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SOME FAMOUS M.S.S.

Charter of England's Freedom Saved From Tailor's Scissors—Original Copy of "Paradise Lost."

A country which has supported for a generation a costly commission to secure for the State printed copies of thousands of historic manuscripts is not likely to let go the original copy of "Paradise Lost," and we may be sure, says The London Daily Mail, that long before the sale announced for next spring the Milton manuscript will rest in the national treasure house, side by side with the sealed and yellow copy of Magna Charta.

That shrivelled parchment, the charter of English freedom, was saved, it is said, by the veriest chance from the scissors of a mercenary tailor. Struck by the great seals attached to a piece of paper the tailor was cutting up, Sir Robert Cotton stopped the man and gave him fourpence for the document he would have destroyed. It is now in the British Museum, lined and mounted and in a glass case, the seal a shapeless mass of wax, and the characters quite illegible.

Fourpence will not buy "Paradise Lost," and the passing of this interesting document into the possession of the State will be a much more formal and unromantic transaction. Is it too much to suppose that the Secretary of the Historic Manuscripts Commission will quietly send a check one morning to Messrs. Sotheby and hand the manuscript to Sir Edward Thompson at night?

The commission, if we are to believe an *anti*, has done much more daring things. The fourth Earl of Ashburnham had no great love for it. "You are here, sir, under false pretences," he shouted to Sir George Darnley when the knight, at the earl's invitation, arrived at Ashburnham. "I have discovered that you are a member, sir, of that most disreputable society called the Historic Manuscripts Commission; they are a society of ruffians, sir."

"Surely," exclaimed Sir George, "a great many eminent persons belong to the commission—Lord Salisbury, for instance, is not a ruffian."

"Yes, sir; he is a ruffian, when acting for that society," the angry earl burst out; "and you, sir, are a ruffian, too—your tamper with title deeds, sir!"

Examples almost without number

come to mind of manuscripts which have lain for years and generations, sometimes for centuries, out of sight. Milton's "Commonplace Book" was lost for 200 years, and was only found and published in 1874. But for an accident his "Comus" might have been lost to the world, as it narrowly escaped being bricked up with the Bridge Water Papers, which had all perished when found.

The Creevey Papers, which all the world has been reading of late, lay for sixty years undiscovered, and we have had in the last few years a remarkable example of how, even in these days, momentous manuscripts may lie hidden and unsuspected beyond the gaze of man. The oldest code of laws in the world, promulgated by a King of Babylon forty-two centuries ago, was found, thanks to the enterprise of the French Government, only last year, and though the ancient manuscript is written in stone, it is an amazing thing that we can now read, in King Hammurabi's own words, 4,314 lines of the statutes he enacted for his people more than two thousand years before Christ.

There is now in St. Petersburg the oldest known manuscript of the New Testament in Greek, saved from destruction by the merest chance sixty years ago. Crossing the hall of a convent at the foot of Mount Sinai, Constantine Tischendorf saw a basket full of parchment leaves on the way to be burned. Two baskets had already gone, he was told, and all that he could secure for himself was a small bundle of old leaves. But the monks, now interested in the "waste paper," saved the rest from the fire, and nine years after, on a return visit to the convent, Tischendorf found that the steward had, wrapped in a red cloth, a bulky kind of volume, which proved to be the whole of the New Testament, with parts hitherto unknown, and parts of the Old, which had long been sought. He begged the volume for the Czar, and to-day it lies well preserved in spite of its 1,500 years of age, among the treasures of the Russian capital.

The Stuart papers, one of the most precious possessions of King Edward, were found lying in a garret by an outlaw upon whose head the British Government had set a price, who bought them for a paltry sum as a heap of tradesmen's bills, and afterwards ended a miserable life by strangling himself in a London tavern.

Four Days

By Lowell Otis Reese

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Our acquaintance began in a manner most unique.

High up on the canyon wall was a rock, shaded by a live oak. For a month it had been my custom to sit upon this rock through the warmest part of the day sketching. I had established possession by right of pre-emption.

