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FOREIGN OFFICE, September 22, 1863.

A DESPATCH, of which the following is an extract, from Major-General Brown, Commanding the British Troops in China, has been communicated to Lord Russell by the Secretary of State for War:—

“VARIOUS statements having appeared in the several journals published at Shanghai, concerning the treatment of rebel prisoners and alleged torture of some few taken at the capture of Taitsan, I have the honour to state that a report was made to me by Captain Murray, R.A., Commanding a Field Force in support of the attack on Taitsan, soon after his return to Head Quarters, of the Imperialists' cruel treatment of their prisoners.

“I took the report to Her Britannic Majesty's Consul (Harvey) without delay, and expressed my desire that the Foutai should be informed of the same, and to urge upon him to send out an order at once to all his Mandarins in command, forbidding any cruelty to be exercised upon captured prisoners; and further, if any report was again made to me of a similar nature, I would cease to act with his troops. Lieutenant R. Cane, R.A., who has been six years in China, and has some knowledge of the Chinese language and customs, was the first who reported the circumstance to Captain Murray, and the letter of the former Officer, called for by me for report, is here annexed, and details, I think, everything most clearly.

“I have no reason to believe otherwise than that the Foutai is equally anxious to be as humane as possible to his prisoners, some hundreds were lately captured at Quang-san, and so far from being cruelly or severely dealt with, have actually, to a great extent, been incorporated by Major Gordon into his own Regiment; and I have also asked for some to be sent down to me from Quang-san to be drilled with, and attached to, the batteries of Chinese artillery gun Lascars, which are under the command of the Officer Commanding Royal Artillery, who reports them most useful and efficient.

“Major Gordon was also lent by me some fifty of these drilled gun Lascars for his attack on Quang-san, and speaks most highly of them. I

have now only to draw attention to ‘eye witness’ statement, who would actually allow the public to believe that men undergoing extreme torture, such as he describes, with various wounds, from whence issued copious streams of blood, and could not only exist from 11 A.M. till sunset, but then to be able to be led out for execution, leaving one to suppose that he was present the whole time; whereas the editor, in his remarks on the bishop's letter, to remove any apprehension as to the non-influence of British Officers who were on the spot, states that the treatment the prisoners were undergoing was only discovered ten minutes before their execution. This alone, I submit, stamps the whole statement as highly coloured and greatly exaggerated.”

Inclosure.

SIR,

Shanghai, June 11, 1863.

In reply to the enquiry of the Major-General Commanding, I have the honour to inform you that on the 3d May 1863 I was present at Waikongsum, as Acting Field Adjutant to a Force under command of Captain A. Murray, Royal Artillery. In the afternoon of that day I was taking a walk for exercise, with several other Officers, along the main road towards Ko-lung-sung, and in passing between two Imperialists stockades our attention was attracted by a number of men, I think seven or eight, naked and tied to posts. On approaching I found they were Chang-man prisoners, all with very long hair (showing that they were rebels of long standing), and with the very peculiar complexion and physiognomy which have been frequently noticed as acquired by men who have spent much time among the Taepings.

These men had evidently been sentenced to the punishment of the “Ling-che,” or “slow and ignominious death,” what we call “cutting into a thousand pieces,” and it was also evident that they had been spared as much as possible, and little more than the form of this horrible punishment carried out. Each man had a piece of skin, not flesh, about four inches by two, partly stripped from one arm and hanging down, and one or two arrows had been pushed (apparently not shot) through the skin in different places. There was very little blood about the ground, and the men did not appear to be in pain, one was crying out

