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HER MAJESTY'S SHIP "CAPTIAN."

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT MARTIAL ON THE CAUSE OF HER LOSS.

(From the Broad Arrow.)

[CONTINUED.]

The examination of the survivors of the *Captain*, by the Naval Court, which commenced in our last, continued as follows:

FRANCIS MERRIMAN, first class boy, sworn and examined: I had just passed my muster and heard Captain Burgoyne give the order to let go the topsail sheets. The ship gave a heavy lurch, which knocked me down in the lee water ways. On getting on my feet again I saw the man on the weather topsail brace jumping on the weather rigging, I then made a jump for the rigging, the officer of the watch, Mr. Purdon, being alongside of me. I gained the rigging, and the water came on top of me and washed me off. I swam to a loose spar I saw floating, and then saw the boom boats drifting towards me. I held on with one hand and swam with the other, and reached the boats. A man there helped me in.

JAMES SAUNDERS, first-class boy, sworn and examined: When the ship capsized I swam to the pinnace, which was floating bottom up, and found there Captain Burgoyne and five others. We passed close to a ship and hailed her, but we could not hear our own voices. The second launch came drifting by and five of us jumped from off the boat's bottom and swam to her.

JOHN GRIBBLE, first-class boy, sworn and examined: I was on the weather foretopsail brace at the time the ship turned over, when the sea took me away from the brace and jammed me under the hammock-cloth. The next I remember I was got into the boat. This examination of Gribble completed the examination of all the survivors.

EDWARD O. BOLITHO, lieutenant Royal Navy, sworn and examined: I have been at sea twelve years, and held my present rank four years and a-half. On the night the *Captain* was lost I was officer of the first watch on board the *Agincourt*. I produce a certified extract of the *Agincourt's* log for the twelve hours preceding and twelve hours subsequent to that in which the ship is supposed to have been lost. Certified readings of the barometer are also inserted in the extract from the log. Between eight and ten of the first watch the weather was squally. In the squalls the *Agincourt* might have carried double-reefed topsails and courses without endangering spars. From ten to

eleven there was rain, and a threatening look in the south-west. During that hour the *Agincourt* could have carried safely the same sail as before, double-reefed topsails and courses. About 11.30 p.m. the squalls became more violent: about a quarter to twelve the wind shifted two points in a very heavy squall, and I deemed it necessary to lower the topsails and have hands by the lee sheets, and have the yards rounded in. I also increased the speed of the engines, to have good steerage way on the ship. The topsails then had two reefs in them. When the second reefs were taken in, that was done by signal. Besides the double-reefed topsails, when shortening sail, the *Agincourt* had her fore staysail on her. The foretopmast staysail was taken in at ten p.m. I was relieved in charge as officer of the watch at five minutes past twelve, but did not leave the bridge for some minutes afterwards. I went below at half-past twelve. Between a quarter to and a quarter past twelve the weather continued about the same as I described before—a strong, heavy gale. The topsails remained lowered until I left the deck. I do not think there was any sudden gust of wind between twelve o'clock and the time I left the deck. About eleven p.m. there was very little sea, but it got up very quickly. The *Agincourt* did not roll until about half-past twelve. It was a short chopping sea, but not at all dangerous for a ship.

By Captain Hancock: About twelve o'clock the *Agincourt* was heeling about three or four degrees. Before the topsails were lowered she was not heeling more than six degrees. There was no difficulty in getting our topsail yards down. One hung for a short time, but came down when the braces were well rounded in. The *Agincourt's* position in the fleet was two miles on the beam of the *Lord Warden*. The *Captain's* position in reference to the *Agincourt* was about half to a point abaft our weather beam, distant about two miles. At midnight I could not distinguish the *Captain*. I think I mistook her for the *Lord Warden*, and, if so, I saw her about a quarter to twelve. I could not see the bow lights of the weather line.

By Captain Rice: We did not shorten sail to keep station, but merely as a measure of precaution to save our sails, which had been some time in use.

By Captain Boys: About twelve o'clock I should say that, from the state of the weather, there was certainly no appearance of risk to any ship in the fleet.

CHARLES ARTHUR NICHOLSON, Lieutenant, Royal Navy, relieved Lieutenant Bolitho of the watch at five minutes past twelve, sworn and examined: I produce a certified extract

of the *Agincourt's* log of the twelve hours preceding and succeeding that on which the *Captain* was lost, with readings of the barometer attached. On the morning of the 7th of September I took charge of the deck between five and ten minutes past twelve. She had then her three topsails, double-reefed, lowered on the cap, and fore and foretopmast staysails. About twenty-one minutes past twelve we had a heavy squall, and split the mizzen topsail, and about five or ten minutes after that the main topsail split. The buntlines were close out, and we were just going to man the reef tackles when the sails split. If our sail and ropes had been new and in good condition I think we could have carried double-reefed topsails without endangering the ship, and I think also the foresail reef in addition. Carrying a press of sail, I think we might have carried a reef out of the topsails, but I should not have carried double reefs. There was a nasty cross sea, but not a long one—a short chopping sea. No ship of the fleet was in sight when I took charge of the deck from Lieutenant Bolitho at five minutes after twelve.

By Captain Commerell: I apprehend that if the *Agincourt* had carried double-reefed topsails through squalls, and spars and sails held on, it would have no more effect beyond causing her to heel some few degrees. When I reached the deck the engines were making twenty-two revolutions.

STAFF COMMANDER LIBBY, sworn and examined: I have been twenty-three and a-half years at sea, and have held the rank of Navigating Lieutenant ten years and ten months, and Staff Commander fourteen months. I am now serving on board the *Bellerophon*. When I went on deck at 12.25 a.m. on the 7th of September it was blowing a heavy gale, with a thick rain. The sea was not particularly heavy, but it was a nasty cross sea. If the *Bellerophon* had been lying in the trough of the sea I think it would not have occasioned her any inconvenience.

By Captain Hancock, The *Bellerophon* had double-reefed main topsails set, with fore and main gaff sails and fore topmast staysails; the screw was not working at that time. The ship was going, I think, about two knots. Her heel was then, I should fancy, from eight to nine degrees. I did not consider her pressed by sail at that time. The sail then on the ship was not too much for the safety of the ship, but perhaps too much for the safety of the spars and sails. When I went on deck I did not consider there was any risk for any ship in the fleet more than common in a gale.

By Captain Commerell: Had I been in command of the *Bellerophon* and all spars