

of the Lopliks' traditional ways of living, it was easy to picture this ground, when it was covered by water-courses from the Tarim and by riverine jungle, affording a sufficient livelihood to a scattered semi-nomadic population of herdsmen, hunters, and fishermen. But that it had seen at least occasional visits of man during early historical times was proved by a well-finished bronze arrow-head which was picked up within five miles of our last camp. Judging from its workmanship, which agrees closely with other specimens found subsequently near the ancient site northward, it is likely to have been left behind by some hunter or soldier in the early centuries of our era.

These unexpected finds were calculated to turn my thoughts to many fascinating problems. Did the Stone Age remains belong to widely separated periods, and was it only the erosion of the successive layers originally containing them which had brought them to lie side by side on the present surface? Would it be safe to assume that the difference in level between the latter and the top of the terraces protected by dead trees and drift sand gave the measure of the extent to which wind erosion had done its work of scouring and lowering since the Stone Age? Or had moisture continued to reach here down to a much later epoch, and had the formation of alluvial loess in the meantime actually helped to raise the ground-level until the progress of desiccation led to the death of all vegetation and consequent denudation?

It was hard to attempt the solution of such questions at the time, or even the collection of sufficiently accurate measurements of levels, etc., while my attention was being constantly distracted by practical cares about the proper direction and safe progress of my desert column. Now when we were proceeding over ground so much broken, even the maintenance of a correct course towards the compass point by which we were steering became a matter of some anxiety. It was impossible to get any distant outlook or well-defined landmarks, and the constant succession of steep-cut Nullahs between terraces crowned by rows of dead trees and dunes was very confusing. Regard for the camels, which could not negotiate steep banks, and