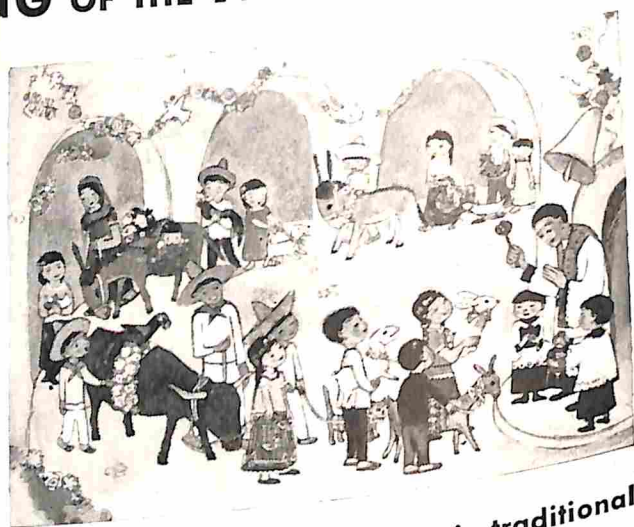


THE BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

ON the day before Easter Sunday, every year, a ceremony called "The Blessing of the Animals" takes place on Olvera Street, a part of Los Angeles where many Mexican people have made their homes.



On this special day the folk of Olvera Street dress in their traditional national costumes. Then they bring their animals and pets, and parade down the street to the old mission church. The animals are washed, brushed and decorated with ribbons and garlands of flowers. The parade is loveliest as it passes through the arches of the church patio, where the mission bells ring, birds flutter through the air and Old Juan plays soft music on his harp. He plays "La Paloma," a beautiful old Mexican song whose title means "The Dove."

The padre stands at the door of the church, and as the parade comes by he blesses the creatures, one by one, so that they may increase in number and continue their usefulness.

Sometimes the ceremony is interrupted by a dog fight, or by some other misbehaving of the animals. Then the smiling padre sprinkles more holy water on them and says, "I guess these animals need an extra blessing," and everyone laughs.

The cover picture of this April JACK AND JILL shows the blessing of the animals. This painting was made for you by Leo Politi, who lives in Los Angeles and loves to make pictures of happenings on Olvera Street.

On page 37 of this JACK AND JILL you will find an arrangement of "La Paloma." This is the tuneful Mexican folk song which is sometimes played and sung on the day before Easter at the time of blessing the animals.

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	AUTHOR	ILLUSTRATOR	PAGE
COVER PICTURE		Leo Politi	
THE BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS			Inside Front Cover
IT HAPPENED THIS WAY	Anne Swinton	Laura Sackett Stein	2
THREE APRIL-FOOL TRICKS	Ollie James Robertson	Rebecca Shapiro	6
SOMETHING TO DO	Ann King, Camilla Walch Wilson, Rita M. Oliver	Rebecca Shapiro	7
TINY TALES	Elizabeth D. S. Stewart, Katharine Gallagher, Blanche Secor Longman, Daisy Jenney Clay, Celeste H. Cohan	Anne Wilcox	8
WHO WAS KILROY?	Ann King	Ruth Rubin	16
TIP, TOP AND TUBBY		Milt Groth	17
PUZZLE JINGLES	Helen G. Fichter and Bernice Elftmann Guest	Ruth Rubin	18
CROSSWORD PUZZLE	Charlotte Beath Brown	Gertrude Gordon	19
BOOKER AND THE MAGIC MARKS	Alice Alison Lide and Margaret Alison Johansen	Janet Smalley	20
INKY'S DRAWING LESSON		Neal Janzen	29
THE WIZARD AND THE FIRE ALARM	Alfred S. Campbell	Jeanne Bendick	30
CAROL ANN'S EASTER		Elsa Scheuerman	33
PRAYERS TO LEARN	Ivy O. Eastwick	Leo Politi	36
LA PALOMA	Mary Peacock	Leo Politi	37
SANDROS PLAYS A JOKE	Sally Reed	Margaret D. Landes	38
BOO BOO, THE WOODS BOY		Joseph Bolden	43
LITTLE PET STORIES	JACK AND JILL Readers		44
RICHARD GOES AWAY TO SCHOOL, Conclusion	Nancy Grace	Beth Henninger	46
NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, WEST	Letters		54
THE PRINCESS AND THE PAGE	Michael Malone	Marian Freeman Holland	56
MOLLIE'S DREAM		Jenia Miller	60
LITTLE ENGINE'S LESSON	Wilma Hatfield	Dollie Morgan	61
AT MY DESK	JACK AND JILL Readers		62
JIBBO, THE MONKEY	Margaret C. Farquhar	Genevieve Endicott	64
MOTHERS' PAGE			68
FINNIE, THE OFFICE GOLDFISH		Marguerite Gaudin	
		Inside Back Cover	

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JACK and JILL

APRIL, 1947



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