

lake for a distance of about eighteen miles eastwards showed with great clearness how thoroughly and intelligently those instructions of the Imperial order had been carried out. The wall had there been carried unfailingly over every bit of firm ground capable of offering a passage for the enemy's inroads and right down to the edge of the marshy inlets. The lakes and bogs across their bottoms necessarily took the place of the wall; for they provided a natural defence and thus saved the labour of construction over many miles. It is easy to appreciate this gain if we think of the huge difficulties of supplies and transport which must have attended the maintenance of adequate labour for building the wall in absolute desert.

The gain resulting from this use of the natural obstacles offered by impassable marshes must have been even greater along the section which stretches farther east to the Khara-nor lake and then along its southern shores. There this 'wet border' formed by the Su-lo-ho marshes and by the large lake is so wide that the construction of a wall appears to have been thought unnecessary, except on two short stretches where the Su-lo-ho happens to flow in a well-defined narrow bed.

The topographical features just briefly indicated necessarily rendered our search for the line of the *Limes* at this point far more difficult. Once my ever-watchful Chinese secretary and Ram Singh, my very intelligent 'handy man' from the Bengal Sappers and Miners, had been initiated into the task of clearing such modest ruins they could safely be left behind to direct this work at the posts traced. Thus I was free myself to start with a couple of my Turki followers on reconnaissance rides. They were needed to show me