

CHAPTER XI.

FROM THE ARKA-TAGH TO THE GOLD-MINES OF TOGHRI-SAJ.

October 2nd. The brook, on the right bank of which we encamped, is soon joined by another, equally as large as itself, coming from the S. 70° W., and then the conjoint stream describes a wide curve from the west to the north. This afforded us a convenient and excellent road by which to get out of the cauldron-like expansion. The mountains that encircle it were then sheeted with snow from top to bottom. The floor of the glen is gravelly and hard, and slopes gradually and regularly towards the north, so gradually in fact that the brook, which was then carrying a volume of $\frac{1}{2}$ cub.m. — for it was also covered with patches of ice — nowhere forms cascades, indeed there was not so much as a ripple to be heard. At first it is inclosed between red hills of sand and soft soil, with sprinklings of grass and japkak. The bottom of the glen is so far unsymmetrical in that the stream flows strongest towards its left-hand side. On that side therefore the craggy walls rise bare and steep, and the side-glens that debouch upon it are very small and almost all of them without water. The right side of the glen is much less steep, and consists almost everywhere — at all events this is true of its lower part — of soft rounded grass-grown slopes, interrupted at one place only by bare, precipitous cliffs, below which the scree of gravel and rocky fragments reaches right down to the edge of the stream. The side-glens that come down on the right of the main glen are pretty large, and in several of them there are small rivulets, then frozen over. We marched almost the entire day through this deeply trenched glen, our view being effectually curtailed by the crags on both sides. Consequently I am uncertain as to the broader features of the orographical architecture; although we appeared indeed to be descending a longitudinal glen between two meridional ranges, parallel spurs of the Arka-tagh. But a little reflection serves to cast grave doubts upon the correctness of this interpretation, and at the same time suggests quite a different orographical plan. In its upper part this glen is joined by a side-glen, with a brook, that comes from the right or east, and appears to originate on a col or pass above a latitudinal valley. In that case the latitudinal valley in question must be very much narrower than all the preceding valleys, although, like them, it