NO HOPE FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE.

At the debatin' club las' night we all discussed a cure
"For the debilitated state of English lit'rachure."
"The stuff thet's writ for folks," I said, "don't move 'em an' delight 'em,
Because the folks who write the things don't know enough to write 'em.

"The folks who write, they stuff their heads in some big cyclopedy,
W'ich ain't no place for mental food to feed the poor an' needy;
They're huntin' on an em'ty shelf, like poor ol' Mother Hubbard,
An' go right by the open door of Mother Natur's cupboard.

"They crawl into some libery far from the worl's inspection,
Bury themselves in books beyond all hope of resurrection:
They cry out from their tombs, in which no sun nor star can glisten,
An' weep because the liv'n' worl' don't fin' no time to listen."

Then Elder Pettengell he asked: "Can you suggest a cure
For the debilitated state of English lit'rachure?"
"Ain't none; our authors' ignorance is far too dark for lightin',
While we who know enough to write hain't no time for writin'."
—S. W. Foss in Yankee Blade.

A WIFE WORTH HAVING.

The old ship Vincent seemed to be one of those craft that, according to the theory of sailors, are doomed to ill fate. James Marshall, a young man from Newport, R. I., had been her captain for five years, and during that time she had been twice "knocked down;" once had she carried away her foremast, and at the time of which we write the old ship was docked at Liverpool undergoing repairs from a serious damage she had received during a heavy gale in St. George's channel, but in all these mishaps the owners had been forced to acknowledge that the young captain was entirely free from blame, while, on the other hand, he had made better "time" in his trips than any other master had ever been able to get out of her.

The last damage which the Vincent received proved to be the occasion of the dawning of a new era in the life of Capt. Marshall, for while waiting in Liverpool for his ship to be repaired he fell in with a blooming New England girl named Emma Ramsey, the eldest daughter of the agent who did the business for the Vincent's owners, and ere long they discovered that between them there existed a peculiar feeling of mutual love. Capt. Marshall popped the delicate question, Emma consulted with her papa, and at length she consented to become Mrs. Marshall. If was a happy day for all parties when the marriage took place, for from the known characters of the bridegroom and his beautiful bride all felt sure that the match would prove one of peace and content.

The Vincent was once more ready for sea. Her cargo was all on board, and shipped for Boston, and Emma had resolved to accompany her husband to the United States. For a number of days the weather was pleasant, and the wind was fair, while Capt. Marshall felt himself supremely happy in the delightful company of his wife. The old sailors shook their heads as they saw the gentle Emma pacing the deck, and they mysteriously asserted that "such pleasures couldn't always last," and so indeed, it proved; for at the close of a pleasant day, when they were within three or four days' sail of their destined port, things began to look anything but agreeable. Away to the south'rd and east'rd the horizon began to assume a sort of inky blackness, with here and there a ghostlike, livid spot, while on all hands the heavens had changed their ethereal blue for a cast of deeper and more fearful import.

Capt. Marshall felt as he had never felt before on the approach of a storm. For himself, for his ship, he had no thought then. There was one on board who engrossed his every sympathy—for his young wife he felt a degree of intense anxiety that was painful; but he forgot not his duty, and with comparative calmness he set about it. The courses were hauled up and snugly furled, the lighter sails taken in, and the lofty yards and topgallant masts sent on deck, and the three topsails close reefed.

Long before the sun went down the undulating ocean had assumed almost the blackness of night, and not many moments elapsed after the spars had been secured upon the deck ere the storm burst upon the ship. It was a regular southeaster, and those who have encountered one of these storms in the gulf know something of their power. Higher and higher rose the mighty tempest, until at length it was found necessary to take in the topsails and trust to the fore and main storm staysails and a large reefed spanker. In this way the ship lay to till morning, the gale increasing every hour.

Capt. Marshall trusted that when the sun rose on the next day the storm would abate, but in this he was disappointed, for a part of the forenoon he was actually obliged to scud before it. It was not until two staysails had been torn from their bolt ropes that he fully explained his anticipations and the extent of his fears to his wife.

