

slopes behind. The explanation of the difference is quite simply this, that the slopes on the right side of the glen are steeper than those on the left, while the river presses closer in to the former than to the latter, so that as a matter of fact there is less room there for the ice than on the left side, where the slopes are relatively less steep. Whereas no tributaries join the stream from the right, several do so from the left, all coming from the glacial mass on the east side of the pass. But on the whole the lower slopes on both sides are decidedly steep, and the glen bears every indication of an active and energetic erosion. Below the point where we turned back, the slopes on both sides are approximately equal in point of steepness, and it is there that the wild transverse glen begins to force its way through the mountains.

In this manner we slowly made our way down this picturesque and peculiar glen, although we were almost certain to get wet through, if not from the steadily falling rain, then from the river which we crossed time after time, or finally from the dripping of the ice-eaves, close under which we were sometimes forced to march. The breadth of the open space between the two icy walls varied of course as the breadth of the glen varied; at the maximum it reached about 40 m., at the minimum half that distance. At length we met our scout coming back. He said he had been about 5 km. farther, but was then stopped, the glen being absolutely impassable. From his description it was evident, that the farther he proceeded the narrower grew the glen, while the ice-bench continued the whole way, although broken in several places, especially at the narrow passages. Nowhere did the glen open out, nor did he observe the slightest signs of grass on the glen-sides. At the point where he stopped the glen was so narrow that the stream, a mere deep trough, filled it completely from side to side. In spite of this he attempted to force a passage through, but when he got out into water 1 m. deep, and the depth still seemed to increase, he thought it better to turn back, especially as the glen farther on grew yet wilder and assumed an increasingly closer resemblance to a typical transverse gorge. As the stream moreover had risen higher and higher during the course of the day, I felt it would clearly be a risky thing to push on any farther. We might indeed succeed in forcing our way past one or two of the difficult passages, but sooner or later we should find ourselves in a trap, and unable either to advance or even to return, should the river still go on rising behind us. It might indeed have been possible to climb up some side-glen in search of a pass, and in that way continue our route to the south, — possible that is for the horses and mules, but absolutely impossible for the camels.

Hence we had no alternative except to return by the way we had come, and accordingly we retraced our footsteps, every one of which was now filled with bright, blue-green water. Owing to the trampling of our caravan animals, all the soft places were yet softer than they had been before, and to add to our difficulties, we had now to climb uphill.

Some idea of the dimensions and appearance of these immense ice-sheets is given by the accompanying photographs. The ice, which now filled two-thirds of the glen-bottom, was formed in the autumn and winter, partly by the freezing of thaw-water from the glaciers and snow (though this must be little), for they will continue to melt especially on bright, still days, and partly, and more particularly,