

determined to resist and give battle, being in great numbers, and apparently using their exertions to strengthen their position.

Upon reconnoitring, I found the village situated in a plain, at the base of a high peak, and in the midst of an extensive cocoa-nut grove.

A very strong and ingeniously constructed stockade surrounded it, with a large deep dike, and an entrenchment, breast high, thrown up within, evidently for the occasion.

The stockade was formed of heavy piles of cocoa-tree firmly driven in, and strengthened by a closely interwoven barrier of bamboo, rendering the whole almost impervious to a rifle-ball; it was of quadrangular form, with a small opening at three of the angles.

My first intention was to surround the stockade, and advance upon it simultaneously, under a fire, but was prevented, from the fear of sustaining serious injury from our own cross-fire. I concluded to assail it from three points, having the advantage of confining the natives to a small space for escape, and that in the direction of the sea, near at hand.

After a short attack, in which the chief and six men were killed, resistance ceased, when I withdrew to a short distance to replenish the cartridge-boxes, examine the arms, &c.

While thus engaged, I directed a party to fire the town, which was executed, and the entire destruction followed, together with much of the property. I completed the work of destruction by setting fire to and destroying the canoes, &c.

The officers and men evinced that zeal and energy to be expected from those despatched upon the melancholy duty of avenging the death of our comrades, and in the chastisement necessary to be inflicted under the circumstances.

I am happy to report having sustained no injury beyond a few slight wounds from arrows and spears, although many fire-arms were used by the natives in their resistance.

I then spread the divisions again, and hastened on with a desire to scour the remainder of the isle, cross the mountains, and descend upon the opposite village. Upon reaching the summit of the ridge dividing the isle, I perceived from the smoking plain below, I had been anticipated.

I descended the plain, where I joined you, and at 8 p. m. had reached the Porpoise with the force, all in good order.

I am, very respectfully, &c.,

C. RINGGOLD,

Lieutenant-Commandant.

CHARLES WILKES, Esq.,

Commanding Exploring Expedition.