

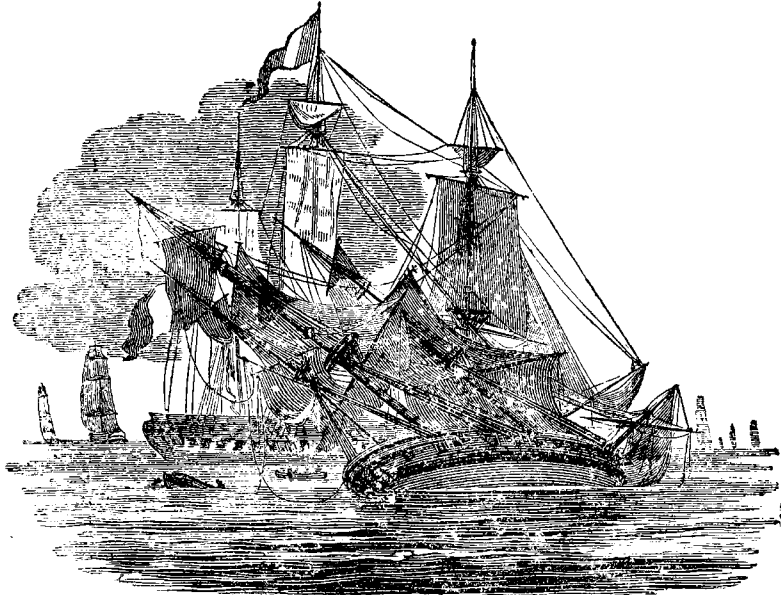
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Situation of the *Arrow* * when sinking. Engraved by NESBIT, from a drawing by N. Pocock, Esq.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF
SIR JOHN THOMAS DUCKWORTH, K.B.
 VICE-ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE SQUADRON.

“ FIRM ARE THE SONS THAT BRITAIN LEADS
 TO COMBAT ON THE MAIN.” PYE.

VICE-ADMIRAL Sir John Thomas Duckworth is one of those brave officers whose professional services have shed such lustre on the maritime county of Devon.

Sir John is the descendant of an ancient and highly respectable, though not opulent, family in that county. His father was a clergyman, whose living, as is too frequently the case with the undignified part of the profession, was not very productive; but who, by means of a strict economy, was enabled to provide for his family, and to live in a respectable manner. Being extremely well qualified for such a task, he educated the subject of this memoir, and fitted him for the service to which he has since done so much honour.

* See Naval Chronicle, Vol. XVII. page 281,
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The first account which we find of our young seaman is, while he was serving as a Midshipman on board of the *Kent*, of 74 guns, Captain Charles Fielding. He was in that ship when her aftermost magazine blew up, on the 4th of July, 1774. While saluting the Admiral, as she was sailing out of Plymouth Sound, the wadding from the guns of the *Kent* communicated with some powder in an ammunition-chest on the poop, which instantly took fire, and blew up all that part of the ship. The beams of the quarter-deck were forced in; and many others, in different parts, were much shattered and broken. By this distressing accident, almost all the men on the poop, and after-part of the ship, were blown overboard, and about fifty of them were killed and dreadfully wounded.

Mr. Duckworth, we believe, remained in the *Kent* till the beginning of the year 1776, when he accompanied Captain Fielding into the *Diamond* frigate, of 32 guns, and sailed with him to America, for the purpose of convoying a large detachment of British and foreign troops.—He continued with Captain Fielding, in America, until the spring of 1779, during a part of which time that officer was Commander in Chief at Halifax. Under his auspices, he acquired much professional knowledge; and, in fact, became a thorough seaman.*