"Emma," said he, "I wish I had not brought you with me."

"Why so?" she asked, as she gazed up into her husband's face with apparent astonishment.

"Why so? Do you not comprehend our danger?"

"But the ship does not leak, does it?" returned Emma with remarkable coolness.

"No."

"Then let us not fear the storm. I was born upon the Atlantic, and I feel that I can yet trust to my native element."

The captain was astonished at this trait in his wife's character, and clasping her in his arms he felt his own soul swelling with a new life.

"Emma," he said, as he gazed more affectionately than ever into her face, "my heaviest fears are passed. For you alone have I feared the most; now I can calmly tell you wherein lies our danger. This storm has driven us far out of our course, and twice have we been scudding before it. I fear that the coast of Maine cannot be far to the leeward, and of that coast I know nothing save what I may gather from my chart. For us to lay to is next to impossible. The rising sea has rendered our stay sails useless, and I have been obliged to set the close reefed maintopsail, but she cannot hold it long."

"My husband," returned Emma, "though you may know nothing of the coast of Maine, yet there are but few spots along her rugged shores that are not as playgrounds to me. My father was for years a surveyor of her islands and harbors, and I was his constant companion. To me her cliffs and inlets present nothing that can alarm me."

Hardly had she ceased speaking when a sharp crack like the report of a pistol sounded from aloft, followed by a tearing and crashing that started the captain to his feet.

"The main topsail has gone!" he exclaimed, and immediately he sprang upon the deck.

Again the ship was put before the gale, and for several moments Capt. Marshall was undecided what to do. While in this quandary he felt a hand laid upon his shoulder, and on turning he beheld his wife. She had a 'sou'-wester' upon her head and a peajacket buttoned closely about her.

"What is the matter, James?" she said.

The husband explained his perplexity.

A strange look of fearlessness and confidence rested upon that fair woman's face, and looking for a moment at the compass she said:

"We head due northwest. Station a trusty lookout in the foretop, and let the ship stand on!"

Capt. Marshall felt at that moment as though an angel had been sent to pilot him to a haven of rest. Whence arose the feeling he knew not, but instinctively he obeyed. Fearful and loud roared the mighty storm, on dashed the riven ship, but all fearless and composed stood the heroic woman upon the quarter deck, and the hardy seamen as they gazed upon her felt that what daunted not a woman should not daunt them.

"Land, ho!" came from the foretop.

In three minutes more, as the ship rose upon the bosom of a giant sea, the land was made out upon the deck, bearing about two points on the larboard bow. Emma caught sight of it, and seizing a glass at the next swell she discovered a lighthouse upon its summit. Then she turned her glass over the starboard beam, and in a moment she exclaimed:

"There are the Bantam Ledges. The land on the larboard bow is Seguin, and beyond I can see Cape Small Point. James," she continued as she gazed into her husband's face with a look all made up of conscious power, "if you will drop your foretopsail I will take you into the Kennebec!"

For a moment Capt. Marshall hardly credited the evidence of his own senses, but one look into the calm, radiant features of his wife determined him, and in five minutes the foretopsail was sheeted home.

Emma Marshall seized the spanker out haul and sprang upon the wheelhouse, and calm as the falling of the summer's dew fell her orders to the man at the wheel. The island Seguin was cleared in safety, the ship bowled fearlessly by the foam dashed rocks, and ere long her bows cleft the smoother waters of the noble Kennebec. All danger was past. Though the storm still raged, yet the old Vincent rode at anchor, and the howling tempest could harm her no more. Confidence was restored to the hardy crew.

Emma Marshall descended from her station and sought her cabin. Her rough habiliments were thrown aside, and ere long she reappeared in all the modesty and beauty of her native grace. Capt. Marshall pressed her to his bosom, and at that moment the hardy seamen waved their hats high above their uncovered heads, while a prolonged shout of joy and gratitude went forth from their relieved souls. They had been saved from the terrible coast storm, and from the bottom of their hearts they confessed Emma Marshall was A Wife Worth Having.—Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., in Yankee Blade.

Yankee Dispatch.

