

had come to an end; but fortunately there was still some flour, and later in the day we procured three fowls and a dozen eggs. So we were saved from hunger.

On April 9 the temperature was  $52^{\circ}$  at seven o'clock, and the usual cold northerly wind whistled and moaned outside. There was not a cloud in the sky; the hills in the west were brightly illumined by the sun, but appeared in very feeble tints, and only Kuh-i-Khoja was as sharp in outline as the day before. The small village had disappeared, with the exception of one hut, where children screamed in rivalry with a monotonously humming hand-mill. There had been no danger of a flood, for during the night the water had retired fully 33 feet from my mark. The land is so flat that a fall of barely more than four-fifths of an inch is sufficient to lay large areas dry.

From lack of caravan animals we still remain prisoners, and have to wait. My men stand looking south-eastwards for a long time, and the field-glass passes from hand to hand, but the black specks on the horizon are only grazing animals.

At last! At nine o'clock Abbas Kuli Bek reports that a caravan is coming, and a little later some of the servants of the Consulate arrive, with fifteen mules and some riding horses. All our belongings are hoisted up quickly; we mount the horses, and off we go to meet with English hospitality in a plague-stricken country.

With the large open water of the Hamun on our left, we rode over a marshy peninsula, and then followed a dry, winding path to the village Afselabad, where we called to our aid six *bellad*, or guides, who knew every detail of the intricate waterways, and where the best fords were situated. As I had my own six men, as well as twelve from the Consulate, there was no danger for the baggage, and even at the worst places we could pass through dryshod.

We had first to cross three broad delta arms of the Hilmend, which carried swiftly-running water, even forming rapids, and very thick with soil and slime, washed down from the wind-swept plains so lately dry. Then followed a large swampy lake, with very shallow water, and narrow,