

panses as these could only be occasioned by overflows of the lake, with consequent deposition of sediment. According to the statements of my guides, the level of the lake is in summer considerably higher than it was then, and in fact the marks on the ground showed distinctly how far the water-line had extended; all the way we were able to discern an extremely flat strip of sediment rising but little above the surface of the water. In the far east this strip of sediment is as much as 400 m. broad, but afterwards it narrows down to 100 m., 50 m., and finally it ceases altogether where the shore is shut in by a steeper rampart. This strip of sediment embraced here and there small frozen pools and lagoons, and exhibited unambiguous evidences that the lake had shrunk somewhat since the summer. Such small quantity of grass as there was at Camp LXXXII soon came to an end, and the scrub also grew scantier. After that the dry ground at the east end of the Kum-köl, which consists of sand and soil, is absolutely barren. Where the mud was moist and frozen we had a good hard path to travel on, but generally the frozen crust was so thin that the horses trod through it.

The southern slope of the Kalta-alaghan now stood out before us in its full length, extending westwards in wild, fantastic cliffs without any snow. Occasionally its flanks are pierced by transverse glens. Some small bluffs appeared to be quite detached and separate from the main mass of the range. The saj slopes up gradually from the foot of the mountains; this flat detritus scree appeared to narrow somewhat towards the west. Rather low hills extend along the southern shore.

A very distinct gap which we saw in the crest of the Kalta-alaghan was said to answer to the Amban-aschkan-davan, and south-south-west of it we reached the eastern part of the lake, the shore of which runs west-north-west. We were travelling on the recently mentioned strip of sediment, having on our immediate right a plainly marked terrace of about a meter in height, entirely barren on the surface and scored by a multitude of gulleys. The high water reaches up to the foot of the terrace, and below the latter there were springs then flowing, the water they yielded being almost fresh and encircled by large sheets of ice. Here and there the salt lay however in cakes and sheets about an inch thick. The lake was here open, except in the smaller sheltered bays and creeks, and the shore was mostly strewn with thin strips of ice flung up by the movement of the waves. Farther on the terrace passes into a more rounded rampart standing back a few meters from the existing water-line. At Camp LXXXIII there was not a trace of grass, only at the most an occasional scrubby plant as hard as wood, which we found useful for burning. Along the shore lay a narrow fringe of driftwood, of the same scrub, but it was wet and rotten and impregnated with sand. We saw no wild animals in this desolate region.

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