No. 30.

Consulate of the United States,
Jerusalem, November 21, 1887.

Honorable James D. Porter,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington D.C.

Sir:-

I have the honor herewith to submit the annual Report of the Consulate, on the business and Commerce of Palestine for the year ending September 30, 1887.

The towns and population

Of the commercial district known as Palestine, Jaffa is the port, and Jerusalem, Nablus and Gaza are the principal cities; while Hebron, Bethlehem, Lidda, Ingdala and Ramleh are small towns. There is besides a large number of hamlets and villages. These last are shown by the following statement, which gives the number of villages in each of the four divisions or districts of the province.

		No. of villages.
Jerusalem district	contains	65.
Hebron district	contains	61.
Gaza district	contains	63.
Jaffa district	contains	68.
	Total	257.

The population, in round numbers, would amount to 500,000 people, of whom four-fifths are poor fallahin or peasants, who have but simple and few wants. Even now, within a few miles of Jerusalem, men (Arabs) may still be found dwelling in tents and caves; and the wild, tent-dwelling Bedouin still range the Valley of the Jordan, the Government not being able to bring them completely into subjection, or to drive them out.

The Population of Jerusalem.

As to the population of the City of Jerusalem, there has always been more or less doubt, owing to the difficulty of obtaining statistics of any and every kind in

in this country, and the absence of any properly taken census. My exertions to be exact in this matter have not been as successful as I hoped and expected. I have been obliged to fall back on the official returns of the Government, which usually would be considered sufficient. These place the present population at 50,000, devided as follows:

Hebrews		25,000 souls.
Christians	(Native)	12,000 "
Mohammedans		10,000 "
Foreigners		3,000 "
	Total	50,000 "

On almost any day in Jerusalem, may be seen thirty or more different nationalities represented on the streets, including Syrians, Hebrews, Bedouin and other Arabs, Armenians, Copts, East Indians, Chinese, Turks, Samaritans, Egyptians, Abyssinians, Nubians, Algerians, Soudanese, Circassians, Albanians, Americans, English, Irish, Scotch, French, Germans, Russians, Austrians, Italians, Greeks, Dutch, Spaniards, Portuguese, Bulgarians, and Poles. These not only are found among the temporary visitors, but are permanent residents.

The Harvest

The rainy season, on which the success of the harvest absolutely depends in this country, commenced with light showers on October 27, 1886, which soon passed into abundant ones, and continued with the customary intermissions, till the 2d of May following, the old divisions of former, middle, and latter rains being well defined. During the remainder of the year no rain fell, as is usual, with the exception of a very slight sprinkling on the 16th of June.

Owing to the abundant rains, the grain harvest, excepting a few localities, has been a good one throughout Palestine. It is considered the best there has been in ten years. But the fruit of the olive tree failed to a large extent. It is characteristic of this tree to be more prolific in dry than in wet seasons. The oranges, too, yielded only about one-half the usual crop.

They obtained, however, a higher price, selling, in fact, for about 30 per cent in advance of the prices paid in the preceding year, with good demand.

The following table exhibits the prices paid in the Jerusalem market, at the present date, for grain, &c., the highest price in each instance indicating superior quality:

Wheat, 70 cents to $1. per measure.
Barley, 40 cents to 60 cents " "
Dura, 40 " " 60 " " "
Lentiles, 60 " " 80 " " "
Sesame $1.60 " $1.80 " "

The measure of wheat would weigh about 48 lbs.

Other products of the soil, such as the ordinary vegetables, have been abundant and, in general, of fair quality. The potato and turnip of the country are decidedly inferior; this occasions the importation of the former from France, to a considerable amount; though, it must be added, the substitute is far from being what would be accepted in the United States as a good article, being heavy and of poor flavor. It seems to me that shipments of American potatoes and apples to this Country would prove remunerative.

The total product of the harvest is known only through the tithes or taxes paid to the Government for the general crop. The past year the tithes amounted to 60,000 Turkish Liras, or about $274,000. This would make the value of the harvest about $2,740,000.

