

shall do well to ascertain whether we too are not facing the problem which faced the Romans. Parts of China have been growing drier and less habitable during recent centuries, and if the process continues, we are in danger of being overrun by hungry Chinese in search of bread. We cannot, perhaps, prevent their migration; but if we understand the cause, we can profit by the lessons of the past and avoid the danger, as a railroad engineer avoids turning back by choosing a place where he can tunnel through the mountains to the broad uplands on the other side.

The importance of climate and of changes of climate in history and the allied sciences has never been fully realized. It is climate which causes the Eskimo to differ so widely from the East Indian; it is climate which almost irresistibly tempts the Arab to be a plunderer as well as a nomad, and allows the Italian to be an easy-going tiller of the soil. And, if Percival Lowell is right, it is the dry climate of Mars which has caused the inhabitants of that planet to adopt an advanced form of social organization, where war is unknown, and each man must be keenly conscious of the interdependence of himself and the universal state.

Four years of life in Asiatic Turkey and three years of travel in Central Asia have impressed upon me the importance of the geographic basis in the study of the anthropological sciences. Hence this book. It is an attempt to describe Central Asia in such a way as to show the relation of geography to history and the related sciences, and to show the immense influence which changes of climate have exerted upon history.

From the Caspian Sea on the west to Manchuria on the