

## TO RAISE COMMODORE PERRY'S OLD FLAGSHIP.

The Frigate Niagara, in Which the Naval Hero Won the Battle of Lake Erie, Lies at the Bottom of Miesry Bay.

The old man-of-war frigate Niagara, on which Commodore Perry won the battle of Lake Erie in the war of 1812, may soon be recovered from the bottom of the lake in which she was sunk three-quarters of a century ago, says the New York World.

Congressman S. A. Davenport of Erie, Pa., is going to introduce a resolution in the coming congress setting aside \$10,000 for that purpose.

The vessel, which turned the tide of battle and established the supremacy of the United States on the Great Lakes and in the whole inland empire, will be a precious relic.

What the famous old Constitution is to the navy of the Atlantic the Niagara is to the naval history of the inland seas of America.

In the still, clear water of Miesry Bay, near the port of Erie, the old Niagara now lies, her staunch oak beams and sides almost as solid as ever. In fact, the water has preserved her better than the Constitution, which was almost all the time, and now lies a rotten hulk at the Charlestown navy yard in Boston.

On clear, bright days the hulk of the Niagara can be clearly seen twelve feet below the surface. The kindly waters for which she won such fame have tilled the old beams a mellow green, they have softened the cannon wounds in her sides with a mossy covering. The protecting waters also have shielded the Niagara from the fate that befell her sister ship, the Lawrence. That vessel, which was sunk higher up on the beach in the same bay, partly above the water line, was long ago hewn to pieces and carried off by relic hunters, till now not a stick of her remains.

It will be remembered that Commodore Perry made the exploit of going from the disabled flagship Lawrence to the Niagara in the midst of the battle, and raising on the latter ship his flag, bearing the famous motto, "Don't Give Up the Ship."

It was the Niagara that, on that memorable September 10, 1812, broke through the enemy's line of battle and with terrific broadsides raked the whole hostile fleet till the white flag fluttered from the British ships.

Congressman Davenport of Erie, who started the project of raising the Niagara, told last week how the idea occurred to him.

"My determination to introduce this measure in Congress was the result of a casual conversation that occurred in Washington last spring. It was about the time that the matter of the rehabilitation of other historic ships was the topic. The restoration of the old Constitution was one of the chief subjects of discussion, not only in Washington, but throughout the country. At that time the subject of the Niagara, on which the gallant Perry won his famous victory on Lake Erie, came up in connection with historic reminiscences of the heroic past.

"That there remained in the waters of the bay at Erie a relic of Perry's fight was remarked, and it excited a ripple of surprise and interest at the time. A little later I conceived the idea of interesting Congress in a project to save all that now remains of that fleet, which made American valor famous the world over.

"I shall introduce a bill next winter to appropriate at least \$10,000 to raise the wreck from the lake in which it has lain for three-quarters of a century, and have it restored as an object lesson for the historical students of the rising generation."

Commodore Perry's exploit in the battle of Lake Erie in 1812, in which he led his ship to another under the fiercest fire of the enemy has been immortalized by the distinguished artist, William H. Powell, in a great painting.

James Barnes, in describing the circumstances leading up to the thrilling incident of the battle in the recent book, "The Hero of Erie," says:

Helpless, and unable to work a single sail, for every brace and bowline had been shot away, the Yankee flagship Lawrence drifted straight in among the British vessels.

Her motto flag, "Don't Give Up the Ship," was still flying, and, single-handed, she was engaging the whole English fleet. From every side came flashes and thundering discharges. She was assailed from all directions, but she would not down.

Signal flags were flying from the Lawrence's yard arm ordering the fleet in the rear to come up and support her. But the wind was too light; they could not approach.

Knowing that the surrender of the Lawrence would be a deathblow to all chances of ultimate victory, Perry determined to hold out to the last. But, looking again across the water, he saw that the Niagara, although nearer, was not coming on fast enough. An idea seized him.

"Lower away that motto flag from the mainmast!" he shouted.

A little yawl that had been towing astern was still floating there, uninjured, with her oars in her. The little boat was brought alongside. The British, seeing the motto flag come down, slackened their fire. Four of the few able-bodied men remaining on the Lawrence slid down into the yawl.

Perry wrapped the motto flag around his arm and entered the boat. Standing erect in the stern, charges of grape sputtered across bow and stern. Round shot clipped the water but a few feet away, dashing the spray into the faces of the men bending at the oars. Two of the men in the stern shoots absolutely pulled their commander down from his exposed position, and, all unharmed, they swept under the counter of the Niagara, whose cheering crew had been watching them.

As Perry gained the deck he turned back and looked at the Lawrence, and the mainmast!" he shouted.

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The Queen Charlotte, of the British fleet, whose crew were working like ants endeavoring to bring her head around, was gathering sternway. Just about her quarter was the flagship Detroit, and she also seemed in difficulties. A quick glance told Perry that his forward starboard gun was in position to do great damage, but there was not an accent of excitement in his voice as he turned quickly and said:

"You may fire, Judson!" Instantly the forecannon was shouldered in smoke, and at the rear of the Niagara's first gun every man aboard looked to see the effect of the shot.

The hall carried away one of the Queen Charlotte's stays and crippled some of the running rigging, so that the topmast went back against the mast. Before the Detroit could get out of the way the Queen Charlotte had run foul of her. They ranged side by side. The yards became twisted in the shrouds, and the running gear that was let go fouled so completely that they were locked together. Now was the time for action. Perry hurried to the quarter deck.

"Hold your fire! Hold your fire!" he cried to the impatient gunners, who were waiting for the word.

Nearer and nearer the Niagara ranged. The blows of the axes of the men who were trying to separate the

twelve-pounder and lowered the breach a little. Perry observed the motion.

"Have you the range there, Judson?" he called out.

"Aye, aye, sir, that I have," the old tar replied. "I think I can cripple her, sir."

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