

THE LOSS OF H. M. S. "CAPTAIN."

STATEMENT OF SOME OF THE SURVIVORS.

Full details have now been received of this great misfortune. It occurred about 12.15 a.m. on the 7th ult., the ship at the time being under double reefed fore and main topstails, on the port tack, close hauled, with the wind about N.W. and very squally, with rain and heavy sea. About midnight the ship was felt making a very heavy roll to the starboard, and before she had time to recover a heavy sea struck her and threw her on her beam ends. She then turned bottom upwards, and eventually sank, going down stern first. From the time she fell on her beam ends to the time of sinking was about ten minutes. Captain Burgoyne and a few of the crew swam to the steam pinnace, which was floating bottom up; shortly afterwards the second launch passed close to the pinnace, and Mr. May, the gunner and two men succeeded in getting on board, but Captain Burgoyne failed in the attempt. After various unsuccessful efforts to save him and others, they were so nearly swamped that they found themselves forced to bear up, or the launch must have gone from under them. At this time there were nineteen persons in the launch, but one man was washed out of the boat by her shipping a heavy sea which nearly filled her.

The following accounts are from some of the survivors. One says:—

"While the middle watch were being mustered by Mr. E. F. Goodfellow, midshipman, at midnight on the 6th of September, the captain called the gunner's mate, and told him to take a careful hand with him and cover up the turrets. While endeavoring to lift a grating so as to perform this order, the ship was thrown on her beam ends by a squall. The gunner's mate, who was to the leeward at the time, held on to the grating; while holding on, the first launch and second launch and gally (which were both stowed inside the first launch) were washed over him, the bottom of the first launch bruising his back. He says that he went over with the ship; as soon as he came to the surface he saw the launches about 15 yards off, and in about a dozen strokes he got on board, where he found two men who had jumped into the boats while the ship was going down (one of these men could not swim). With the assistance of one of these men he succeeded in hauling in 12 other men, each man as he got in assisting to save the others. They then separated the launches (that is to say, the first launch got full of water and sank from under the second launch, in which latter the men were). During this time they were being swept away to the leeward. On getting out a steer oar they succeeded in passing close to the steam pinnace, which was floating bottom up with Captain Burgoyne, James May (gunner), and five men on it. While passing the gunner jumped into the launch, at the same time asking the captain to jump, as it was his only chance. He does not remember the answer the captain gave him, but he believes that the captain jumped but missed the boat. Three other men also jumped and succeeded in getting on board, making a total of 19 souls in the second launch. When alongside the pinnace one of the men offered the captain an oar, but he declined saying "*For God's sake men keep your oars; you will want them.*" They were then swept away and lost sight of the pinnace. They endeavoured to return to the pinnace, and threw overboard

