

springs where it welled up to the surface was about 38° Fahr., and Sven Hedin is of the opinion that the springs assist in keeping the waters of the lake cool.

Rakas-tal, 15,056 feet above sea-level, is very irregular in outline: it is 16 miles in length, and the width varies from 4 miles in the north to about 13 miles in the south. The lake is very stormy, and Sven Hedin was able to take only a few soundings. He found the greatest depth in the northern part to be 54 feet, while in the south, in the middle of the sound between the island La-che-to and the mainland, the depth was 113 feet.

**Lake Hámun.**—The Seistan is described by Sir H. M. M'Mahon<sup>1</sup> Seistan depression. as a large depression, some 7000 square miles in area and without any outlet to the sea, which receives all the drainage of a vast tract of country, extending to over 125,000 square miles, girt on all sides by high mountain ranges. It lies half in Afghanistan and half in Persia, and is about midway between the Russian-Turkestan border and the Persian Gulf. The Hámun, or lake area, into which the various Seistan rivers discharge their surplus waters, lies in the north and north-west parts of the depression. In spring and early summer the Khash, Tarah Rud, and Harut Rud bring large volumes of water from the north, but during a portion of the year their higher waters are taken off for irrigation. The Helmund, the principal river of Seistan, 600 miles in length, rises near Cabul, drains a large portion of Afghanistan, and divides into three branches after arriving in Seistan. In the flood season the Hámun becomes a vast sea, more than 100 miles in length, and varying from 5 to 15 miles in breadth. Every few years, when the water reaches a certain height, it escapes through the Shelag channel into another large and still deeper lake-depression called the Gaud-i-Zirreh. When the Hámun water, which is singularly free from salt, overflows through the Shelag, the water in that channel becomes drinkable; but at other times the water found throughout its course in large stagnant pools is nearly pure brine, with solid salt crystals round the margins. Evaporation is very rapid in the region of the Seistan, owing to the heat and the strong winds, and as the water of the Gaud-i-Zirreh dries up, a thick deposit of salt is left behind. According to T. R. J. Ward, Irrigation Officer of the 1903 Mission for the survey and exploration of Seistan, 10 feet of water is removed by evaporation alone in a year.

**The Lake of Bákhtegán** (also known as the Lake of Niriz) is situated in Fars, a province in the south-west of Persia, bordering on the Persian Gulf, and is fed by the Kur and its affluents.

<sup>1</sup> *Geogr. Journ.*, vol. xxviii. p. 209, 1906.