

Arabic fluently. The night was bright starlight, but as the Island was very rugged, rocky and precipitous, we took lanterns with us, and ascended the hillside, leaving two blue-jackets to look after the boat. We had no arms. There was only about four feet of water in depth between the Island and the mainland, and the crossing was easily fordable.

On reaching the summit of the island, we found an old deserted (Saracen) fort. About this time we heard horns blowing all about the Arab village on the mainland, and concluded it must be a "feast day" amongst the natives. We were soon to be undeceived however, and to know the real meaning of the horn-blowing was the calling of the Tribe together. We prepared to take the star observations, and as our particular star would not pass its meridian until about half-past ten, our interpreter "Paolo" had brought a tea kettle with water, coffee and other ingredients, had lighted a fire against the wall of the old fort to boil the kettle, and we lay down on a little knoll close by to smoke and chat, until such time as the time for our observations would come on. We had not been there more than thirty or forty minutes, when all at once, without the least intimation by noise or otherwise, we heard surrounding us on all sides in the dark, the jabbering of natives, and the click, click, click, of muskets; at the same time Paolo, the interpreter, who was boiling the kettle, shouted at the top of his voice an unearthly howl in Arabic, gesticulated wildly to the crowd, and roared to us in English *to hold up our hands and show that we were unarmed*. This of course was quickly done, when the ragged, jabbering, wild mob of natives, about one hundred and fifty in all, trembling and excited, closed cautiously in on us, covering each of our party with dozens of muskets, as they approached. Here was a bewildering predicament for us, and although we had not time to think of what might happen, our feelings can better be imagined than described.