

North Fort. The Opossum, under Captain Willes, was placed in advance, close up to the Stakes and the Forester, and Haughty in reserve, in rear of the line, the former having directions to move up into the Plover's position, should that vessel advance in support of the Opossum.

The vessels on the right were under the directions of Captain C. F. A. Shadwell; those on the left under Captain N. Vansittart. The strength of the tide and the narrowness of the channel (about 200 yards) had rendered it a matter of extreme difficulty to take up the position above detailed; and the Banterer and Starling, the vessels on the extreme right and left of the line, had both taken the ground, the former, however, in a good position, the latter in one which incapacitated her from taking much share in the action.

At 2 P.M., I directed the Opossum to open a passage through the first barrier, which being effected by 2:30, she moved up to the second barrier, supported by the Plover, closely followed by the Lee and Haughty, which vessels I ordered in for that purpose.

On the arrival of the Opossum at the second barrier, the forts opened a simultaneous fire of not less than between thirty and forty guns, of calibres from 32-pounders to 8-inch, on which I directed the ships to engage. The Plover took up a position close to the barrier. The Opossum, Lee, and Haughty, in succession, astern of her.

At 3 P.M.,\* finding that the ships inside the barrier, especially the Plover and Opossum, were becoming disabled by the enemy's fire, they were dropped out into fresh positions outside of it, where, having received assistance in men, they renewed the action.

In consequence of the Plover's disabled state, I shifted my flag to the Cormorant; and at 4:20 a severe wound I had received about an hour previously compelled me to call Captain Shadwell on board the Cormorant, and entrust to him the more immediate command of the squadron.

At 5:40 the Kestrel sunk in her position; and it became necessary to put the Lee on the ground to avoid the like result.

At 6:30 the fire from the north forts ceased altogether, and half an hour later that on the south side was silenced, with the exception of that proceeding from one gun in the outer or south bastion, one in the curtain on each side of it, and one in the flank of the centre bastion, also one in the detached fort to the south.

At 7:20 a landing was effected opposite the outer bastion of the south fort, the portion which appeared most injured by the fire of the squadron, and where the attack could be best supported by the guns of the vessels. The force consisted of a detachment of Sappers and Miners, under Major Fisher, Royal Engineers; a brigade of Marines, under Colonel Thomas Lemon; a division of Seamen, under Captain Vansittart, assisted by Commanders John E. Commerell and W. A. J. Heath, the whole under Captain Shadwell's direction, accompanied by a small detachment of French Seamen, under the command of Commandant Tricault.

They were encountered by a heavy fire proceeding from those guns I have already named as not completely silenced, as well as from gingalls and rifles; but notwithstanding these and other serious obstacles presented by the character of the ground to be crossed, and the nature of the defences, 150 officers and men having reached the second ditch, and about 50 having arrived close

\* At this time, Lieutenant Rason, of the Plover, was killed, and I placed Lieutenant George A. Douglas, my Flag Lieutenant, in temporary command of her.

under the walls, had the opposition they experienced been that usual in Chinese warfare, there is little doubt that the place would have been successfully carried at the point of the bayonet.

Captains Shadwell and Vansittart and Colonel Lemon, R.M., having been disabled in the advance, the command in front devolved on Commander Commerell, who, after consultation with Majors Fisher, R.E., and Richard Parke, R.M., and Commandant Tricault, having reported to Captain Shadwell that they could hold their present position, but that it was impossible to storm without reinforcements, received from that officer the order to retire.

17. This operation was effected with a deliberation and coolness equal to the gallantry of the advance, under cover of the night, which had now closed in, the force being sent down to the boats by detachments, carrying the wounded with them, and eventually the whole were brought off by 1:30 A.M., of the 26th, Commanders Commerell and Heath being the last on shore.

18. I have already stated that the Lee and Kestrel had sunk in their positions from the effect of the enemy's fire; and I regret to add, that in proceeding down the river after the termination of the action, the Plover was grounded within range of the forts, and the Cormorant in endeavouring to remove, was also found to have taken the ground. Under these circumstances I desired the officers and men to be removed from them for the time, in order to obviate the loss which might occur, should the enemy be enabled to reopen their fire.

19. The Kestrel, I am happy to say, has since been recovered; but notwithstanding every exertion which was subsequently made, under the direction of Captain Willes, to recover the three other vessels, the Plover and Lee proved to be so hopelessly aground, that it was impossible to move them; while the Cormorant, which got afloat comparatively uninjured on the night of the 27th, was again unfortunately grounded, within range of the forts, on moving down; and on the following day such a heavy fire was opened on her, that although again afloat, she sank at her anchors, and the officers and men employed in removing her were withdrawn as she went down.

20. The fire of the enemy being remarkably well directed and sustained, occasioned the squadron considerable loss, amounting to 25 officers and men killed, and 93 wounded, of which 54 are slight. Amongst the former I have to regret the loss of Lieutenant W. H. Rason, commanding the Plover, a very promising young officer, and Captain Theo. M'Kenna of the 1st Royals, who was attached to me by the Major-General commanding the Forces in China.

21. In the subsequent attack on shore 64 officers and men were killed, and 252 wounded, of which 90 are slight. Amongst the former I have to regret the loss of Lieutenant A. Graves of the Assistance, Lieutenant C. H. Clutterbuck, and Mr. T. H. Herbert, Midshipman, both of this ship; of Lieutenant Hamilton Wolrige of the Royal Marine Brigade, and Lieutenant H. L. T. Inglis, Royal Marines, of the Highflyer, attached to the 2nd Battalion.

Amongst the severely wounded are—  
 Captain Shadwell, C.B., of Her Majesty's ship Highflyer.  
 Captain Vansittart, C.B., of Her Majesty's ship Magicienne.  
 Acting Lieutenant C. E. Buckle, of Her Majesty's ship Magicienne.  
 Mr. A. J. Burniston, Master of the Banterer.  
 Mr. N. B. Smith, Acting Mate of the Chesapeake.