

none of our animals would even touch it." Sykes describes the same route in equally uncomplimentary terms:—

"Gurz, the first stopping-place, is generally considered to be the worst stage in this part of the desert, the pools of water being quite undrinkable. . . . In summer, owing to the heat, Gurz is little better than a death-trap, and here, more than elsewhere, the abomination of desolation is realized. . . . At Shurgaz [the next stage] the water was just a little better, but so scanty that there was none for the camels." At the end of the third day, after marching over a hundred miles through the worst part of the desert, a better region was reached. "A day's halt was imperative, as our camels could hardly move." That a large army could cross such a desert is hardly credible; that such an army should have no hardships worthy of mention by the historian is less credible; and that they could bring elephants with them is least credible.

The elephants of Krateros are not the only ones mentioned in Persian history. Malcolm speaks of them as abundant in antiquity in the kingdom of Persia, as is shown both by the ancient records and by the sculpture of the country. Mazanderan, the rainy province immediately south of the Caspian, is the only part of the country that could now support them, but they are spoken of in other places.

Another interesting commentary on the climate of antiquity is afforded by a comparison of a description of the province of Kirman as it is to-day, by Sykes, and as it was in the past, by Strabo. The modern description runs: "The whole province can best be described as partly desert, pure and simple, and partly desert tempered by oases. . . . As