Fruit

There is a large variety of fruit cultivated, affording an important article of food for the people, who are quite fond of it, and use it largely. The fellahin and poor laborers may often be seen sitting on the street or road-side making their noonday meal on a cake of bread and bunch of grapes, or handful of

of figs. When they cannot have fruit, a piece of the coarse cheese of the country is the usual substitute.

The fruit, with the exception of apples and pears, which are uncommonly poor, is generally of fair if not excellent quality. The oranges and grapes are especially fine. Among the more important kinds of fruit, may be mentioned the orange, lemon, citron, lime, apricot, nectarine, peach, plum, fig, cherry, grape, melon, prickly pear, pomegranate and date. Among the nuts of the country are the walnut, almond pistachio and hazel nut. The natives are also greatly addicted to eating the seeds of the melon and pumpkin.

The vegetables and fruit from the Gardens of Solomon, a few miles south of Jerusalem, are celebrated for their superiority, the peaches and apricots being unusually fine as to size and flavor. This place, recently identified with the Emmaus of Scripture, is now known as Urtas, evidently a corruption of the Latin Hortus, the name, no doubt, applied to it by the Roman colony, it being one of the military posts established by Titus after his capture of Jerusalem. Herod had here his baths (Hammamat), hence Emmaus. The sheltered gardens, in the bottom of the deep, narrow valley, are well watered by the Pools of Solomon, the overflow of which affords the ancient Paradise (Findous) abundant irregation. Most of the different kinds of vegetables cultivated in Europe are here produced in abundance.

Tobacco.

There is only one kind of Tobacco cultivated in Palestine, but it is of various qualities. Its excellence or its inferiority is to a large extent dependent on the character of the soil in which it is grown, the situation of the land, and even the description of the manure which is used as a fertilizer. As to the latter, the dung of the rabbit is considered the best, and large numbers of these animals are kept for the purpose of enriching the tobacco plats. Next to that of the rabbits, the dung of the gazelle and of the goat is preferred; while that of the cow is not considered good for the purpose, the flavor of the tobacco being injured by it.

The best kind of Tobacco is that grown in the Lebanon, where great care is observed in its culture. It is of a mild and delicate flavor.

From the sowing of the tobacco seed to the maturing of the plant covers a period of, at least, three months. After it is reaped, it is spread out at night in the dew. Early the next morning it is heaped, and placed under heavy pressure. This is continued for twenty days; when it is spread for a few days; ~~when it is spread~~ indoors, after which it is ready to be cut for smoking.

The majority of the people of this country smoke the tobacco in clay pipes, which are provided with long stems made of reed or wood. The Nargilah, however, is to a great extent indulged in, especially by the Moslems, while the use of the cigarette is spreading so rapidly, it promises to exceed all other forms for the consumption of the weed. Chewing is seldom or never seen, but snuff is much more largely used here than in the United States, the Jews being particularly addicted to it.

Owing to the heavy Government tax, but little tobacco is grown in Palestine. The price, for the best qualities, ranges from sixty to eighty cents per lb., while the lowest grade brings about ten cents per pound.

Licorice

This plant, which naturally associated with tobacco in some of its manufactured forms, no substitute being found for it hitherto, grows wild in this country. It flourishes in the greatest abundance in the Jordan Valley. Any one is at liberty to gather the roots without paying any tax to the Government. When sold on the spot where collected, about $4 per kantar (600 lbs.) may be obtained for it. Most of the Licorice shipped last year was sent to the United States.

It would seem that, from the large amount of

of capital invested in this industry, and the ease with which it is prosecuted, it might assume proportions in Palestine which it has hitherto failed to do, becoming to the poorer peasantry a source of income not to be despised.

Salt.

The salt used in Palestine is brought from the Dead Sea, where, as is well known, it exists in pure and inexhaustible deposits. It is a Government monopoly; and is conveyed by the Bedouin, in sacks on their Camels, to the Turkish Custom House officer, who pays the Bedouin at the rate of one cent for each kilo (2 lbs.). It is afterwards sold to the people for 2½ cents per kilo. Any one offering for sale salt which has not passed through the Custom House, is fined; while the salt is seized by the Government.

Wool and Goat Hair.

