



Fig. 19. Mesa formations near camp no. 77

spring of 1931 during HÖRNER's expedition to Lop-nor; he recognized the place at once. We thus had an interesting link-up with CHEN's earlier map, and knew that Altmish-bulaq was 27 km away to the N. N. W.

We were soon out in the open again, but we often passed yellow reedy islands rising out of the clear, grey-green water. Our direction was north-west and north. We entered a labyrinth of islets and reeds.

About dusk we found a *yardang* with a top just wide enough for the tent. On every side except the south-west it was bounded by a sheer drop of from 2 to 3 m, so that one had to be careful if one went out star-gazing in the dark.

When we were settled down in this camp, No. 80, I sent for the boatmen.

They had seen YEW, KUNG and EFFE go off eastward on April 27th with the small car and a lorry on their attempt to reach Tun-huang via Altmish-bulaq. What we now wanted to know was whether the motor-expedition had passed eastward and come back in the direction of the cars' base camp, No. 70. The instructions, then, that I gave to three boatmen, APAQ, HAYIT and ISMAIL, were to start at dawn and walk straight N. N. W. to the foot of the mountain, but to return as soon as they found wheel-tracks. They were, further, to decide whether the tracks showed that the cars had returned or not. They took with them a red and white signal flag, and this, if the cars had not come back, was to be set firmly in the track, with an empty jam-tin in which we had placed letters from CHEN and myself saying that we were on the nearest water 10 km east of the meridian of Lou-lan. We asked our fellows, when they returned to base-camp No. 70, to send