



*The centre portion of the
east wall of Yangi Hissar
with moat.*

edge of the big moat. After riding along a winding bazaar street that seemed interminable, we finally reached the gate of the caravanserai, where my pack-horses had been stabled. It is a small yard that would be quite pleasant, were it not so dusty, with a great many little, dark cubicles, the creaking doors of which and an occasional window, with a wooden grill in oriental style instead of panes, open on to the yard. In front of each room or of two adjoining rooms there is a low clay terrace, about 1 1/2 metres wide, on which goods are stacked, packed in cubes of equal size and wrapped in felt. Here and there a rug or carpet is spread on a terrace and you see a picturesque group of merchants from every country in Central Asia sitting cross-legged with tired, expressionless faces and doing business over a cup of tea or a common pipe. Beyond the first yard lies another, full of holes and dirt, with mud blocks along the walls. Here a few dozen pack-horses are collected with their large saddles, shaped like beehives and padded, that are never removed. In the yard there is always a crowd of loafers that grows with surprising suddenness when anything of interest occurs. They are driven off regularly by the host of the caravanserai and reappear as regularly a few seconds later. Where there is an upper floor, it is arranged exactly like the lower one. Only the clay terraces are replaced by a common wooden balcony that runs round the yard. All day long there is an incredible coming and going in these yards. The merchants only make a short stay. One caravan succeeds another. The shouts of the drivers and the dull tinkling of the camel's bells herald the approach of a fresh caravan from a distance. It enters the little yard of a caravanserai and fills it to overflowing, so that, if by a miracle you escape having an absent-minded camel put its feet into your cubicle, you may be sure of having it filled with the clouds of dust raised by the unloading of the beasts.

The caravans of the Afghans are very picturesque with their well groomed, fine horses, somewhere between the Turcoman and Arab. The men are distrustful and shy. In dress