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Foreign Office, October 30, 1889.

THE following Despatches have been received by the Right Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:—

No. 1.

Consul Biliotti to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received September 10.)

MY LORD, *Canea, Crete, September 3, 1889.*

I HAD the honour to telegraph to your Lordship on the 1st instant, that in consequence of the rumours having reached me, I spoke to the Vali on the subject of the profanation of Christian tombs in the village of Perivolía. His Excellency had already heard the rumours referred to, but on making enquiries had been informed that nothing of the kind had taken place.

At my suggestion a fresh enquiry was instituted by the Government, with the co-operation of the ecclesiastical authorities, and the rumours were confirmed. Search is now being made for the culprits. On the 31st ult., accompanied by the Commander and two officers of H.M.S. "Fearless," I visited the village of Galata, and ascertained that nearly all the Christian tombs had been violated, and that the churches had been defiled, and the wooden ornaments, the altars, pictures, and gospels entirely spoilt. The remains of the corpses had evidently been replaced in the tombs at a later period; but here and there a few bones were still to be seen. It would seem that similar desecrations have been perpetrated all round the town of Canea, as some officers of the "Fearless" have seen a similar state of things in the village of Hikalaria.

The village of Perivolía is destroyed, and is still uninhabited, but troops were in charge of the place when these desecrations took place.

I had the honour to inform your Lordship by telegraph yesterday, that I had related to the Vali the facts which I had ascertained. His Excellency will visit the spot, and have the tombs restored before the inhabitants return. I have also reported to him, that although he had provided us with an escort, two sentries used offensive language towards us, and one of them spat upon a picture which we picked up. His Excellency promised that the culprits should be severely punished. Three unarmed Christians were shot at by soldiers on the 28th instant, in the district of Keramia; one was killed and another wounded. The Vali sent for the whole of the company which was stationed at the spot, and paraded them before the third Christian, but

he was unable to identify the offenders. The troops both at Keramia and Galata come from Syria, and the authorities themselves recognise that they are unfit to be employed on this service. The only plan is to keep them in the fortresses, for if they are posted at separate stations in the country, there will probably be some collision between them and the Christian inhabitants.

The rumours with regard to the profanation of Christian sepulchres were afloat since nearly a fortnight, but I refrained from reporting on so delicate a subject before ascertaining the fact by myself.

The Vali is of opinion that Christian tombs were not opened for the mere purpose of profanation, but to look for valuables, which it would appear were concealed in them in previous times of troubles.

Be this as it may, the undeniable fact remains that the contents of Christian sepulchres were removed from their resting-places, and judging from the condition of those that I have seen, it is not impossible that such corpses as were not entirely consumed may have become the prey of dogs, as Christians say they were at Perivolía.

The family tomb of Mr. Cassimati, my clerk, being profanated like others, our party lowered the lid to its place.

I called the attention of his Excellency Shakir Pasha, who made a special note of the circumstance, that the destruction at Galata, and the profanation of sepulchres, had taken place while troops were stationed in that village.

Its inhabitants having been allowed to visit their houses on the 25th ultimo, when the village was guarded by Anatolian troops, I am told had found several objects untouched. On their return last Sunday, by special permission of the Vali, all that property had disappeared. Mr. Cassimati's family tomb was also intact at that date.

Our party, which was under a Government escort had great difficulty in entering the village. On our approach five or six soldiers took up their rifles and loaded them in our presence. We had to parley with the commanding officer, who gave us an escort of four soldiers and one corporal to visit the village. Two of our party, having lost sight of this escort, were threatened by a sentry to be fired upon. We were all abused with offensive language, and the church picture was spit upon.

The Anatolian cavalry who accompanied us were themselves indignant at what took place, and more than once repeated, "Bounlar adam deil" ("These people are not men").