

set on edge. A similar decorative band, done in stone, was seen on the gate tower, iii, and on the lowest tower of the Zulkhomār fort.

Citadel of  
fortress.

Farther up, the wall curves round the top of a small concavity in the scarp (Fig. 402) and is here defended by three massive round towers, of which Fig. 403 shows two. In the uppermost, v, which is also the best preserved, there can be seen a double row of loopholes and, at a height of 5 feet above the lower row, the sockets in which the beams supporting a floor were once fixed. From this point, which is about 600 feet above the level of the outer gate, the wall ascends in an almost straight line nearly 400 feet higher (Fig. 402) until it reaches the southern corner of the triangular citadel, vi, which crowns the top of the spur (Fig. 406). This fort, of which a detailed sketch-plan is shown in Pl. 48, extends northward for about 130 yards. From the point where its two longer sides meet there projects to the NW. a kind of ravelin (Fig. 410), ending in a massive square tower which guards the only approach to the fortified area from the plateau rising above it.

Ravine  
below N.  
extremity  
of citadel.

From this higher ground the narrow rocky ridge bearing the citadel is separated by a narrow ravine (Fig. 406), the bottom of which lies about 120 feet below the square tower just mentioned. This ravine owes its existence to the Vichkut stream having diverted a portion of its volume towards the Yamchin gorge and thus cut through the narrow neck of conglomerate which once joined the fortified portion of the spur to the Yāzh plateau above it. This curious bifurcation was made possible by the fact that the bed of the Vichkut stream, where it passes the plateau, lies much higher than the Yamchin gorge. To-day, most of the Vichkut water cascades down to the Yamchin stream, while of the rest a portion is caught in a canal which takes off near the same place to irrigate the fields of Putup. Thus but little water is left for the deep-cut cañon which the Vichkut stream had carved out for its course before that bifurcation took place. I may add that terraced fields higher up on the Yāzh plateau are irrigated from the Yamchin stream, which is fed by glaciers and is much larger than the Vichkut.

Construc-  
tion of  
citadel.

The walls enclosing the citadel are built of slabs of stone, unhewn but carefully adjusted and set in fairly hard plaster. This masonry looked scarcely inferior to that observed in dwellings of the Buddhist period in Swāt and elsewhere on the Indian NW. frontier. The outer walls, everywhere loopholed, show a thickness of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet and carry a parapet about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide. They still rise to a maximum height of 13 feet, but show in places repairs in inferior masonry. A series of round towers strengthen the circumvallation on all faces. Apartments of varying size are found within, the dividing walls being generally 2 feet thick but equally solid. The fact that these quarters were built mainly against the southern and western wall faces may be attributed to the better protection afforded there against the bitter winds of Wakhān, which for a great portion of the year blow with particular force up the valley. I was not able to trace the position of a gate to the citadel, and conclude that the entrance may possibly have lain through the narrow passage, now blocked up, at the north-western corner (Fig. 410).

Descent into  
Yamchin  
gorge.

As already stated, there were no walls needed to protect the position on the side towards the gorge of the Yamchin stream; for there the extremely precipitous rock walls provided adequate defence if watched from above. But where the previously mentioned track from the Vichkut stream, after crossing the fortified area, strikes the edge of the Yamchin gorge, we found it continuing downwards over a narrow ledge of walled-up masonry which looked decidedly old. Without this supporting wall the descent along the steep cliffs would be very risky, if not impossible. We followed the track to a point about 200 feet above the bottom of the ravine without finding traces of a tower or other defence to close access along it. It seemed possible that a gate-tower or the like had completely disappeared here owing to the precipitous slope having caused the foundations to give way.