

similar pursuits, who also entertain, in China, an incredible bias towards Taepingdom and its tenets. And because that secret leaning is suppressed and unavowed, let it not be supposed that it does not fully exist in their inmost hearts, patiently waiting for its open avowal and more patent vitality, when the times and circumstances may seem less generally averse to the Taepings and their cause. Let us earnestly hope, for the honour of Christianity, that those times and circumstances may never be seen. In truth, I must confess that what my mind cannot embrace, what my comprehension is still unable to grasp, is this morbid sympathy, on religious grounds, alleged to be entertained, by the parties in question, for those Taeping miscreants. I find it so difficult a task to appreciate or even to understand that sympathy, that I am almost forced sometimes to disbelieve in its real existence, mentally placing its incentive on quite a different basis; for instance, upon a pedestal more terrestrial than spiritual in its nature. Be that as it may, however, I feel fully convinced that if ever the Taeping chiefs are seriously informed of this compassionate and Christian regard for their principles, it will not fail to afford them the liveliest entertainment.

Apologising for the length of this despatch, and for having intruded so much upon your valuable time,

I have, &c.,

(Signed) FREDERICK HARVEY,
Her Majesty's Consul, Ningpo.

*Edmund Hammond, Esq.,
&c., &c., &c.,
Foreign Office.*

SIR, *Foreign Office, June 26, 1862.*

I ENCLOSE a copy of a letter to which Colonel Sykes has drawn my attention, as having been published in the "Overland Times of India," and which purports to contain an account by an eye-witness of atrocities perpetrated on Taeping prisoners, by the Imperialists at Shanghai. This statement is at once so horrible, and so revolting, as to be almost incredible; but I have to instruct you to report to me immediately whether there is any foundation for it.

And you will also report to me whether any similar cruelties have been committed by the Chinese within the district of your Consulate.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) RUSSELL.

*Mr. Consul Medhurst,
Shanghai.*

*British Consulate,
Shanghai, August 16, 1862.*

MY LORD,

I HAVE had the honour to receive your Lordship's despatch, dated the 26th June last, on the subject of a letter published in the "Times of India," of May 13, 1862.

The description quoted by the correspondent of the "Times of India" is, as far as I can ascertain, a fabrication, and must have been the production of a person whose grossness and mendacity even a Chinese might be ashamed of.

The only notable execution of prisoners that has happened at Shanghai since the commencement of the proceedings against the Taepings, took place in February last of this year, and the description of the scene, given by an eye-witness in a letter to the editor of the local paper, was considered so exaggerated that it was at once contradicted by another looker-on, writing to the same journal,

The first writer defended the truth of his statements in a rejoinder, but the general feeling of the community at the time was that the milder view was the correct one, and that the execution was not accompanied by any horrors not usual on such occasions in this country. It is possible that this very scene was the one the correspondent of the "Times of India" attempted to describe.

From my own knowledge of the Chinese, derived from an acquaintance of two-and-twenty years, I should say that as a race they are cruel and callous, where they have no interest in the victim save that of sport, revenge, or neglect. But I have never observed that the Government officials are more inhuman or barbarous than the rest of their kind, and I am sure that no one but a prejudiced or a casual observer could declare that the Imperialists are more cruel than the Taepings.

In the particular instance of prisoners taken in the late proceedings in this neighbourhood I can honestly aver that the Imperialists have, if anything, relaxed their usual severity in dealing with rebels and pirates. I have saved many captives handed over to me by simply requesting that they might not be beheaded, and I have passed over numbers of women and children found amongst the rebels by our forces to a benevolent Chinese institution licensed by Government, whose committee have undertaken to support and clothe the unfortunates till their friends could be found. I certainly have never heard of an instance in which women and children have been beheaded and treated cruelly, nor do I think such a thing probable, as the Chinese are not in the habit of punishing women, save when they are the proved relatives or accomplices of accused persons, and it is well known that the Taepings have only pressed or captive women amongst them. The Chinese, moreover, in all cases, even when the prisoners are captives of war, subject them to an examination in which wonderful care and trouble are taken to sift out the truth, and although this principle is often lost sight of, at the instance of a bribe or other powerful interest, yet it is perhaps more strictly adhered to in the case of trials of rebels, robbers, and traitors than in any other, as they are of that important class of criminals which inferior Maudarius have always to give a detailed account of to their superiors.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) W. H. MEDHURST,
H.M.'s Consul, Shanghai.

*The Right Hon. Earl Russell,
H.M.'s Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.*

SIR, *Foreign Office, June 26, 1862.*

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I am, &c.,

(Signed) RUSSELL.

*Mr. Consul Harvey,
Ningpo.*