

Bahr el-Ghazal, is also given to a broad current which flows from the mouth of the Shari River to the eastern extremity of the lake, following the shore to the north-west side of the lake, where it gradually loses itself.

Lieutenant Boyd Alexander<sup>1</sup> explored Lake Chad in 1904, and found progress across it by boat to be extremely difficult, owing to the great belts of high reeds and the shallowness of the water. He describes the lake as being practically divided into two basins by about 25 miles of marsh and thick bush. The northern basin, which receives the waters of the River Yo, is the shallower, apparently not exceeding 4 feet in depth. The southern basin, into which the Shari flows, has a depth of about 12 feet in places, and the islands in it, which form a prominent feature, are fertile and thickly populated. The lake, which is generally shallow and swampy, opens out into a fine sheet of water round the mouth of the Shari.

The **Aujila Depression** is a remarkable zone of oases or depressions extending from the Wady Fareg, near the south-east angle of the Gulf of Sidra on the coast of Tripolis, eastwards to the Bahriyeh (Lesser) Oasis in Middle Egypt. This depression assumes somewhat the aspect of a long, winding, dry water-course, expanding at intervals into patches of perennial verdure and shallow saline basins, and was thought by some to have been of marine origin. Hence Rohlfs conceived the idea of again transforming this chain of oases into an inland gulf by admitting the Mediterranean waters through a cutting to the Wady Fareg and opening a waterway into the Libyan Desert. This project, analogous to Roudaire's scheme in respect of the Algerian Sahara, was subsequently abandoned when it was discovered that only one of the oases, Swah, with its eastern extension, was below sea-level.

**Kufara Oases.**—South of the Aujila depression in the heart of the Libyan Desert five oases, called the Kufara Oases, stretch for a distance of 200 miles north-west and south-east, with a total area of 7000 square miles. Although there are no surface streams, fresh water in abundance is easily obtained by tapping the underground water occurring at depths of from 3 to 10 feet on the margins of saline ponds and marshes.

**Birket Qarun** is a brackish lake in the lowest part of the Fayûm province of Egypt, a large circular depression in the Libyan Desert separated from the Nile valley by a strip of desert two to seven miles in width. A narrow watercourse, over 200 miles long, the Bahr Yusef, enters the lake through a gap in the Libyan Hills, connecting it with the Nile and forming a narrow neck of cultivation across the desert. The Birket Qarun is usually regarded as a remnant

<sup>1</sup> See *Geogr. Journ.*, vol. xxx. p. 119, 1907.