

burning drought. God-i-zirre, which only in certain years contains water, is, as a rule, dry, and I suspect that Hamun-i-mashkil and Lora-hamun also are temporary phenomena. The great Hamun only in Seistan is an exception, but this lake is fed by the great Hilmend, which draws its waters from hills which are exposed to the precipitation of the south-west monsoon. And yet the Hamun also is following the general course, for the lake fluctuates tremendously in different seasons.

In Eastern Persia, then, one can hardly speak of any but dead or dying lakes. It is to a great degree this circumstance which accounts for their occurrence in close association with driftsand. The existence of belts of dunes of more or less extent on the southern margins of all the depressions in Eastern Persia struck me forcibly during my last journey in this country. The stage at which the lakes happen to be seems to be of no special consequence, for driftsand lies to the south of the great Hamun, just as in the southern parts of the Tebbes basin. Whether the lakes are living or dead, still the sand is there. God-i-zirre is rather a water-channel than kevir lakes, but this depression has its sand-belts on the southern edge all the same. With a little ingenuity we could extend this law on a large scale also to the Sea of Aral and the Caspian, though the sandy areas there have rather their sites on the south-eastern and eastern coasts.

Of course the configuration of the country also plays an important part. On the southern shore of the Sea of Aral the shifting delta of the Amu-darya prevents the accumulation of ordinary dunes, and on the southern shore of the Caspian both the plastic and climatic conditions are as unfavourable as possible to their formation.

Before we pass on to seek an explanation of this conspicuous phenomenon in one of the most weathered, desiccated, and scorched-up regions of Asia, we will select some instructive examples from the experiences of other travellers with especial regard to the attitude of the sand to lakes.

Exactly a hundred years ago, in the year 1810, Lieutenant Pottinger accomplished a bold and meritorious