

small, grass-covered valley snuggled at the bottom of several wooded hills and here was located their dining room. The greater portion of the valley was covered by a group of towering redwood trees growing in a huge circle some hundred feet across. These giants were circled with a wall of matted brush and trees. On the southern side of this circle of age-old evergreens there was an opening in the wall of brush. This arch like opening served as a door to this magnificent "cathedral," for so it was called by the little Methodist church just ten miles over the hills in Aptos. The earth within the shadows of this living cathedral sloped downward from the ring of trees forming a bowl. From the very center of the entire formation rose a gigantic, fire scarred stump which was the father of the ring of giants surrounding it and the remains of a monstrous redwood that had long ago succumbed to its one great enemy: fire.

"Oh say! wouldn't Reverend Edwards howl if he knew we built fires in his mighty pulpit," laughed Herbert setting his sack down by the majestic, fire-blackened stump that was at least twice as tall as he. On one side the charred, rotten wood had been cleared away and a small platform erected which was sturdy enough to support a speaker. Opposite the pulpit was a large hole in the side of the stump, large enough for two stooping boys to slip through and into the hollow shell which was at least a dozen feet across.

"Well, let's cut the wood," suggested Herbert digging an ax out of the leaves that covered the area within the stump. "Then let's hurry up and get the eggs from Pop's and get back here."

Some time later, when the hot sun had almost completed its upward climb, the boys arrived at the farm of Mr. Bishop who was better known as "Pop." Of course the Bishop's were very much surprised when the Marlee boys declined an invitation to eat dinner and hurried away with the eggs.

"Guess their father needs them in the apples," suggested Mrs. Bishop.

"Maybe," replied her husband as he thought momentarily of his own youth, "but I think they have something in the wind."

And there was something in the light afternoon breeze that whispered through the boys' "dining room." It was the smell of food, the odor of the evergreens, the crackling of a fire, and the laughter of two happy boys. The dry redwood leaves had been raked away from the center of the stump and a small fire was burning. Eggs were boiling in a rusty tin can, potatoes were roasting in the ashes, and several sausages from the home cellar hung over the fire from a slender branch. Though the lunch was prepared in a short time, even less time was required to eat it; and it was not long before the boys were wiping sticky peach juice from their pocket knives, burying the egg shells and potato skins, and replacing the leaves.

The boys found a sunny spot just outside the stump and stretched contentedly out to rest and listen to the wind in the branches of the tall trees and the sounds of birds and insects around them. Just a little way beyond the great arch door amid the surrounding brush stood a solitary madronne waving its slender red limbs slowly as if directing a symphony. And the efforts of the tree were not in vain, for as the breeze got tangled in the lofty crowns of the redwoods and murmured its protests the old giants lazily replied with creaks and groans. This to these boys was music indeed.

Meanwhile mom was still in the kitchen, as the boys had left her early that morning. Besides her ordinary multitude of tasks she always prepared most of Sunday's dinner on Saturday afternoon because "Everything goes wrong," she always said, "when I try to get up a whole dinner Sunday morning."

Right in mother's garden by the kitchen, Stubby slept peacefully throughout the afternoon in a very comfortable hole he had dug. In the late afternoon he suddenly sat up with a twitching nose and inquiring ears. From the orchard be-

low the house the dull thumping of apples could be heard as Mr. Marlee picked hand after hand full and rolled them into wooden boxes. But it was not the thumping which aroused Stubby, for he was looking toward the barn and the pasture which spread below it. Then he heard it again:

"Ka, koo, koo," came the quiet call of a quail far down below the barn.

Stubby sprang from his hole with a growl and a bark, and disappeared behind the barn.

"There's the boys," thought Mrs. Marlee peering out of the kitchen window at a few lazy clouds of dust marking the dog's path.

Down in the shadows of the forest Herbert and Martin hurried along, eggs in hand. Martin's lips puckered to whistle and the call of a quail again pierced the forest and crossed the hills. It was answered by the distant barking of Stubby. A few moments later the three met at the pasture fence and Stubby eagerly welcomed the boys with wriggling efforts to lick their faces.

"Down Stubby-boy! Down!" they laughed holding the bags of fragile eggs high. The fence was scaled and the blank stare of a bull's skull that was mounted on a fence post seemed to watch the boys and the playful dog climb the pasture hill, and approach the kitchen door.

". . . And they said they're coming up to see us next Wednesday night," said Herbert as the boys recounted part of the day's adventures to their mother.

"And Pop gave me some more bullets," added Martin.

"Well, good," said Mother inspecting the eggs.

"There's three extras in the bags that Mrs. Bishop gave you," remembered Herbert.

"Fine," said the Mother. "Now I shall have enough to make cup cakes." And she looked fondly at the happy boys as she said, "Now run and help your father scatter the empty boxes for Monday's work and haul in today's apples before time to do your night chores."

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