

covered with white crusts of salt peter (potassium nitrate - KNO_3). The marsh which made up great sections of Southern Babylon, made regular grain growth impossible and this could be used only for pasture lands. To drain such swamp land was possible, but it could be accomplished only with great difficulty. In addition the cultivatable land was still further lessened through the establishment of artificial swamps, either as in the case of Sennacherib, in order to blot out the city of Babylon from the earth, completely, or as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, in order to protect the same city against the attacks of its enemies. In the desert and in the swamp lands there are Bedouins and other kinds of vagabonds who naturally did not think of the development of fields for agriculture. In Assyria, the mountains made additional difficulties for agriculture. Furthermore, "High rocks from which practically no vegetation could be grown," on which certain monarchs tried to produce harvests. So for the harvests of Babylonia in the main, there were really only the lands which lay along the river, of which that which was in the plain was the most valuable, and those that lay higher up and which could only be irrigated with difficulty. In order to increase the area that was cultivatable and at the same time to regulate the excess flow of water in spring, all of Sumer and Akkad was covered with a net of canals. Since the water was the necessary prerequisite for any hope of harvest.....'

The best and largest estates belonged to the crown. A number of instances of this are given.

The kings were rivaled as great land holders by the gods who though regarded as lords of the entire territory, yet were constantly obtaining possession of new territories. Therefore there were constant conflicts between the power of the king and the priest and it is entirely natural that as the incident grew, the power of the priest grew and the worldly power was decreased. Therefore, from the earliest times, it was the constant effort of each temple authority to increase the ground of the temple, either through purchase, presents, or inheritance. The