

DEATHBED CONFESSION OF A GOOSE BONE.

BY J. D. CALHOUN.

On a trash heap in the back yard of a handsome city residence lay a pallid and shriveled goose bone, the faint beams of an unclouded moon scarce revealing its warped and twisted outline. By its side peacefully reposed the leg of a doll, minus the sawdust, a few hacked and battered spoons, the top of a baking powder can, and it may be imagined without further specifications, that the surroundings were dull and irksome to a goose bone that had had an extended existence under the happiest possible circumstances. Almost every moment the goosebone would shiver, and crinkle, and moan, as the cold penetrated deeper and deeper, and fiercer and fiercer into its shallow and age-weakened frame. A cat on amatory conquest bent stopped for a moment to snuff contemptuously at its fleshly figure, a vagrant dog sent a shudder to its central fibre by pressing it for a moment with a nose as inquisitive as a beggar and as cold as charity, while the wind whistled fitfully about the heap on which it rested. A sound, gentle as the pattering of an aspen leaf, and the sharp nose and bright eyes of a mouse showed over a spool and its gaze rested with morbid interest upon the goose bone. By some mysterious impulse the lying goose bone became aware of the presence of a friendly spirit. It looked up and saw the mouse, whom it feebly remembered as one that had frequently taken refuge beneath its friendly shelter when the household was on her semi-weekly dusting expeditions. The whiskers of the little creature moved with tremulous sympathy, its eyes gleamed with tender solicitude. It approached nearer, laying one paw softly upon the edge of the goose bone, it said:

"My dear friend, how do I find you here—you who but today dwelt over the grate of the wealthy owner of the house hard by, honored and consulted?"

"A long, low sigh rent the bosom of the goose bone.

"Ah me," it breathed, "could I but live my life over again, I would not be here now."

"Cheer up," exhorted the mouse, "you may yet recover all you have lost."

"Ah, no," wailed the goose bone. "Tomorrow the chore boy will fling me and my wretched companions into the furnace. Only tonight my master, once my proud possessor and best friend, cast me out with his own hand, and tomorrow my wretched existence will come to an end. I have been terribly wicked and I am being justly punished."

"Do not say that," replied the mouse, "you have always been so kind to me that you must have a good heart."

"No, no. Listen to me, and when I am gone, let the lesson of my ill-spent career sink deep into your heart. Tell it to others, and let me, dead, atone for what I did while alive. Draw nigh."

The mouse, weeping, cuddled up to its disheartened and departing friend and received its dying confidences.

"I was taken from the bosom of a maiden goose, shot by an ardent sportsman, as she was winging her way south to the sunny shores of the gulf, where she and her kind were intending to spend the winter. Her form was taken to a market and purchased by my master. Up to this time I had scarcely felt that I had a separate existence, but when I heard him say to the cook that I should be taken out of the body of the goose before it had been brought to the table, a consciousness suddenly awoke in me, faint and dim at first, but soon growing into a keen and prophetic intelligence. I could see a down the vista of time, with its great procession of days and nights. If they were bright and clear and pleasant, I gazed upon them with happiness. If they were cold and lowering they made me shudder a little. I due time I was stripped from my surroundings of flesh and hid in the hands of my master. He was a good man—and here the poor goose bone burst into a shower of tears so copious as to bedew three spoons and a large piece of rag that lay beneath it. But its own recovered its firmness and said: "I must hasten with my story, while I have yet strength. My master held me up to the light and I knew that he was admiring my graceful and slender proportions and gazing with rapture upon the semi-transparent joint of my structure. He laid me down and noted the clear and dark spots on my sides, he bent my elastic form until it was nearly double and let me spring back to my former shape. I was delighted with myself, with him, with my knowledge of the future and I felt that I was born for a great career. My master laid me upon the mantel and said I foretold a mild winter, with just about enough snow at Christmas to make it a pleasant season. He used to point me out to his friends and explain my gifts and my value, and he would consult me at all times when he wished to learn what the weather was to be. And so many happy years went by. I loved him, and foretold the weather and was glad. Ah, those were pleasant times, and oh, how foolishly wicked I have been."

"Once, a week went by and my master never came near me but a single time, and then he glanced at me but carelessly. And then a long period when his visits were few and far between, he seemed not to care whether I existed or not. My heart went out to him in vain longing when I heard his voice or his step. I grew pale, and I wasted, and I turned to dust. At last I learned the fatal truth. My master had betrayed my fond affection and trifled with my honest heart. He had bought a barometer, one of those stuck up, glassy, brassy things that pretends to foretell the weather, and upon it he lavished the confidence and affection that had been mine.

