Report on the Agriculture & Horticulture of Palestine for the month of February, 1891.

During February the native agriculturists find little to do in their fields; but the farmers of the German & Jewish Colonies of Palestine dig or plough their vineyards, pruning and grafting their vines.

The general promise of the grain crops continues favorable; the abundant rains producing a rapid growth. The rainfall reached nearly 5 inches; and for a great part of the time the wind storms were of unusual severity. On the 17th instant the Barometer fell to 29,45, the lowest point on record for twenty years. This was followed by one of the heaviest gales known within a recent period in this place. The temperature also declined, the rain turning into snow on the hills.

The shipment of oranges this month amounted to 8000 boxes, each containing on the average 160 pieces. Prices remain unchanged from those of last month. The fruit is fair.

Temperature at Jaffa.

Maximum, daytime 71° Fahr.
Minimum, night 47° "
Maximum daytime 49° "
Minimum night 42° "

In the hill country the temperature was about 10° colder.

S. N. Ds.
Consul.

United States Consulate,
Jerusalem, Feb. 28. 1891.

f. 226.

Consulate of the United States.
Jerusalem, March 7. 1891.

Honorable William F. Wharton,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on the 19th ultimo, at about 4 o'clock, a.m., the Steamer "Tchihatcheff", of the Russian Steam Navigation Company, struck on the rocks at Jaffa, about one-half mile from the light-house, and 120 yards from the shore, becoming a total wreck. Public opinion ascribes the cause of the disaster to unpardonable neglect on the part of the third officer.

A very heavy sea was running at the time, and the waves at once began to break over the vessel, enter the cabins, and put out the lights. Passengers and crew all retired to the bridge, to the front, and to the rigging, to save themselves from the tremendous sea. But it is quite certain that some twenty of the deck passengers were swept over board before reaching a place of safety. The situation of all on board was desperate, wavering between the alternative of being washed overboard, or attempting to swim to shore, running the risk of being drawned or smashed on the rocks.

The lives of all on board would doubtless have been sacrificed had it not been for the heroic action of the Jaffa boatmen. Of these men, who are Mostems, and Turkish subjects, being natives of Palestine, Suleiman Eiby is specially worthy of mention. He was the first man to venture out to the wreck in a boat, and with him was his brother.

1891.

Mohammed Gaby, and Kimmer Abd-el Farek. The names of the other boatmen who distinguished themselves on this occasion are, Ali Zaid (the Guard of our Consular Agency), Mohammed Anad, Ibrahim Umberji, Mohammed Ali Abassi, & Slimian Manai, who all worked to the utmost of their physical strength, standing six hours shivering in the cold brine. But Suleiman Gaby was the chief agent in saving the lives of those on board, and he repeatedly risked his own life in doing so. He brought the first boat-load of passengers safely to shore; but his own boat was smashed on the rocks, and the cable, the only means of communication, was lost in the waves. It was then Suleiman, at extreme peril, dived into the wild sea, and succeeded in recovering the cable, directing the entire work. For the officers and crew of the Steamer had lost all presence of mind and were perfectly helpless. Suleiman swam naked between the wreck and the rocks three times; while his brother performed the same feat twice, having the skin on his chest torn by the rocks, in doing so.

By noon about 150 lives were saved. Of the six cabin passengers, five are United States citizens, two of whom are Rev. Thos. H. Stacy, of Auburn, Maine, & Rev. F. W. Sandford, of Great Falls, N. H.

No language can do justice to the noble conduct of those brave boatmen whose names I have mentioned. They refused all compensation from our wrecked citizens, who in gratitude offered them what money they could spare and replied, "You have lost nearly everything; we cannot

take anything from you; but we will lend you money".

I make this report with the hope that the matter being brought to the knowledge of our Government, suitable acknowledgments may be made to those heros. It may certainly be considered a case specially worthy of recognition; and I feel our Government will not prove unmindful of it.

It may be important to state in this connection that the claims of our citizens for the loss of their property, brought before this office, against the Russian Company, have been duly transmitted by me, through our Consulate-General. Our Citizens, who were tourists visiting Palestine, have already proceeded on their journey.

I am, Sir,
Your Obedient Servant,
Henry Tillman
Consul

Consulate of the United States,
Jerusalem, Palestine,
March 13. 1871.

Prof. S. P. Langley
Secretary Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th January last, forwarded through the Honorable the Secretary of State, and with his recommendation.

With regard to the objects of your