

and manifestly part of a dried-up lake basin. It proved about two miles broad, and extended from south-west to north-east, where it seemed to join on to a larger basin. From its eastern edge the direction of our march under Ata-ullah's guidance took a decided turn to the south-east, and after crossing a second promontory of drift sand, rising to a ridge of forty feet or so, brought us to another bay of the great dried-up basin northward.

The most striking feature of the latter consisted of hundreds of high clay terraces, unmistakable 'witnesses' of erosion, which could be seen scattered in clusters or rows over the wide depression. All shapes and sizes were represented; but most rose like islands or towers with very steep walls, looking in places almost vertical. Their top level seemed fairly uniform, and the evident variation in relative height was mainly due to unequal erosion of the ground at their feet. A big terrace near which I halted on reaching the second bay, and which is seen in Fig. 152, rose to fully eighty feet. It showed clearly horizontally deposited strata of fine and hard clay with thin layers of compressed wind-ground sand between. Owing to wind erosion proceeding more rapidly in the latter the walls of the terrace were under-cut in many places, and large masses of débris at its foot showed that erosion and detrition were still actively proceeding.

Our onward route continued to skirt the southern edge of the great eroded basin from which these huge 'witnesses' rose. In the course of seven miles from where we had left the eastern edge of the first, we crossed two more ridges of sand projecting from the south-west into the salt-encrusted depression. At their foot some scanty reed stalks were found, mostly dead. Farther on we came upon a few low cones covered with scrub, and then passed again amidst a belt of clay terraces, where the only trace of vegetation consisted of dead and completely withered tamarisk wood cropping out over drift sand. Here darkness obliged us to halt, though the attempt to dig a well failed completely. The water brought in one tank gave out before dinner was cooked, Hassan Akhun in his care to lighten the camel's load and from over-confidence in our