

become accustomed to the darkness, I saw that the room was divided into halves by a depressed path four feet wide, running from the outside door to a store-room, and bordered on either side by posts supporting the roof of reeds and mud. On my side, where there was no furniture save a box, sat the peasant and his three sons. On the other, a young woman, looking like a withered hag, nursed her baby, and a girl, who at twenty was the mother of three children, worked not ungracefully as she sat cross-legged before a wooden spinning-wheel. A third, a girl of fifteen, put weeds on the fire below a big iron bowl of milk; and then cleaned a red earthenware jar, a rare possession, by dropping hot sizzling stones into the water which half filled it. The family ate their supper of hot bread and milk in relays, using a single unwashed wooden bowl and spoon, aided by the fingers. First the two older boys ate; next the father, taking his rosy four-year-old son affectionately in his arms, fed himself and the child alternately; then two demure little girls had their turn; and finally the women modestly retired to the store-room to eat what was left. The peasants' diet, so they told me, is almost invariable, morning, noon, and night, and month after month. Meat, at the local rate of a dollar for a whole sheep, is too expensive to be eaten oftener than three or four days a month. The peasant and his sons care for several hundred sheep and goats, but they all, like the house, the fields, the cows, the trees, and well-nigh the people themselves, belong to a "Bai," or rich man, who lives in Sanju. The peasants have all the milk, and whatever fruit and vegetables they can raise. Half the grain, after next year's seed has been taken out, goes to them