The wool of the Syrian sheep is of fair quality. The price ranges from 60 cents to $1. per rottle (6 lbs). It is largely used for filling beds and pillows, as well as for making cloth, carpets, bags, and sheets for beds, for which last it is used instead of cotton. The heavy outside garment of the Bedouin and fellahin, which is striped white and black, is made of wool; the black stripes being of the undyed wool of the black sheep. The hair of the goat is employed to make their tents, and for various other purposes.

Trade and Business

There are about 500 shops and stores in Jerusalem. The character of the business done is generally moderate, and, so far as large transactions are concerned, can scarcely ever be said to be very brisk. The professions, trades, and business carried on have the following representation: Clergymen, physicians, soldiers, lawyers, advocates, engineers, bankers, merchants, teachers, clerks, dealers in antiquities and religious articles, apothecaries, carvers, manufacturers of oil, wine, beer, arrack and other liquors, hardware dealers, shopkeepers, goldsmiths, silversmiths, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, carpenters,

masons, tailors, shoemakers, bakers, dragomans, guards, seriles, carriers, hotel-keepers, painters, glaziers, haberdashers, weavers, potters, soap-makers, stone-cutters, book-binders, saddlers turners, knife-makers knife grinders, dyers, millers, butchers, grocers, weavers, auctioneers, hunters, water-carriers, carriage-drivers, Café-keepers, money-changers, bath keepers, gardeners, muleteers, camel-drivers, cooks, tatooers, waiters, porters, barbers, laborers, and shoe-blacks.

Rates of wages of workmen

Except for mechanics, the wages of workmen are remarkably low, being about the same as paid in Italy and some other parts of Europe, as shown by the accompanying statement:

Wages of skilled mechanics per diem,	$1.80 to $2.40
Wages of unskilled mechanics per diem,	.60 " $1.00
Wages of farm laborers per diem,	.30 " .60
Wages of common laborers per diem,	.20 " .30

These all find their own food, and every thing else required, at this price.

Manufacture of Shoes.

The shops for making shoes are as follows: viz:, 80 shops for making European shoes, 15 shops for making the Syrian red shoes, and 20 shops for making Bedouin ~~shoes~~ and peasants shoes. These represent every grade, from the rudest sandal of the fellahin, to the well-finished boot of neat appearance and fashionable make. And as the natives generally have small and handsome feet, the better classes take a pride in being well shod. The price of European shoes are from $1.60 to $4. per pair, the Syrian red shoes cost from 40 to 80 cents per pair, while the coarse Bedouin shoes are sold from 60 to 80 cents.

The yellow slipper, the use of which was formerly restricted to the moslem, tradition being to the effect that such a foot-covering was worn by the prophet Mohammed, is now permitted to the worn by all.

The leather used for soles of the peasants' shoes is made of the Buffalo skin, and is brought from Africa. It is strange to see the hair still left for about a quarter of an inch in length on the bottom of the sole, after the shoe is finished and ready to be worn. The leather for the best shoes is brought from England, France, Germany, and Greece.

Soap manufacture.

There are five manufactories of soap in Jerusalem, about 40 at Jaffa and at Nablous, some of which are very small, 3 at Gaza, 5 at Lidda, and one at Hebron, making a total of 54. The superiority of the article made is unquestioned, and is largely due to the use of olive oil in its manufacture. It is sold for from 40 to 60 cents per bottle (6 lbs.), according to quality. The best of the toilet soap is transparent, and greatly resembles Pears' celebrated soap, and retails for about 30 cents per box of six cakes.

Glass ornaments and Tiles.

There is a glass manufactory at Hebron, where are made only bracelets, rings, and small bottles. There are two tile manufactories, one at Jerusalem, and the other at Jaffa. These tiles for the roofs of houses, are inferior to the imported French tiles, which are used to a great extent.

Petroleum.

A deplorable feature in the commercial results of the year presents itself in the fact that American petroleum has been almost eclipsed by the Russian oil. The rapid increase in the demand for the American oil, as shown in my last annual report, when the sales amounted to $36,400, as compared with $22,000 worth the previous year, was a hopeful sign which has not been sustained. As shown by the annexed Return of Imports, the sales this year have fallen to $1560., the import of the Russian oil advancing to $38,376. This result cannot be altogether attributed to the want of care in forwarding only the best article from the United States, and keeping the price as low as possible, by selling at a faire remuneration, as recommended in my former report. The advantages of

Russia in such a competition are manifest. Her greater proximity to this market, would alone give her advantages not easily overcome. Added to this, the quality of the Russian petroleum has been greatly improved, while it is sold at from 12 to 15 per cent, cheaper than the American oil. In short, our former load in this import was due altogether to the natural objection had to the poor character of the oil sent here by the Russian forwarders, which objection they have now taken care to remove.

