

and spots like this, which included about a hundred and fifty acres of arable land, were cultivated. The district is known as Raskam, which, I was told, is a corruption of Rást-kán (a true mine), a name which was probably given it on account of the existence of mineral deposits there. Both on this journey and another which I made down this valley in 1889, I found the remains of old smelting furnaces in several places, and was informed that copper was the mineral extracted. In the Bazardarra valley, on the right bank of the Yarkand River, there are said to be traces of gold. The Kanjuti raids were the cause of the country becoming depopulated, and now that these have been effectually stopped by the British Government, we may expect to see Raskam, in future years, again spring into life.

One march below Karash-tarim the valley narrowed considerably, and high cliffs constantly approached the river, making it necessary for us to cross and recross it frequently. At length it became confined in a gorge, called the Khoja Mohamed gorge, and was here shut in between cliffs of enormous height and nearly perpendicular. Through this gorge the river rushed with great force, and, as it was quite unfordable, we were brought to a standstill. We unloaded the ponies, and every man of us set to work to make a road round the base of the cliff by throwing rocks and boulders into the river, and so building up a way. By the next morning we had succeeded in making a narrow pathway round the cliff. The loads were first carried over this; then the ponies were carefully led along, till at last the whole party was safely conveyed to the other side of this formidable obstacle.

A short distance below this, on the left bank of the Yarkand River, we struck a tributary named the Surakwat, up which led the route to the Mustagh Pass, so we here left the valley of the Yarkand River. For a few hundred yards above the junction the Surakwat flows through a very narrow