

It is evident that such a horizontal filling as the plastic salt loam of the Kevir cannot be a löss formation. It still bears all the signs of a salt lake bottom. It is, indeed, wet in winter, and the ground water stands quite close to the surface. The perfectly level salt layer excludes any supposition of æolian origin. But, as far as I can make out, the conditions in Persia are by no means at variance with Richthofen's explanation of immense löss deposits, as much as 2300 feet thick, in China and Mongolia. He certainly found no trace of glaciers even on the highest hills of China, and considers that the diluvial ice epochs passed by China without leaving any vestiges, owing to the dryness of the climate. The effect of a dry climate is that the fine wind-blown products of weathering fill up all hollows in course of time to such an extent that all inequalities are smoothed out, and even mounds and small hills are buried in them. Thus a flat, basin-shaped salt steppe is formed, on all sides skirted by hills. If the climate then becomes moist, the salt steppe is turned into a löss basin. The precipitation is collected into rivers, which cut deeply into the löss deposits.

During the dry period preceding the ice age the same æolian deposition probably took place in the enclosed basins of Persia. The only unmistakable traces of löss deposits I found at the margin of the Kevir were at Turut. The village is, as I have already stated, built partly on, and partly at the foot of, a terrace of löss which falls steeply or precipitously towards the flat, even slope which runs down to the edge of the Kevir. In the yellow beds of löss, which after rain have a surface as smooth and slippery as the Kevir, the brook of Turut cuts its way down along a furrow, which is shut in on both sides by steep or vertical walls of löss 40 to 50 feet high. The front of the löss bed, towards the salt desert, has a very irregular outline running out in projections and blocks between intruding bays. Of its prolongation east and west nothing is known to me. Northwards the yellow expanse seems to pass, at a distance of perhaps 6 miles, into the grey tone of the present detritus fan which runs up to the foot of the nearest hills. As far as the foot