One day I made some reference to the clumsy and long-drawn-out way in which the Russian guns were taken up to the front. True, the roads were frightful, the mud being beyond all description, but I ventured to suggest that the progress of that artillery was, in many instances, lamentably slow.

"Wal," said the American, in broad Yankee twang, "I think you're right. They've been at it for months and there's very little promise of increasing speed. How long, now, do you think it would take Britishers to accomplish the same end?"

Actually, I had not the slightest idea, but I was not going to collapse before my Yankee interrogator, so I suggested, as an improvement on the existing state of affairs, that it would take, say about a fortnight or three weeks. "By the way," I continued, "how long do you think it would take the Americans to achieve a similar result?"

"Americans? Oh, that's a very different kettle o' fish! Americans?" and with this he took out his watch, and glanced at it several times in meditative silence. "The Americans? Wal, I should say, as near as I can calculate, somewhere between twenty-five minutes and half an hour," and with this he turned on his heel with a self-satisfied air, leaving me to digest the comparison.—Irving Montague in Camp and Studio.

The Lamb Tree.

Joannes Zahn in 1696 first gave the world information as to this valuable plant. The planta tartarica bowmetz, according to Mr. Zahn, grows in Tartary like any other plant, and when it gets ripe a lamb forms on the top of the flower stalk. After a while the stalk bends over and the lamb grazes till all the grass in the vicinity is cropped off or the stem is severed. Then it dies. Wolves are said to be quite fond of this vegetable mutton.—John Ashton in Curious Creatures in Zoology.

THE CHOCTAWS' HEREAFTER.

An Indian Idea of the Life Beyond the Present.

From their earliest traditions the Choctaws have been taught to believe in a life after they leave this world. They believe that the spirit, the moment that it leaves the body, is compelled to travel a long distance to the west, until is arrives at an immense chasm, at the bottom of which flows a very rapid, rocky, and dangerous stream. This terrible gorge, which is surrounded on every side by great mountains, the soul has to cross on a "long and slippery pine log with the bark peeled off," the only passage to the "happy hunting grounds," which lie beyond the dangerous bridge. On the bank of the stream, just on the other end of the log, there always stand six persons, who have reached the "happy hunting grounds," and who throw sharp rocks at whoever attempts to cross the treacherous log the moment the middle of it is reached. Those who have lived properly, according to the Indian idea of morals, have no trouble in crossing the log; the stones fall harmlessly from them, and they reach the "happy hunting grounds," where there is perpetual day, without difficulty. There the trees are ever green, the sky cloudless, and the breezes always gently blowing; there, too, a continuous feast and dance are going on; the people never grow old, but live forever and revel in perpetual youth. The wicked, when they attempt to cross the dangerous bridge, can see the stones which are thrown at them, and in trying to avoid them they will fall from the giddy height into the awful gorge thousands of feet below the slippery log, where a rushing boiling stream is tumbling over the great sharp rocks, filled with dead fish and animals which are continually brought around to the same place by the eddies and whirlpools. There all the trees are dead, the waters infested by poisonous snakes, toads, and other repulsive looking reptiles, the dead are always hungry, but have nothing to eat; are always sick, but never die. There is no sun, and the wicked are constantly "climbing up by thousands on the sides of a high rock, from which they can overlook the beautiful country of the good hunting grounds, the abode of the happy, but can never reach it."—[Boston Transcript.

The Harvard Athlete.

The athlete in a recitation is very amusing. When he enters some admirer usually whispers his confidante: "Look at ——, isn't he a dandy?" The athlete always looks too large for his chair in the class room. You wonder why it does not break down. The book, too, seems all out of place in his big hands, and a pencil looks positively funny as he handles it. He wears an air of patronage as if intellectual pursuits were well in their way, and a thing to be encouraged, even interesting on occasions, but just a little unworthy a man of muscle.

He likes to stretch out his big limbs, and watch them in repose, knowing how much they can do when occasion requires. The professor even defers to him a little, unable to refuse his instinctive homage to power—even though it be physical. When he strolls across the yard men look out of their windows after him. He is pointed out to the young lady visitors, and the fair creatures look with awe on the god like being whom they have seen battling in mud and gore for the honor of Harvard in the superhuman fashion.

