
have never seen him since. I do not
know the gentleman's name even, but
I have always thought that the Lord
sent him to me that morning to
encourage me to use the one talent
he had given me in my own
humble way, and to assure me that
some simple word of mine, even when
I fancied I was making no good 'im-
pression,' would take root in some
waiting, longing heart, and bear precious
fruit.'

Temperance.

The following is old, but good, and
we do not remember that it has been
in the *Messenger*, at least for some
years. To those who have read it be-
fore, it will be of interest and benefit:

Dr. Dod's Sermon on Malt.

Dr. Dod lived many years ago, a few
miles from Cambridge, Eng. Having
several times preached against drunken-
ness, some of the students were very
much offended, thinking he made reflec-
tions on them.

As Dr. Dod was once walking towards
Cambridge, he met some of the gowns-
men, who, as soon as they saw him at a
distance, resolved among themselves to
ridicule him, and meeting him, said:
'Your servant, sir.'

He replied, 'Your servant, gentle-
men.'

They asked him if he had not been
preaching very much against drunken-
ness of late. He answered in the affirma-
tive. They then told him they had a
favor to beg of him, and it was that he
would preach a sermon to them there,
from a text they should choose. He
argued that it was an imposition, for a
man ought to have time for consid-
eration before preaching. They said
they would not put up with a denial,
and insisted upon his preaching imme-
diately (in a hollow tree which stood
upon the roadside) from the word
MALT.

He then began, 'Beloved, let me ex-
hort your attention. I am a little man
—come at a short notice—to preach a
short sermon—from a short text—to a
thin congregation—in an unworthy pul-
pit. Beloved, my text is Malt. I can-
not divide it into sentences, there being
none; nor into words, there being but
one; I must, therefore, of necessity,
divide it into letters, which I find in my
text to be these four—M, A, L, T.

M—is Moral.
A—is Allegorical.
L—is Literal.
T—is Theological.
'The Moral is to teach you rustic
good manners, therefore,
M—My masters,
A—All of you,
L—Leave off
T—Tippling.

'The Allegorical is, when one thing
is spoken of and another meant. The
thing spoken of is Malt. The thing
meant is the spirit of Malt, which you
rustics make

M—your Meat,
A—your Apparel,
L—your Liberty,
T—your Trust.
'The Literal is, according to the let-
ters,

M—Much
A—Ale,
L—Little
T—your Trust.
'The Theological is, according to the
effects it works; in some,
M—Murder; in others,
A—Adultery; in all,
L—Looseness of life; in many,
T—Treachery.

'I shall conclude the subject, first by
way of exhortation.

M—My masters,
A—All of you,
L—Li-ten
T—to my text.
'Second, by way of caution,
M—My master,
A—All of you,
L—Look for
T—The truth.'

This quaint sermon was, by God's
blessing, productive of a great change
in the lives, not only of the hearers, but
of many others.

How Drinking causes Apoplexy.

It is the essential nature of all wines
and spirits to send an increased amount
of blood to the brain. The first effect
of taking a glass of wine or stronger form
of alcohol is to send the blood there
faster than common; hence the circula-
tion that gives the red face. It
increases the activity of the brain, and
it works faster, and so does the tongue.
But as the blood goes to the brain faster
than common, it returns faster, and no
special harm results. But suppose a
man keeps on drinking, the blood is
sent to the brain so fast in such large
quantities that, in order to make room
for it, the arteries have to enlarge them-
selves; they increase in size, and, in
doing so, they press against the more
yielding flaccid veins which carry the
blood out of the brain, and thus dimin-
ish their size, their pores, the result being
that blood is not only carried to the
arteries of the brain faster than is natu-
ral or healthful, but it is prevented from
leaving it as fast as usual; hence, a
double set of causes of death are in oper-
ation. Hence a man may drink enough
of brandy or other spirits in a few hours,
or even minutes, to bring on a fatal
attack of apoplexy. This is literally,
being dead drunk.—*Dr. Hall.*

I'll take what Father takes.

'Twas in the flowery month of June,
The sun was in the west,
When a merry, blithesome company
Met at a public feast.

Around the room, rich banners spread,
And garlands fresh and gay;
Friend greeted friend right joyously
Upon that festal day.

The board was filled with choicest fare;
The guests sat down to dine;
Some called for 'bitter,' some for 'stout,'
And some for rosy wine.

Among this joyful company
A modest youth appeared;
Scarce sixteen summers had he seen,
No specious snare he feared.

An empty glass before the youth
Soon drew the waiter near;
'What will you take, sir?' he enquired,
'Stout, bitter, mild, or clear?'

'We've rich supplies of foreign port,
We've first class wine and cakes,'
The youth, with guileless look, replied:
'I'll take what father takes.'

Swift as an arrow went the words
Into his father's ears,
And soon a conflict deep and strong
Awoke terrific fears.

The father looked upon his son,
Then gazed upon the wine,
O God! he thought; were he to taste,
Who could the end divine?

Have I not seen the strongest fall?
The fairest led astray?
And shall I on my only son
Bestow a curse this day?

No; God forbid! Here, waiter, bring
Bright water unto me,
My son will take what father takes;
My drink shall water be.

W. HOWLE.

Love is a habit. God has given to us
the love of relatives and friends, the
love of father and mother, brother and
sister to prepare us gradually for the
love of God.

God had one Son on earth without
sin, but never one without suffering.