

culty from the excessive amount of sediment would vanish. Though the absolute quantity of sediment might conceivably be greater than now, it would be diluted with a far larger amount of water, and spread over a much larger area. The hard cake would be reduced from two or three inches to perhaps a quarter of an inch, not enough to interfere with cultivation. Miran, even more than the other ruins, seems to verify the hypothesis of a change of climate during historic times.

After staying at Miran two days, we turned to the north, and a day's journey brought us to Abdal, on the bank of the Tarim River, near Przhevalski's Lop-Nor, or the lake of Kara Koshun, as Hedin prefers to call it. This hamlet is occupied by Lopliks, a clear-skinned, dark-haired people, probably Chantos with a large admixture of Mongol or Tibetan blood. They talk a Turki dialect but little different from that of the Chantos, like whom they dress. They have the same gentle, hospitable ways as the rest of the people of the Lop basin, but seemed to me more independent and self-respecting. I was amazed at the way in which some of them drew maps of roads, lakes, and rivers in the sand, representing the proportions and directions correctly to a degree rare among uncivilized people. Perhaps their ability comes from the necessity of keeping in mind the exact length and direction of the multitudinous and intricate canals and little lakes of the reedy swamp of Kara Koshun. They make their living as fishermen, paddling their dug-out canoes of poplar from pond to pond through narrow lanes bordered by reeds. Till eighty years ago, or less, when Charklik was founded, or better refounded, none of the Lopliks practiced agricul-