

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

CROSSING THE RED SEA.

Mamma says I can tell about it if I'll say that I was just as naughty as the other boys—she says naughtier, because I'm the oldest and ought to know better—but I think 'Gene and Hal, the twins—they're ten—ought to know better just as much as I—two years aren't much.

There are five in our family besides papa and mamma, and we're all boys, and we have lots of fun. Sundays we go to church and Sunday school, and then we have dinner, and after dinner if it's pleasant, papa takes us for a long walk, and then we come home and have Bible games till supper time and then we go to bed early Sundays. But if it's very stormy, mamma lets us play upstairs after dinner. And we think as it's Sunday, it's proper to play Bible plays.

Saturdays when it's too stormy to play out, we play historical plays; we're all fond of history, and 'Gene and Hal and I make them up. We've had Washington crossing the Delaware, and Napoleon crossing the Alps—of course I was Washington and Napoleon. I am the oldest and nearest to Washington's size. We've had the Concord fight, too, and Bunker Hill and the Charge of the Light Brigade—we only had rocking horses, though, and couldn't make a very good charge.

Mamma says she's willing we should play those plays if they are noisy, as it teaches us history; and we have to have it just the way it happened. When we had the Concord fight, Hal and 'Gene and I was the minuteman, and Stevie he's eight, and a plucky little fellow—he and the Babe was the British—he wouldn't run.

"Why, you must," I said; "cause it was so. See the Babe; he's running, 'cause it's so in history. Don't you know in 'Paul Revere,' 'Chasing the Redcoats down the lane?' and how could the Yankees chase if no one was running?"

"I don't care," said Stevie, "I ain't a coward, and I don't believe all the British were. You know grandpa was left standing all alone out of his company at Bull Run, and I'm not goin' to run any more'n he did."

"I think the Babe has the most right to complain," said 'Gene, "he always has the small parts, and has to be the baby in the basket when we play Moses."

"Yes, but I always have to be his sister, dressed up in the old red tablecloth, hiding in the bulrushes, and Rob's always Pharaoh's daughter, and wears the ball dress and the red glass beads," said Stevie.

Wasn't he cross? Small boys are just ninnies. I wanted to slap him, but mamma says if we big ones lose our tempers, the game must stop, and we're on to our honor about it, so I didn't; and Hal, he's the gentle one (sometimes papa calls him his "daughter") Hal said, "I'd just as soon be routed; let Stevie be a minuteman;" so we did.

Hal always thinks of things, just like mamma; and I guess we all love him just a little bit better than the other brothers.

'Gene is reading this over my shoulder, and he says I'm 'way off my subject. Well, we have lots of fun with our Bible plays, and we really learn a lot, because we study them all up before we have them. And sometimes we have to hunt a long time for the ones we want. We had Daniel in the Lion's den, and I was Daniel, and Stevie had a great time because he was chief lion and wore grandma's cashmere shawl. And when we've worked on them, and think they're real good, we ask papa and mamma up to see them.

Well, one day we were thinking what to have. We'd had Noah, and Moses, and Daniel, and David and Jonathan. 'Gene was Jonathan, he can shoot arrows the best of any of us, but he ought to, he's got the best ash bow, that Uncle 'Gene sent him. He says it takes more'n a bow to make an archer, and it's because he practices archery and croquet that he's the best at them; and 'I'd only care for something besides wrestling and tumbling, p'rhaps I could shoot as well as he does. But I am the best wrestler, all the boys say so.

So we were thinking, and Steve says, "Why, we've never had Pharaoh and the Red Sea!"

"How could we?" said Hal.

"Just as easy," 'Gene says. "We could fix it up fine in the bathroom. We could be the Israelites, and dress up in our night-gowns—you know Eastern men wear sort of dresses—and make handkerchief turbans, and wear sashes, so's to look as Eastern as we can; and Stevie could be Pharaoh, and have the biggest toy wheelbarrow for a chariot, and the Babe could be Pharaoh's army. And then we three biggest fellows could go across the sea—that would be the empty bathtub—"dry shod," and then we'd fill the bathtub chock full and drown Pharaoh. It wouldn't hurt you any, Pharaoh; don't be silly!—only get your nightgown and the Babe's wet, and there's plenty more of those."

"I'll be Pharaoh if I can wear the glass beads," said Stevie. So we had to let him, so as not to spoil the play.

