

been powerless against the surface of the Kevir desert. However hard they may blow they will never in a thousand years change its even surface. The reason is not far to seek. In winter, when the soil is wet and viscous, there is no possibility of deflation and corrasion. In the summer the salt-impregnated loam is dried up into a stony mass, and, even if the wind is then able to do some little damage, the result is obliterated during the wet season. The whole constitution of the contents of the basin must also be taken into consideration, the ground water lying near the surface, the loose, slowly moving material which, in obedience to the law of gravity, is always striving to assume a horizontal position. No superficial changes by the action of wind are, then, noticeable. This fact stands out with the greatest clearness in the Lop country, where one passes from yellow clay deposited in water to the dry *shor* beds where formerly salt lakes lay. The former region is scored with wind trenches several yards deep parallel to the prevailing wind; the latter is even, untouched by wind, and shows no trace of wind furrows. It must, therefore, have a consistency which presents a great resistance to the sculpturing and planing forces of the wind.

The old religion of Persia, founded by Zoroaster, may, singular as it may appear, afford a proof of the constancy of the climate during two and a half thousand years or more. For, according to the most probable data, Zoroaster lived not long before the rise of the Achaemenid dynasty. According to Justi, this religion, as it is set forth in the Avesta, took the place of the old Magian religion of the Medes. "The teaching of Zoroaster was first fully accepted and developed in Eastern Iran, and in western lands was mixed with foreign elements. The genuine Iranian spirit has always had its stronghold in Eastern Iran, while the western parts of the country were exposed to Babylonian and Greek influence." Night and sleep are hostile powers. By the uprising of the sun the power of demons is restrained; thanks to the sun, irrigation, agriculture, and other work can be carried on, whereby the extension of desert is checked. "When the desert with its storms smoothes out the roads, so that at night only the bright