work on the money of other people, becoming hopelessly involved in debt, and all in the name of religion. With regard to Mrs. Gould who is mentioned in the report it may throw a little light upon her position to say that the community have every thing in common, and all her property belong to the community or would if she had it, hence the creditors look to her for their pay. The question may arise why they have been allowed to run up so many bills? They have the appearance of respectable people & when they made promises to pay with the most sacred and solemn oaths, the simple people of this town have been led to believe that they would certainly pay. People are getting their eyes open and this method of obtaining goods and money cannot last much longer. The inclosed report which is little more than an outline, I have tried to prepare without prejudice, not in justification of any action that I have taken recently for every step has been perfectly legal, but as an explanation of certain matters which the Department should be made cognizant of.

I remain respectfully
Your Obedient Servant,

U. S. Consul

The Spafford American Community in Jerusalem.

The receipt of your telegram of the 12th instant makes it proper for me to state certain facts regarding the Spafford's household in this city, which is quite time were laid before the Department of State. A complete history of this household since their coming to Jerusalem would fill a volume, hence my report must not extend beyond the briefest outline.

They are a religious sect and I, of course, have nothing whatever to do officially with their religious notions except as these notions lead them to violate civil or criminal law. The name "Overcomers" is generally applied to these people, but I believe that they themselves do not admit that they have a name.

Mr. & Mrs. H. G. Spafford of Chicago were the leaders of this movement & with their followers came here in the Autumn of 1881. Mr. Spafford has since died & Mrs Spafford is now the head of the community. One of their strange notions most prominently advocated when they arrived was that they were not going to die; but in the twelve years that they have been here ten (and I believe eleven) deaths have occurred in that household. The community at the present time consists of six Turkish subjects two of whom are children, three English subjects, six adult Americans and nine American children between the ages of ten and nineteen years, - making twenty four in all. Of the six adult Americans, - three men & three women, - the three women are widows, and of three men one is a bachelor, one a widower, and one has a wife in America whom he deserted. None of these six people have passports and never have had; still I recognize them as American citizens. Some weeks since my Colleague the English Consul here, told me that those people applied to him to be taken under English protection which he decidedly refused to do. Moreover there is no blood of family relationship between any of these six adults.

One peculiarity of these people is that they denounce marriage as a sin, but they admit that they, - both men and women, "live together as eunuchs" whatever that may mean. The are completely under the will of Mrs. Spafford. She has revelations from God and her word "is as the word of God". They are in their own estimation above all moral law and it is no offence for them to deny all civil law. Several persons who have belonged to the community have left them after becoming thoroughly disgusted with their principles and practises and these allege that Mrs Spafford keeps her followers in subjection by threats of terrible judgments should they refuse to obey her will. One women who had the boldness to disbelieve in Mrs. Spafford was placed in a village about six miles from Jerusalem and kept a prisoner where she died, it is said by those knowing the circumstances, of criminal neglect. This occurred several years since; but the matter is a serious one and in America would be thoroughly investigated and the real facts brought to light.

It is alleged by those who have been members of the household that some of the members are guilty of immoral practices. This, when questioned about it by strangers, I have always said I could not affirm because I had no knowledge of specific acts and I should not investigate such a matter unless I was officially called upon to do so. Still I have been aware that they have been guilty of great imprudencies. Sufficient facts are now known to justify me in the statement that the atmosphere of what household, in relation to the sexes, is such as to make it an improper place for the training of any young person.

Socially I have nothing to do with these people and I may add that the respectable people of Jerusalem let them severely alone. Officially my

relations with have been formal but pleasant enough and I have rendered them all the protection and assistance in the power of the Consulate to render. During the past year or two whenever they have any papers to be signed officially I have done it free of charge because I knew they were in straightened circumstances.

