

season when we caught sight of them, peak beyond peak, far up into the southern horizon. This valley contained the first illustrations we had yet seen of those vast alluvial accumulations which formed so marked a feature of many of the larger rivers of Western America where they debouch from the mountains. Across the whole broad plain, evidently of alluvial origin, the Madison had worked its way from side to side. From the mouths of the principal tributary valleys higher terraces of alluvium opened out upon the main valley, each affluent projecting a tongue of detritus from the base of the hills (Fig. 26). Night had fallen when we crossed the Madison River below its last

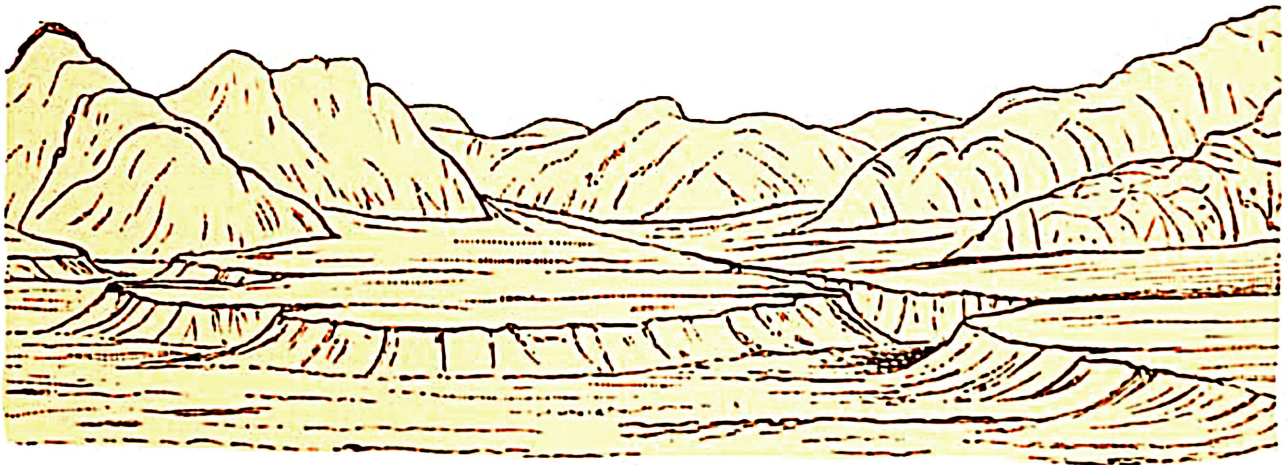


Fig. 26.—Alluvial Cones of the Madison Valley.

cañon, and further progress became impossible. There was a "ranch," or cattle-farm, not far off, where our companion had slept before, and where he proposed that we should demand quarters for the night. A good-natured welcome reconciled us to rough fare and hard beds.

On the afternoon of the third day we at length reached Boseman, the last collection of houses between us and the Yellowstone. A few miles beyond it stands Fort Ellis, a post of the United States army, built to command an important pass from the territory to the east still haunted by Indians. Through the kind thoughtfulness of my friend