

CHAPTER L

POST-GLACIAL CLIMATIC CHANGES IN PERSIA

BEFORE we can arrive at a satisfactory conclusion with regard to climatic variations within historic times we must try to gain an insight into the probable changes that affected Iran during the long interval which has passed since the glacial period.

An invaluable guide or key to the solution of the problem is afforded us by the fluctuating level of the Caspian Sea, and I take the liberty of citing some of the results which Professor Eduard Brückner has set forth in his remarkable work, *Klimaschwankungen seit 1700 nebst Bemerkungen über die Klimaschwankungen der Diluvialzeit*. In this work Brückner has collected all the available notices and observations of the water-level of the Caspian Sea.

Of course the data are more numerous and reliable the nearer they are to our own times. Monteith remarks that during the period 1811-28 the Caspian Sea sank and all the lakes of Persia also became shallower. Sokoloff places the beginning of the period of fall in the years 1809-14, and Lenz says that the sea fell 10 feet from 1816 to 1830. Brückner estimates the sinking of the surface from the beginning of the century to 1830 at $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet. A minimum occurred, according to Khanikoff, in the years 1844-45, and then followed a rise, which from the middle of the sixties showed itself distinctly on all the shores of the Caspian Sea.

By the aid of ancient buildings still existing and by historical notices we obtain some reliable data from a past which extends back for 1000 years. A measurement on the walls of Derbend enabled Khanikoff to prove that