During the past twelve months I have had more to do with these people officially than ever before, for the reason which I will now explain:- When they came to Jerusalem in 1881 they made quite a show in many ways and it was then generally understood that they had ample means in America. It is now known that with the exception of one woman from Chicago they have not a penny to back them. When they arrived, 1881, they began to obtain good, household supplies &c., soon borrow money promising immediate payment. They had no property here that could be seized for debt. Their creditors found after a time that their promises were not fulfilled and when payment was urged their stereotyped response was,- "You must wait; God is with us; He will surely send no money?. This process has been going on and getting worse for ten years. For several years I stood many times, I presume as many as thirty times between the Spaffordites and their creditors, telling them that they had property to seize, that money might come from America, and that they had best wait. During the past two years the creditors have annoyed me constantly with their claims. Some of these claims have reached me through official courses. Others have been presented to me directly from the natives of this country imagine that a Consul has power to collect money even assured that there is none to collect. I have a list of their creditors, I do not know that it is complete, and they number forty two. To these the Spaffordites owe not far from $8.000. Some of these debts are six, others of eight, and others of ten years standing. The name of the only person among the community who has any money is Gould, and I have urged her

repeatedly to go to America, get her money if she really has any, return and pay these debts. Her brother authorized me to buy her ticket and furnish her means to return to Chicago, but she persistently refuses to go. She declines to give any reason for her action; but it is surmised that Mrs. Spafford fears, if she lets Mrs. Gould go, she will lose her grasp upon her the moment she is out of her sight.

The practise of those people I look upon as nothing more nor less than obtaining goods & money under false pretenses. It is a form of swindling and the fact that they invoke God at every step does not remove from it its criminal character. I have told them repeatedly that it was a shame for them to live thus year after year on the money of other people the majority of whom are poor trades people who cannot afford to lose their money. The Spaffords do no missionary or educational work in fact they do not believe in these things, nor do they do manual work by which they might earn something. They simply live on other people who are getting very tired and demand a change. The German among the creditors have sent me a petition asking me if I cannot compel this Mrs. Gould to go to America and get the money which she claims to have and pay them.

The Department will see that my position between those people and their many creditors who are very clamorous, is a most embarrassing one. I wish some legal steps might be advised by which these people, the American portion of them, might be made to pay their debts or to leave the country. The owner of their house has been very generous with them and formerly put a good deal of confidence in their promises. But he has waited now two years

for his rent and proposes to wait no longer. He is a Moslem and if he sends me an order through the Turkish Government that they leave the house I shall have to see that it is executed. As the American section rent the house it all becomes American domicile although there are both Turkish & English subjects in the community.

One of the American women residing in this community is a Mrs. Whiting, a widow with two children. Her family reside in Chicago. Early in July of this year her brother hearing from two persons who had been members of the community but are now in Chicago, many facts respecting the character of the house, came here to investigate matters and to see if his sister would not return with him to her home and friends in America. Upon his arrival here he saw his sister once or perhaps twice for a short time alone, but after that the members of the community would not allow him to see his sister except in their presence. He said to them, - "If there is nothing wrong in your house why cannot you let me see my sister alone since we have always been fond of each other?" Subsequently, as they persisted in their refusal to allow him to see her, he made a sworn affidavit that he believed his sister was deprived of her liberty and retained in that household against her will, and he demanded the assistance of the Consulate in ascertaining the facts. I asked these people if Mrs Spafford was their head and they replied that she was not. It was convenient for them at that moment to say that they had no head. As I could not ask the entire household to bring this woman before me I summoned the woman herself. She refused to obey the summons or was forced to refuse I do not know which, but I know that four men took her & hurried her away about one mile from the house & secreted her. The authority of the Consulate had been defied and the woman and

and the entire household had made themselves liable to arrest. I was bound by section 105 of Regulations for Consular Courts in Turkey to see that the authority of the Consulate was maintained; hence subsequently I sent a warrant for the arrest of the woman. Forcible not to say violent resistence was made by all the members of the community but she was at last brought before me and I stated the offence and sentenced her to twenty four hours imprisonment. To make it less tedious for her I had her children accompany her and they were taken to the Grand Rest Hotel, given one of the best rooms, and everything was done for their comfort, - the immediate care of them being assigned to her brother.

