

with fairly thick Toghrak jungle growing amidst low dunes, they set out to locate the ruins.

Three hours passed in weary waiting. Though the atmosphere had now cleared sufficiently, and isolated high tamarisk cones gave a wide outlook, I vainly scanned the horizon with my glasses for any sign of ruins. At last the guides returned crestfallen with the report of having failed to discover them. It was past mid-day by that time, and as our animals had tasted no water since Yar-tungaz and the supply brought from there for my men was wellnigh exhausted, I thought it safest to strike due east for the Endere River, and to await the result of the fresh search on which I sent out our 'guides.' Leading the caravan by the compass I had scarcely proceeded a little over two miles when high trunks of dead poplars standing on more open level ground attracted my attention. Presently we stumbled on the 'Kone-shahr,' only a couple of hundred yards off the course I was actually steering!

There were ruins of houses, rough in their timber construction but well preserved on the whole, crowding an area comparatively clear of tamarisk growth and overrun only by slight dunes (Fig. 102). The first look at the site was far more suggestive of an 'old town' than the usual appearance of the widely scattered ruins or insignificant Tati remains to which the term is indiscriminately applied by all dwellers along the edge of the desert. As soon as, in eager expectation, I had hurried up to the ruins, I realized that they were all contained within a roughly oval circumvallation formed by a clay rampart still traceable at most points. Subsequent measurement showed the enclosure to be about 263 yards long at its greatest axis from north-east to south-west and about 210 yards across where widest.

My satisfaction was great at having been saved by lucky chance a protracted search on such deceptive ground and with ignorant 'guides.' But a rapid preliminary inspection sufficed to damp any over-sanguine archaeological hopes. A number of observations suggested from the first that the remains of this 'deserted village'—for as such it could properly be designated in spite of its modest