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The Life History of H.M.S. "Victory."

And What She Means to The Empire.

By Admiral of the Fleet SIR F. C. DOVETON STURDEE, Bart, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., C.V.O., LL.D.

The Victory! Nelson's famous flagship. An Imperial treasure and a living inspiration to all sons and daughters of the Empire. The story of her fame needs no recapitulation to older generations, but the magic and glory of her life history, the part she and others played in the days when the Empire was in the making, and the glorious lessons to be learned from her, are of more than academic interest to the generations of to-day and those as yet unborn, and it is impossible to over-emphasize their importance.

Every one knows how, at the battle of Trafalgar, she proclaimed the deathless message: "England expects that every man will do his duty"; and then, with the signal "Close Action" nailed to her masthead, broke with resistless power and majesty through the inflexible Franco-Spanish lines. Magic words "Duty"—the watchword of Britain the world over, and for which countless thousands have laid down their lives in the service of the Empire.

The honours of Trafalgar were sufficient in themselves to make the Victory famous, and yet she was famous before ever Trafalgar was fought. It was in her that Nelson pursued, over the Atlantic to the West Indies and back again, the fleet which Napoleon believed would carry him across the Channel to conquer the only State in Europe that had never yielded to his sword.

On that occasion Nelson chose the Victory for his flagship, not because she was the fastest of all the three-deckers, nor yet because she was the hardest-hitting battleship afloat. He chose her because he hoped to emulate in her the battle honours which she already possessed. The Victory was the flagship of Admiral Sir John Jervis when, with fifteen ships against twenty-seven, he routed his country's enemies at St. Vincent. She was the flagship of Lord Hood when he occupied Toulon, and conquered Corsica. She was the flagship of Lord Howe, when, in face of every obstacle, he relieved Gibraltar after three years of siege and defeated the combined fleets investing it. She was the flagship in turn of Keppel and Komopelt, and majestically sailed the seas, a living emblem of that Sea Power which created the far-flung Empire of to-day, and upon which the safety, honour, and welfare of that Empire still depend.

It must have been a vision of the future that inspired Pietro Mocenigo, a famous Ambassador of Venice, to write, centuries ago: "This Nation has for its territory the ocean, whereupon it trades with the Universe, or establishes its dominions with the movable forts of its ships, which, uniting force with speed, diffuse to the boundaries of the world the glorious traffickings of their own valour." She was laid down in the Year of Victoria, the year 1759, the year made glorious by Minden, Lagos, and Quiberon, the year in which Wolfe gave his life at Quebec. No other ship had ever one title of her renown; no other ship can ever hope to rival her. And after Trafalgar, no less than before, she has played her part. It is not that she has borne continuously

guage to explain why this is so. For the Victory is made of oak, and, as all the world knows, oak furniture, such as chests, and chairs, and coffers, will last and endure for centuries, even when neglected; and the Victory has not been neglected. She has been tended with loving care. The true comparison, however, is not between the Victory and an oak chest, but between the Victory and an oak gatepost in the fields. A century-old gatepost which on Monday stood erect, on Tuesday may be lying prostrate; for the portion under ground may have rotted away. So with the Victory. The keel, the keelson, and those parts of the vessel's ribs below the water-line, serve the ship as foundations serve a house. But they have been immersed in water for more than a century and are in places as decayed as the planking with which they are sheathed. Yet they are expected to support five storeys above them, the Orlop, the Gun Deck, the Middle Deck, the Main Deck, the Quarter Deck (with Forecastle and Poop), besides the guns and masts and spars. Resort cannot be had to any process of underpinning, because a wooden ship is all of one piece; and, having no rock like a church, on which to base its foundations, alter shape through length and breadth, if any integral part be removed. There is no remedy but (in homely phrase) to unpick from the top. This process explains, however, why it is that any steps for the preservation of the Victory must be accompanied by a restoration of the ship to the appearance she wore at Trafalgar. During the nineteenth century, when the under water timbers were good and sound, changes were introduced into the upper works, and fashions which Nelson never knew were inadvertently added. By the agreement of all who have examined her history, there is no case for the retention of these structural innovations. The building plans of the ship are still extant, and while every plank that Nelson trod will be religiously preserved, intruding timbers will be replaced by such as conform to the original design.

The expense will be considerable, and some may ask whether the whole cost should not devolve upon the Board of Admiralty. But it must be remembered that the Victory, like any other ship in commission, has required in the past, and will require in the future, both maintenance and upkeep. The provisions of these the Admiralty has always regarded as a sacred trust. Within the last few months the Lords Commissioner have moved the ship, still proudly wearing an Admiral's flag, into a dock consecrated for all time to her sole use; they have furnished the dock with new gates of the latest patterns; they have relieved the vessel's hold of 550 tons of ballast; and supported her sound timbers by an iron cradle, as the body of a cripple is supported by crutches.

