

inhabitants were most anxious for arms) comparatively open. We were also informed that the chief storehouses were situated close to the sea,—that a breach might be made in the outer wall, and immediate access obtained to them.

I therefore directed some large bags of powder, with hores and fuzes, to be prepared, and ordered the Carysfort and Zebra to anchor close off it, which they did within five hundred yards. Four successive deserters from the enemy's cavalry (each arriving on different days) stated there were *no soldiers* quartered in Tortosa; but a party was regularly sent down every night to bring away sufficient provisions for their different detachments, and the last deserter who left Tortosa, so late as the night of the 24th, stated confidently that there was not then a soldier in it,—that even had any come in after his departure, they could only be dismounted cavalry, with short carbines,—that a sort of council of war had been held to days before, when it was resolved,—that, *as they had no infantry*, cavalry alone could not protect it, and that they must get camels, &c. to remove the stores from it as speedily as possible: and he offered, if we would give him an axe, to land with a single boat's crew, and break the corn store door open; and the three other deserters likewise offered to go.

This determined me to make an attempt either to take the town, or at least to destroy the stores, and the following plan of operations was decided upon. The boats to rendezvous on board the Carysfort, and she and the Zebra to cannonade the walls, and especially a large built-up archway in the centre, until sufficiently opened for entrance. Lieutenant Charlewood being prepared with the necessary means for blowing up stores, buildings, &c., and accompanied by Mr. Turner, gunner of this ship, with eight steady men as pioneers to land in the cutter, and be immediately followed by the portion of marines at present on board the Benbow, together with those of the Zebra; and twenty seamen of the Benbow, under Lieutenants Maitland, R.N., and Harrison, R.M., and that all the boats (after the disembarkation) under the command of Lieutenant Stevens, of the Carysfort, should lay off, prepared to cover the landing party with their guns and small arms, and to re-embark them.

The space from the margin of the sea to the breach, does not exceed sixteen yards. We could perceive only a few loopholes commanding that spot, and I concluded, that even should a fire be opened from them, the advance from the boats would be too rapid to admit of its being effective,—and that, being once within the breach, our men would easily make good their way.

Accordingly yesterday, at one, fifteen P.M. the Carysfort and Zebra commenced an admirably well-directed fire, and very soon opened the archway, and showed us a large clear space within, and the boats shoved off. The beach under the town appeared so smooth and deep, and so similar to all the other parts where we had landed, that a doubt of the heavy boats being able to reach it never presented itself until they went in, when a ledge of rocks or ancient building was found to extend itself across at some distance from the shore, with such deep water inside, that no man could land, and keep his ammunition dry, only the light boats, of which there were but two, could pass

over it. Thus the marines (in the launch barge, and two pinnaces) were unable to land; had they done so, I feel confident that we should have completely succeeded in destroying the magazines of provisions, and have driven the enemy out of the vaults, and even from the town, although not without loss, as subsequent intelligence has reached me, that two hundred infantry (from the northward) and one hundred dismounted cavalry, had entered the town *the same morning*, three hours before daylight. Lieutenant Charlewood being in the cutters with the pioneer's powder, and the three deserters as guides, landed at once, and proceeded towards the breach, and had nearly reached it before a shot was fired, but the moment the large boats touched the rocks, they became exposed to a destructive fire from every minute loop and crevice, and even from the holes which our cannon shot had just made. Lieutenant Maitland succeeded in getting about fourteen of his men with himself, landed by another turn of the same cutter, and my only reason for not instantly recalling the boats when the fire opened was, that I could not know what these officers were doing inside, and I entertained great hopes that they might be able to find out, and blow up the provision stores, and thus effect our principal object. The guides who had landed, fled back to the boats at the commencement of the firing, but they are now all on board, and free from any suspicion of treachery. Lieutenant Charlewood, proceeding with his pioneers, broke open several stores, and at length reached one filled with rice, and another with corn, when he immediately ran back to inform Lieutenant Maitland, and get more hands forward. Unfortunately, during his momentary absence, his men had hewn open another door, when, to their surprise, they found it entered upon a place filled with *infantry* soldiers, a struggle ensued. Two soldiers were killed by the three pioneers, but having nothing but axes, they were obliged to give way, but Mr. Charlewood's return checked the enemy's advance, and they never followed him.

Becoming anxious at the delay, and seeing Lieutenant Maitland still in the breach, I hastened in my gig, and hailing that officer, I learnt from him that there was no longer any prospect of success, his ammunition being expended, and much of that of the marines wet (from the attempt to get out) and I immediately ordered all to retire, and succeeded in getting every man off. Lieutenant Charlewood even bringing his exploding apparatus away.

It is now my duty to allude to a more grateful theme—the merits of the officers and men employed, where *all* did their duty, it is a difficult and somewhat delicate task to particularize, but I should be very unjust did I not bear my cordial testimony to the very gallant conduct of Lieutenants Maitland and Charlewood, the latter officer was the first man on shore, and one of the very last off, and his quiet determined resolution, was the theme of praise with every person.

I annex a list of the boats employed, with the names of the officers commanding them, together with a return of the casualties in each boat. The first cutter being a light boat was extremely serviceable, and much and constantly exposed. Mr. J. C.