

horse to turn round. Such tight quarters recalling life on board ship were the best illustration of the need of shelter which this inclement climate imposed even for animals.

What with the heat and glare, the constant irritation inflicted by the clouds of mosquitoes and other insects, and the saltiness of the water, we were all suffering acutely from the amenities of this desert climate in spring. Little wonder that the task of keeping our Chinese labourers at work, all opium-smokers and of deep-rooted *vis inertiae*, had grown more and more difficult even for the unfailing tact and good-nature of my Chinese helpmate, Chiang-ssü-yeh. At last by May 8th, when supplies were beginning to run low, owing to a fresh convoy having failed to reach us, I was obliged to let most of them depart. But by that time the exploration of the extreme end of the *Limes* had been completed.

The Surveyor had rejoined me three days earlier from survey work about Khara-nor, and I had despatched him with Naik Ram Singh and other mounted men to the south-east, to reconnoitre the ground there, and if possible push across the sand-covered hill range to the route leading west of Nan-hu. There or at So-mo-to, a little hamlet nearer to the foot of the mountains, fodder would become available for the ponies. But by the evening of May 8th Rai Ram Singh returned, after trying marches across the barren waste, having been effectively baffled when nearing the great sandy range by closely packed dunes which the ponies could not surmount at this season. I was glad he gave up the attempt in time and brought back ponies and men in safety.

I was not altogether sorry to find myself thus obliged to make my way back to Tun-huang once more along the *Limes*. There were a number of smaller ruined stations previously sighted eastwards remaining to be explored. But though interesting finds of records on wood, rags of patterned silk, etc., rewarded our search, I need not stop now to describe it. Nor can I do more than allude here to what I was able to observe about the river we discovered flowing out of Lake Khara-nor, and about