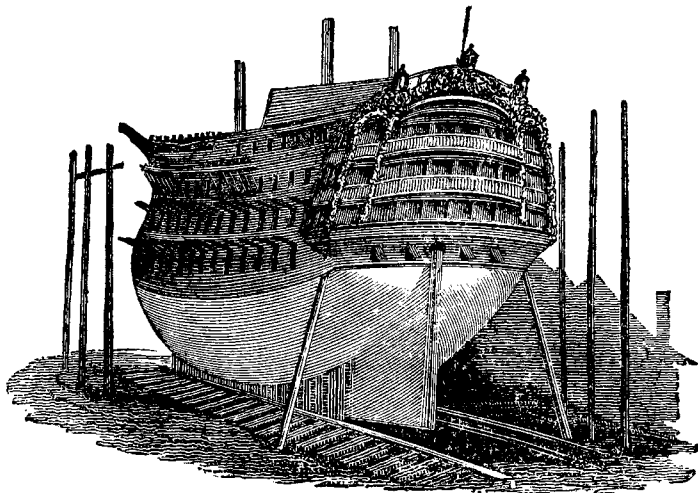


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978-1-108-01853-1 - The Naval Chronicle, Volume 14

Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur

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The Windsor Castle, of 98 guns, built at Woolwich; drawn by Mr. Pocock just before her launch, and engraved on wood by Mr. Nesbit. Her stern differs from most other three-deckers, by narrowing in at top; which gives her a very light appearance.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF
SIR THOMAS BOULDEN THOMPSON, KNT.
OF THE ROYAL NAVY.

“ ——— LET ME PURCHASE IN MY YOUTH RENOWN,
TO MAKE ME LOV'D AND VALU'D WHEN I'M OLD.”

OTWAY.

WE know not how to commence a fresh Volume of our labours with more self-satisfaction, than in presenting the Public with some particulars of Sir Thomas Bouden Thompson, a gallant Officer, whose distinguished Services point him out as an object of eulogy and emulation, in that Profession of which he is a dignified ornament.—He is one of those brave Men — the proudest boast of Britain — who, by their glorious exertions, have increased the fame of their Country; have seized, for themselves; a wreath of perennial verdure; and whose names and virtues will live in the remembrance of a grateful posterity.

Thomas Bouden, now Sir Thomas Bouden Thompson, it will be recollected by many of our Readers, is the Nephew of

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Cambridge University Press

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that able Officer and worthy Man, the deceased Captain Edward Thompson, whose extraordinary merit, as a Seaman and as a Writer, long since obtained for him the most honourable notice in the biographical department of our **Chronicle***. For young Boulden, the relationship was peculiarly fortunate; as to the advantages which it afforded him must, in a great measure, be ascribed the conspicuous figure he has made in his Profession.

The Subject of the present Memoir is a Native of Kent. His Father, Mr. Boulden, married Miss Thompson, the Sister of the late Mr. Thompson, who had then attained only the rank of Lieutenant. The Boy, when very young, gave indications of spirit, vigour, and ability; but, as

“ The noblest blood of all the land’s abash’d,
Having no lacquey but pale poverty,”

those indications of spirit, vigour, and ability, might have proved useless to himself and to his Country; and the flower of his youth have been suffered to “ waste its sweetness on the desert air,” had not the fostering influence of his Uncle protected his earlier years. The narrow finances of Mr. Boulden prevented him from bestowing the requisite education on his Son; but the deficiency was amply supplied by Captain Thompson, who placed his Nephew at school, for the purpose of receiving the first rudiments of learning. The literary acquirements of Captain Thompson fully qualified him for the office of a preceptor; and as soon as his Nephew was sufficiently advanced in his boyish studies, to profit by superior instruction, he took him entirely under his own care; and, with the greatest accuracy, strictness, and success, taught him Navigation, in all its branches, and instilled into the youthful mind of his pupil a very competent acquaintance with other subjects of useful and elegant knowledge. Though extremely indulgent to his Nephew, the old Gentleman never suffered his affection to over-reach his prudence, nor would he ever accept of any but the most accurate performance of the tasks which he conceived it proper to impose.

