

their remarkable preservation, had there not been striking evidence on the very ground near them how little wind erosion, that greatest foe of ancient remains in a practically rainless region, could assert its force on this flat surface of gravel. Again and again I noted that the footprints left as I had ridden past more than a month before looked absolutely fresh. All the same it was a surprise when returning here seven years later on my third expedition I was still able to recognize my own footprints and in some cases even those of my ever-active fox terrier 'Dash II'.

Adaptation to all important natural features and careful use of whatever advantages they offered had obviously played a decisive part in the planning of this ancient line of defence. This was fully demonstrated by our survey, where the westernmost section of its wall proved to have terminated. So far the line of wall extended along the route towards Lop, which it obviously was meant to protect and watch. Then close to the point where the Su-lo-ho bed is crossed it turned sharply to the south-west, and after a stretch of some twenty-four miles ended on marshy ground. The explanation is that the *Limes* had at its turning-point reached the extreme north-eastern corner of the great terminal basin of the Su-lo-ho. This extends over an area of some 300 square miles filled with lakes and marshes, quite impassable during most of the year. Thus the *Limes* could here rest its flank securely for a great distance upon ground that offered effective protection from attack by mounted men.