

equal to that of the kingdom of Sweden. Sweden however possesses two and a half times as many inhabitants, or 5 millions in all. The density of the population in East Turkestan thus does not exceed 4 inhabitants to the sq. km. (10.4 to the sq. mile), so that taken as a whole the country is exceptionally sparsely inhabited. It is even more sparsely inhabited than Norway, which with about the same population possesses 6 inhabitants to the sq. km. (15.5 to the sq. mile). In Norway

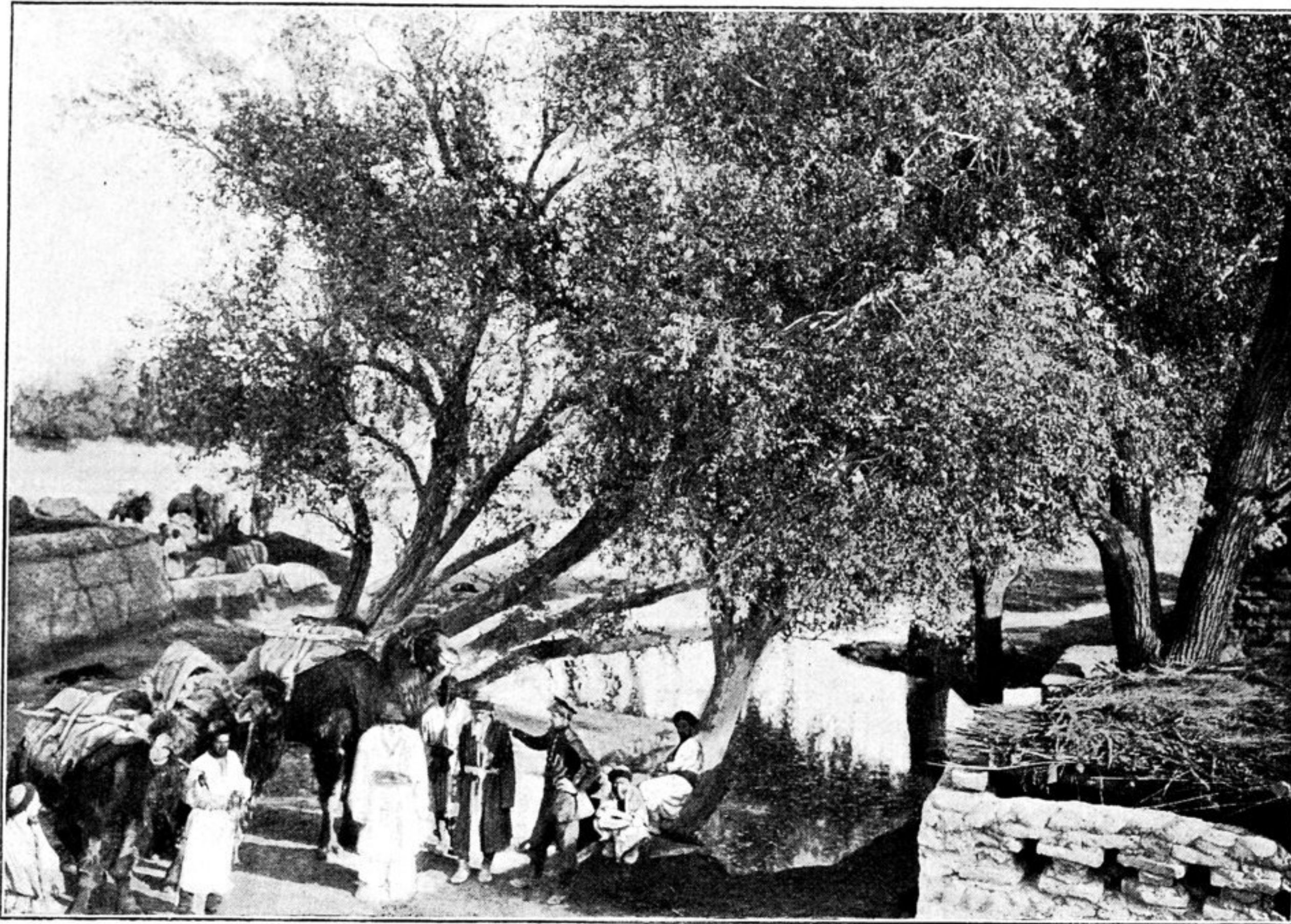


Fig. 271. A VIEW FROM TSCHARKLIK.

however only 0.7 per cent. of the total is cultivable; yet in East Turkestan the corresponding percentage is even less. The deserts in the latter country play the same part that the mountains do in the former. In Norway cultivation is only possible in the lower and broader parts of the valleys; in East Turkestan it is confined to the river-courses, and especially to those parts of them which are situated immediately below the foot of the mountains and where the fall is sufficiently great to admit of the practical execution of irrigation-works. This necessarily dictates a very unequal distribution of the population in East Turkestan. If we assume for each town an average area of 4 sq. km., the cultivated parts of the country will amount to about 1500 sq. km., with 1100 to 1200 inhabitants to each sq. km. In the forest tracts beside the rivers there can hardly be more than one or two inhabitants to each sq. km., by far the larger part of the Tarim basin being entirely uninhabited. The distribution and concentration of the population through the country