

to the conditions of life that prevailed along it for centuries. All that the finds and observations on the spot and the interpretation of the hundreds of documents have disclosed has been fully recorded in my *Serindia*. Glimpses at characteristic ruins and brief references to the finds which they yielded must here suffice.

On the edge of the bare gravel plateau along which the westernmost section of the wall extended, there rose at varying intervals some of the best-preserved watch-towers (Fig. 84). They were invariably built solid, whether with bricks or stamped clay, and on a base from twenty to about twenty-four feet square; they tapered towards the top. This had once borne a small look-out room or platform protected with a parapet. In most cases the top could be reached only by clambering up ropes, holes still visible in the brick-work serving as footholds.

The position for the towers had invariably been chosen with a sharp eye for the natural advantages which the ground offered both for defence and for look-out. Hence significantly enough the distances between the towers varied considerably as the ground outside the line could easily be kept under observation or not. In the same way advantage was invariably taken of any elevated position which might offer facilities for the transmission of optical signals. A carefully organized system of transmitting information by fire signals at night and smoke signals by day was maintained along the whole line. This is proved both by references in the documents and by actual evidence of the materials which I found provided for such signals.

Considering that two thousand years had passed since those towers were built, I might well have wondered at