My heart dried up, a wild wrath took possession of me and from that moment I lived for revenge. My brain whirled with mad desire, and plots were the perpetual burden of my mind. I walked and waited, and I learned patience, and at last my time came. The summer passed, and just when the frost began to tinge the plants, I could see through the window, I heard my own voice, but no hated master say he must consult me and see what kind of a winter it was going to be, so he could lay in his winter's supply of coal. I held my breath and waited. He came; I was so full of wrath that I deceived him. I turned dark, black, from end to end. He muttered to himself and staggered from the room. All the next day, and the next, and the next, I heard the grating crash of the Anthracite coal as it rolled into the shed just outside. And the next day a strong, stern man came in with a bill for thirteen tons of coal at \$11 a ton. My master looked at the bill and then at me. In my frenzy of ferocious glee I was transparent my full length. He picked me up and gazed at me as if he would read my very soul. I returned his look with interest, for I enjoyed his suffering and my triumph. I was revenged. Ha, ha! Revenge is sweet, ah, sweet," and the decrepit old bone fairly hugged itself in transport. But it shuddered, while it paused, and then resumed in a low and broken voice:

"But time brings changes. That cold, stern, coal clerk came again and again, twice a week, and then every day. He grew more

insolent and pressing with each visit. Then the piano was sold and he did not come for a week. His next visit was followed by the disappearance of the book case and two rocking chairs, and then in another week he came once more and all the furniture seemed to follow him away. My master grew pale and thin, the hired girl was discharged and my beautiful young mistress began to sweep the empty rooms and dust the pictureless walls. And the winter wore on and the weather was moderate and the coal lay unconsumed in the cellar, and today the spring fairly arrived. My master came up to me and picked me up and gazed on me in rage. He hurled me to the floor and was about to grind me with his heel when a sweet, low voice said, "Don't papa. You will spoil the carpet, and it will be a long time before we can buy another."

He picked me up, threw me through the window and I lodged upon this heap. The rest you know, but you can never measure the remorse I feel."

A boy approached with a basket. Daylight had come. The mouse fled, but never forgot the deathbed confession of the goose bone. It told it to me and I tell it again.

SKETCHES OF THE LATE CIVIL WAR.

BY REV. W. G. HAWKINS.

