

batteries brought on an action which ended at 8, P. M., in completely silencing the American batteries; and on the 6th, at daylight, the squadron got under weigh, leaving their antagonists on shore so thoroughly satisfied that all further resistance was futile, that they were allowed to proceed without further molestation; and on the 9th the Sea Horse and her squadron and prizes sailed out of the Potomac and came to an anchor in safety at the spot where they had weighed twenty-three days before.

The loss incurred in this difficult expedition amounted to *seven killed and thirty-four wounded*. The skill, ability, and courage displayed in this enterprise deserves the highest encomiums. No ship of the draught of water of the Sea Horse had ever passed up the channel before with her guns and stores on board, and it took the President 42 days to accomplish the same object with all her guns taken out.

In strong contradistinction to this brilliant feat of arms was the repulse in which a gallant officer, Sir Peter Parker, of the Menelaus, lost his life. He had been detached on service up the Chesapeake bay, and while his vessel lay at anchor off Moorfields received information that a small American force was encamped in the woods about a mile from the beach. Accordingly on the 30th August, at 11 a.m., Captain Parker landed at the head of 104 seamen and 30 marines, in two divisions, and found the enemy, with a small cavalry force and some artillery, drawn up in a small open space. They were instantly charged and driven into the woods; here they opened fire and mortally wounded Sir Peter Parker, who literally bled to death. Bewildered and embarrassed the survivors were obliged to retreat with a loss of 14 killed and 27 wounded. Thus perished a brave officer in a skirmish from which no effect could be possibly produced.

#### THE LAST OF NELSON'S CAPTAINS.

(By Tom Hughes, in *McMillan's Magazine* for Feb.)

On the 8th of January the last survivor of Nelson's captains, the Pladins of the great war, sank to his rest calmly at Greenwich, a hale old sea-king of eighty-six. Sir James A. Gordon had been Governor of the hospital since 1853, and became Admiral of the Fleet just a year since, on the 30th of January 1868. He entered the navy in November 1793, at the mature age of ten years, straight from his father's house Kildrummie Castle, Aberdeen: was posted in May, 1805, several years before the Premier was born, and had been nine times gazetted for conspicuous gallantry in the face of an enemy while Mr. Gladstone was yet in the nursery. The race to which he belonged stands out as clearly as Napoleon's marshals of whom they were the contemporaries. Nelson's captains, now that we can look at them as a group of historical personages,

strikes us as on the whole the most daring set of men ever thrown together for one work. Were it not for their uniform success and the thoroughness with which they carried through that work, one might be inclined to call them foolhardy disciples of the chief who "did not know A. . . Fear."

As a boy, Sir James fought in the general actions, under Lord Bredport, at Cape St. Vincent and the Nile, and took part in a dozen minor engagements and cuttings out which are chronicled in the faithful pages of arms.

But it was not till 1811 that his great chance in life came. In that year he was captain of the Active frigate, cruising in the Atlantic under Hoste. They were three frigates and a 22-gun ship, the *Volage*; when off Lissa a French and Venetian fleet of six frigates, a 16-gun corvette, and two gunboats came in sight. Hoste wore at once and signalled "Remember Nelson," and the four English ships went into action with a hundred and twenty-eight guns less than the enemy, and 880 men against 2600. In half-an-hour the *Flore*, 40 gun frigate, struck to the Active; but Gordon, without waiting to send a prize crew on board, followed the *Corona*, another French frigate, and took her within shot of the batteries of Lissa. Meantime, the *Flore* had stolen away, no one knew where, and the able editors of the day denounce her captain for treachery in not waiting for her captor's return, and blamed Gordon for not securing her. Hoste only remarked that they didn't know Gordon if they thought he would waste one minute on a prize while an enemy's flag was flying.

Six months later, in the same waters, Maxwell in the *Alceste*, and Gordon in the *Active*, came up and fought through a long autumn day with the *Pomone* and *Pauline*, French frigates running for Trieste. Gordon's leg was carried away by a 36 pounder, but the *Pauline* was taken, and Maxwell brought the sword of Rosamil, the French captain, to Gordon, as his by right.