* Vide Vol. III, page 52; Vol. VI, page 437; and Vol. VII, page 93.

Cambridge University Press

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The only punishment which he inflicted for those instances of idleness to which all boys are occasionally prone, was an increase of labour, and confinement from play. When the extraordinary industry of the pupil claimed a reward, an appropriate indulgence was granted.

In June 1778, the late Captain Thompson was appointed to command the *Hyæna* Frigate*; and, at the same time, young Boulden, now taking the name of Thompson, having previously been rated as a Midshipman, entered into active service on board of the same Ship, which was mostly employed on the Home Station till 1780. On the 16th of January, in that year, the *Hyæna* having been fixed on as a repeating Frigate to the Fleet commanded by Sir George Rodney, and destined for the relief of Gibraltar, our young Officer had an opportunity of witnessing our glorious Victory over the Spanish Squadron of Don J. de Langara, off St. Vincent; a Victory which could not fail of making a lasting impression on his mind. It was after this Engagement that the senior Thompson was sent home with duplicates of the dispatches relative thereto; arriving in England two days before Captain M'Bride, who sailed from Gibraltar with the originals, in the Childers Brig, ten days before the *Hyæna*.

Young Thompson accompanied his Uncle on his return to Gibraltar, whence, in the following year, that Gentleman sailed as Commodore of an Expedition against Demerara; which, with the Dutch Settlements of Berbice and Issequibo, surrendered without opposition †. On this Station Mr. Thompson was engaged in much active Service; and the meritorious manner in which he conducted himself procured him a Lieutenantcy, which the Admiralty soon after confirmed.

Shortly after this appointment, Lieutenant Thompson commanded a small Schooner, and distinguished himself by capturing a French Privateer of very superior force.

In July 1783, soon after the conclusion of the American War, the late Captain Thompson was appointed Commodore on

* *Vide* NAVAL CHRONICLE, Vol. VI, page 455. † *Ibid.* Vol. VII, page 99.

Cambridge University Press

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the African Station*; his Nephew acting as his Second Lieutenant, in the *Grampus*. On the death of the Commodore, in January 1786, Captain Trip, of the *Nautilus*, succeeded to the Command of the *Grampus*; and, by an agreement with his senior Lieutenant, Mr. Thompson was appointed Master and Commander of that Sloop. In the *Nautilus* he made a Voyage down the Coast of Africa, executing the commission with which he was intrusted, to the satisfaction of his Commanding Officer, and with the full approbation of the Admiralty. For the period of twelve months, which he remained on the African Station, he was no less distinguished than his deceased Uncle, for nautical skill, and for a strict attention to the various duties of his Profession.

On his return to England, when his Ship was paid off, Captain Thompson spent some time in London.

From London Captain Thompson retired to Hertfordshire, where he principally remained, until the commencement of hostilities subsequent to the French Revolution.

He obtained Post rank in 1790. Some time after the beginning of the War, he was appointed to the *Leander*, of 50 guns, and stationed in the North Seas, where he performed considerable Service. In 1796, the *Leander* was ordered to Portsmouth, to be refitted, and remained there till the Summer of 1797, when she was directed to convoy a Fleet of Merchantmen, and afterwards to proceed to Gibraltar. It was shortly after Captain Thompson's arrival at that Port, that Admiral Earl St. Vincent, from a variety of intelligence which he had received, was induced to believe that the Town of Santa Cruz, in the Island of Teneriffe, was an assailable object. That Town was well fortified by the Spaniards; and to insure a probability of success in the attempt to take it, Men of skill and intrepidity were requisite. The command of the Squadron which was appointed to this Service was accordingly given to Rear-Admiral Nelson, with permission for him to choose his Officers. Captain Thompson was one of those on whom the Rear-Admiral's election fell; and, with the Captains, Trow-

* *Vide* NAVAL CHRONICLE, Vol. VI, page 460.

