

## LUCKY LAST LOOK

Preserved the Declaration of Independence in 1814.

SAVED IT FROM THE BRITISH.

The Precious Document Would Have Been in the State Department When It Was Burned but For Pleasanton's Final Glance Around the Room.

Comparatively few of the present generation know how near to being lost was once the most precious of our national documents, the Declaration of Independence. It was during the year of 1812. The Declaration of Independence hung for many years in a frame in the state department in the room then occupied by Stephen Pleasanton. Mr. Beaseley, commissary of prisoners of war in London, forwarded to the state department some London newspapers, stating that the English fleets and transports were receiving troops at Bordeaux, France, with the intention of operating against Washington and Baltimore. Soon after it was learned that the British fleet was in Chesapeake bay and that it was ascending the Patuxent. The officials and citizens of the little capital city were hourly expecting an attack.

Upon receipt of this information, which was a few days before the enemy entered Washington, Mr. Monroe, then secretary of state, James Madison being president, mounted his horse, rode to Benedict, a small village on the Patuxent, where the British forces were being landed, and climbed an eminence within a quarter of a mile of the village, in order to ascertain the strength of the enemy. Being convinced, after his inspection, that we had no force available that could successfully resist them, he sent a note to Mr. Pleasanton by a vidette, advising him to see that the best care was taken of the books and papers of the state department.

Acting at once upon this authority, Mr. Pleasanton purchased some coarse linen and had it made into bags of suitable size, in which he, assisted by others in the office, placed the books and other papers.

While engaged in this work General Armstrong, then secretary of war, passing the state department on his way to his own office, remarked that he thought they were unnecessarily alarming themselves, as he did not think the British were serious in their intentions of coming to Washington. Fortunately Mr. Pleasanton was of a different opinion, and observed that it was the part of prudence to take measures to preserve these valuable papers of the revolutionary government. Had Mr. Pleasanton delayed but a few days, had he followed the advice of the secretary of war, an irreparable loss would have been sustained. For the papers which Mr. Pleasanton had placed in the coarse linen bags comprised the secret journals of congress, then not published; the correspondence of General Washington, his commission, resigned at the close of the war; the correspondence of General Greene and other officers of the Revolution, as well as laws, treaties and correspondence of the department of state from the adoption of the constitution down to that time.

Mr. Pleasanton had the bags carried to a grist mill, which he selected as a suitable depository. The mill, which was unoccupied, belonged to Edgar Patterson and was situated on the Virginia side of the Potomac, beyond the Chain bridge, two miles above Georgetown.

The last load had left, and Mr. Pleasanton was just quitting the vacant rooms when, glancing back suddenly to see whether anything had been left behind, to his consternation he saw the Declaration of Independence, which had been overlooked, hanging upon the wall. He hastily cut it out of the frame and carried it away with the other papers.

He then began to be uneasy about the place he had chosen, for if the British took Washington, which he firmly believed they would do, and very soon at that, they would in all probability detach a force for the purpose of destroying a foundry for the making of cannon and shot in the neighborhood and, of course, would consider a grist mill too valuable a thing to be left standing in a country they meant to subdue. Mr. Pleasanton therefore visited some of the Virginia farmhouses, whose owners were only too willing to loan him wagons in order to convey the documents to Leesburg, a distance of thirty-five miles. There they were deposited in an empty house, the keys of which were given to Rev. Mr. Littlejohn, who was one of the collectors of internal revenue.

Worn out with his labors, Mr. Pleasanton states in a letter, he retired early to bed that night and slept soundly. Next morning he was informed by the people of the little tavern where he had stayed that evening that they had seen during the night, the same being the 24th of August, a large fire in the direction of Washington, which proved to be the light from the public buildings, which the enemy had set on fire and burned to the ground.

When he returned to Washington on the 29th he found the public buildings still burning and learned that the British army had evacuated the city the preceding evening in the belief that the Americans were again assembling in the rear for the purpose of cutting off their retreat.—Kansas City Times.

"It is well said that man has no greater enemy than himself."—Firezevala

## PROMPTING AN AUDIENCE.

English Actors Give a Signal When It's Time to Laugh.

"Nothing illustrates the difference between English and American wit more, probably, than the manner in which playwrights write their lines," said Rupert Hughes. "There are few people who realize the intricacy of the science of writing a 'laugh'—that is, a line capable of producing a laugh from an audience.

