

The Velvet Hammer

THE COOS BAY KNOCKER.

YOU FIND a grouchy character in every kind of town, who never gives his city praise, but always knocks it down. He says the streets are crooked and the councilmen are worse, and prospects are as pleasant as the plumage of a hearse; that Central Avenue street will be presently a pasturage of cows, for everything is drifting to perdition and bow-wows.

The people are immoral and the preachers are inane, the children underwitted and the parents are insane; the houses all are tumbling down and rents are going up, there are bats in every belfry and some fleas on every pup; our public school's the biggest joke a body ever saw; the Mayor is a grafter and he won't enforce the law.

The knocker's face is gloomy and would stop a Chinese clock. His favorite diversion is to sit around and knock. You ask him what is keeping him and why he needs to stay, and why he doesn't pack his trunk and gladly go away; a man of his ability should never waste his prime by hanging 'round a burg like this—it's really a crime.

But Mr. Marshfield Knocker has no desire to leave—it's just the creature's nature to deplore, and rap, and grieve. He lacks the optimistic mind and energy and pluck; he has a drooping spirit—he's the image of bad luck. He'll grace some day the health resort that's run by Landlord Nick, and there for dismal centuries he'll stand around and kick.

—ANON.

IS THERE A SANTA CLAUS?

One of the gems of present day journalism is the reply of the New York Sun to the letter of a little girl, Virginia O'Hanlon, who, not doubting the editor's infallibility, demanded the truth about Santa Claus. Here is the editor's answer:

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 childlike 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 all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and 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 can lift.

MY GUIDE

TO RESPECT my country, my profession and myself. To be honest and fair with my fellow-men, as I expect them to be honest and square with me. To be a loyal citizen of the United States of America. To speak of it with praise, and act always as a trustworthy custodian of its good name. To be a man whose name carries weight wherever it goes.

To base my expectations of reward on a solid foundation of service rendered. To be willing to pay the price of success in honest effort. To look upon my work as an opportunity to be seized with joy and made the most of, and not as painful drudgery to be reluctantly endured.

To remember that success lies within myself—my own brain, my own ambition, my own courage and determination. To expect difficulties and force my way through them. To turn hard experience into capital for future use.

To believe in my proposition, heart and soul. To carry an air of optimism in the presence of those I meet. To dispel ill temper with cheerfulness, kill doubts with a strong conviction, and reduce active friction with an agreeable personality.

To make a study of my business. To know my profession in every detail. To mix brains with my efforts, and use system and method in my work. To find time to do every needful thing by never letting time find me doing nothing. To hoard days as a miser hoards dollars. To make every hour bring me dividends, increased knowledge, or healthful recreation.

To keep my future unmortgaged by debts. To save as well as earn. To cut out expensive amusements until I can afford them. To steer clear of dissipation, and guard my health of body and peace of mind as a precious stock in trade.

Finally, to take a good grip on the joys of life. To play the game like a man. To fight against nothing so hard as my own weaknesses, and endeavor to grow in strength, a gentleman, a Christian.

So I may be courteous to men, faithful to friends, true to God, a fragrance in the path I tread.

—Selected.

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