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There are two reasons why the Admiralty can do no more. In the first place, by immemorial British custom, the rebuilding of a battleship which is still in commission can only be carried out with money specifically raised for the purpose; and there are obvious reasons why the Victory should not be put upon the Estimates. She is not to be weighed, like a newly voted ironclad, in the scale of immediate necessities. Her value is no transitory thing; and the patriotism, which she magically stirs, would evaporate in an Act of Parliament.

And secondly the age of wooden battleships is gone, and from the Dockyards the men who built them. The knowledge of what the Victory requires is confined to the body of specialists in the Society for Nautical Research, whom the Admiralty has appointed to conduct the Victory's restoration. At present there is no proposal to put the vessel, when restored, into the water again, for that would mean the repetition a century hence of the problem that confronts us to-day; neither is it intended to remove Nelson's flagship from the Active List for the upkeep of the ship must be provided for, and to whom could she be confided more appropriately than to the sailors who have preserved her from Nelson's day to our own, and in whose heart the spirit of Nelson burns with undiminished brightness? The preservation of this priceless relic, the visible embodiment of the soul of an Island Race, should be regarded as an Imperial Duty, and I am sure I shall not appeal in vain to the citizens of the Empire for assistance in carrying out the trust which has been confided to me as President of the Society for Nautical Research by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

The smallest subscription will give each member of the Empire a personal interest in a work of Imperial importance; a work which will preserve for posterity an emblem of all that is noblest in the past chapters of the Empire's history, and which will enable our children and our children's children to draw the same inspiration from this noble ship that we have drawn ourselves, and our fathers before us.

Note.—The sum of £150,000 is needed. It is proposed thoroughly to overhaul the Victory, to refit her in the rig in which she fought at Trafalgar, to remove nineteenth century anachronisms, and to replace the beautiful bow, foremast, and stern, which were altered out of recognition in the early part of the last century.

Subscriptions may be sent direct to Admiral of the Fleet, Sir F. C. Doveton Sturdee, Bart, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., C.V.O., LL.D., at the Victory Offices, 233 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. or may be paid into all Branches and Agencies at home and abroad of the London Joint City and Midland Bank, Ltd.—United Empire.

City Named by Flip of a Coin.

The death of Francis W. Pettygrove, a former Portland, Me., resident, which occurred recently in Portland, Ore., has brought to light the story of how the city on the Pacific coast almost was named Boston instead of Portland.

A flip of a coin fixed the name of Portland, Ore., on what was then but a tiny settlement. The coin was flipped in the autumn of 1843. A man named A. L. Lovejoy of Boston, and a second named F. W. Pettygrove of Portland, Me., were new settlers in Oregon and were joint owners of a small store, one of a few buildings in a settlement on the Willamette river.

The settlement was called everything from "the village to 'Stamp-town,'" and the partners determined to dignify it with a real name. Lovejoy wanted to call it Boston; Pettygrove preferred Portland.

Finally they agreed to toss a coin. The Portland man called the turn over the Boston man, and the village forthwith was named Portland, Ore.

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FRIDAY:--MISS NICKELS, NEW YORK'S PRIMA DONNA.

Woodsmen For Maine Scarce.

BANGOR, Dec. 30.—There is little need for woodsmen to linger around the streets of cities this winter, idle and destitute, for according to labor agents, there are more jobs in that line of work than can be filled, the largest operators being especially in need of help.

"Wages are a little lower this season than last year, but there are plenty of jobs that pay \$1.50 a day, with board, and good for a long stretch," says a Bangor employment agent. "Times have changed in the labor agency business in Bangor, for while once there were crowds of men hanging around the offices, awaiting for a job, and an order of almost any size could be promptly filled, to-day the agents have difficulty in getting even 50 good men together.

Hate to Leave Cities.

"In old times men were glad to go into the woods in the fall or early winter, being sure of at least moderate pay, good board and a comfortable home through the cold winter, but to-day we have a different class, mostly foreigners, who hate to get away from the cities and the movies, and take almost any kind of a job in town in preference to spending the winter in the bush. Maine goes on cutting her 1,000,000,000 feet of timber every year and men must be had from somewhere.

"The holiday season makes all sorts of trouble for the woods operator who finds it hard to keep his crew on the job. The men will go along until about the middle of December, but then they begin to long for a lay-off and just before Christmas they quit and hurry back to the bright lights with their pay check, eager to celebrate. In the days when Bangor was wide open the men came here to spend their money, but now they cross the border and have their merry time in some Canadian oasis where they can get what they want.

"Woodsmen's wages have ranged within my recollection from 50 cents a day to \$3.50. Ten years ago men were lucky to get 75 cents a day, while in 1920 the day scale was \$3.50 for pulpwood cutters, without board. Last season we were paying \$1.65 a day on an average, and this winter it is \$1.50. There was a time when the best of native loggers worked from daylight to dark for as little as \$16 a month, with a diet of "beans 21 times a week." Try to get a crew on those terms to-day!"

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