

and almost none for trees to be used as fuel and timber, or for plants for forage. In good years, the average poor inhabitant of Transcaspia or Persia raises grain enough for his family, and a small supply of fruit and vegetables, sufficient for his own needs, but usually not enough to sell. He cannot feed much live-stock, at best only a couple of donkeys or oxen, and three or four sheep or goats, if he is fortunate. His only fuel is weeds, laboriously gathered by the women and children, or dried dung, with which he ought to manure his fields. It suffices to cook his bread in out-of-door ovens, but not to warm him or his house. He has practically no means of getting anything but a bare sustenance — bread, with a little milk and a few vegetables, and more or less fruit. Only with the greatest difficulty can he scrape together enough produce to sell at the local bazaar in exchange for clothes to keep him warm in his fireless mud hut in winter. He is always on the verge of starvation, and has no hope of change.

In the Lop basin, conditions are far more favorable. The amount of grain that can be profitably sown, and hence the population, is limited by the spring water supply as absolutely as in Persia, but fortunately the supply keeps increasing as the season advances. The maximum flood from the loftiest mountains does not come till June. The amount of water is then so great that not only do even the poorest farmers have enough and to spare, but a large amount goes to waste and aids the underground water in supporting the reeds, tamarisks, and poplars which characterize the zone of vegetation. When once his grain has been sown and watered, the Chanto has little anxiety, for he knows that, however