



*Ruins of a tower on the northern spur of Patlama tagh, near the bank of the Taushqan darya.*

of Kosagaz, Ajaktche Tumshuk, Igerchi with 20 houses, Gulbash with 20 and Darya Buia with 140. The width of the Taushqan darya is 24 fathoms at the bridge and its speed 10/6 m per second. From here the road goes north over low-lying ground, marshy in places and covered at first by bushes that give way to fields later on.

In a little over an hour we reached the walls of Yangi-Shahr, the Chinese town, and after riding for quite two hours more over a ridge of light soil that wedges itself between the Chinese and Sart towns, we came to the latter. The men and baggage were installed in the large sarai of the Russian aksakal, who gave up his private quarters to me — a splendid, comfortable room with a sheet-iron stove and two windows with glass panes. After 11 1/2 hours on horseback it was an indescribable pleasure to sit down to a couple of platefuls of hot soup in a warm room on a decent chair at a steady table. The aksakal, a venerable, handsome old man with a long white beard, had specially ordered for me an excellent loaf of wheaten flour and sheep's fat, also a sheep's stomach filled with much less appetising rancid butter. I have seldom crept into my blankets with greater satisfaction than last night after a thorough wash. This was not the end of my delights, for one wonderful dream succeeded another, either taking me back to bygone days and opening up a vista of fond recollections, or enchanting me with sights of unimagined beauty. All this was accompanied by subdued, voluptuous music of the kind one would imagine might be heard in some oriental fairyland. To my great chagrin I awoke from this rapture and, while only half-awake, I still heard the rhythm of the wonderful music. Instead of dying away, it became clearer; I sat up in the hope of seeing the form of some sprite or fairy princess by the side of my camp bed, but the room was pitch-dark. I realised, however, that a musical box must be playing in some niche in the wall. A match helped me to solve the problem. The old man had a little clock that played a tune for a few minutes at a given time, and purposely or by chance it had been set