* Captain Fielding was the second son of Charles, the third son of Basil Fielding, fourth Earl of Denbigh, and third Earl of Desmond, in the Kingdom of Ireland, by his lady, Hester, daughter of Sir Basil Firebrass, Knight and Baronet. He was made Post, in the *Flamborough*, of 20 guns, on the 27th of August, 1760. In 1762, he commanded the *Unicorn*, of 28 guns; and, in 1770, the *Achilles*, of 60 guns, under Vice-Admiral Geary, then Port-Admiral at Portsmouth. (*Vide NAVAL CHRONICLE*, Vol. XVII. page 185.) As soon as the prospect of a rupture with Spain had passed away, he was removed into the *Rainbow*, of 44 guns, a ship then equipping for service at Chatham, where he remained nearly two years. He next commanded the *Kent*, a guard-ship, at Plymouth, in which he continued for the period usually allotted to such service. Early in 1776, as we have already seen, he went to America, in the *Diamond*. At the end of 1779, after his return to England, he was appointed to the *Namur*, of 90 guns; and was sent out, on a Channel cruise, as commanding officer of a small squadron, consisting of six ships of the line, one of 50 guns, and five frigates, or sloops of war, for the purpose of intercepting a Dutch merchant fleet, and its convoy, reported to be laden with naval stores, and bound to

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On the 15th of March, 1779, Mr. Duckworth was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, in the *Princess Royal*, of 98 guns, then Vice-Admiral Byron's flag-ship, on the West India station. He was consequently present, during the action with Count d'Estaing, off Grenada, on the 6th of July following.— At the beginning of July, the Vice-Admiral had received intelligence, that the French fleet, in very great force, had been discovered from St. Vincent's. He immediately put to sea in pursuit of them; and, on his passage to Grenada, he was informed that that island was attacked by a force not exceeding nineteen ships of the line. On the 6th of the month, having arrived off St. George's Bay, where the enemy lay at anchor, immediate measures were taken to bring them to a close and decisive action. The French fleet, however, when completely formed, was found to consist of twenty-seven ships of the line, instead of nineteen. Notwithstanding this great superiority, (the whole of the English force amounting to only twenty-one sail, seven or eight of which were of 64 guns, while very few of the French ships carried less than 74) M. d'Estaing most industriously avoided a close action; a circumstance in which he was favoured, from his ships being all clean, and in general faster sailers than the English. The encounter, of course, produced nothing decisive, though an immense number of lives was sacrificed. The English had 183 killed, and 346 wounded.

some of the enemy's ports. This service was satisfactorily performed.— Captain Fielding was soon afterwards removed into the *Minerva*, a new frigate, of 38 guns, supposed at that time to be the finest vessel of her class in the British navy. In the *Minerva*, in March 1781, he accompanied Vice-Admiral Darby to the relief of Gibraltar. Towards the close of that year he was some time out of commission, till the *Ganges*, of 74 guns, one of the ships presented to Government by the East India Company, was launched. Early in 1782 he was appointed to that ship; and, in the month of September, proceeded in her, with Lord Howe, to relieve Gibraltar. In the skirmish which took place with the combined fleets, on the 20th of October following, Captain Fielding had the misfortune to be wounded in the arm by a splinter. The hurt was apparently slight, and no ill consequences whatever were thought likely to ensue; but, owing to a bad habit of body, the wound unfortunately turned to a gangrene, which terminated his life in a few weeks after his return to England.

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while the loss of the French, at the lowest estimate, was 2,700, of which the slain amounted to 1,200. This vast slaughter was attributed to the great number of troops, which were crowded on board the ships.*

The Princess Royal, although the loss which she sustained was not so extensive as that of some of the other ships, was very

* As an illustration of Naval History, we here subjoin a list of Vice-Admiral Byron's fleet, in the engagement with Count d'Estaing, on the 6th of July, 1779:—

<i>Ships.</i>	<i>Guns.</i>	<i>Commanders.</i>	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>
Princess Royal	98	{ Vice-Admiral Byron } { Captain Blair }	3	6
Albion	74	——— George Boyer	0	2
Prince of Wales	74	{ Rear-Admiral Barrington } { Captain Hill }	26	46
Medway	60	——— Wm. Affleck	0	4
Suffolk	74	{ Commodore Rowley } { Captain Christian }	7	25
Conqueror	74	{ Rear Admiral H. Parker } { Captain Harwood }	0	0
Magnificent	74	——— Elphinstone	8	11
Boyne	74	——— Sawyer	12	30
Sultan	74	——— Gardner	16	39
Grafton (much damaged)	74	——— Collingwood	35	63
Lion (lost all her masts)	64	——— Cornwallis	21	31
Cornwall	74	——— T. Edwards	16	27
Fame	74	——— Barber	4	9
Vigilant	64	——— Sir D. Dent	0	0
Trident	64	——— Molloy	3	6
Royal Oak	74	——— T. Burnet	4	12
Elizabeth	74	——— Maitland	1	2
Yarmouth	64	——— F. Parry	0	0
Stirling Castle	64	——— Carket	2	6
Monmouth	64	——— Fanshaw	5	28
Nonsuch	64	——— W. Griffith	0	0

Ariadne, 20 guns, Captain Pringle, to repeat signals.

