

and that its importance stands out in every period of military history, we find an indirect but very striking proof of the extension of the desert in former times over the same area as at present. Politics, wars, religions, all have been affected by the geography of the country, and everywhere we detect the influence of the great desert on the life of the people. As long as records go back, the great desert has lain where it still lies, and, on the whole, with the same characteristics as to-day.