the gally (which was inside the second launch, as before stated) so as to save the captain and two other men who were left on it, but could not, in consequence of a very heavy sea, which prevented them from making any headway. While attempting this, George Myers, who was in the launch, said, "I think we are all right now." The words were scarcely uttered when a heavy sea struck the boat and washed him overboard; so after a short consultation they bore away for the land which they knew was under their lee, at the same time commencing to lighten the boat by throwing overboard the stay tackles, masts, &c., retaining only the oars. The boat was all this time up to her thwart in water. Luckily, one of the boats crew (David Dyburgh) happened to be in the boat, and accordingly knew where to find everything, so that they were able to rig the pump, and with the assistance of men that could not man oars (who were bailing with their caps) succeeded in bailing her out. Shortly before the ship went over the captain was on the bridge endeavoring, with the watch, to round in the topsail yards, but could not; he then gave the order to let go the lee topsail sheets (the halyards having been previously let go.) Before this order could be obeyed the ship was over on her beam ends, with the water pouring down the funnel, which was not sufficient to drown the shrieks of the stokers, which were heard by some of the survivors; she then turned bottom up and sank stern first in less than five minutes. The report when she sank they describe as resembling a tremendous explosion. Not a soul could get up from below, as the whole thing occurred in an instant; all the men saved belonging to the watch on deck. Shortly after she sank, a ship, supposed to have been the *Inconstant* or *Bellerophon*, passed close over the place, but they did not see the boat or even miss the ship until Admiral Milne, about two hours after the accident, caused a signal to be made to the fleet to count the ships; they accordingly did so, and signalled back ten and there ought to have been eleven; the next day they (the fleet) found two boats, yards, spars, and gratings; secured to a boat's bowsprit they found a silk handkerchief which had been used by one of the men who were saved to fasten himself to the spar, but, seeing the launch, freed himself from it and swam to the boat. The gunner's escape was most miraculous; he was awoke by some marines making a noise outside his cabin, and noticing that the ship was knocking about he dressed and went on deck to examine the guns and see if they were properly secured. On going up into the after turret, the ship went over, and he jumped out of the turret into the water, swam to the pinnace, and was rescued by the launch. A mizen topman, as the ship capsized, got on the weather netting, and ran up the mizen tripod, finding the ship still sinking he took to the water, and was saved. Another man, David Dryburgh, crawled over the weather netting, and actually walked along the ship's side as she went over, and finally along her bottom as she turned bottom up. He distinctly remembers placing his foot upon a Kingston valve. At the time the ship was capsized she was under double-reefed fore and main topstails, and fore top mast staysail, close hauled, the yards being braced very sharp up. The general opinion is that the ship was too heavily sparred."

All the survivors agree that they felt full confidence as to the ship's sea-going qualities, and no apprehensions of danger were entertained. The "Captain" was built

with a very large forecandle, and a similar compartment aft; this Mr. Reed has always condemned as depriving turret ships of their primary and supreme advantage, that of providing an all round fire, and more especially a head fire. These two compartments are joined by a hurricane deck running over the turrets, leaving a perfectly open space only occupied by the turrets and funnel casing. The ship at the time was under double-reefed fore and main topstails, and braced sharp up; she was noted for the small angle at which she could brace her yards up on the port tack, heeling 18 degrees; and it was also the general opinion that she was too heavily masted. With these facts the following conclusions are arrived at:—"The absence of any side between the forecandle and the poop, presenting no surface to the water, and the pressure of water on the lee side of the main deck, together with the hurricane deck, acting as a sail, and taking into consideration that the yards were sharply up, rendered it almost impossible for the ship to right herself when once over. When the lee side of the main deck is submerged, the water, of course, exercises a great leverage on the side of the ship, tending to press her downwards."

A NATIONAL ARMY.

(From the *Pall Mall Gazette*.)

It is so important that the people of this country should seriously face the question of military reorganization that we make no apology for returning to the subject. The events of the past few weeks have been pregnant with instruction and warning; but all their teaching fades into insignificance beside the one great truth which they bring home to us, that it behooves a nation which would maintain its independence and integrity to be in the highest sense prepared for war. Is what has proved so fearfully possible in France impossible in England? Half our sense of security rests upon an unexpressed feeling that the thing is impossible, simply because we cannot realize it. That England is very far from impregnable now will hardly be seriously disputed. We do not propose to go over the wearisome calculations as to the exact number of bayonets now available, which always end by showing that our military force is quite inadequate to our need. We assume that the country is now thoroughly alive to the necessity of improving our national defence. What then do we require? No one, we think, who cares to observe recent events can have failed to notice that three fundamental requirements must be satisfied to produce a strong military system—numbers, efficiency and organization. On each of these points the present war is pre-eminently instructive. It is the harmonious union of these three qualifications which has mainly earned for the German nation its present position. In 1866 and 1870 it has been so. When men went about exclaiming that the needle gun had won the Bohemian campaign, thoughtful men said, no, it is a higher power than the needle-gun. That is one factor only—one element only in one of three principal qualifications—efficiency. And the proved value of numbers, efficiency and organization in the present war no one will dispute. It is further to be recognized that any one or two of these elements without the other will not secure the desired result.

How are these elements to be obtained? There are, as far as we can see, but two ways, by maintaining a large standing army or by adopting the national military system.