In 1812, Gordon, now with a wooden leg, was again afloat, captain of the *Sea Horse*; and in 1814 was under Cochrane on the American station. In August, Cochrane and Ross resolved on the raid on Washington; and Gordon, with a small squadron, was ordered to sail up the Potomac, in support of the land forces. He started on the 17th, and struggled up to Fort Washington in ten days. "We were without pilots," he writes, "to assist us through the difficult part of the river called Kettles Bottoms, consequently each of the ships was aground twenty times, and the crews were employed in warping five whole days." On the 27th he took Fort Washington, and on the next day appearing off Alexandria, and offered terms of capitulation to the town which our cousins found hard of digestion. Washington had been abandoned by Ross on the 25th, after the public buildings were burned. The whole country was rising, and here was this impudent, one-legged captain insisting that the merchant ships which had been sunk on his approach should be delivered to him, with all the merchandise on board, or—The army was already back at the coast, there was not the slightest chance of support, and his difficulties were increasing every hour; but the Alexandrians soon found that nothing but his own terms would get rid of this one-legged man. So the sunk merchantmen were "weighed, masted, hove down, caulked, rigged, and loaded" with the cargoes which had been put ashore, even down to the cabin furniture, and with twenty one of them as prizes, at the end of

three days, Gordon started to run the gauntlet back to the sea, our cousins vowing they would teach him something about "terms of capitulation" before he got there. And they worked hard to keep their vow, and at one point (name unknown) had nearly effected their purpose by aid of a strong battery and three fire-ships. But Gordon in the *Sea Horse*, and Charles Napier in the *Euryalus*, anchored at short musket range right off the battery, and succeeded in almost silencing it; a daring midship or two towed away the fire ships, and the whole fleet of merchantmen slipped by. And so Gordon got down to the sea with a total loss of three officers and sixty-one men after twenty-three days' operations, in which the hammocks were down only two nights. No stranger feat of daring was ever performed than this, now nearly forgotten.

His last command was in his old ship the *Active*, to which he was appointed in 1819; and in 1826 he was made superintendent of the Plymouth Victualling Yard, at which time so far as we know, his work as a fighting man ceased. Stop—we are wrong; on one occasion the old sea lion was brought to bay. He attended the coronation of William IV., like a loyal messmate, in full admiral's uniform, with his orders, and the gold medal which had been awarded him after Lissa on his breast. He walked away from the ceremony, and at a narrow street corner in Westminster was hailed by a leading rough in the crowd, "By God! that's Jem Gordon. He flogged me in the *Active*, and now, mates, let's settle him." The Admiral put his back to the wall, and looked the fellow in the face. "I don't remember you," said he, "but if I flogged you in the *Active*, you d—d rascal, you deserved it. Come on!" Whereupon the crowd cheered, and suppressed his antagonist, and the Admiral stumped back to his hotel in peace.

Even with a wooden leg, he must have been a very formidable man in those days; for he stood six feet three inches, and had been all his life famous for feats of strength and activity. He could heave the lead further than any man in his best crews, and before his accident had been known to leap in and out of six empty water hogsheds placed in line on the deck.

For the last sixteen years he has been living, full of years and honors at Greenwich; and now he lies buried amongst his comrades, and has left the grand heritage of an unsullied name to his numerous grandchildren.

Heaven keep Great Britain from any such war as that in which James A. Gordon earned his good service pension of £300 a year and his Grand Cross of the Bath; but, if Britain is ever fated to endure the like again, Heaven send her such captains as James A. Gordon and his peers.

Two important additions have just been made to the Royal Navy by the launching of the "*Volage*," a swift corvette built of iron, with a timber casing, and the "*Audacious*," a second class ironclad of somewhat peculiar construction.

The *London Times* mentions that a rumour was current to the effect that the Lords of the Admiralty had sent telegraphic orders to the naval authorities to prepare all available ironclad ships for service.

The naval estimates have been made public. The total amount required for the service of the year is £9,996,641 as against £11,157,290 for last year—a reduction of £1,160,649.