

Fig. 223. A VIEW FROM THE SOUTHERN CLAY TERRACE PARTLY COVERED WITH SAND.

Here again we dug a well, the temperature of the ground being -1.5° at 25 cm., $+0.4^{\circ}$ at 50 cm., $+1.6^{\circ}$ at 75 cm., and $+2.1^{\circ}$ at 86 cm., where we struck the ground-water. The sp. gr. was 0.0215, so that the water was absolutely undrinkable. On the north-west slopes of a couple of dunes, immediately under the crest, there still remained a narrow ribbon of snow, so that there must be some downfall there, as well as in the Kuruk-tagh, during the winter. The grazing at Atschik-kuduk is rather poor, and as both water and fuel are wanting, caravans avoid the place, preferring to encamp at a spot about 10 km. farther to the east, where the grazing is said to be a good deal better. The caravan I have mentioned had marched straight on without stopping at Atschik-kuduk. There were also signs of another caravan, which had passed apparently about a month before. The footprints were quite distinct in the moist, marshy schor, showing up white against its dark brown surface by reason of the thin efflorescences of salt with which they were lined.

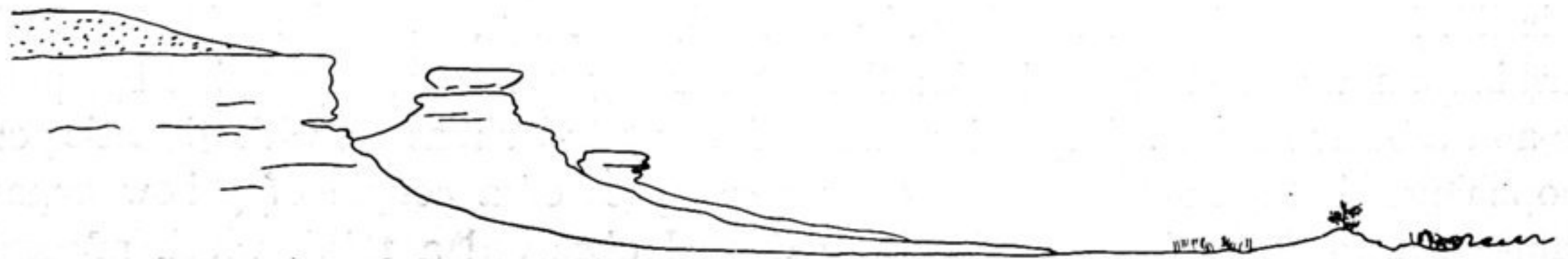


Fig. 224.

On the 6th February, after the little kamisch oasis of Atschik-kuduk had thinned out and melted away, the ground still preserved the same characteristics, and was so soft that the camels advanced very slowly and heavily, leaving deep foot-