

blown sand beating into one's face. I suspect, therefore, that such a sandy zone as this comes into existence only under certain conditions of wind and configuration of the country, and that when these conditions cease to exist, the blown sand can no longer gather into dunes. Granted that the area constantly receives additions from the north, and that the blown sand sweeps over the crests of the dunes, still these do not increase appreciably, for when they have attained a certain height their tops are blown away again by the wind. And the sand skimmed off the last row of dunes passes on southwards to form dunes at perhaps 100 miles or more away, where again the necessary conditions are present.

That, on the other hand, such a zone of sandhills as lies to the north-west of Yezd is in a state of motion, seems beyond doubt. It is proved by the ruins already mentioned, which are now buried in sand. About these sands Floyer expresses himself as follows: "After leaving Yezd, I crossed at about 10 miles north the very extensive remains of ancient Yezd, buried in sand; and it appeared reasonable to think that the present Yezd was gradually being buried, but the process was so slow, if indeed it was going on, that no one could give me any information on the subject."¹ Large areas around the town are, according to Curzon, full of ruins, and in his opinion the sand is encroaching from the east. It seems, however, as if this belt of dunes is moving towards the south-east, following the main direction of the valley, though the local wind conditions may force the sand to settle on the eastern side, where it is sheltered by the walls. The existence of ruins need not, however, be a proof that the town was formerly much larger. The houses are built of sun-dried bricks and clay, and if a quarter of the town is invaded by sand, it is deserted and the people build new cabins and houses on clear ground in the neighbourhood. Yezd is a wandering town persecuted and hunted by the sand.

This is what Marco Polo says of Yezd: "Yasdi also is properly in Persia; it is a good and noble city, and has a great amount of trade. They weave there quantities of a

¹ *Unexplored Baluchistan*, p. 354.