Cambridge University Press

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bridge, Hood, Freemantle, Bowen, Miller, and Waller, he volunteered his services to land the Troops. On the evening of the 25th of July, the Squadron anchored a few miles to the northward of Santa Cruz; and, by eleven o'clock at night, all the Men were in the Boats, and rowed towards the Shore in six divisions. In their progress some unfortunate accidents happened; and the night being extremely dark, the Boats were unable to keep together. The Rear-Admiral, however, and the Captains, Thompson and Freemantle, with four or five Boats, succeeded in landing at the Mole, which they stormed and carried, although defended by four or five hundred Men, and half a dozen 24-pounders, which they spiked. But such a heavy fire of musketry and grape shot was kept up from the Citadel, and the houses at the Mole-head, that it was impossible for them to advance; and, almost to a Man, the whole party was either killed or wounded. Among the latter, as is generally known, was the brave Nelson, who lost his right arm, and the Captains Thompson and Freemantle, who were only slightly hurt.

Notwithstanding the failure of this attempt, the merit of the Officers employed shone conspicuous, and met with the full approbation of their gallant superior.—Rear-Admiral Nelson, in his letter to Earl St. Vincent on the occasion, asserts, that *more daring intrepidity never was shown, than by the Captains, Officers, and Men, whom he had the honour to command*.*

After this affair, Captain Thompson returned to Gibraltar, on which Station he remained till June 1798, when he was ordered by Earl St. Vincent to the Mediterranean, destined soon to become the scene of his individual, as well as of the national glory.

For a full and circumstantial account of the glorious Battle of the Nile, on the 1st of August, we must refer our Readers to the earlier Volumes of our Work †. Instead therefore of entering into detail, we shall simply offer a few brief observations, relating more immediately to the subject of the present

* *Vide* NAVAL CHRONICLE, Vol. III, page 179.

† Vol. I, page 43; and Vol. III, page 181.

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Memoir.—The Enemy had taken a station which they supposed, and not without probability, would secure to them the most decided advantages. The situation in which they were moored was such as might be expected to afford full play to their Artillery, to the force and dexterous management of which the splendid series of their land Victories was in a great measure to be imputed. Our Officer's Ship, the *Leander*, though but of 50 guns, was stationed in the Line of Battle. By an instantaneous exertion of that powerful genius which, with the rapidity of thought, conceives and executes new measures for cases of untried emergency, Admiral Nelson immediately decided on the movement which determined the event of the day; and thus early prevented the effectual co-operation of the French Batteries with their Line.

In a narrative of this illustrious Victory of Admiral Nelson, which was published at a shortly-subsequent period, the achievements of our Officer are mentioned in terms of the highest praise.—“Captain Thompson,” says the writer, “of the *Leander*, of 50 guns, with a degree of skill and intrepidity highly honourable to his professional character, advanced towards the Enemy's Line on the outside, and most judiciously dropped his anchor athwart the hauser of *le Franklin*, raking her with great success, the shot from the *Leander's* broadside, which passed that Ship, all striking *l'Orient*, the Flag-ship of the French Commander in Chief.”

Thus did Captain Thompson, with a Ship of inferior force, succeed in that noble achievement peculiar to British bravery and skill;—the cutting through the Enemy's Line*.

On the 5th of August, the *Leander* sailed, with Captain, now Sir Edward Berry, of the *Vanguard*, as the bearer of Admiral Nelson's dispatches to the Commander in Chief. In the course of the *Leander's* Passage, Captain Thompson had an opportunity of exerting his Naval abilities, which, though unfortunate in the result, as fully and gloriously manifested the heroism of his

The total loss which the *Leander* sustained was that of 14 Seamen being wounded.

