



Fig. 24. On the shore of one of the many lakes in the delta

the temperature in the shade was 30.2° C., while that of the water was 23.1° . We scraped along reed-beds that rustled against the sides of the boats; and sometimes tamarisks stretched over us with their violet clusters of flowers like arms raised in benediction. This voyage was idyllic; we only hoped that the lake might run far to the south-west, all the way to Lou-lan. Overhead, gulls uttered their shrill, warning cries; they had never before seen canoes on Lou-lan's sinuous waterways.

But we had already reached the southern shore of this lake by 12.30 p. m., and we sought in vain for a narrow cut leading towards Lou-lan. We therefore landed, and sent BABEDDIN south and SADIQ south-west to reconnoitre. They came back four hours later with not very encouraging reports. To the south they had come upon a fairly high barrier of *yardangs*, that seemed to offer an insuperable obstacle to any extension of the water in that direction. Where HÖRNER and CHEN, in 1931, had found wide sheets of water there were now only reed-beds. One or two isolated channels had been sighted to the south-east.

CHEN'S WALK TO THE LOU-LAN SITE

So camp No. 86 was to be the final stage of our journey towards Lou-lan, at any rate for myself, for I was not in good enough training for a long march in the summer heat. But CHEN was eager to undertake the march; and I was glad to be in a position — thanks to his youthful energy — to link up with his and HÖRNER'S map of 1931 and with my own of 1901. CHEN estimated the distance at 12 km, and expected to be back early on the afternoon of the following day. He