

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, 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 gorge, which the stream fills up completely, and through this gorge the guide now led us, though I found, in 1889, that a much better road led over the top. The boulders over which the torrent dashed were covered with ice, and it was cruel work taking the ponies up. They were constantly slipping and falling back, cutting their hocks and knees to pieces. But we got them through without accident, and emerged on to a wide plain, evidently the bed of a lake, which must have been formed by the rocky obstacle we had passed through before the stream had cut its way down to its present level