"A man may write one of the funniest lines ever given to the American stage and see it ignored by an audience because of some act on the part of the producing company or one member of that company. I have seen the wittiest remarks wasted because of the move of a hand or of the head of the comedian or actor who enunciated it. Then, again, the laugh is taken out of a line by the moving of some person in the stage setting or by the moving of some part of the stage setting itself. It is funny how the slightest move on the part of an actor, after reciting certain lines, absolutely eliminates the wit from what he has just spoken, so far as the audience is concerned.

"This is so of American audiences, but not so of the English theater-going public. They will not laugh unless the witticism is finished by a nod of the head or a certain movement of the body.

"It is on this account that certain comedies, great successes in this country, are absolute failures in Great Britain," he continues. "Something must be done when a 'laugh line' is spoken on the English stage to give the audience an inkling that the witticism has been completed. Then you get your laugh.

"Not so, on the contrary, with Americans. I remember of hearing of an incident involving one of Olga Nethersole's first appearances in this country. Several times during the performance the celebrated actress walked to the sides and exclaimed to the stage manager: 'What's the matter? Are they going to hiss me off? Why, they applaud before they hear the end of the lines.' In each instance she was told that the audience was quicker than the audiences to which she had been accustomed to playing. She was told the Americans grasped the meaning and the wit of her lines when she had spoken only half of them. The actress, although she received all kinds of applause during the performance, seemed disheartened."—Washington Post.

### A Wig and a Tragedy.

It is just as well that our enthusiasm for oriental curiosities should be tempered by discretion. Eastern antiquities may be picturesque and with all the charm of mystery, but at the same time they may have a history that, if known, would consign them to the stove without benefit of clergy. Here is a story bearing upon the point and with its obvious moral. A young and extremely pretty girl went to a fancy dress ball in Chinese costume. The triumph of her makeup was a real oriental wig, and she wore it proudly. Some time after a strange mark appeared on her forehead, and this was treated as a trifling skin affection. But it refused to disappear; in fact, it grew larger, and then the specialist was consulted. It was leprosy.—Argonaut.

### Color of Lightning.

The color of lightning is almost entirely due to the nature of the substance in its track that is made incandescent. The blue, red, purple or silver tints, which are ordinarily much more brilliantly marked in tropical countries than they ever are in this latitude, are due to the same circumstance as that which produces the color designedly communicated to the light of different kinds of fireworks. Each different foreign ingredient that floats in the air has its own proper hue, which it can communicate to the lightning. The vapor of iron has one kind of shine and the vapor of sulphur another.—Harper's Weekly.

### Stolen Eloquence.

"It is better to be silent," said a prominent clergyman, "than to be eloquent by unfair means." "There was once a divine whose good wife said to him: 'James, dear, the Rev. Dr. Tenthly has made over \$200 by the publication of a volume of sermons. You preach much better than Dr. Tenthly, dear. Why not print a few of your sermons?' 'My love,' the man whispered hoarsely, 'they were all printed long ago.'"

### A National Mistake.

"I wonder why the English people have taken the rose as their national flower?" "Why not?" "Judging by the way their peerage hunt American fortunes, I should think a more appropriate floral emblem would be marygold."—Baltimore American.

### Dad Was Horsey.

"Pa, what did Herodotus do?" "Oh, I think he won a purse that was offered for three-year-olds once. Say, can't you quit bothering me when I'm trying to read what is going on in the world?"—Chicago Record Herald.

### Too Great a Sacrifice.

She (weary of waiting)—If you sell 'dog, John, we could get married. He—An' wouldn't O! look silly to sell a dog like that to be married!—London Opinion.

"It is not work that kills men—it is worry. The revolution is not what destroys machinery, but the friction."

## ECCENTRIC WAGNER.

A Glimpse of the Famous Composer in One of His Moods.

Richard Wagner, the composer, needed a good deal of managing, and Frau Cosima was always tactful, according to Judith Gautier's "Wagner at Home." When the author hesitated before accepting Wagner's invitation to an excursion she says Frau Cosima made signs to her and, coming nearer, said in a low voice: "Do not refuse. He would be angry. And let him manage it all; let him take the lead, if you do not wish to grieve him."

Later on she gives another curious scene: "Behind the house, in that court which formed a part of the garden, and from which the carriage drive started, there was a high swing, which the children were allowed to use very carefully, and with which the older people sometimes amused themselves. One day Mme. Cosima was sitting on the narrow board. Wagner offered to start the swing and give her a good flight through the air. All went well for a time, but, little by little, the motion became more rapid; higher and still higher went the swing. In vain Mme. Cosima begged for mercy. Carried away by a kind of frenzy, the master paid no attention and the incident began to have a terrifying effect.

