

twenty-six miles, passing on the way the camping-grounds of Chiragsaldi, where the route from Yarkand, which I followed in 1887, joins in, and which is the furthest point reached by Hayward. From this point the valley narrowed considerably, and as the stream runs at places between enormously high cliffs, it is necessary to be constantly crossing and recrossing the river, which gets deeper and deeper as streams from either side add to its volume, till at last it becomes too deep to be forded by laden ponies, and we were brought to a standstill at the same gorge where I was delayed two years ago. The river at this point was up to the ponies' backs, and flowing with a strong rapid current over a rocky bottom, so that it was out of the question to take our baggage over on ponies; and we had to halt for the night (September 7) and wait till the morning, when the river is less deep than during the afternoon, as its volume is then increased owing to the sun melting the snows.

On this march we passed some ruins on a grassy plain called Karash-tarim (*i.e.* the cultivated lands of Karash, a man who is said to have lived here some eighty years ago). There were remains of half a dozen huts and some smelting furnaces, and there were also signs of furrows where land had been cultivated. This strip of grass and jungle was over half a mile long and six hundred yards broad, and doubtless in former times was a flourishing spot. There were evident signs, too, of the existence of minerals, copper and iron, and possibly even gold in small quantities may be found, for quartz and pieces of iron ore were abundant; while there are many traditions of the presence of minerals in these mountains, and the name of the country, Raskam, a corruption of Rastkan (a real mine), clearly shows that minerals may be expected.

Lower down we passed a considerable stream called the Bazar Darra, up which a route leads to Pakhpulu. The size of the stream, twenty-five yards broad by one and a half foot deep,