The united delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra (Fig. 138) covers a space of between 50,000 and 60,000 square miles, and has been bored through to a depth of 481 feet, the whole mass of deposits consisting of fine sands and clays, with occasional pebble-beds, a bed of peat and remains of trees, but with no trace of any marine organism.[188]

(*g*) Sea-borne Sediment.—Although more properly to be noticed under the section on the Sea, the final course of the materials worn by rains and rivers from the surface of the land may be referred to here. By far the larger part of these materials sinks to the bottom close to the land. It is only the fine mud carried in suspension in the water which is carried out to sea. In none of the numerous soundings and dredgings in the Gulf of Mexico has Mississippi mud been obtained from the bottom more than 100 miles eastward from the mouth of the river.[189] The soundings taken by the "Challenger," however, brought up land-derived detritus from depths of 1500 fathoms—200 miles or more from the nearest shores (p. 764). The sea fronting the Amazon is sometimes discolored for 300 miles by the mud of that river.

§ 4. Lakes

Depressions filled with water on the surface of the land, and known as Lakes, occur abundantly in the northern parts of both hemispheres, and more sparingly, but often of large size, in warmer latitudes. For the most part, they do not belong to the normal system of erosion in which running water is the prime agent, and to which the excavation of

---

[188] For a full account of the alluvium of the Indo-Gangetic plain, see Medlicott and Blanford's "Geology of India," chap. xvii., and authorities there cited; also a more recent paper by Mr. Medlicott, Records Geol. Surv. India, 1881, p. 220.

[189] A. Agassiz, Amer. Acad. xii., 1882, p. 108.