



**IS THERE A SANTA CLAUS?**

On September 21, 1897, an editorial writer of the New York Sun, now dead, wrote the following beautiful reply to a little girl who asked if Santa Claus is a reality. This reply is so tender, full of sensibility and truth, and so far transcends anything we are able to say in defense of the Saint of Christmas, that we again give it, and may it have a thoughtful reading in every household the Banner enters. Thus speaketh the wise scribe:

We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently, the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of the Sun:

"Dear Editor: I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, 'If you see it in the Sun, it's so.' Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?"

**"VIRGINIA O'HANLON."**

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no child-like faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle to see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. It is all real! Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God, he lives, and he lives forever! A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

**Editor Fackler in a New Role**

A special telegram to the Atlanta Journal of Saturday from Hazlehurst, Ga., says:

S. A. Fackler, editor of the Hazlehurst News, has secured the services of Charles C. Clark, a theatrical manager, well known in the east, to rehearse the members of his theatrical company, which will play the remainder of the opera season in South Georgia and Florida, presenting their play entitled, "The Ups and Downs of a Country Editor," mostly "downs," that was taken from the popular book written by Mr. Fackler. This company will play in all the large cities of Florida and south Georgia. This play as it is now presented by this company, has been pronounced by critics one of the best of recent years. It is said to be one of the first plays written that depicted newspaper life from beginning to end. The author, Sam Fackler, has recently revised and re-written this play. The music for the play was written by Mr. M. M. Straten of Crystal River, Fla., the noted authoress and song writer.

His Florida friends will wish him great success in his new venture.

When you want a quick meal, drop in Hogan's Cafe, where you'll find everything in season on the bill of fare.

**REPLY TO TIMES-UNION'S EDITORIAL**

To the Editor Ocala Banner: "Boo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo!" cried the boys.

"What is the matter?" anxiously inquired Mama Florida. "We have been playing city, and Billy Jordan—hateful thing—was playing like he was our papa, and he would not let Duval play on Sunday. He said at first that we could all play on Sunday; then he said that the boys who played keeping bar could not play on Sunday, and nearly everybody said that that was right, but now he won't let Duval or Dixie play on Sunday, and we are all mad about it, and won't play at all!"

So the mayor has done the acrobatic stunt and reversed himself. Isn't it just awful? He has actually called the attention of the chief of police to certain things which are considered Sabbath-breaking and unlawful. What an unpardonable sin! Fie, fie! Mr. Jordan, aren't you ashamed to shut up the innocent play house? Didn't you hear what the Times-Union said? Don't you know that the theatrical companies own more property in Jacksonville than all the preachers put together?

But, oh! Mr. Mayor, don't shut up the undertaker's shop on Sunday, for perhaps the merciless reporter, seeing that the undertaker's parlors are such a gay place, he might want to go with the Times-Union force and spend Sunday afternoons there, after the theaters are closed; and don't, Mr. Mayor, shut up the garages, for some young fellow might want to get a machine and take his best girl out for a Sunday ride.

But say, Times-Union, honest, where do you go to find your comparison, when you compare the theater with stables, garages and railway and steamboat offices and undertakers' shops. It must be that you are taking it straight, and the kind that has four snakes to each ounce. Did it ever occur to the Times-Union that there are those in Jacksonville who do own some property, even if the theaters do own more than the preachers, who oppose Sunday theaters, and that they are entitled to some consideration? If the theaters are so innocent, how is it that there is a case pending in the criminal court to decide the legality of Sunday opening? Who is it that you are discriminating in favor of, Mr. Jordan?

What kind of a howl would the Times-Union set up if all the farmers were to hitch up their horses and go to plowing on Sunday? Or if all the stores in the city were to open for business on Sunday?

And now comes the Times-Union of December 17th, and states that the itinerant preachers still have no property in the city of Jacksonville, and that most of them are not registered voters, and have no interest in that flourishing city except to haze the people into the church, and that the church idea has penetrated as far as King's road. Verily, old boy, it's spreading, and you had better watch your play houses and swill shops, or these penniless preachers and some of these foolish people who are aiding them may seriously interfere with your "harmless amusements."