OFFICERS KILLED.

Lieutenant Bowen Parry, of the Royal Oak.
 ——— John Hutchins, of the Grafton.
 ——— John Veale, of the Sultan.
 Mr. Nicholas Bowen, Gunner, of the Grafton.

OFFICERS WOUNDED

Vice-Admiral Barrington.
 Lieutenant Breti, of the Grafton.
 ——— Richards (Marines) of the Royal Oak.
 ——— Caldwell (do.) of the Sultan.
 ——— Bowdens, (do.) of the Magnificent.

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warmly engaged; and, in the course of the action, a piece of a black man's skull (Peter Allen's) was forced by a cannon ball against the breast of Lieutenant Duckworth, while all his clothes were literally covered with the brains.

Mr. Duckworth afterwards proceeded to St. Christopher's, with Vice-Admiral Byron; and, on the 16th of July (1779) he was made Master and Commander in the Rover sloop, remaining on the same station. While there, he was accustomed to cruise off Martinique, and to look into Fort Royal harbour every day.

Captain Duckworth's promotion appears to have been unusually rapid; as, on the 16th of June, 1780, he was made Post, in the *Terrible*, of 74 guns. From the *Terrible* he was very speedily removed, and appointed Captain of his old ship, the *Princess Royal*, then destined for the flag of Rear-Admiral Rowley. He conducted her to Jamaica, where he remained until the month of February, 1781, when he returned to England, in the *Grafton*, of 74 guns, with a convoy.

His passage home was long and tempestuous; a circumstance which served to display his humanity in a very conspicuous and honourable point of view. The crew of the *Grafton* being extremely sickly, Captain Duckworth was in the daily habit of sending his fresh meat and wine to the invalids; and we have been assured, that, if any thing else were brought into the cabin, he would not taste it until those on the Doctor's list had been first served. Thus he lived chiefly on such salted provisions as are usually served out to the men.

It will be recollected that, soon after this period, a peace took place, which lasted until the breaking out of what we have denominated the War of the Revolution, in 1793. Captain Duckworth, who had been all the time out of commission, then found immediate employment, by being appointed to the *Orion*, of 74 guns. This ship was attached to the Channel fleet, under the orders of Earl Howe; and, consequently, Captain Duckworth was in the three memorable actions of the 28th and 29th of May, and 1st of June, 1794.

Into the particulars of those engagements, so glorious to the

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English name and nation, it is here unnecessary for us to enter; having already fully detailed them, in our respective memoirs of Earl Howe, Lord Gardner, Lord Bridport, Sir Thomas Paisley, Sir Roger Curtis; the Admirals Berkeley, Payne, Caldwell, Bazely, and Demett; the late Captain Harvey, &c.* —In the first volume of our Chronicle † also appears an interesting article, under the head—“*Proceedings of His Majesty’s Ship the Orion, John Thomas Duckworth, Esq. Commander, and his Observations during the Actions of the 28th and 29th of May, and 1st of June, 1794.*”—To this it is only requisite to add, that, on the present occasion, the Orion had 5 men killed, and 24 wounded; that Captain Duckworth was one of the eighteen Commanders, who were *especially* distinguished by Lord Howe, in his official despatches, as *having particular claim to his Lordship’s attention*; that, consequently, he was honoured with a gold medal and ribbon; and that, in common with the other officers of the fleet, he received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament.

Having been refitted at Plymouth, the Orion sailed from St. Helen’s, on the 3d of September following, with the fleet under Earl Howe, on a cruise in the Bay. She continued in that service during the whole of the winter, occasionally returning to Spithead, Torbay, and Plymouth, to refit and water.

