

# California Saturday

Mrs. Marlee pushed some wood into the bright, crackling fire, slammed the stove lid into its place, and turned around to look at an old clock ticking in the corner. Time for the boys to get up she thought, as she picked up the coal-oil lamp and started for their room.

"Herbert . . . Herbert . . . get up now. Call Martin too. Here's your clean socks . . . now get up," she said tossing two little bundles into the boys' faces. Mrs. Marlee was satisfied that her two sons would get up at once for this was Saturday, the one day in the week when they were utterly free. Errands to neighboring farms were joyful pilgrimages and did not properly come under the head of "work."

While their mother prepared breakfast, the two boys did the chores. Several yards from the house under some tall eucalyptus trees stood the unpainted, tattered barn. As the milking proceeded, the two brothers carried on an earnest conversation.

"Get the three eggs?" inquired Herbert as he milked.

"Sure did. Salt too."

"Better sneak back and get that other stuff."

Martin disappeared and a few moments later returned just as Herbert was hanging up his milking stool. Martin was not empty handed on his return: he had a jar of peaches. He hid the fruit in a growing pile of food in the manger. The two boys exchanged a few more words and then picked up the bucket of milk and returned to the warm kitchen and breakfast.

While the two boys ate, the mother issued some instructions as she strained the milk.

". . . and don't lose that dollar Herbie, and tell Mrs. Bishop to divide the eggs between you to carry, and be careful," she concluded.

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By  
**Harry Leippe**

As the early morning sun began to draw thin clouds of vapor from the dew-covered hills, breakfast for the boys, dog, cow, and even the cats, had been completed.

"Don't lose that money," warned Mrs. Marlee a last time as her sons slammed the door and began their journey. The food hidden in the manger was dug out, put in a bag, and down the steep pasture the boys plunged. Stubby, their old dog, followed as far as the pasture fence and then stopped to watch the boys out of sight.

The trail which the boys chose on the other side of the fence was soon buried in a mass of tangled brush all wound together by means of long, twining, wild blackberry vines. Overhead, the twisting limbs of the great live-oak trees and the bright red-purple colored madronne trees climbed skyward. The trail as well as the ground was covered with dry leaves and the crushing of the brittle, sharp-edged oak leaves beneath their feet made much noise. Though the morning sun was shining brightly, its warm rays had not yet seeped through the trees and brush, and the boys found the air rather cool as they walked through the shadowy forest with the morning dew dripping from leaf to leaf. After winding for some distance through the dark damp woods, the trail began to climb again and soon the boys had reached the top of a plateau-like hill covered with brush and trees.

The plateau was crossed and on the other side the boys found themselves looking down into a small valley in which grew the remains of an old apple orchard. Herbert removed a picket from the ancient, moss-covered fence that

stood before them, replacing it after they squeezed through the opening. For several decades the fence had successfully held back the great live-oaks, and the madronnes and even the towering redwoods, but brush and wild berry vines had long ago sneaked through and settled comfortably throughout the orchard. Perhaps the fence didn't mind the trespassing vines and bushes so much, for it was that very tangled, branching mass which kept the ancient fence from falling to the ground, where the shady, moist earth would have devoured nails, pickets, rails and all.

"Full of worm holes, ain't they," commented Herbert inspecting a large apple then wiping it on his shirt sleeve.

"Here's a couple ripe ones over here. Don't have to worry about washing off the spray on these. Come on, let's go."

After walking through a little more brush the boys arrived at a

## Obvious But Opaque

A Riddle In Rhyme

Hushed by a spark,  
And a bearer of cark.  
It urges travelers to hark  
And watchdogs to bark.  
It's to lovers an incentive to park.  
In its vagueness the burglar and shark  
Go through its reticence to leave  
their mark.  
In the realm of the moon it's a  
hierarch.  
At the dawn of time, ere the day  
of the Ark,  
Its rival was created by our Patri-  
arch.  
"Bright" is antonymous," I also  
remark.  
I ask, "Are you puzzled as I de-  
bark?"  
"If you are," I reply with a lark,  
"You're in the 'dark'."

—Ray Rogers.