

should remember that Alexander lost three quarters of his army. And if we compare the old description with the narratives of Sir FREDERIC GOLDSMID<sup>1</sup> and Captain S. B. MILES,<sup>2</sup> who have travelled the same way in our time, it would be hard to call the climate of the coastland in any way worse now than in 325 B.C. The same aridity, the same heat, sand dunes and occasional rains, the same poor population living on fish and dates and dwelling in miserable huts of the same kind and drinking from brackish wells exactly as in Alexander's time!

WILHELM TOMASCHEK who has compared the descriptions of the Arabian geographers of the 10th and 11th centuries, as Istakhri and MAQDISI, with the modern descriptions of the Persian deserts, arrives at the conclusion: »Aus der Vergleichung ergibt sich mit Sicherheit, dass die Zustände innerhalb des letzten Jahrtausends auf diesem Gebiete merkwürdig stationär geblieben sind.»<sup>3</sup> Tomaschek believes that the oases of Eastern Persia a thousand years ago could not feed more inhabitants than now. From the last 630 years, after Marco Polo's journey, one comes to the same result: the Persian desert is not worse now than then.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. W. F. HUME has obtained the same result referring to the climate of Egypt. »None of the observations recorded in the past give any indication that the climate differed greatly from that of today, and rainstorms were as rare during the time of Herodotus as they are now . . . The regularity in the character of the Nile floods through the long period of time during which they have been recorded also tends to indicate that the conditions now obtaining were those prevalent throughout the historical period in Egypt.» But, regarding the post-glacial changes in general Hume says: »The studies made in Egypt point to conditions in which deposition exceeded erosion, and water-accumulation prevailed over desiccation. On theoretical grounds we should expect that there would be a great reduction of temperature during the glacial period, and the present climate of Egypt is of such a character that such reduction would produce very marked effects in increasing rainfall and the other agents of denudation.» He has 8 different points of evidence for the gradual desiccation in post-glacial times, amongst which the former presence of plant-life where desert conditions now prevail, the drying up of the great lakes in the Kharga Oasis, the production of general terraces on the large scale in former days, probably as the result of more frequent rainfall and frost-denudation, etc.<sup>5</sup>

From 20 years' travels in Syria, Palestine and Egypt Professor MAX BLANCKENHORN has arrived at the same conclusions.<sup>6</sup> Since long ago it has been known that

<sup>1</sup> Journal Royal Geographical Society Vol. XXXIII (1863), p. 181 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Journal Royal Geographical Society Vol. XLIV (1874), p. 163 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Zur historischen Topographie von Persien, Part II, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> See my: Overland to India, Vol. II, p. 67 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> Climatic changes in Egypt during post-Glacial Times, in the work of the 11th international Geolog. Congress in Stockholm 1910, p. 421 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> As to the historical time he says: »Während der historischen Zeit hat sich das Klima Palästinas wie auch wohl dasjenige Ägyptens nicht wesentlich geändert. Die in Palästina bemerkbare Aus-