

LITTLE FOLKS



Harold's Birthday in California.

(May Bell, in 'Congregationalist'.)

No one in the family had any difficulty in remembering Harold's birthday, for he was born with the New Year. He seemed a little fellow to be remembered on so large a day, but of course he will soon get over that.

It happened that he was in California with his father and mother when the last day of the year came, and while other people were thinking thoughts that always come when the year is at an end, Harold was looking forward to a birthday in the new land.

'Please wake me early, grandpa,' he said, 'I want to see the sun paint the mountains the first thing in the morning.'

'All right,' said his grandfather, who was waiting for his good-night kiss. 'There'll be no trouble about that. We'll wake you good and early, never fear.'

But Harold needed no waking. About two minutes after his birthday and the New Year began, a cannon cracker exploded in the street and soon the bells were ringing. When he rose from his bed and ran to the window there was a crowd in the street, though the clock on the shelf said only a quarter past twelve.

Harold rubbed his eyes in wonder. He had never been up at midnight before, and when his mamma came in and kissed him and wished him a happy New Year, as if it were a matter of course for a boy of six to be getting up at midnight, he began to think it was good fun. 'I wonder if it's because it is my birthday. His father

laughed at that and told him that this was the way the people celebrated New Years Day. He looked out and saw the people in the street, and it was a long time before he got to sleep again.

They woke him again at daybreak, and he saw the sun on the mountains and after breakfast was eager to start on the drive which his father had promised him.

The road to Pasadena was full of carriages of every sort full of people going to help celebrate the Tournament of Roses. Harold thought it was like fairyland as he sat between his father and grandfather in the carriage and saw the procession of moving flowers. Every pole along the street was hung with palm branches. Flags were waving, some of them the buff and blue, which are the tournament colors, and some the stars and stripes.

First came the horses of the advance guard, stepping proudly under garlands of roses and carnations wreathed with smilax. Next were automobiles completely hidden by feathery pampas plumes. Then came tallyhos, autos, floats, bicycles, donkeys and ponies, covered with roses, pinks, callas, palms, smilax, pepper branches and bamboo, and carrying school children, firemen, Chinese, Indians, cowboys. It was like a dream of odd folks and beautiful flowers.

There was one small brass cannon drawn by four little donkeys, each with a boy on his back, and two boys on the gun carriage; and this Harold liked best of all, although the Chinese children were interesting. But his little sister Gladys thought the basket of roses with a little girl in the middle driving the big white doves was best of

all, and next to this the white float with the Maypole and the children around it.

The day seemed like June, with a cloudless sky. Harold thought of the snowy street and the sleighride of his last birthday. It seemed impossible that people in the East were shivering with cold while the sun was so warm and all along the country roads people were picnicking as they drove home. When night came he was tired, but happy. 'It's the beautifullest birthday I ever saw,' he told his mother as she kissed him good-night; and he dropped off to sleep, as a tired boy should, to dream of riding on a donkey with a wreath of roses round its neck and a big brass cannon just behind.

The Magical Door.

(Margaret E. Sangster, in 'Harper's Young People'.)

There's a door in the wall of the ages—

A door that no man sees;

For the Angel who writes in the Book of Time

Is the keeper of the keys.

Once in the year it opens,

At the solemn midnight hour,
When the children sleep, and the old
clocks keep

Awake in the tall church tower.

And then, as it swings on its hinges,
Whoever might peer inside
Would catch a glimpse of the centuries
That behind in the silence hide.

Egypt and Rome and Tyre,
All in that mythical place
Where the old years rest that were
once possessed

By the wonderful human race.

The shadowy door swings open,
And a pilgrim enters in,
Bowed with a twelve-months' struggle