

it I first observed, on a slightly lower shoulder northward, the much-decayed remains of a small fort-like enclosure, measuring about thirty yards from east to west and somewhat less across, built of rough blocks quite Cyclopean in appearance. The wall eastwards was over sixteen feet thick at its base. The amount of debris and earth which in most places overlies the ruin of this outwork left no doubt in my mind about its antiquity. Ascending to the crest of the hill I had before me the very well preserved walls of a manifestly recent circumvallation, extending for about 170 yards from north to south with an average width of only 30-40 yards. I was told that it was built by the Mankiāl people within the present generation for the purpose of warding off invasion from the south, which was apprehended at the time when Chilās was brought under control in 1892. The good condition in which the walls, in spite of their very rough construction, are found to-day supported the statement. The modern fort appears never to have been completed. In any case the small size of the stones used, as seen in Fig. 22, made it easy to distinguish its outline from the walls of a far larger and manifestly ancient circumvallation traceable on the slopes below, and also from the remains of the dilapidated dwellings that cover the area thus enclosed.

The walls of the old fort, though built of large stones, had in most parts, owing to the steepness of the lower slopes which they crowned, to a large extent crumbled away. Their remains, rising now nowhere to more than four or five feet above the surface of the ground, could be traced most easily for about 250 yards along the south face and for about 170 yards northward from the south-east corner. The remains of walls of similar material that belonged to interior structures occupying easier slopes had suffered less decay. The general impression I gained during my rapid survey of the Rajī-kōt site was fully in accord with the local belief that it marked the fortified residence of the ancient rulers of Darēl, a belief to which the very name *Rajī-kōt* lends support. The position must have specially recommended itself for this purpose on account of its natural strength, the relatively large space available on the hill-top, and also because it completely commands the narrow neck-like portion of the valley which intervenes between the two main cultivable areas, viz. Mankiāl in the north and Samagiāl in the south.

Command-  
ing position  
of Rajī-kōt.

It was probably the advantage of this central position dividing the two largest communities of the valley and thus facilitating their control which had induced Rāja Pakhtūn Wālī to choose the small open plain at the south foot of Rajī-kōt for the castle he was building as his place of residence in the newly annexed territory and as a stronghold to safeguard its possession against possible risings. The site had long ago gone out of occupation, and even the rich land at the mouth of the Bachai valley westwards had only recently been brought again under cultivation. There, in the open court of the as yet unfinished castle of Gumāre-kōt, Rāja Pakhtūn Wālī received me in full state. The high walls of the enceinte, turreted at the four corners, seemed to be copied from the old strongholds that had long sheltered the rulers of Chitrāl and Mastūj, members of rival branches of the Rāja's race, during centuries of strife and bloodshed.

Stronghold  
of modern  
ruler of  
Darēl.

It was to me an interesting experience, welcome both on personal and historical grounds, to meet Pakhtūn Wālī. After a chequered career that befitted the son of Mīr Wālī—ruler of Yāsīn, murderer of Hayward and finally a fugitive—he had succeeded in building up a new kingdom for himself, the most recent that India has seen raised on the old adventurous lines, and perhaps the last for the time being. Rāja Pakhtūn Wālī, if (Fig. 27) not a man of imposing build, yet in expression of face and in bearing appeared the shrewd and energetic chief that his success proclaimed him. Though he looked relatively young for his age, then about forty-six years, there was no mistaking in his features the traces of anxious periods of struggle and intrigue. He generally wore an air of reserve in which suspicion and cunning were combined; nevertheless, in his unguarded moments, I thought I caught glimpses of genuine *bonhomie*. When speaking of his young sons,

Meeting  
with Rāja  
Pakhtūn  
Wālī.