Cambridge University Press

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character, and vigour of his genius, as any of his previous or subsequent exploits — Disabled by the late Battle, and far short of her complement of Men, on the 18th of August the Leander was fallen in with by le Genereux, a French 74 gun Ship, with her full complement of Men. Under these circumstances, Captain Thompson, as wisdom directed and duty required, endeavoured to avoid an Engagement; but the state of his Ship rendering it impossible to escape without a contest, he instantly prepared for action; and, notwithstanding the inferiority and disadvantages under which he laboured, he maintained an obstinate combat for *six hours and a half*. At length, finding his Ship entirely a Wreck, he consulted with Captain Berry on the propriety of holding out any longer; and, with the concurrence and advice of that able Officer, he found it expedient to yield to the circumstances of the moment, and reluctantly surrendered.

The Leander was carried into Corfu, whence the unfortunate Captives were sent to Trieste. Immediately on his arrival at the latter place, Captain Thompson wrote to Admiral Nelson, apprising him of the loss of His Majesty's Ship Leander, in the following terms; a duplicate of which was also dispatched, under cover, to Evan Nepean, Esq., for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty:—

Trieste, October 13, 1798.

It is with extreme pain I have to relate to you the Capture of His Majesty's Ship Leander, late under my command, by a French 74 gun Ship, after a close Action of six hours and a half. On the 18th of August last, being within five or six miles of the west end of Goza, near the Island of Candia, we discovered at day-break a large Sail on the S. E. quarter, standing directly for the Leander; we were then becalmed, but the stranger bringing up a fine breeze from the southward, we soon made him to be a large Ship of the Line. As the Leander was in Officers and Men upwards of 80 short of their complement, and had on board a number which were wounded on the 1st, I did not consider myself justified in seeking an Action with a Ship which appeared of such considerable superiority in point of size, and therefore took every means in my power to avoid it: I, however, soon found, that an inferiority of

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sailing made it inevitable; and I therefore, with all sail set, steered the *Leander* a course which I judged would receive our Adversary to the best advantage, should he bring us to battle. At 8 o'clock the strange Ship (still continuing to have the good fortune of the Wind) had approached us within a long random shot, and had Neapolitan Colours hoisted, which he now changed to Turkish; but this deception was of no avail, as I plainly made him to be French. At nine he had ranged up within a half gun-shot of our weather quarter; I therefore hauled the *Leander* up sufficiently to bring the broadside to bear, and immediately commenced a vigorous cannonade on him, which he instantly returned. The Ships continued nearing each other till half-past ten, keeping up a constant and heavy firing. At this time I perceived the Enemy intending to run us on board, and the *Leander* being very much cut up in rigging, sails, and yards, I was unable, with the light air that blew, to prevent it. He ran us on board on the larboard bow, and continued alongside us for some time. A most spirited and well-directed fire, however, from our small party of Marines, (commanded by the Serjeant,) on the poop and from the quarter-deck, prevented the Enemy from taking advantage of his good fortune, and he was repulsed in all his efforts to make an impression on us. The firing from the great guns was all this time kept up with the same vigour; and a light breeze giving the Ships way, I was enabled to steer clear of the Enemy, and soon afterwards had the satisfaction to luff under his stern, and passing him within ten yards, distinctly discharged every gun from the *Leander* into him. As from thenceforward was nothing but a continued series of heavy firing within pistol-shot, without any Wind, and the Sea as smooth as glass, I feel it unnecessary to give you the detail of the effects of every shot, which must be obvious from our situation. I shall therefore content myself with assuring you, that a most vigorous cannonade was kept up from the *Leander* without the smallest intermission, until half-past three in the afternoon. All this time the Enemy having passed our bows with a light breeze, and brought himself on our starboard side, we found that our guns on that side were nearly all disabled by the wreck of our own spars, that had all fallen on this side. This produced a cessation of our fire, and the Enemy took this time to ask us if we had surrendered? The *Leander* was now totally ungovernable, not having a thing standing but the shattered remains of the fore and main-masts, and the bowsprit; her hull cut to pieces, and the decks full of killed and wounded; and perceiving the Enemy, who

