

siderable difficulty. The ascent led first up steep talus slopes and then through a still more precipitous couloir of rock débris. The young guide accompanying us had never ascended before, superstitious fears keeping Sarikolis in general from visits to the ruins. Plentiful pieces of ancient-looking juniper wood (*archa*) strewed the higher slope, and allowed me to guess the construction of the old walls of which I caught glimpses above us, long before the height was gained. After reaching the neck, only fifteen to twenty feet broad and some fifty to sixty yards long, we had still to clamber up a height of about a hundred and fifty feet over an equally narrow *arête*, and then I found my antiquarian surmise verified; for the old walls rising before us (Fig. 28), along what proved the south-west rim of the highest of the series of terraces forming the top of the promontory, showed, as expected, the curious structural peculiarity of twigs and brushwood embedded in regular layers between courses of sun-dried bricks.⁶ A massive tower-like bastion, some twenty-five feet square, barred approach from the neck and the narrow crest continuing it eastwards. We managed, however, to scramble over its ruined side and then to cross, not without some difficulty, along the top of the decayed wall, about sixty feet long, which connected this outwork with the main defences. We then stood on the line of walls which was meant to defend the rim above mentioned, and first got a sight of the natural terraces with which the hill-top sloped away northward.

Plan of Kiz-
kurghān
ruins.

The walls from near the point just described could be traced first running to the north-west for over a hundred feet and then, near a massive corner bastion of which the summit measured about fifteen feet square (seen in Fig. 28), taking a turn to the north. For about a hundred and ninety feet on this alignment following the rocky crest the walls were clearly traceable, whether in their superstructure of sun-dried bricks or in foundations of large rough stones. For about a hundred and forty feet further north remains of walls were visible here and there by the precipitous edge, and where they ceased sheer natural rock walls took their place rendering all fortification unnecessary. Rising still to over twenty feet where in fair preservation, elsewhere decayed almost to their foundation, these walls had once completely protected that portion of the isolated hill-top facing westwards on which alone an attack could be attempted. But even on this side, excepting the narrow neck we had followed, the slopes were far too steep to be climbed by armed men in any numbers. Everywhere else sheer walls of rock descending for hundreds of feet formed unscalable natural defences. From the south-west rim the top of the hill sloped to the north and north-east in a series of terraces which, where they grew broader near the northern end of the line of walls, must have afforded ample space for structures of shelter. But these, having probably been built of rough stones, could be traced only in heaps of rubble in the position which the rapidly executed plan shows. At a point about twenty yards from the northernmost point of the walls the site of a tank, about thirty feet in diameter and closed northward by a thick stone wall, could be clearly made out. A second reservoir was recognizable towards the north rim of the sloping area.

Construc-
tion of walls.

The solid construction of the bastioned walls would alone have sufficed to prove a great antiquity for the site. Without this solidity the walls could not have retained a footing on such steep and difficult ground. They showed an average thickness of sixteen feet at the base near the corner bastion, and, apart from large rough slabs used in the foundations, consisted of remarkably regular and closely laid brickwork as seen in the photograph (Fig. 28). The bricks, sun-dried but solid enough, measured on the average fifteen by twelve inches, with a thickness of about five inches. Neither the material, a fine clay plentifully mixed with small pebbles, nor yet adequate water for making them, could have been obtained on the spot, and their transport to this height must have

⁶ In the photograph, Fig. 28, taken from the outlying bastion, these brushwood layers are clearly displayed by the curtain wall on the right which has lost its brick facing. But

they are present also between the brick courses of the better preserved bastion on the left.