No 17

United States Consulate at Jerusalem
Dech 26th 1870.

Hon. Hamilton Fish
Secretary of State
Washington D.C.

Sir.

I have the honor to inform the Department that the eclipse of the sun on the 22nd inst as seen from this point was only partial, about three quarters of the sun's surface being covered. The day was not clear and during the later part of the eclipse the face of the sun was totally obscured by heavy clouds. Two dark spots were plainly visible on the sun by the aid of the glass, and the observation of the shadow of the moon moving over them must have afforded important data to astronomers.

The month of December has been pleasant and uniform with moderate rains which have been of great advantage to the country and stimulated all kinds of vegetation. The thermometer has averaged at 10 o'clock in the day about 65°. On the 9th instant a great flight of locusts made their appearance and threatened annihilation to the young vegetation but happily they remained but a few hours and passed on. Whence they came or whither they went no one knows. For some hours the sky was darkened by them as though by a cloud.

During the past season Palestine has been so consumed by locusts and scorched by drought that her condition is indeed deplorable. Many of the poor are in great distress from the failure of the harvests and the consequent high prices which prevail. Wheat and barley are imported for home consumption and even the commonest vegetables are scarce and dear. Especially has the hill country of Judea suffered, and it may almost be said that her mountains and valleys have become deserts. Her soil however is strong and fertile naturally and with plentiful rains and better tillage we may hope for much.

I am glad to be able to inform the Department that there are prospects of a more vigorous and better administration of affairs in these parts. The Governor of Jerusalem Kiamil Pacha seems alive to the necessity of some ~~action~~ active measures to advance the developement and prosperity of this unhappy land. He has incorporated a company for running carriages on the road between Jaffa and this city which intends to commence operations in about six weeks. He has also projected a carriage road from here to Nablous to be commenced in the Spring. These are steps in the right direction and lead us to hope for better things in the future.

I have the honor to remain Sir your obt. svt.

(Sgd) R. Beardsley
U. S. Consul.

No 18

United States Consulate at Jerusalem
Dech. 29th 1870.

Hon. Hamilton Fish
Secretary of State
Washington D.C.

Sir.

About the first of the present month one of the cavasses in the employ of the Vice Consulate at Jaffa was severely beaten without provocation by an officer of the Turkish Government. The excuse given by the officer was that the Cavass had been selling bad meat in the market. The charge however was false and the Cavass was perfectly innocent.

As the offi~~cer~~ was rather an

aggravated