

(2) the intensity of evaporation ; (3) the absorption of water in the ground ; (4) the amount of sediment carried to the lake ; (5) the salinity of the water. As, now, the amount of precipitation diminished during the Post-Glacial period, the Kevir lake disappeared, or at any rate it entered on a stage in which it was on the verge of annihilation. The volume of water which is now contributed to the basin, either directly by rain or indirectly by rivers, is not sufficient to cover the sedimentary deposits, which therefore are exposed to view. The large salt crusts we find in the interior of the desert indicate a period of abundant precipitation during the most recent period. When larger surface lakes than usual were formed during such moist intervals, the salt was deposited in their beds, and then another dry period caused the lakes to disappear. Undoubtedly, such accumulations have taken place during a very long space of time. Consequently if a crowbar be thrust in certain places in the Kevir through the surface clay, it comes upon a stony salt layer at a depth of a couple of feet. This salt layer has evidently been precipitated in a very considerable lake, and it has afterwards been covered in the course of time by fresh silt. A bore-hole in the Kevir would no doubt reveal a whole series of alternate layers of silt and salt, the latter marking the conclusion of a period of humidity, the former a period of the same character in the main as the present one.

Walther calls the transporting work of the wind deflation, and considers this power as the principal cause of the desert relief. This force has, however, no marked validity in a kevir desert : The horizontal surface form itself shows that the wind is powerless in the long-run. We miss the deeply carved-out wind furrows so characteristic of the Lop country and Seistan, where the tremendously violent winds impress on the clay beds such a fantastic relief. And that there is no lack of wind any one will soon be convinced who travels along the southern margin of the Kevir. On some of the detritus slopes are found quantities of particularly fine specimens of wind-worn stones in bowl-shaped and tetrahedral forms. The winds which have been able to grind down these stones have