

and gourds, fields of Indian corn and grain, were around us on every side; and the air was full of the delicate fragrance of the yellow mustard fields, or the sweeter, heavier odor of the yellow flowers of the thorny gray eleagnus tree, or Trebizond date. Here, as in all the oases of the Lop basin, the low mud houses stood apart, as they naturally do in a secluded land where war and violence are rare, each by itself in the midst of fields, orchards, and shade trees, and yet none so remote as to be lonely. Only in the very centre of the town, where the weekly bazaar is held, were the houses close together. There the open country lanes, bordered by hedges or low mud walls, gave place for a distance to the typical streets of a bazaar town, dusty alleys between high walls of grayish-yellow mud, pierced every hundred feet by low wooden doors. It is hard to imagine any mode of life more conducive to conservatism and contentment than that of such small oases. Most of the five or six thousand people of Sanju live on their own small farms, and raise enough to support themselves in comfort. No one is poor, and no one is immoderately rich. No one is isolated either socially or physically. The farms are so small that neighbors are always close at hand; throughout the whole extent of the oasis, though it stretches along the river for a dozen miles, one always feels that he is not far from the centre of the village. The contentment of the people is shown by their care-free manner. Though I talked with scores of them freely in their own language, almost no one mentioned his grievances. The Chanto has no opportunity to expand his activities into new fields, and as he is content with his lot, there is nothing within or without to spur him on.