"Cosima grew white; her hold relaxed, and she was about to fall. 'Do you not see that she is falling?' I cried, throwing myself toward Wagner. He grew pale in his turn, and the danger was quickly averted. But, as the poor woman continued to be dizzy and trembling, the master concluded it would be wise to create a diversion. He ran rapidly toward the house, and by the aid of the shutters, the moldings and projections of the stones, he climbed nimbly up the side and, reaching the balcony of the floor above, leaped over it.

"He had obtained the desired effect, but in replacing one evil by another Trembling with anxiety, Cosima turned to me, saying under her breath: 'Above all things, do not notice him; do not look surprised, or you can never tell where he will end.'"

## HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY.

The English Method of Dealing Out Supplies by the Week.

In the matter of small savings and watchfulness of expenditure the English housewife is ahead. For example, the English housekeeper deals out to her servants the week's allowance of sugar, rice, flour, coffee and all other household provisions that are kept in quantity, and requires an account of it all to be rendered, the thing having been brought to so fine a point that she knows the exact amount of each article requisite for her family, allowing so much to each individual and that quantity being sufficient, as she knows by experience, two ounces of tea, for instance, being regarded as a week's supply for each single individual, one-half pound of sugar, three and one-half pounds of meat for a woman and five and one-fourth for a man—facts which the housekeeper probably learned from her mother before her—knowing, moreover, the greater variety of the simpler kinds required.

All of these stores she sets down in her housekeeping book as she gives them out, and she does not fail on the next dispensing day to consult her dates and if anything be left over in the cook's hands not accounted for to subtract that from the amount to be newly issued. And in England servants expect this. So far from being indignant with it they would feel as if there were no guiding hand behind them if left undone and they given their head in an overflowing store-room, as servants are with us.

In fact, there is no saving which the housewife across the water considers too small to practice or as beneath her dignity.—Exchange.

### Sir John Rose at Great Length.

An accomplished English barrister was Sir John Karslake. In height he was six feet four inches. A provincial newspaper in reporting a case in which he was engaged on circuit laconically described the opening for the complainant as follows: "Sir John Karslake, as soon as the defendant's case was concluded, rose at great length to reply."

### Very Simple.

"I've been working two or three evenings making an umbrella stand," says the man who has taken up arts and crafts endeavor. "Two or three evenings," exclaims the other man. "Why waste all that time? Why don't you lean it in a corner or stick it in the ground?"—Judge.

### The Trouble.

"What's the trouble?" inquired the judge. "This lady lawyer wants to make a motion," explained the clerk, "but her gown is too tight."—Washington Herald.

### A Lesson For George.

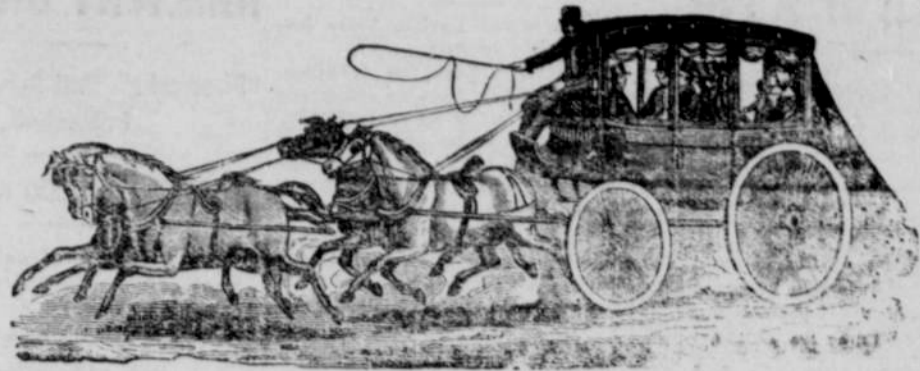
Betty—George intends to have his own way in everything when we are married. Grace—Why are you going to marry him, then? Betty—Just to relieve his mind of a false impression.

### Can You Beat It?

"I'm afraid, Tom, dear, you will find me a mine of faults. He—Darling, it shall be the sweetest labor of my life to correct them. She (flaring up)—Indeed, you shan't!—Boston Transcript.

### Perseverance.

Perseverance is more prevailing than violence, and many things which cannot be overcome when they are together yield themselves up when taken little by little.



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