

exposed to great danger ; for though these boats are made as strong as possible, yet they bend and heel over in the waves, so that the bundles of rushes part. The man had plied across the Hamun for six years, and never lost anything, and would not run any risks, for he was responsible for the travellers' effects. But if the storm continued for two days he would build two large *tutins* of a more solid make. He did not advise making the voyage by night, for there was no moon, and if the canoes grounded on banks they would go to pieces. We had, therefore, to exercise patience and wait.

Three courses run across the Hamun. The one we were to take is called Rah-i-torotki, and is reckoned 2 farsakh long. It was said that this course had not had water more than twenty days, and before that it was quite dry, for the Hilmend was then lower than usual, and the rain had been slight. This year, however, the supply of water had been so abundant that the swamp was expected to be full all the year round.

The second route is called Rah-i-surkh-gezi, and the third Rah-i-Shah-rud. This last, where the telegraph line runs, is so shallow that it is not navigable by canoes, but can be used by camels and other animals, though caravans do not cross at this time of year.

While we stood talking on the shore we could see the water rapidly gaining ground and spreading out at the rate of perhaps 6 feet in half an hour. In order to observe its progress we set pegs at the water's edge and watched the water penetrate into all the small holes and shallow hollows. The strong northerly wind was, it was said, driving the water southwards, where large areas round Kuh-i-Khoja would be flooded. But if the wind suddenly abated the water would flow back northwards, the flooded areas in the south would be laid bare again, and our tents would be in danger where they stood now. The Hilmend now carried down vast quantities of water daily, which spread over the shallow lake basin. Later in the day, or during a space of five hours, the water had extended 92 feet beyond our marks. The lake, therefore, expanded very quickly in our direction.