

blue water. Now there is nothing but one vast sweep of greyish-yellow, barren, desolate, arid desert. And yet to one who has studied the Lop-nor problem as earnestly as I have done, it is a scene not devoid of sublimity; the work which for century upon century the winds and the storms have been accomplishing lie spread out like a map before our very eyes. All the countless jardangs and table-like elevations of the surface stand out on the picture with extraordinary regularity and distinctness, and between them the parallel wind-eroded gullies stretch away as far as the horizon in every direction. Of the Kuruk-tagh close at hand not a single mountain was visible, because at that season the atmosphere was constantly charged with fine dust. Standing on the top of the tower, one finds oneself the centre of a wilderness of yellow clay, appalling in its monotony.

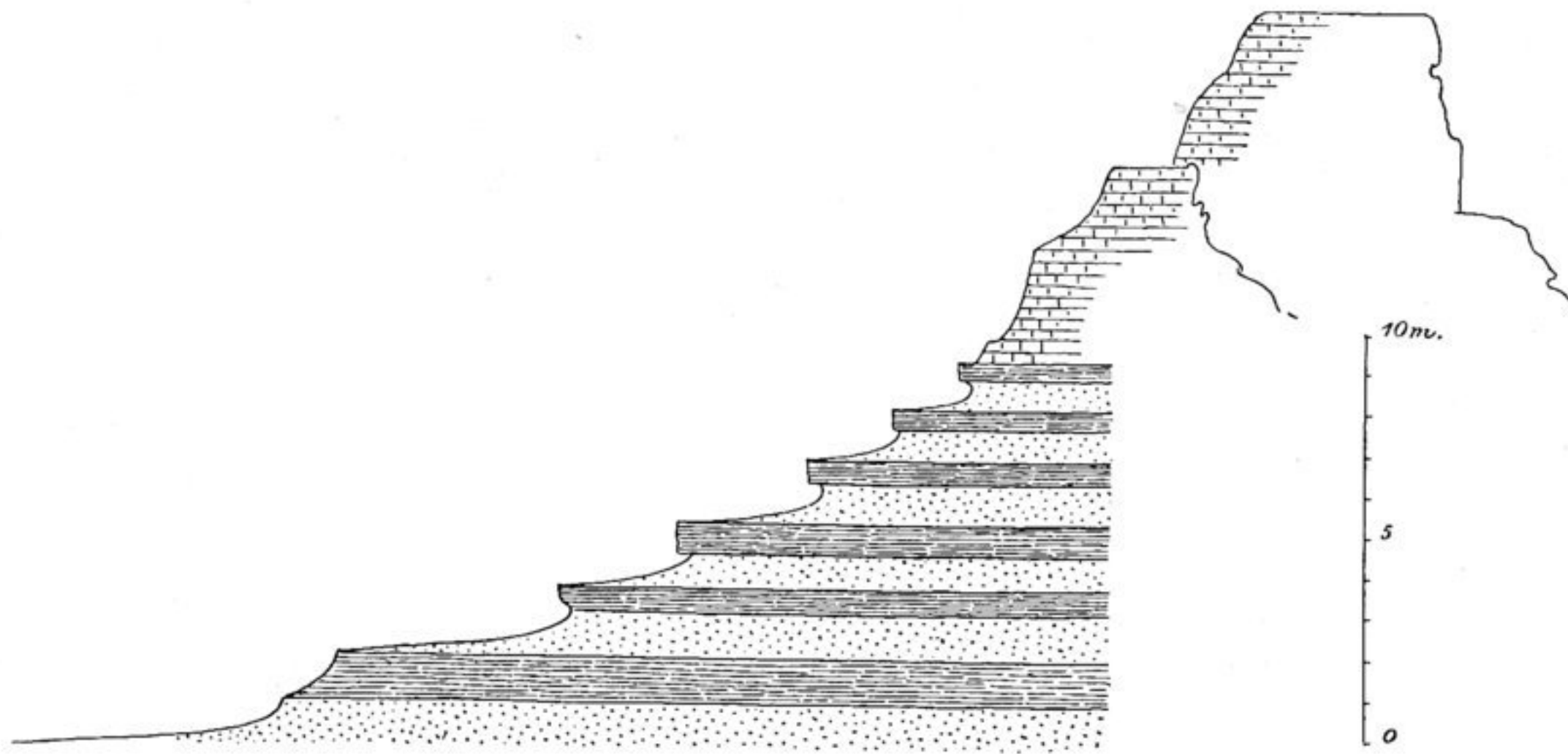


Fig. 292.

The above fig. (292) gives a profile of the tower and the platform on which it stands. The latter is 9.6 m. high, so that when the tower is looked at from the bottom of the depression on its western side, it appears to be twice the height it actually is, and so when seen from the north and the north-east. On the south-east and south the platform is not broken down, but connects with the platforms that support the houses B, C, and D; so that when it is viewed from that direction, the tower appears to be a good deal lower.

On its western face, where there is no timber, the profile of the platform can be beautifully seen. Six different layers or bands of hard clay material, with vertical edges, project here after the manner of cornices, and are separated by layers of sand, which shelve down from one clay band to another. The heights from the bottom of the depression to the upper edge of each clay layer successively are —

Layer 1	1.6 m.
» 2	3.2 »
» 3	4.8 »
» 4	6.4 »
» 5	8.0 »
» 6	9.6 »