Early in January, 1795, accounts were received by Government, that a French fleet, consisting of thirty-two sail of the line, and several frigates, had escaped from Brest. On the 14th of the ensuing month, Captain Duckworth accompanied Lord Howe from Torbay, with the Channel fleet, which was joined the next day off Plymouth, by Rear-Admiral Parker, and a squadron of Portuguese ships of war.—The French, however, having sustained considerable damage in a heavy gale of wind, in which le Revolutionaire, one of their three-deckers, foun-

* *Vide* NAVAL CHRONICLE, Vol. I. page 1; Vol. VIII. page 177; Vol. I. page 265; Vol. IV. page 349; Vol. VI. page 261; Vol. XII. page 89; Vol. III. page 1; Vol. XI. page 1; Vol. XIV. page 177; Vol. XV. page 1; Vol. III. page 211; &c.

† Page 293.

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dered, were obliged to return into Brest; and Lord Howe, after seeing the East and West India convoys safe out of the Channel, and ascertaining that the enemy's fleet was actually in port, came back to Spithead.

This, we believe, was the last cruise which Captain Duckworth had in the *Orion*, and with the Channel fleet.*

On the 25th of March, in the same year, he sailed in the *Leviathan*, of 74 guns, with the squadron under the command of Rear-Admiral Mann, for the Mediterranean; but parted company off Cape Finisterre, and, with the *Hannibal* and *Swiftsure*, proceeded with a convoy to the West Indies.

Captain Duckworth remained a considerable time at Jamaica; and, on the 22d of March, 1796, he was employed, under Rear-Admiral William Parker, with the following squadron, in an unsuccessful attack on the town of Leogane, at St. Domingo:—

<i>Ships.</i>	<i>Guns.</i>	<i>Commanders.</i>
Swiftsure	74	{ Wm. Parker, Esq. Rear-Admiral of the Red. Captain R. Parker.
Leviathan	74	—— J. T. Duckworth.
Africa	64	—— Rod. Home.
Iphigenia	32	—— F. F. Gardner.
Ceres	32	—— J. Newman.
Lark	16	—— W. Ogilvy.
Cormorant	26	—— F. Collingwood.
Serin	16	—— D. Guerin.

The ships which covered the landing, and brought up against the enemy's batteries, lost some men. The *Leviathan* had 5 killed, and 12 wounded; and the *Africa*, 1 killed, and 1 wounded.

In the month of August, 1796, Captain Duckworth hoisted his broad pendant, in the *Leviathan*; † and, as he was much employed in cruising, he participated in the capture of a great number of the enemy's privateers and merchant vessels.

* Sir James Saumarez succeeded Captain Duckworth in the command of the *Orion*.

† Captain J. Bingham was appointed to serve under him.

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In 1797, he returned to England; in the early part of 1798, he was employed in the Channel fleet, under the command of Admiral Lord Bridport; and, in the month of August following, having joined Earl St. Vincent, in the Mediterranean, he again hoisted his broad pendant in his old ship, the *Leviathan*.*

The reduction of Minorca being deemed an object of considerable importance, Commodore Duckworth was, about this time, appointed to the command of the following squadron, for the purpose of effecting it:—

<i>Ships.</i>	<i>Guns.</i>	<i>Commanders.</i>
<i>Leviathan</i>	74	{ J. T. Duckworth, Esq. Commodore. Captain H. Digby.
<i>Centaur</i>	74	——— John Markham.
<i>Argo</i>	44	——— J. Bowen.
<i>Aurora</i>	28	——— J. G. Caulfield.
<i>Cormorant</i>	20	——— Lord Mark Kerr.
<i>Calcutta, armed } frigate..... }</i>	24	——— R. Plouden.
<i>Coromandel, do.</i>	24	——— R. Pressland.
<i>Ulysses, do....</i>	24	Lieutenant W. Simmonds.
<i>Petterel</i>	16	
<i>Constitution, } cutter..... }</i>	14	——— Whisten.