The athlete during his season of activity does not study much. He has to reserve his energies for physical effort. He can neither smoke nor drink. About all that is left him is to talk athletics, and for this purpose he can get plenty of listeners. But when 4 o'clock in the afternoon comes then he is in his element. And from 4 to 6 he toils away like a young giant.

Storing Sunshine for Use.

"Hi! Jimmy! Come down here. Let's set on the bridge and go round when she turns."

This from a 10 year old street boy standing on the approach to a bridge over the Erie Canal in an interior city.

The person addressed was a fellow street boy standing on a raised foot bridge over the same muddy waterway. He was no older than his companion and full as ragged. He was lame and carried a crutch, but he had his compensation in a philosophy of contentment that old Horace might have envied.

He stood upon the foot bridge and answered:

"Naw. Can't. Got t' stay here."

"Aw, come on down. What d'ye hang up there for? Lots o' fun swingin' around here. We kin git on a boat and go over the aqueduct an' then ride back on here. Aw, come on down."

"Naw; can't do it."

"Why not? What yer wants ter fool 'round up there for? Ain't no fun up there."

"Wal," was the answer that Jimmie drawled out with as solemn a face as a cadet on parade, "I can't come down now. I've got to stay up here and soak in all the sunshine I can so's I kin laugh when it rains."

A Heaven Sent Gift.

There is in the office of the Merchants' National Bank, of Kansas City, a fragment of a meteor which has a peculiar history.

A farmer in Western Kansas had borrowed more money on his farm than he found himself able to repay. While meditating over his bad fortune, but, with the usual energy of the Kansas farmer, still tilling his soil, he turned up this meteoric stone, and examined it, but discovered nothing peculiar in its make up that would tempt him to part with it. A relative from the East, who was visiting him, noticed it and told him it was of great value.

The farmer communicated with Professor John Hay, State Geologist at Junction City, Kan., who visited the place and confirmed the opinion of the relative and caused collectors of such stones to compete for its purchase.

It was sold for a sum largely in excess of the amount required to redeem his home from the money lender.

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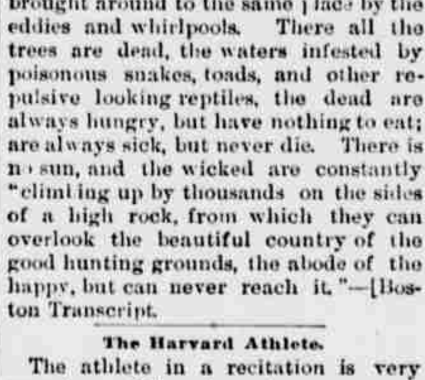

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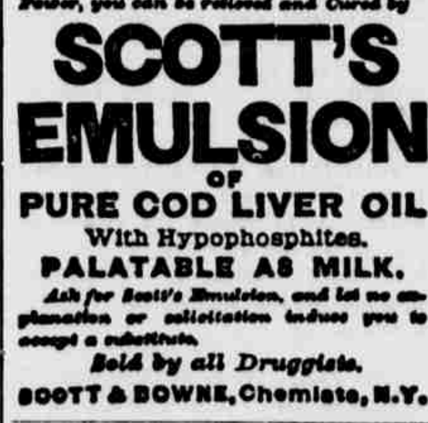

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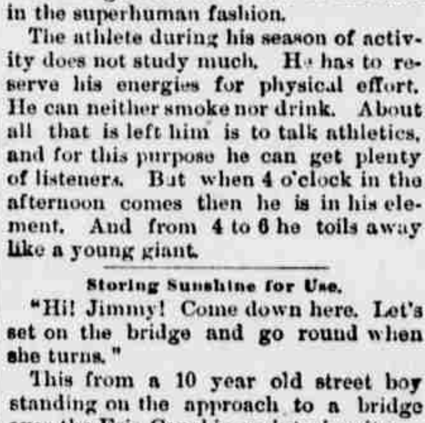

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