



AND LITERARY GEM.

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."—PROVERBS, Chap. 20.

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OUR OWN BROAD LAKE.

From the Huron Signal.

We cannot boast of high green hills,
Of proud bold cliffs where eagles gather,
Of moorland glen and mountain rills,
That echo to the red-bell'd heather.
We cannot boast of mould'ring towers,
Where ivy clasps the hoary turret,
Of chivalry in ladies bowers,
Of warlike fame, and knights who wore it—
But, had we Minstrel's Harp to wake,
We well might boast our own broad lake!

And we have streams that run as clear,
O'er shelvy rocks and pebbles rushing—
And meads as green, and nymphs as dear
In rosy beauty sweetly blushing—
And we have trees as tall as towers,
And older than the feudal mansion—
And banks besprent with gorgeous flowers,
And glens and woods, with fire-flies glancing;
But prouder—loftier boast we make,
The beauties of our own broad lake.

The lochs and lakes of other lands,
Like gems may grace a landscape painting,
Or where the lordly castle stands,
May lend a charm, when charms are wanting;
But ours is deep, and broad, and wide,
With steamships through its waves careering,
And far upon its ample tide
The bark her devious course is steering.
While hoarse and loud the billows break
On islands of our own broad lake!

Immense, bright lake! I trace in thee,
An emblem of the mighty ocean,
And in thy restless waves I see
Nature's eternal law of motion:
And fancy sees the Huron Chief
Of the dim past, kneel to implore thee—
With Indian awe he seeks relief,
In pouring homage out before thee.

And I too, feel my reverence wake,
As gazing on our own broad lake!

I cannot feel as I have felt
When life with hope and fire was teeming;
Nor kneel as I have often knelt
At beauty's shrine, devotedly dreaming.
Some young hand must strike the string,
'To tell of Huron's awful grandeur,
Her smooth and moonlit slumbering,
Her tempest voices loud as thunder;
Some loftier lyre than mine must wake,
To sing our own broad, gleaming lake!

T. MACQUEEN.

July 9, 1849,

THE FATAL JOKE.

BY HELEN C. GAGE.

I was once present where a small party of young persons were warmly discussing the subject of *practical joking*. After a long and interesting debate the question seemed about to be decided in its favor, when a gentleman, whose singularly melancholy and dejected air at once attracted our attention, related the following story:—

In my younger days I was remarkable for my fondness for practical joking, even to such a degree that I never allowed a good opportunity to pass unimproved.

My orphan cousin, Robert, to whom I was fondly attached, was of a different nature from this. He was sober, sedate, and grave almost to a fault, very thoughtful and very bashful. This stupidity, as I called it, was often a check upon my natural gaiety, and it was seldom that I could induce him to join my boyish sports, though he sometimes did, merely to gratify me. Poor Robert! the green turf of his native valley, on whose bosom the fairest flowers that New England could boast of, have blossomed and withered, and passed away to eternity, leaving behind them a lasting impress of their loveliness, now covers his mouldering ashes. Yes; Robert is dead, and I am the unhappy cause of his untimely end, the circumstances of which will serve to convince you of the folly of "*practical joking*."

It was late one evening early in September, that Robert and myself retired to our room to talk over the exciting scenes of the day, for it was the night after the election, and a fine holiday it had been to us. I had just returned from a visit to some friends in the city, and had, of course, brought with me many curious things which Robert had never seen, nor heard of. Among them was a mask, the use of which I explained to my unsophisticated cousin, who laughed and wondered why people could wish to look horribly enough to wear one.

I was in my gayest mood, just ready for an adventure, and seeing he was disposed to make fun of my mask, I proposed an experiment.

"What!" exclaimed my cousin, "you do not intend to wear it to bed do you?"

"Far from it," I replied, "it is you should wear the mask; not I. I am quite ape enough without it."

"A very just remark, indeed," he observed gravely.

I had never seen him in better humor, and I thought it best to unfold my plans at once. At our next door lived a worthy gentleman, with whose daughter my bashful cousin was already smitten. That very night as we passed by, on our return from the village, he had called and bade her good night, and had received in return, one of the sweetest smiles from the happiest eyes and most charming lips I ever beheld. I was his bosom friend, and to me he always entrusted his secrets, (alas! how little have I deserved such confidence,) yet, he always blushed when I spoke of Julia.

Some evil spirit, I know not what else it could have been, prompted me when I proposed to have a little sport, at her expense. My plans were these:—He was to dress himself in a suit of clothes to correspond with the mask, which, by the way, was the most frightful looking thing I ever saw, repair to the dwelling of his friend, and call her to the door by rapping. I was to stand near to witness the result, and participate in the joke.

He blushed, hung his head, and, of course, refused. I had expected this, but flattered myself that I could easily persuade him to the contrary. It was, however, a harder task than I had anticipated, for his unwillingness seemed greater than ever; the reasons I readily understood.

I poked and pshaw'd, and finally threatened to expose to all the boys his cowardly disposition, as I pleased to term it, and tender feelings toward Julia, which as yet, none of them had discovered. This last argument proved more successful than the other, for he well knew that I never suffered the idlest threat to remain unfulfilled; and the fear of being laughed at, beside betraying that which he most wished to conceal, conquered, and he yielded, though reluctantly, his consent. At that moment, I even exulted over my triumph, though I have often since wished my lips had been struck dumb, before I had uttered those words that sealed the after fate of two pure beings. But, in my thoughtlessness, I rushed heedlessly on in whatever I undertook, regardless of consequences. My wild, reckless spirit had never been tamed.

Finding that there was but one alternative, and that to submit cheerfully to my whim, he suffered himself to be arrayed as my fancy suggested, with good grace, and even laughed quite heartily as I added garment after garment, in order to make him look as frightful as possible; yet, after all I could see that his mind was ill at ease, and I half condemned myself for being the cause of his unhappiness.