It was one of the hottest days near the end of July, 1864, just one year after the terrible battle of Gettysburg—when George Heaton came rushing into the parsonage, his face pale with fright, saying that he had just come from the diamond or public square of the town and had seen one of Gen. Stewart's raiders. They were the advanced guards of a company of cavalry on a raid through the Cumberland valley. Early in the morning they had heard shots and their forces were now encamping on the hills overlooking Chambersburg, one of its flourishing towns. The citizens were now gathered at the court house, having a "parley" with some officers sent in advance to make terms for the surrender of the town or to demand a large indemnity of the officers of the bank for its redemption, otherwise threatened to burn every house after pillaging the stores. Mr. Heaton hastened out, determined to learn the worst and to make arrangements for the safety of his family. Joseph and Willie were eager to go with him, but he advised their remaining with the family until his return. For more than three years the inhabitants had heard rumors of the advance of the rebels, but hitherto no serious damage was suffered, except by a few of Lee's army, who one year before had marched through on their way to the fatal defeat at Gettysburg, which was about twenty-four miles distant. The government had established several hospitals in the town, and the citizens had shown great kindness to the sick and kindness of both armies. A committee of ladies were constant in their visits to these wounded men, whom the fortune of war had left to the care of strangers. Every thing that tender nursing could do, was done to mitigate the horrors of the fratricidal contest, and many were the loving expressions of mothers in the north and south, whose sons were restored or in dying were not left without the consolation of Christian tenderness and love, as they yielded up their lives away from home and friends. The present raid was conducted by Gen. McCausland, who had previously moved on to Hagerstown and demanded \$20,000, which was paid and the town saved. The whole force, of which this was the advanced guard, the rebel commander Gen. Jubar A. Early, who by a rapid movement, was threatening Washington. Meanwhile plundering parties were sent out to invade the border towns of the north and those in Maryland, and which could be reached in safety. Mr. Heaton soon learned the following facts: The rebels having been interrupted by the forces employed to protect the border, did not enter the town until Saturday morning. They had previously taken the precaution of planting two batteries in commanding positions and in getting up their whole column—early on Saturday they opened with their batteries and fired some half a dozen shots into the town, but they did no damage; it was the noise which had aroused the town very soon after their skirmishers entered by almost every street and alley running out west and southwest, and finding the way clear, their cavalry, to the number of 450 came in under the command of Gen. McCausland, and while the officers were reconnoitering to get a good bargain with the citizens for tribute, his soldiers spent most of their time in almost indiscriminate robbery. Hats, caps, boots, watches, silverware and everything of value were appropriated from individuals on the streets without ceremony, and when a man was met whose appearance indicated a plerotic purse a pistol would be presented to his head with the order to "deliver" with a dexterity that would have done credit to the finest horsemanship of an "Italian Brizard." Their chief rode up to a number of citizens and gave notice that unless \$500,000 in greenbacks or \$100,000 in gold was paid in half an hour the town would be burned, but no one responded to his call, and the citizens of Chambersburg promptly informed them that they could not and would not pay any ransom. He had the court house bell rung to convene the citizens, hoping to frighten them into the payment of a large sum of money, but no one attended and no sort of effort was made by individuals or by committee to make any terms. All determined that the rebels should fulfill their threat to burn the town, rather than that they should pay tribute. Inflamed by the determination of the people, a major rode up to a group of the citizens and ordered them under arrest. This officer said they would be held for the payment of the money, and if not paid he would take them to Richmond as hostages and also burn every house in town. While he was endeavoring to force them into an effort to raise the money, his men commenced the work of firing and they were discharged when it was found that intimidation would do nothing. The main part of the town was enveloped in flames in ten minutes, and no time was given even to remove women or children or sick or even the dead. No notice of burning the town was communicated to any one, but like inflated bladders, the work of destruction was commenced. They divided into squads and fired every other, and often every house, if they presented any prospect of plunder they would beat in the door with iron bars or heavy plank, and set fire to the building with an ax, throw fluid or oil upon it and ply the match. They almost invariably entered every room of each house rifled the drawers of bureau's, appropriated money, jewelry, watches and any other valuables, and often would present pistols to the heads of inmates, men and women and demanded money or their lives. In nearly half the instances they demanded owners to ransom their property, and in cases it was done and the property burned. The main object of the men seemed to be plunder, not a house escaped pillage, all were plundered of everything that could be carried away. In most cases houses were entered in the rudest manner, and no time whatever allowed even for families to escape, much less to save anything. Many families had the utmost difficulty to get themselves and their children out in time, and not one-half had so much as a change of clothing with them. They would rush from store to store, to rob and always fire the building at once in order to keep the family from detecting their robbery. Feeble and helpless women and children were treated like brute beasts, told insultingly to get out or burn even the sick were not spared. Several invalids had to be carried out as the rebels kicked their couches. Thus the work of destruction continued for two hours; more than half the town on fire at once; amid the wild glare of the flames, the shrieks of the women and children, and often louder than all the terrible blasphemy of the rebels, conspired to present such a scene of horror, as has never been witnessed by the present generation. No one was spared save by accident. The widow and the fatherless cried and pleaded in vain that they would be homeless and helpless, a rude oath would close all hope of

mercy and they would fly to save their lives. The old and the infirm were thrust aside and the torch applied in their presence. In the brief space of two hours the greater portion of the town, its chief wealth and business, its capital and elegance were devoured by a barbarous foe. In a single day nearly three millions of dollars worth of property were destroyed, and three thousand human beings, mostly women and children left homeless and penniless. Of course W. Heaton and his family were in a state of great fear as house after house was fired near their home. As rebels had fired no churches it was hoped that the parsonage would escape destruction, as yet their church had not been built. The family had not long to wait, as the house next to them was on fire and the flames bursting from the roof adjoining. Hastily selecting such things as could be carried on their hands and which might be used to make his wife and children comfortable for the night, they left their home to the cruel flames. They soon reached the public highway which led to Harrisburg, the former place was eleven miles distant. There they hoped to find friends and shelter. The day was exceedingly warm, one of the hottest in July. Unaccustomed to the fatigue of long journeys on foot, they were in haste to reach the open country where they could be safe from the further outrages of the enemy. They soon found a shady place near a stream of water, where they stopped awhile to rest, while they took counsel as to their future movement. W. Heaton had many friends among the farmers and it was determined that the larger boys should be left in the care of a Mr. Freeman, whose farm was only a few miles from Shippensburg. It was late in the evening when the travelers, now left destitute, reached the home of their hospitable friend. He had heard of the disaster and had seen the road crowded with the fleeing refugees he had already taken into his barn a number of women and children. W. Heaton and his family were as tenderly cared for as the circumstances would permit. After a hearty meal, during which the exciting scenes of the day were recounted, the weary travelers were glad to rest their limbs, on beds spread in the lower rooms of the house. Every room was filled by those who were so fortunate as to find temporary shelter for the night. The terrible scenes of the day and the excitement through which they had passed drove sleep from their eyes, and as the darkness went up to the Divine ruler for life preserved, with no bitter thought toward the foe, there punishment was left to Him whose voice is more terrible in wrath who has declared "vengeance is mine, I will repay." Late at night the rebels had their bivouac pitched near the town, and it was reported that the union forces were in rapid pursuit. It was not many months after the scenes here related, that the national armies were victorious over all the foes of the republic, and the rebel submission to "the powers that be," which are ordained of God and next the loving of our neighbors as ourselves, and the doing unto others as we would have them do unto us.

