

surveyed on his successive journeys south from the site, and to approach it by a new track.

The ground over which this course took us on December 16th bore the same general character as on the previous day. The closely packed Yardangs all showed a uniform direction from north-east to south-west, and their tops were all intersected with furrows having the same bearing. Now with their creator, that icy north-east blast, at work, it was interesting to watch how the scouring and scooping was proceeding. It was easy to see that the erosive effect of the wind was greatest on the sides of the trenches, which the sand driven before it was steadily undermining just like running water. The closeness of the relation between this north-east wind and the surface configuration would have forcibly been brought home that day even to the least observant of men. For tempting as the trenches, cut down to twelve feet and more, looked as places of shelter, it was quite useless to seek a short rest there from the wind which seemed to cut to one's marrow. The blast was, if anything, greater there. Vainly would one search for a protecting bank at the end of a Yardang terrace. Invariably it ran out into a sharp edge, where piercing currents of air would catch one from both sides as if in an eddy. Rows of dead Toghraks and tamarisks running apparently west to east were met with again and again, usually over hard gypsum-like banks and adjoined by ridges of low dunes. Also some five miles from camp we passed extensive patches of ground where the tops of Yardangs were covered with dead reed stubble.

Remains of flint implements and coarse pottery, manifestly neolithic, continued to crop up in plenty at frequent intervals. There could be no doubt that we were still passing over ground which had seen human occupation during prehistoric times. These finds presented an increased interest, since we were now well within the area where Hedin had been led to locate his earlier Lop-nor lake depression. From about the sixth mile onwards I thought I could recognize fragments of pottery of distinctly better make, showing a uniform black surface over a red core. Nevertheless I was scarcely prepared about three