

"RED" TERROR IN SOUTH CHINA.

THOUSANDS KILLED.

VICTIMS TORTURED TO DEATH.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

SHANGHAI, JAN. 11.

A Swatow correspondent writes:—

"A Communist reign of terror in the Haifung and Lufung districts has been going on unchecked for two months. The news indicates a state of things which for utter ghastliness can have few parallels in modern times, except perhaps in Armenia or Russia, from which its inspiration comes. It is not merely massacre, but massacre with fiendish delight in cruelty and gloating over the agonies of the victims. A week ago the total number was put at 10,000, and there is little reason to think that this is an underestimate. The figures given for individual towns and villages are often in hundreds, and in some cases as high as 600 or 700.

"Those are regarded as fortunate who are summarily shot or beheaded, but many poor wretches have undergone the agony of dismemberment or the historic



slicing process with new refinements of cruelty before they were allowed to die.

"The folk of the place are compelled to attend meetings at which these atrocities are intermingled with harangues on the blessings of Communism, and any indication, not merely of sympathy, but even of horror or disgust on the part of an onlooker is enough to bring him into the ranks of the victims. The platforms from which the orators speak are festooned with heads cut off in the course of the meeting. Towns and villages are required to produce their quota of heads, and, if they fail, are urged or threatened to make greater efforts. Any failure in proper enthusiasm is in due time visited with vengeance.

"The scourge goes on spreading in a steady advance, and is already threatening the districts on the side towards Swatow. It is still doubtful whether Chen Ming-chu's army in its march from Fukien to Canton intends to clear up this unspeakable mess, or will leave it in its haste to get a place in the sun at Canton. If it does not occupy the region in force there is every reason to fear an advance of Communists in this direction.

"The victims of the terror are capitalists, larger landowners, merchants, village notables, and any persons suspected of want of sympathy with the cause, and, as in every such terror, any one against whom a private enemy has a spite to wreak. All owners of land are compelled to hand over their title-deeds for destruction. All boundary stones have been removed, ridges and paths marking divisions between fields have been ploughed up, and all traces of private ownership destroyed. Plentiful seed has been sown for endless litigation when peace is restored.

"In the later stages of the madness an anti-Christian slogan was raised, and a report has come through that an order has gone out for a general massacre of Christians on Christmas Day."

This was confirmed by the report brought from Swabue by the Italian priests rescued by the gunboat Seraph, but further information is lacking. Chapels everywhere have been occupied by Communists, and one at least burned down. A preacher very narrowly escaped execution, and was only let go after being publicly stripped and flogged.