

the province is such that the city of Tabriz (p. 521) now numbers a population of nearly 200,000 and is the commercial metropolis of Persia, while the province (p. 517) contains 2,000,000 inhabitants, or from 25 to 40 per square mile, according to the estimate which is put upon its area. Ruins are found in many parts of Azerbaijan, but they do not give the impression of a country whose population and resources have steadily declined, but rather of a country which has suffered and recovered. If war and calamity are the chief causes of depopulation and the fall of nations, why has Tabriz lasted so steadily, and why is Azerbaijan so prosperous and populous?

A comparison of the four provinces of Khorasan, Azerbaijan, Kirman, and Sistan is suggestive. Khorasan (Curzon, pp. 180, 514) has suffered from war more severely than any other province of Persia. Its northern portion, where the rainfall is greatest and where also the greatest amount of fighting has taken place, is to-day one of the most prosperous portions of Persia. It contains abundant ruins, but they are by no means the impressive features which they are farther south. The southern and drier part of the province is full of ruins and has suffered great depopulation. Azerbaijan, which (Curzon, p. 514) has suffered from war more than any province except Khorasan, is the most prosperous and thickly populated part of Persia. The relative abundance of its water-supply renders its future hopeful. Sistan has suffered from wars, but less severely than the two preceding provinces. Nevertheless, it has been depopulated to a far greater extent. Its extreme aridity renders recovery well-nigh impossible, except along the Helmund. Kirman (Sykes, p. 60) lies so remote behind its barrier of deserts and mountains that it has suffered from war much less than any of the three preceding provinces. Yet its ruined cities and its appearance of hopeless depopulation are almost as great as in Sistan. If war and misgovernment are the cause of the depopulation of Persia, it is remarkable that the two provinces which have suffered most from war and not less from misgovernment should now be most prosperous and least depopulated; while the two which suffered less from war and no more from misgovernment have been fearfully and, it would seem, irreparably depopulated. It is also significant that the regions which have suffered the greatest ruin are those where water is least abundant and a decrease in the supply would most quickly be felt. Wars and misgovernment do not seem to necessarily cause depopulation, nor has that process gone on most rapidly where war has been most prevalent.

(b) *The density of the population of Iran.*—It is often asserted that with proper methods of irrigation Persia might support a much larger population, and the Persians are taken to task for not utilizing their resources. The Persians, as Holdich (p. 374) says of the Afghans, "have from time immemorial been great practical irrigation engineers. Every acre of rich soil is made to yield its abundance by means of every drop of water that can be extracted from overground or underground sources. It would be rash to say that the cultivable area of Afghanistan could be *largely* increased." Goldsmid, who knew Persia from end to end, was of the same opinion in regard to that country, as he shows (c, p. 186) when he speaks of "the precariousness of cultivation (in Persia as a whole), even where to many travelers fertility has appeared undeniable and of considerable extent."