At the expiration of twenty four hours I brought up the matter of the original summons & after the case was heard, the brother versus Mr. Rudy whom I had assigned to the woman as counsel, I decided that the woman should remain for a short period in the care of her brother till he could learn something definite as to her condition and actual wishes. She accordingly remained with her brother in the same room she had occupied. She had the freedom of the Hotel & in fact of the city the only condition being that wherever she went she was to be accompanied by her brother. The Spaffordites were notified that as the woman was not their servant, as they had no contract with her nor claim upon her, as they were not relatives, and as they had no jurisdiction over her whatsoever, they were to let her alone while she was with her brother; in defiance of this order however they took every opportunity to communicate with her so that the brother had his sister to himself very little of the time. The Spaffordites were violent and abusive and fearing they might kidnap the woman

I had one of the guards of the Consulate remain about the hotel a part of the time. At the end of four days the brother said he was satisfied that his sister was determined to remain and he allowed her to return to the Spafford community. He has stated to me in writing that he did not attempt in anyway to influence his sister, his desire being to ascertain her real wishes & condition. He states further that the constant espionage which these people maintain over his confirms him in the opinion that all is not right in that household and that his sister is not at liberty to decide anything or to act in any way for herself.

As I did not wish to be severe with these people whose notions of what constitutes violation of law are certainly very strange, I waived the matter of their forcible resistence to my summons and latter to my warrant for arrest, and did not punish them. Perhaps I should have let the law take its course with them. - It might have taught them a wholesome lesson.

It is well known in Jerusalem that the children in that household do not receive any proper education. The members of the community do not believe in education as that word is commonly understood. Two of the nine children belong to Mrs Spafford, one the Mr. Page whose wife it is alleged died of criminal neglect as I have mentioned, four to Mr. Baldwin whose deserted wife is in America, and two to Mrs. Whiting. The trustee of the property of the Whiting children and the mother of the Baldwin children are very desirous of getting these children away from this household and taken to America where they can be properly educated and where their moral surroundings will be more healthy.

From their peculiar views or some other cause these people seem to have lost the

ordinary distinction between truth and falsehood and the statements they make about those who differ from them are often outrageously unjust. During the early part of their history here some prominent Mohammedan families had a good deal to do with them thinking that they were "holy people"; but they have now ceased to associate or to have any communication with them whatever on the ground that the house is not a proper place to visit and the influence of the members of the household dangerous. The Governor of Jerusalem and Palestine recently had a long interview with me respecting this community and he deeply deplored their presence in this city.

M. S. Consul

U. S. Consulate,
Jerusalem, August 19. 1893.

Poultry Industry in Palestine.

In reply to the Department's circular dated May 29. 1893 relative to the Poultry Industry in this Consular district I would say that chickens and eggs are staple necessities of living here. The natives consume great quantities of them & European families & hotels have eggs and chickens in some form at every meal. At the same time no special interest is taken in the raising of them, that is to say as to varieties, breeding, and the like. To a great extent they take care of themselves; they are in and out of peasants' houses like the children, in fact they form a part of the "domestic circle". The

climate is such that except for the heavy rains they can be out of doors all winter.

Artificial incubation is never employed, there are no fancy fowls, they have bred in and in for centuries, and they are of every variety of color. They have red combs or crests and have no feathers on the legs.

The general size of fowls here is small and their eggs as nearly as I can ascertain after weighing several hundred, average per hundred a little less than eleven pounds. Small or medium chickens cost per pair twenty four to twenty eight cents; large or full grown fowls cost per pair forty eight to sixty four cents.

For eggs the average summer price is two for one cent, half a cent each. During the heavy weather in winter when travelling is bad, they average four fifths of a cent each. Occasionally in very bad weather they become scarce and the price mounts up to one cent each. But at such times there is no market for eggs for nobody will pay such a tremendous price.

Every family and every village raises chickens and eggs, but the chief centres of poultry raising in Palestine are Lydda, Ramleh, and Jaffa. As to profit little can be said; eggs must be raised and got to market; and when in Jerusalem a cent buy two eggs in Jaffa two days journey from Jerusalem a cent will buy three eggs.

S. M.
M. S. Consul

U. S. Consulate
Jerusalem, September 12. 1893.