

summer; in winter no thaw-water will presumably descend from this snow-field, though possibly there may be springs at intervals in the bed. The similar glen which begins west of the snowy mass, and contrary to expectation flows at first towards the north-east, does not join the glen which we were then following, at all events not along the stretch that we traversed. Instead of doing so, it curves away towards the northwest; possibly both glens unite lower down. At this time there was not a drop of water in the western glen.

On a clear bright day such as that was this eastern river receives in its upper part a large number of brooks and rivulets, most of which flow down from the tongues and arms that jut out from the snow-field. The principal river was however very muddy, and was stained red by the soft formations higher up. The lower parts of the snow-field, especially where directly exposed to the sun, were softened, slushy, and water-logged; but during the night they freeze again and consequently shrink, as also does the principal river during the early hours of the morning. Having attained its maximum volume, the river dwindled again according as we passed one contributory brook after another. From the right it does not pick up a single tributary. Its bottom is firm and hard, consisting of gravel, both fine and of medium size. Thanks to the excellent firmness of the ground, and the uniform and not especially steep character of the slope, our caravan animals, tired though they were, succeeded in getting over this pass, one of the highest I have ever surmounted. Its altitude reached 5337 m. In shape the pass is rounded, with gently curved contours, being situated amongst finely powdered, disintegrated material. The previous summer we had crossed over this same range by a considerably lower pass farther to the east.

The glen that descends on the other side proceeds first towards the east and east-south-east, but soon turns to the south-east; and as we went down it, we still had for a time an offshoot of the culminating mass immediately on our right. In other words the pass is excentrically situated in relation to the summit and lies north of the eastern end of the great snowy mass. In consequence of this the view that one would expect to have to the south from such a lofty vantage-point is obstructed. In every direction there was nothing to be seen except rounded heights of a brick-red colour. One of my Cossacks, who climbed to the top of an adjacent peak, reported that he was able to see three or four lakes of different sizes to the south and south-east.

Only a very short distance below the summit of the pass we found water flowing down the glen that runs south-east, but the first contributories from the snow-field were larger than the principal artery itself. In this way the river soon grows to a not inconsiderable stream, though its channel is very unlike that on the north side of the pass, for it is narrow and difficult, being choked with coarse detritus and small stones. Besides which we had to keep crossing over the stream every minute, and as it continued to grow bigger and bigger this became at last very irksome. But all at once the glen expanded, and we were able to leave the river on our left and yet ride down the dry parts of its bed. A little lower down we pitched Camp XXVIII on the well-defined hilly right bank, at a point where the river makes a bend to the east-south-east. To the south-east we saw a small lake,