"Pity we couldn't have the sea really red," I said. "Seas never look the color of plain water—they're always gray, or blue, or green—and red's such a pretty color. There's a lot of splendid red paint in the shed that the painters left."

Mamma says that was where I was wrong, putting that idea into the children's heads.

Then Hal says, "Why, yes, we could use that. You can get paint off with turpentine. Don't you know mamma just cleaned some off Stevie's trousers?" I think Hal was naughty, too.

So we sent Stevie and the Babe down to the shed for our paint and then we dressed. The Babe looked awful cunning as Pharaoh's army. We dressed him in his little pink pajamas. 'Gene says the 'Gyptians didn't wear pants—but that's the kind of a nightie he wears, and so he did.

There was two brushes in the paint pails, and 'Gene and I painted the tub all over inside so that the water'd look really red. I think the main trouble was that the paint didn't have time to dry. That's why it got over the Israelite's feet so, when they walked across dry shod.

We didn't ask papa and mamma up. Mamma says that was because we knew she wouldn't approve of it. But papa had gone out and we didn't know as mamma'd care to see it alone. So after we'd gone across, we filled up the tub for the Babe and Stevie.

Stevie was proud as a peacock. He had on a long nightgown of mamma's. He said Pharaoh prob'ly wore a train, as he was king, and he had on a blue and gold tissue, paper cap that Hal owns—came out of a snap-bonbon—and the glass beads. They're red glass, and they're awful pretty. And he got into the wheelbarrow—it's quite a big toy one.

The Red Sea looked fine. The paint showed through the water just as bright, for we'd painted over where the Israelites' feet had taken it off, and we got a board and made an inclined plane down into the tub. We made it pretty

steep, to give the wheelbarrow a good start. Then we let Pharaoh go.

It was fine. The plane was so steep the wheelbarrow tipped right over into the tub, and O, he was an awful sight, Stevie was; but we fished him out, and he's a plucky little fellow, so he only laughed. But his face was all paint, and he looked so queer. And the glass beads' string broke and they went all over the Red Sea.

Then we put the army on the inclined plane—of course they was infantry, and didn't have chariots—and gave it a push. But the Babe was frightened and gave one of his awful yells, and we pulled him out; but he kept on roaring. And so mamma came. And she said, "Robert, you may go to your room and stay there until to-morrow morning." And so I didn't hear the rest of it.

We were all punished except the Babe. Mamma said he was too little to know he was doing wrong. And mamma talked with us three older boys, and we felt mean. But 'Gene and I didn't care quite so much when she said she was surprised at Hal, for Hal's the good one. And you see he didn't find the turpentine after all. So we didn't play the Red Sea again. The next time it was Joseph and his brethren. And Hal was Joseph, and wore papa's breakfast coat. And papa and mamma came up to see it.—The Interior.

COAXING BIRD GUESTS.

It is well to begin to make preparations for bird guests at least as early as the middle of November. In the first place, it takes some time for the news of one's hospitality to spread among the feathered folk, and the sooner it starts the better. Then, most people prefer to work outdoors in November rather than in December. But January is not too late. It is very desirable that some of the birds should be induced to feed where they may be observed by their hosts.

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of birds to prepare for — those which eat seed or grain and those which prefer animal food of some kind. There is another class, well represented by the bluejays, which will eat almost anything, but no special preparations need be made for the birds belonging to it, since they will fare riotously on the food set out for the others. First of all we will consider the insectivorous birds. Their natural fare is rarely attainable in winter, but beef suet will be found a very good and convenient substitute for it. All things considered, suet is the best thing I have tried for this purpose.

If there happens to be trees near the house, the problem of the bird-feeder is simple; all he has to do is to tie the suet securely to the trunks and prominent branches and await the arrival of his guests. If there are no trees, he should go out into the woods and cut down as large a dead one as he can handle, and set it in the ground exactly where he wants it. A sapling will answer, but a larger tree is more interesting.

For the seed eating birds it is well to have a variety of food. Mixed bird seed is excellent for the smaller birds, but to it should be added such things as oats, wheat, buckwheat, corn and sunflower seeds. If there are no cats in the neighborhood, the best place to scatter the seed is on the ground, where seed-eating birds usually get their food. First of all, however, the snow should be cleared away; otherwise the food is liable to sink in.