As soon as peace was again restored to the valley and the people were assured of protection for their families and homes, nearly all the fugitives returned. A few of their husbands had been made prisoners by the enemy and were retained as hostages, and it was many months before they were released by an exchange of prisoners. Their sufferings were often extreme from the cruel treatment they received and the absence of sufficient food and shelter—all this intensified by the filthy, crowded encampments and the intense heat of a southern climate. Many never returned to the places of their confinement. As the fugitives entered the town what a scene of desolation met their eyes, nothing remained of their former happy homes but piles of brick and crumbling walls and desolate gardens and fields. The patriotic states further north contributed liberally towards pressing wants, they had not felt the iron heel of the war as the latter states were now feeling, and their hearts were moved with grief, and they thought of those and of noble fathers as if to perish in battle, but the foe was not at their doors. The noble state of Pennsylvania made liberal appropriations for the rebuilding of their homes. Within a year a new city, built as if by magic, by the unshaken courage of the people. Of course no money could replace the precious relics of the past, and works of art which had been transmitted through many generations; in many instances brought from the homes of their own borders, were determined to leave only a track of desolation on the road of their retreat. The house of an old and feeble man of eighty was entered, and because his wife earnestly remonstrated against the burning, they fired the room, hurled her into it and locked the door on the outside. Her daughter rescued her by bursting in the door before her clothing was on fire. The widow of a national soldier who had no means of support, got on her knees and begged to save her and her little ones from the fang of rebel wrath, but while she was thus pleading for mercy, they fired her little house and stole ten dollars, the only money she had in the world. An aged citizen, prostrated by sickness so that he was unable to be of any service, it was said to be spared a horrible death in the flames of his own house, but they laughed at his terror and fired the building. Only through the kindly effort of some friends he was carried away to safety. The wife of a jeweler lay dead, and although they were shown the dead body, they piled the torch and burned the house. A neighbor held her dying babe in her arms and plead in vain to spare her house. Such are some of the horrors of civil war, which even the high civilization of the nineteenth century has not been able to subdue—if only the memory of these sad times will soften the hearts of the new generation as they rise, it may be that peace and good will to all men may yet prevail.

MISS MARIE JANSEN'S

Famous Song from ERMINIE.

THIS AFTERNOON AT FOUR.

We take pleasure in offering to our readers, through our columns this week, by permission of the owner and publisher, Mr. R. A. Saalfeld, Union Square, New York, the famous song entitled "This Afternoon at Four." It is sung nightly, with round after round of applause, by the popular soubrette, Miss Marie Jansen, in the Opera of Erminie, at the New York Casino Theatre.

By MAX FREEMAN.

Repeat after D. S. Lento. fr. Musical notation for the first part of the song.

Second time go to Chorus. Musical notation for the second part of the song.

Musical notation for the third part of the song.

CHORUS AND DANCE. Musical notation for the chorus and dance section.

Musical notation for the final part of the song.

USEFUL AND SENSIBLE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Globe One-Price Clothing House

- Silk Mufflers, Cashmere Mufflers, Silk Handkerchiefs, Silk Ties, Plush Ties, Fur Caps, Elegant Silk Umbrellas.

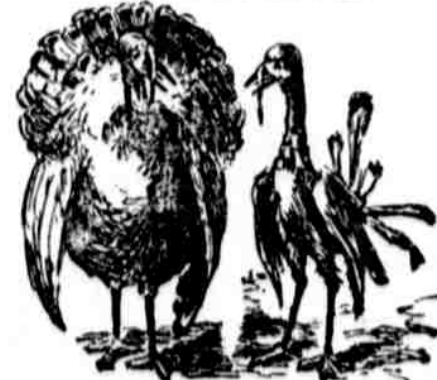
And several other articles in Fine Furnishing Goods suitable for Holiday Gifts, which we are selling at exceedingly low prices.

GLOBE ONE-PRICE CLOTHING HOUSE, Corner O and 10th. E. M. EISELDT & CO., Props.

The mince pie was a Christmas favorite in the time of the poet Herrick, who wrote of it:

The while the meet is a-shredding For the rare mince pie, And the plums stalk by To fill the paste that's a-kneading.

The Day Before Christmas.



Fat Turkey—I've been living high lately. Wonder what's the matter. What is this Christmas business anyway? Thin Turkey (who has consumption)—You will know before night, ta, ta!

Telephone at the COURIER office is 253.