So it came in the nature of a shock when I climbed to my usual vantage point and found ensconced in my favorite position on my rock a girl. I was indignant, and disappointed. I felt much as Isaac Walton might have felt when he found an interloper fishing his favorite pool. This was a most presumptuous young person.

"Ahem!" I remarked.

She half turned and made a slight bow.

"The view is something tremendous from here," I observed further.

"Very," she agreed.

"I come here every day," I panted as I sat down conventionally near. "I have done so for a month."

"Oh, perhaps you would rather I—"

"By no means!" I exclaimed. "The view is much better."

She froze me; then she laughed. We were friends by the divine instinct which tells unerringly whom we are going to like or hate.

I was glad she had jumped my claim, for she was very pretty, and her eyes were the kind that send a thrill through your whole being, and you wonder if you are going to live through it.

That was the first day.

It was three days after.

"Why didn't you wait for me?" I asked as I climbed over the rock and threw myself down beside her.

She opened her brown eyes wide in a wonderful assumption of surprise.

"How did I know you were coming?" she asked.

I was amazed at the nerve of her. As though I could have kept away! As though the combined police forces of two continents could have kept me away! This girl must be disciplined.

"Of course you know," I said confidently.

She looked at me, and I felt my heart turn to water. Still I persisted, where a wise man would have turned the conversation swiftly to the weather or the view. "You knew I'd be coming every day for a month. You knew I usually came up about this time. You knew—then why didn't you allow me to accompany you?"

She rose. "I'm not coming any more," she said.

I sprang to my feet in fright. "Don't!" I pleaded. "I want you to stay! I—"

She kept her face averted, though I could see that her cheeks were hot and flushed. "Goodbye," she said, and was gone.

The sun suddenly turned to ink. Where a moment before had been a bright scene spreading away below me was a howling wilderness, and I was tempted to jump off the rock and butt my empty head against the river bed 300 feet below. I longed to be a boy again that I might go down and fight the first kid I ran across.

This was the second day.

The next Saturday night there was a quiet dance in the assembly room of this famous resort between the high walls of the Matilija canyon. I saw my chance to redeem myself. I would dance with her and make my peace while she was so close she would be compelled to listen, for all the week she had seemed unaware of my existence.

It was an informal affair—a country dance, sans cards and ceremony. I approached the group where Miss Winston was chatting brightly with a golf stocking Englishman and a Boston magnate. Miss Winston saw me coming—I knew she did. She looked through and beyond—far beyond me. I felt like a perambulating piece of thin glass which a breath of hers might shatter.

I stopped suddenly. Of course that was it! We had not been properly "presented." What a chump I was. I sought diligently for Bobby Jelinski, who knew everybody. I didn't find him. The band struck up, and I saw her go gliding away with the Englishman—his golf stockings flashing among the dancers like two variegated comets running amuck along the heavens of a bright night.

And this was my luck all through the evening. Try as I would, I got no dance from her. I managed to say a few words while she was waiting for her mother, who was struggling with a Mexican mantilla. I gathered that it was a fine night and that she had enjoyed her dance immensely, and, yes, California moonlight was far superior to anything she had ever seen, and then she was gone, with the Englishman pompously escorting her.

"What's the matter with you anyway?" demanded Bobby Jelinski, who at the eleventh hour had presented me.

"Bobby," I said savagely, "will you kindly go to blazes a few times and stay there?"

And this was the third day.

A month had passed. The season was drawing to a close. I had made no progress. Miss Winston met me on the ground of easy comradeship which obtained at the Springs, where everybody was dependent upon everybody else for companionship and entertain-

ment, but the sweet familiarity which had come so naturally those first three days upon the rock seemed, viewed in the light of the present situation, as a thing I must have dreamed about, but never could have been.

And still the Englishman persisted.

I had come down from the rock and was wandering aimlessly among the live oaks on the opposite side of the canyon when, happening to glance across, I saw the flutter of a skirt on the trail leading up to the rock. I drew out my field glasses and trained them on the figure ascending the familiar trail. It was she! I watched her climbing with furtive downward glances. The mystery was solved at last. Regularly all these unhappy days I had been missing her. She must have been going up there all these days, waiting always for me to come down.