Water Supply of Jerusalem.

It is not generally known that there are no wells in Jerusalem, and that for their water supply the inhabitants are chiefly dependent on rain-water. This, caught on the flat roofs of the houses during the rainy season, is run off through pipes into large underground reservoirs or cisterns, in which it is stored for drinking, culinary, and all the other purposes for which water is used. One brackish-spring, indeed, exists in the Convent of the Ecce Homo, and has its rise immediately underneath it, in the Bezetha or Royal Caverns or Quarries, where there are traces of an ancient conduit, indicating the use of the water by the workmen in these extensive excavations of a long past age, and perhaps originally having connection with the Holy Temple, the stone for the construction of which the material these quarries are supposed to have supplied, as they extend from outside the present walls, north-east of the Damascus Gate, to beneath the Dome of the Rock or Mosque of Omar, the former site of the Temple. From outside the walls, water is brought in, in skins, by the water carriers, from the Virgin's Pool, and the connected Pool of Siloam, as well as other sources. A few months ago, repairs were made by the Government on the ancient aqueduct which originally

Brought

brought water into the Temple from Solomon's Pools, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and so for the first time in many years, water is again obtained from the source suggested by the wise King. It is at the present writing delivered in abundant supply in the Mosque of Omar, where exist extensive reservoirs for holding the water, some of which are doubtless of immemorial age.

It is astonishing to those whose attention for the first time is called to the subject, for instance, strangers drinking the water at the hotel tables in Jerusalem, to find that rain water could be preserved in such perfect condition, absolutely pure for so many months - sometimes, ten months or more. But when drawn immediately from the cistern, it is quite palatable and sufficiently cool not to require ice. It is scarcely necessary to add that, of all water, rain water is considered the most free from impurities and extraneous matter; and when preserved in properly made and kept cisterns, there can be little objection to it on sanatory grounds.

The water brought into the city in skins, is transported on donkeys, or men's backs, and is sold at from 4 to 5 cents per goat skin.

Towards the end of the long rainless season, the water in the smaller cisterns getting low, and nearly exhausted, is, doubtless, swarming with bacteria, and is more or less contaminated with foul deposits. This unquestionably is the cause of much of the fever that prevails during the early autumn.

Prisons and Prisoners.

The prisons in Jerusalem are two in number, one for the prisoners who are under trial, and for those whose imprisonment is only from 24 hours to 6 months; the other for those who have been sentenced for committing some serious crime, such as murder, robbery, forgery &c. At present there are 400 prisoners in confinement, one half of whom are murderers. This excess of murderers is explained by the fact that murder is seldom committed ~~here~~ here except as a

the character of a species of revenge or retribution, when several members of a village community conspire to take the law into their own hands, and execute vengeance on the offender. The prisoners are, most of them, supplied with bread by the Government, but with nothing more. Those, however, who are able to afford to buy other cooked food, or to cook for themselves, are permitted to do so. All prisoners are allowed great liberty, and are not confined in cells. They can go from one room to another, and converse with each other, sing, play, and otherwise amuse themselves, as much as they wish. Murderers have a heavy chain around the waist, with other chains connecting it with the legs near the ankles. The majority of the prisoners are Syrians, and the remainder are of various nationalities, as Turks and Greeks, with a very few other Europeans. Americans are, of course, never found there, as they have the special privilege, not possessed by any other nationality, even the English, of being tried by their own Consul, and, if necessary, imprisoned by him.

Women criminals are not incarcerated in the same jail with the male prisoners. The sheik of the district or quarter takes charge of them in his own house.

Improvements.

The buildings erected during the year are about 70 in number. Many of them are of a superior character, and all are substantial structures.