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had only lost his mizen-top-mast, approaching to place himself athwart our stern; in this defenceless situation I asked Captain Berry if he thought we could do more? He coinciding with me that farther resistance was vain and impracticable, and indeed all hope of success having for some time vanished, I therefore now directed an answer to be given in the affirmative, and the Enemy soon after took possession of His Majesty's Ship. I cannot conclude this account without assuring you how much advantage His Majesty's Service derived during this Action from the gallantry and activity of Capt. Berry, of the Vanguard. I should also be wanting in justice if I did not bear testimony to the steady bravery of the Officers and Seamen of the Leander in this hard contest, which, though unsuccessful in its termination, will still, I trust, entitle them to the approbation of their Country. The Enemy proved to be the *Genereux*, of 74 guns, commanded by M. Lejoille, *chef de division*, who had escaped from the Action of the 1st of August, and being the rearmost of the French Line, had received little or no share of it, having on board 900 Men, about 100 of whom we found had been killed in the present contest, and 188 wounded. I enclose a list of the loss in killed and wounded in the Leander, and have the honour to be, &c.

T. THOMPSON.

A Return of Officers and Men Killed and Wounded on board His Majesty's Ship Leander.

Officers killed.—Mr. Peter Downes*, Midshipman; Mr. Gibson, Midshipman of the *Caroline*; Mr. Edward Haddon, Midshipman.—24 Seamen killed.—Marines killed: Serjeant Dair, and 7 Privates.—Total: 3 Officers, 24 Seamen, 1 Serjeant, 7 Marines.

Officers wounded.—Capt. Thompson, badly; Lieut. Taylor; Lieut. Swiney; Mr. Lee, Master; Mr. Mathias, Boatswain, badly; Mr. Lacky, Master's Mate; Mr. Nailor, Midshipman.—41 Seamen; 9 Marines.—Total: 7 Officers, 41 Seamen, 9 Marines, wounded.

* This gentleman was the younger Son of the ancient Family of Downes, of Shrigley, in Cheshire. He was only in his 20th year, but had served in the most active scenes during the whole of the War, with the highest honour to himself, the most distinguished approbation of his commanding Officers, and the universal esteem of his Comrades. Towards the conclusion of the defence of the *Leander*, he received a fatal shot, of the wound from which he lingered, with the greatest resignation, till the following morning.—*Ed.*

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The circumstance of their being taken Prisoners was not the only inconvenience which Captain Thompson and his Officers sustained; for no sooner had they arrived on board of le *Geneux* than they were plundered of every article belonging to them, excepting the clothes which they wore. They expostulated with the French Captain on the harshness of this treatment, but their remonstrances were in vain; and when they reminded him of the situation of the French Officers who had been made Prisoners by Admiral Nelson, in comparison with those now taken in the *Leander*, he coolly replied:—“*J'en suis fâché, mais le fait est, que les François sont bons au pillage**.” Captain Berry expressed a wish to have a pair of pistols returned to him, of which he had been plundered. On their being produced, however, by the Man who took them, the French Captain immediately secured them for himself, telling Captain Berry that he would give him a pair of French pistols to protect him on his journey home. It is proper to add, that the promise was never performed.

Various other acts of cruelty were experienced by Captain Thompson and his gallant Crew, from these worshippers of liberty and equality, which would have disgraced a *Bombay Corsair*, or an *American Savage*. Their inhumanity was even carried to such an extreme, that, at the very moment when the Surgeon of the *Leander* was performing the surgical operations, he was robbed of his instruments; and the wound which Captain Thompson had received was nearly proving fatal by their forcibly withholding the attendance of his Surgeon. The barbarous treatment inflicted on these brave Men was continued even after their arrival at *Corfu*, as is evident from the following letter on this subject, addressed by Mr. Stanley, the British Consul at *Trieste*, to the Lords of the Admiralty:—

MY LORDS,

Trieste, 3d December, 1798.

Thirty Seamen of the *Leander*, which was taken and carried into *Corfu*, arrived here from that Island the 20th ult. : these poor Men were forced away in three small inconvenient Vessels, ten in

* I am sorry for it; but the fact is, that the French are expert at plunder.