

constancy or variability of the climate during the last 2000 years may be seen from the following quotation from Léontieff's narrative, "De Tiflis aux Indes," where it is said: "En résumé, il résulte des dires de M. Léontieff, que les conditions climatériques et biologiques du Beloudjistan (ancienne Gadrousie) ont dû brusquement se modifier depuis le passage d'Alexandre. Aujourd'hui, non seulement une armée, mais même un escadron de cavalerie ne trouverait pas assez de munitions et d'eau pour y subsister. Une grande quantité d'anciens canaux obstrués et de petits fleuves desséchés confirment cette opinion du voyageur et démontrent l'existence de la culture dans des temps plus reculés. En général, le Beloudjistan doit être considéré comme une demeure fort ancienne de l'humanité à en juger par les rochers qui se trouvent près de Toump où se sont parfaitement conservées des cavernes d'habitations rupestres."<sup>1</sup>

What are the conclusions we can draw from this? Well, that in remote antiquity one general lost his whole army, and another the greater part of his. A thousand years later a lively traffic, and even armies, used the roads through southern Baluchistan. In our days, two officers, who knew the country from their own observation, have expressed their opinion that a large army could march through, provided it followed certain reasonable routes, and would not encounter any obstacles, but would find all it needed in the country. We are tempted to believe that the conditions are more favourable at the present day than in earlier times. In fact, the result would depend on the equipment and preparations, and scouting, and lastly on a favourable year, for it now occurs occasionally that the south-west monsoon fails in India, and then millions of people die of starvation.

Alexander wished to make the adventure, and staked his chances with all too great recklessness. The enterprise did not succeed, because the country was a desert, as it is now. The fact that he himself came through safely, and for some years more could brandish his victorious spear over Asia, is very apt to make us forget his troubles

<sup>1</sup> *Compte rendu des séances de la Soc. de Géogr. de Paris* (1893), p. 27.