Blind rage filled my heart. I would go up there and face her with her guilt! I would reproach her and make her see the enormity of her offense! All this time I was plunging across the canyon and up the trail. I would show her just how far she could go in breaking a loving heart. I would—

Then as I found I was nearly half way up the trail I lost my nerve, decided to wait and meet her casually as she came down. I was tired anyway. I sat down in the shadow of a great rock which projected from the hillside. I lit my pipe and wondered why minutes didn't pass more swiftly. Certainly she had been there ages. I put my pipe away. And then—

There she stood in the trail, looking at me with a gleam in her eyes which confused me, for I didn't know what it meant. I had caught it from time to time all along the way of tribulation I had traveled for over a month.

"Why didn't you come up, Mr. Blake?" she inquired. "The view was excellent today."

Was she mocking me? I started to say something when from above came a terrific roar, and glancing up I saw a huge stone, loosened by some careless climber no doubt, plunging down the slope. Miss Winston saw it coming and gave a stifled cry, which was smothered against my breast, for I had caught her from the trail and flung her behind the ledge, jamming her fiercely against the ground as the flying monster roared over our heads and down the canyon side, crashing trees and stones as it went, till a few seconds later it struck the bottom of the chasm with a long, thunderous crash that echoed up and down the river like a mighty explosion. Then all was still.

I turned to the figure in my arms. She was occupying exactly the same position as when I flung her behind the ledge, with her head in the hollow of my arm.

"Are you hurt?" I asked anxiously. She shook her head ever so slightly and kept her face hidden against my coat. My heart began to beat with a tumult of hope. "Look at me!" I commanded.

She raised her face, but her eyes were averted. She peered over my shoulder at the depths below. "Is it coming back, I wonder?" she began, and the words stiffed, for my soul was suddenly illumined with the surety of my blessed fortune, and I kissed the red lips, wondering mightily how ever I had done without them for so long.

And that was the fourth day.

Enjoyed the Performance.

In his familiar character as a time saver Mr. Gladstone adorns an incident recorded in the new "Life of Sir Charles Wyndham," the English actor and manager. During the blazing July day Sir Charles invited him and other notables to his theater to hear a recital deliver Tennysen's "Elsie." Mr. Gladstone occupied a box below the one in which the actor-manager kept watch lest his guests should see from the staid theater. When the recital ended Sir Charles hastened to join the statesman.

"Afraid you've had a trying time with all this heat, Mr. Gladstone," the host suggested.

"Not at all," was the reply. "I have had a charming afternoon. I thank you for asking me, and now, quite refreshed, I can run back to the house."

Sir Charles was elated. He rushed to the stage and found his other guests waiting for him.

"What have we done to you," they cried, "that you should give us 'Elsie' on a day like this? Surely there was something lighter to choose?"

"Lighter?" retorted the host. "That's the trouble with you society people, you're all so frivolous. I give you a class treat. Why, Mr. Gladstone has just told me he had a delightful afternoon."

"Of course he had," was the rejoinder. "He was asleep all the time."

Bristles Were Not Included.

One of the ablest lawyers and advocates New England ever produced was Roger Minett Sherman, who was also famous for the quickness of his wit.

A story which fully illustrates Sherman's powers of repartee is quoted by the late Senator Hoar in his book entitled "An Autobiography of Seventy Years."

On one occasion Sherman was arguing a case against Nathan Smith, a very able but rather coarse lawyer. Mr. Smith had discussed the question of law with the subtlety for which he was distinguished. Mr. Sherman said to the court that he thought Brother Smith's metaphysics were out of place in that discussion; that he was not adverse to such refinement at a proper time and would be willing on a fit occasion to chop logic and split hairs with him.

Smith immediately pulled a hair out of his own head and holding it up, said: "Split that."

Sherman replied quick as lightning: "May it please your honor, I didn't say bristles."



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