With this force, accompanied by the late General Stuart brother to the Marquis of Bute, as Commander of the troops, Commodore Duckworth arrived off Minorca, on the 9th of November. He immediately landed a body of troops at Addaya Creek, near Fournella, without opposition from the enemy, who blew up their magazines, spiked their guns, and evacuated the fort. The troops proceeded on their march to Mercadal; which they entered without resistance, the enemy having retired to Cindadella, and thence to Mahon; the squadron, in the mean time, blocking up the different bays and creeks, to prevent supplies being thrown into the island, from Majorca.—In the course of the same day, a detachment of 300 men, under the command of the Hon. Colonel Paget, arrived

On this occasion, H. Digby, Esq. was the Captain under him,

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at Mahon, and compelled Fort Charles to surrender; by which the Colonel was enabled to remove the boom which obstructed the entrance of the harbour, and to open a free passage for the *Aurora* and *Cormorant*, which Commodore Duckworth had ordered upon that service.

On the evening of the 12th, four Spanish frigates* were observed standing over from the island of Majorca; on the receipt of which intelligence, the Commodore instantly put to sea, with the *Leviathan*, *Centaur*, *Argo*, *Calcutta* *Ulysses*, and *Cromandel*, in quest of them. At day-break the next morning, five sail were seen standing for Cindadella, and the signal was made for a general chase; but the enemy observed it, and immediately hauled their wind for Majorca. The pursuit was continued, with little wind, till eleven at night, by which time the Commodore had arrived within three miles of the sternmost frigate; but, fearful lest he might be drawn too far from Minorca, he directed Captain Markham, in the *Centaur*, to pursue the enemy, and returned off Cindadella, to co-operate with the army, if necessary. On his arrival off that place, he received the agreeable intelligence from General Stuart, that the whole island had surrendered to His Majesty's arms, by capitulation, on the 15th.

On the same morning, Commodore Duckworth was joined by the *Argo*, Captain Bowen, who, in the chase on the 13th, had re-captured the *Peterel*, which had been taken on the preceding day by the Spanish frigates.—Captain Markham also rejoined the Commodore, but without having had the good fortune to come up with the enemy.

During the proceedings at Minorca, a detachment of 150 seamen was landed, to assist and to co-operate with the army, under the direction of Captain Bowen; but, other essential service rendering it necessary that that officer should return to his ship, the command of the seamen devolved on Mr. William Buchanan, the second Lieutenant of the *Leviathan*, whose

* The *Flora*, *Casilda*, *Pomona*, and *Proserpine*, of 40 guns each.

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general conduct on the occasion was entitled to much praise. Indeed, all the captains, officers, seamen, and marines, who were employed, either on shore, or in covering the landing of the troops and military stores, displayed the greatest zeal and activity.

Thus the conquest of Minorca was effected, without the loss of a single man; although the Spanish troops, including officers, amounted to between three and four thousand; and had the means, in every respect, of making a stout resistance.—A great quantity of ordnance and military stores was taken in the forts. In the arsenal, at Mahon, was found abundance of naval stores; the keel and stern-frame of a man of war brig on the stocks, with her timbers, part of her stores, rigging, &c. fourteen gun-boats, hauled up, with all their rigging complete; and thirteen other large boats, from twenty to thirty-six feet keel, with their rigging in good order, and fit for service. Two large merchant ships, a zebeck, and four tartans, were taken in the harbour.†

Whilst Commodore Duckworth remained in this quarter, he also captured several merchant vessels, some of which were of considerable value.

His presence being no longer necessary at Minorca, he returned to the Mediterranean, where he continued till the

* As a proof of the sense which General Stuart entertained of the meritorious behaviour of Lieutenant Buchannan, and his party, he sent the following letter:—

“ SIR,

Before Ciudadella, Nov. 18, 1798.

“ I have the honour to return you, and the gentlemen employed on shore under your command, my sincere thanks for your activity, zeal, and assistance in forwarding the light artillery of the army; neither can too much praise be given to the seamen for their friendly and cheerful exertions under very hard labour—exertions which were accompanied with a propriety of behaviour which I greatly attribute to your management, and which will ever merit my acknowledgments, and affords me the satisfaction of assuring you, that I am, with sincere regard,

Yours, &c.

Lieutenant Buchannan.

CHARLES STUART.

† *Vide NAVAL CHRONICLE, Vol. I. pages 78 and 336.*