

this place anchored in the afternoon of the 16th instant.

The same evening I received a letter (No. 1) from the Political Agent, informing me that all negotiation on his part had failed, and that hostilities had already commenced.

On receipt of this letter, I communicated with Major Baillie, the Officer commanding the troops, and we determined to lose no time in attacking the place.

The 17th was spent in drawing up the plan of the attack, and in making the necessary preparations.

On the morning of the 18th, I weighed with the squadron* to proceed to the front of the town, which I reached in the afternoon, in company with the Cruizer (towing a mortar boat) and Mahé schooner.

On standing in towards the island of Seerah, a fire was opened on the ship with musketry and several large guns, when I commenced a partial attack. The Coote (corvette) and transports not having come up, I hauled off and anchored for the night.

On the morning of the 19th, the whole force having arrived, I made the signal to prepare to attack, and the troops to be held in readiness for landing in two divisions; at half past nine the Volage anchored, with a spring on her small bower cable, in four fathoms water, at about three hundred yards distance from the lower battery on the island of Seerah, at the same time the Mahé took up her position to the southward of the island.

On standing in, the enemy opened a fire of great guns and musquetry on us, but the ship being laid so close to the shore, the guns on the heights were rendered useless, their shot passing over us.

At ten the Cruizer anchored, and was of essential service in destroying the flank of the battery. During this period a heavy firing was kept up, but in a short time two of the guns in the lower battery were dismantled, and most of the people were driven from the remainder, they, however, took shelter behind the ruins of the battery, and kept up an incessant fire of musquetry on the ships, and although the lower battery was almost knocked to pieces, still we had great difficulty in dislodging the men.

At this period I directed the fire to be opened on the round tower and batteries on the heights, which were filled with men armed with matchlocks, and in the course of one hour I had the satisfaction to see this tower (though sixty feet high, and strongly built), a mass of ruins.

At eleven the Coote anchored to the southward of the island, and opened her fire upon the town.

Finding the firing had not ceased from the lower battery, I directed the Mahé schooner to proceed to the end of it, and endeavour to drive out the men from behind it, by musquetry; this service was performed by her commander, Lieutenant Daniels, in a most gallant manner, but I regret to say that Mr. Nesbitt, midshipman, was severely wounded.

* Her Majesty's ships Volage and Cruizer; Honourable Company's ships Coote and Mahé; Transports, Lowjee Family, Ernaad, and Ann-Crichton.

The firing having now almost totally ceased, I gave directions for the boats of both divisions to land. Lieutenant Dobree, who had charge of the first division, Mr. Rundle, mate, and a quarter master of this ship, were the first on shore, and made for a sixty-eight pounder which had been fired at us several times, when a matchlock was fired at the quarter master by a man behind the gun, who was immediately cut down by him, and the first British flag was planted by Mr. Rundle.

So completely were the enemy driven from all points (with the exception of the island), by the fire of the ships, that the whole of the troops landed with the loss of only two men killed, and three wounded.

A partial firing was still kept up from the island, when I directed Lieutenant Dobree (who had returned), with two mates (Messrs. Stewart and Rundle), with a party of seamen, and Lieutenant Ayles with the marines, amounting altogether to fifty, to land and take possession of it; this was gallantly accomplished, the party ascending the heights, spiking and dismounting the guns, taking the flag which had been flying from the tower, and making prisoners of one hundred and thirty-nine armed Arabs, who were conducted from the island to the main by the party, and given over into the charge of Major Osborne. In an attempt to disarm the prisoners (made by the military), they made a most formidable resistance, and I regret to say that several lives were lost on both sides.

Mr. Nesbitt, a midshipman of the Mahé, was the only person hurt on board the squadron, and on the part of the military, sixteen were killed and wounded, most of them dangerously, and one serjeant has since died.

The enemy's guns were served badly and fired irregularly, they appearing to have most confidence in their matchlocks; and there can be no doubt that if it had not been for the total destruction of their defences by the squadron, the troops would not have been able to have accomplished their landing without a very severe loss.

I have not been able to ascertain the number of armed men that defended the town, but from what I can learn there must have been upwards of one thousand; nor can I come at the exact number that were killed or wounded, twenty-five dead bodies were found on the island of Seerah alone, several in the town, and this moment there are twenty-five wounded lying in the Mosque, amongst whom is the Sultan's nephew, who defended the island.

I beg to recommend to your notice the gallant conduct services of Lieutenant Dobree and Messrs. Stewart and Rundle (Mates); nor can I omit mentioning the assistance I received from Captain Hains, the Political Agent, who, from his local knowledge, piloted the ship in, which enabled me to take up so effective a position.

I herewith transmit to your Excellency a plan of the attack (No. 2), and a list of the ordnance stores (No. 3) captured.

Lieutenant Dobree is now employed with a party of men in endeavouring to get off the three large brass Turkish guns, which it is the wish of the captors should be presented to Her Most Gracious Majesty.