In the attempt to reconstruct the history of the old river-terraces of a country, we have to consider whether they have been entirely cut out of older alluvium (in which case, of course, the valleys must have been deeper and broader than now, before the formation of the terraces, Fig. 128); whether they afford any indications of having been formed during a period of greater rainfall, when the rivers were larger than at present; whether they point to upheaval of the interior of the country, which would accelerate the erosive action of the

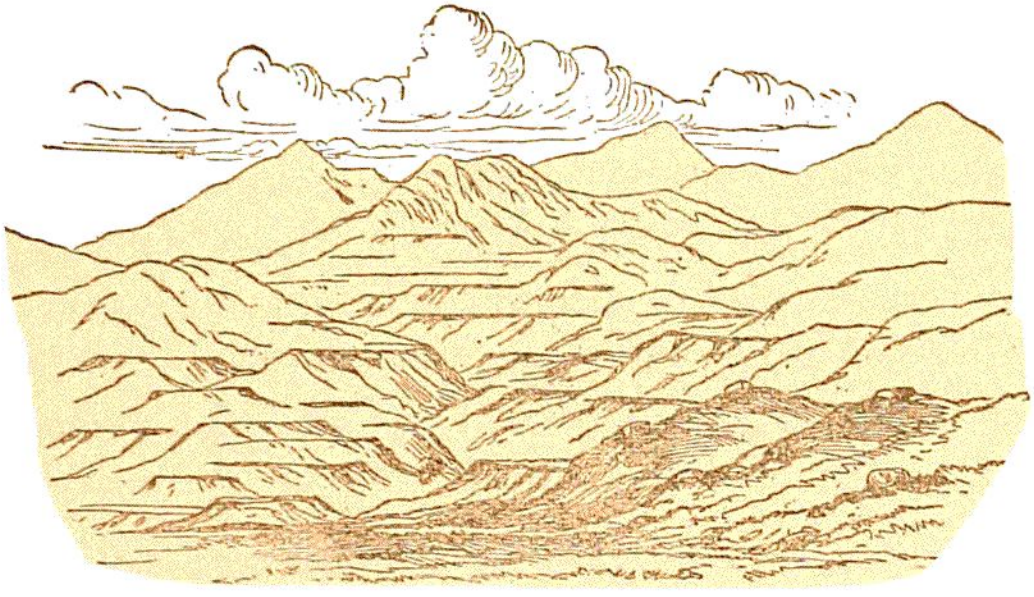

Fig. 129.—Old Terraces on the left bank of the Yellowstone River, above the first Canon, Montana.

streams, or to depression of the interior or rise of the seaward tracts, which would diminish that action and increase the deposition of alluvium. Prof. Dana has connected the terraces of America with the elevation of the axis of that continent. There can be no doubt that both in Europe and North America the rivers at a comparatively recent geological period had a much greater volume than they now possess.

(*d*) In Lakes.—When a river enters a lake or inland sea its current is checked, and its sediment begins to spread in fan-shape over the bottom (*c* in Fig. 130). Every tributary