

dry country before us. At length Riza came and served up his first supper.

A northerly storm raged all night with whirling and swirling driftsand, which penetrated everywhere and formed a heap 4 inches high in my tent. All odds and ends, all sweepings and refuse that had lain about in the evening, were covered with sand, and the ground looked neat and tidy. And when we again mounted our dromedaries, and the storm continued with the same impetuosity, we were pestered by blown sand, and closed our eyes and mouths as tightly as we could.

Between a large lagoon and the river we pass along a narrow spit, and then leave the Rud-i-Seistan and ride among dunes and tamarisks. Then we cross some mounds and ridges of clay and ascend to a plateau with its surface bestrewn with gravel. In the distance scattered villages and ruins are seen, and to the north the green belt of vegetation along the river, bounded on the farther side by a plateau similar to our own. This rise in the ground, which lies some 30 feet above the bed of the river, marks the eastern edge of the Hamun basin, and floods cannot extend beyond it.

After we have crossed two roads from deserted villages in the slightly undulating country, we come to the place where the last Commission had its camp, like an abandoned town where only bare mud walls are left, and silence and desolation reign. The mud houses seem to have been erected in separate quarters for the various members of the Commission. Most of them had sloping roofs to carry off the rain-water. A large space was taken up with clay mangers, where the horses stood to eat their corn. Several skeletons of dromedaries lay where the Afghan caravan men had their camp. The climate of Seistan was fatal to many of their animals. A more dreary and dismal site for a camp can hardly be imagined, but there was good reason for its selection. Only up here were they safe from floods, gadflies, and mosquitos. The place is now called *ordu* or the camp.

We go down to a steppe with tamarisks and grass, and on the left the little fort of Kohak crowns a solitary mound.