"No interest in Jacksonville." Say, old man, what constitutes interest? And what constitutes prosperity in a city? Is its prosperity always measured by dollars? Now, don't you think that it would add something to the prosperity of your city if you could offer greater security to life and property? And how better can you do that than by upholding law and order? Don't you remember, sweet Times-Union, that only a few weeks ago a man was murdered in his bed and robbed? And that is not the only case of a similar kind that has happened there, right in your most prosperous, rapidly growing, highly moral (?), wholly civilized city of Jacksonville. That the murderer was caught is commendable, but it did not bring the man back to life, nor does it prove that there will be no more such murders. Don't you think, Times-Union, that it is time for you to uphold the churches and their doctrines for a while, and let Mayor Jordan and the city council, with the police department, look after the Sunday closing of such places as seem best for the good of the city? Do you think the city would go into the hands of a receiver if these play houses were closed?

If you people would pay your preachers a sufficient salary it might be that in after years you could not taunt them with their lack of property interests in your city. Maybe they would become citizens and real estate owners.

A sprained ankle will usually disable the injured person for three or four weeks. This is due to lack of proper treatment. When Chamberlain's Liniment is applied a cure will be effected in three or four days. This liniment is one of the best and most remarkable preparations in use. Sold by all dealers.

Thus sings the Pensacola Journal: "Advertise and the world will trade with you; Sleep, and they'll leave you alone."

**THE EDITOR'S MISTAKE**

It is held to be an inexcusable outrage for a newspaper editor to make the slightest mistake in a statement of any sort, while professional persons, upon whose certainty of knowledge and on whose statement in regard thereto, life or death and the most important interest depend, make the most serious errors without incurring the slightest criticism, much less blame.

Take the judge on the bench, whose decisions are set aside or annulled by higher courts almost every day, and the judge whose judgment is so reversed does not suffer in the least in public and professional estimation.

In the same way, the physician who makes a wrong diagnosis of his patient's disease, administers treatment that results in death instead of a cure, loses none of the confidence of his patrons in his skill, and he may kill any number of persons secundum artem without incurring the slightest responsibility.

These are curious facts, but they are facts, and they are mentioned, not by way of excusing editorial mistakes, for there is no excuse for them, but because every individual firmly believes that he could conduct newspapers better than those who are charged with the work, while no unprofessional person would undertake to usurp functions of the judge or the physician.—New Orleans Picayune.

**First Tomato Shipment**

Mr. James of Lemon City, one of the prominent vegetable growers of the county, yesterday made his first shipment of fall tomatoes to the north. The shipment consisted of fifteen crates, and is probably the first shipment of the present crop of tomatoes to go out of the county.—Miami Record.

**Ladies' Long Coats**

All Styles and Shades  
CUT PRICE SALE NOW ON  
—AT—  
J. KLEIN'S STORE

DON'T DRINK! But if you do, see Hogan, and get the best that money can buy. If it's a good drink, we have it.

**TOO LATE**

Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!  
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.  
"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now!"  
No light had we—for that we do repent,  
And learning this, the Bridegroom will relent.  
"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now!"  
No light! so late! and dark and chill the night;  
O, let us in, that we may find the light.  
"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now!"  
Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet!  
O, let us in, though late, to kiss his feet.  
"No! no! too late! ye cannot enter now!"  
—Alfred Tennyson.

**Lakeland's Appreciation of the Conference**

The annual meeting of the Methodist conference is now in session at Lakeland. The people of Lakeland gave the preachers a very warm welcome. Mr. Sheats made the speech of greeting. He went so far as to say that "even the chickens cackled, the roosters crowed and the turkeys gobbled their welcome," and that the city had bought a great African lion to "roar a welcome." The bishop responded most felicitously, asserting the agreeable disappointment that he felt at finding so charming a little city crowning the hilltops and begemmed with lakelets.

**Sea Island Homespun**

YARD WIDE  
5c YARD  
CUT PRICE SALE NOW ON  
—AT—  
J. KLEIN'S STORE.  
The young king of Spain will be compelled to undergo a third operation for tubercular troubles.

To My Friends and Patrons

I Wish You One and All a  
Merry Christmas and A  
Happy New Year ❧ ❧

*Marcus Frank*

A Merry Christmas  
and  
A Happy New Year  
to you  
are the wishes of  
The  
**O K GROCERY**  
HARVEY CLARK, Prop.  
OCALA, FLA.

The Atlanta papers scrap among themselves over everything but Atlanta. Atlanta is the magic platform upon which they all unite, and they are to be commended for their efforts to build up their own city.—Merriweather Vindicator.

When in Ocala don't forget Hogan's Place. He will do all in his power to make it pleasant for you. Hogan, the whiskey man.