

filled with sand, and have partially fallen in. The surrounding fields are studded with light-yellow dunes contrasting strongly with the fresh verdure. The dunes are crescent- and shield-shaped as far as they have not been altered by fences of twigs thrust into their crests to prevent them moving. Only to leewards, south or south-east, there is no sand.

Two more villages, and then we ride through large wheatfields smelling pleasantly of the wheat which will be ripe for harvest in twenty days. And then, again, comes a belt of sand on level clay ground, and with tamarisks which blossom amid the dunes.

Through an intricate maze of dunes and tamarisks, flooded ground and reed huts, we come to an arm of the Hilmend, the Rud-i-Seistan, and follow its right bank for a while. The current is swift, and the thick muddy water breaks into abrupt waves in face of the wind. The water-level is very high, being almost up to the edge of the high-water terraces, and the large river is cool, the temperature being 61° . On the left bank is the village Burch-i-ser-i-bend, "the fort at the beginning of the embankment," and on the right bank nomads wander with their flocks. They are some Parsis, others Baluchis, and live either in huts of reeds or in grey beehives of mud daubed over a framework of tamarisk stems.

The Berton boat, which was only needed here, was made ready, and the baggage was taken over in several trips. It was more difficult to get the dromedaries over the river. A man put under one arm a bundle of ordinary well-corked gourd-shells, and supported by them swam over the river, holding the nose-rope in his other hand. Another man clung fast behind the hump to prevent the animal coming down on his nose in the water. With this ballast the animal is kept in equilibrium, and can hold his head above the surface. Some obstinate animals had to be towed over with the help of the boat. Our four riders rode on the horses through the river without trouble.

We set up our tents on the bank in a furious wind, which howled and moaned mournfully outside while the large volume of water rushed by, a striking contrast to the