About two miles of paving have been completed within the walls of the city, well-built sewers having been made in connection therewith. In making the necessary excavations, extensive and massive Roman pavements, in a remarkable state of preservation, were discovered, lying about ten feet beneath the present surface. These ancient pavements, in all probability nearly 2000 years old, span the entire length of Damascus Street, and also of a street branching out of it at an acute angle and

and crossing the Via Dolorosa. The large slabs, 5 feet × 4 feet, and one foot in thickness, were laid diagonally or diamond-wise, and were so perfectly fitted that, when openings were broken through, and the earth removed from beneath, they still held their places intact and solid. There was a slight rise toward the centre of the pavement, and the upper surface was quite smooth from the frequent passing of feet, affording some indication of the length of time it had been used. From various connecting circumstances, which it would be out of place to enter on here, this must be considered one of the most important discoveries made in Jerusalem for many years. One valuable point it unquestionably establishes, viz: that the position of the two streets I have described are identical with those of ancient streets before the destruction of the city by Titus, in the year 70. And therefore it may naturally be supposed a similar relationship may exist between the sites of ancient streets and others of the present streets of Jerusalem.

The Jaffa road has been greatly improved since my last report; in many places a completely new road-bed having been constructed. Nearly 15 miles of it have been repaired and thus put in order. But it will probably take the Government at least another year to complete the work to Jaffa.

Business outlook.

Though Palestine has been free from the epidemic which has been severely felt in other places on the Mediterranean, it has been in its business and commerce an indirect sufferer, and it has hardly yet recovered from the effects of the consequent depression which has over shadowed it now for several years. It is thought another year will bring brighter prospects. As an evidence of what might be done by properly managed enterprises in even what would seem an unlikely field (especially in a country like this), I may mention the case of an insurance agent representing the New-York Life Insurance Company, who visited Palestine last spring, and was agreeably surprised at the amount of business he was called to do. He had expected at most to make but a slight impression or opening, scarcely hoping to pay expenses; but the number and value of the policies issued by him induced him to

prolong his stay and extend his tour further north and in other directions.

Declared Exports.

The declared exports from this Consular district consist of olivewood work, mother-of-pearl work, wine and spirits. The value of these for the year ending September 30. 1887, is as follows: Quarter ending December 31, 1886 $630.99; March 31, 1887, $1060.07; June 30, 1887, $371.28, and September 30. 1887, $1208.75; making a total of $3271.09.

I am, Sir
your obedient Servant

Consul.

Jaffa.

1/ In forwarding the accompanying returns of exports, Import, and Navigation, Consular Agent E. Hardegg dwells on the languishing condition of trade and commerce, the scarcity of money, and the high rates of interest, moving between 12 and 25 per centum and even higher, under which circumstances business, having degenerated into usury accompanied by wild inconsiderate speculation, ends in bankruptcy. There is scarcely a failure in which European capital has not been engaged to some extent. Hence the sunken commercial credit which this country shares with neighboring Syria and the entire Levant.

The old scheme of improving the harbor at Jaffa, and building a narrowgauged railroad between it and Jerusalem, has again been taken up. this time nominally by some native capitalists, who are trying at present to get the permission of H. M. the Sulton. It is not probable, however, that they will be

be any more successful than the French company and others who have attempted it about five times in the last fifteen years.

2/ To the Returns of Exports is added, as required, a list 3/ of the principal productions of the district other than are shown by that table.

Enclosures:
1. Return of Exports (duplicates).
2. Return of Imports "
3. List of the principal productions of the district other than are shown by the declared export table.

No. 31.

Consulate of the United States,
Jerusalem, November 29, 1887.

Honorable James D. Porter,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington D. C.

Sir:

In accordance with Circular, "Production and Export Tables," dated September 10, 1887, I have the honor to forward herewith state-
1/ ments showing the declared exports from this Consular District, including Jerusalem and Jaffa, during the four quarters of the year ending June 30, 1887. A list of the principal productions of the district other than are shown by the declared export table has already been forwarded with despatch No. 30, dated the 21st instant.

I am, Sir
your obedient Servant

Consul

Enclosures
1. Return of declared exports to the United States from Jerusalem for year ending June 30, 1887.
2. Return of declared exports to the United States from Jaffa for year ending June 30, 1887.