

70 feet high, everywhere very steep, and in some places covered with high fern. The main road leading from St. George's Redoubt across the mouth of the river to the left of the enemy's position was known to be strongly defended by a line of rifle-pits half way up the left bank of the river, and as this road passed through a large patch of flax bushes when it reached the table land, it appeared difficult to force the position at that point.

I was informed by Mr. Bayley, a New Plymouth settler, that about 600 yards above the ford at the mouth of the river, there was another ford, and a track by which the left bank could be easily ascended. Higher up the river, on a commanding point about 600 yards to our left of this ford, and 400 yards from the bank of the river, the enemy had enclosed some whares with a kind of redoubt, consisting of a parapet and rifle pits, which appeared to be his principal work; and between this and the main road, the position was defended at various points by lines of rifle pits. A prisoner, captured a few days before, had reported that a kainga, or village, about a mile down the coast, was also entrenched.

The plan of attack which I considered best adapted to this state of things, was to pass the 57th Regiment across the river under cover of the guns at the last-mentioned ford, to detach the two leading parties of the "advance," as soon as they reached the top of the bank, to turn the rifle-pits and flax bushes at the road. The third party of the "advance" to extend to its front to protect this movement; and the main body of the Regiment to show a front to the left towards the redoubt, so as to keep the enemy in check. The remainder of the force (with the guns and mortars, if necessary) to cross the mouth of the river as soon as the defences of the road were turned, and to advance to support the main body of the 57th in the attack of the redoubt, and afterwards of the kainga.

These arrangements were successfully carried out. Soon after daybreak, having given all the instructions necessary to Col. Warre, C.B., of the 57th Regiment, and the officers commanding the three parties of the "advance," as well as to Captain Mercer, Royal Artillery, I directed Colonel Warre to move the 57th up the river, and to place it opposite the ford by which it was to cross. Captain Mercer followed with the three Armstrong guns, which he placed in a position little to the right of the 57th Regiment. I posted the detachment 65th and 70th Regiments, under the command of Major Mulock, in rear of St. George's Redoubt, ready to cross the river at any point when ordered. The 70th threw out a line of skirmishers to the edge of the bank of the river, to check any attempt the enemy might make to interfere with the passage. The 'Eclipse' stationed herself as close to the mouth of the river as her draught of water would permit.

At a quarter before 7 o'clock, everything being ready, and the preconcerted signal having been given, Captain Mercer's half battery, and the 'Eclipse' opened fire upon the enemy's position, throwing shell with great precision and effect, into his principal work. After a few rounds the 57th crossed the river, and ascending the left bank with some difficulty gained the plateau without opposition; the two leading parties then wheeled quickly to the right, without replying to the musketry fire opened upon them from the rifle pits in every part of the enemy's position, and under the immediate direction of Colonel Warre, moved rapidly to the rear of the rifle pits and flax bushes on the road, which the enemy hastily abandoned, retreating in the greatest confusion towards the kainga, closely pursued by the two parties. When I perceived these two parties turning the defences of the road, I moved the 65th and 70th across the mouth of the river, ascended the left bank without opposition, and pushed them on towards the redoubt, which from the heavy musketry fire and cheering of the 57th I inferred was being attacked by that Regt. The third party of the "advance" and the main body of the 57th, commanded (in the absence of Colonel Warre, who was with the two leading parties) by Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Logan, had after crossing the river obeyed the instructions they had received, but after replying for some time to a sharp musketry fire opened upon them from the redoubt and rifle pits near it, they assaulted the work with the bayonet, and entering it with a rush, shot down or bayoneted all who remained inside to defend it. I had the satisfaction of witnessing the gallantry of the 57th at this point, and the desperate resistance made by the enemy in their rifle pits. Major Mulock's column arrived at the spot before the contest was terminated, but their assistance was not required; and I moved them towards the kainga to support the two leading parties of the "advance," who were met returning after burning all the whares of the kainga, which had not been entrenched, as reported. The enemy had now been driven from every part of his position, and was seen from the 'Eclipse' in precipitate flight down the coast, which afforded her an opportunity of throwing a few shells among them.

Knowing that it was hopeless to attempt to overtake any of them, and being desirous that the troops should return to New Plymouth before dark, I withdrew them from the left bank of the Katikara, and ordered them to march back to the town, after a short rest. They reached New Plymouth about 5 p.m., and in the twenty hours of their absence had made a night march of 15 miles, had taken part in an action with the enemy, and had marched back the same distance without a straggler, although many had been on duty the previous night.

Our loss in this engagement was small, as will be seen in the return of the casualties herewith enclosed. Twenty-eight of the enemy were found dead inside the redoubt, and one on the road leading to the kainga, but it is probable that there were many more killed and wounded.

There can be no doubt that the enemy was taken completely by surprise, all the preparations for the march having been kept secret, and he was thrown into confusion by the suddenness and rapidity of the attack.

I cannot speak too highly of the conduct of all the officers and men present in this engagement, or of the conspicuous gallantry displayed by the 57th, on whom the brunt of the action fell. The movements of this Regiment were most ably directed by Colonel Warre, whose zeal and activity