

say from the pass which we now had to cross over, namely the pass situated in the subsidiary range that is pierced by the united stream. This pass proved to be the most difficult of any that I have ever scaled in Tibet, not by reason of its altitude, for it was 100 m. lower than the principal pass and only 100 m. higher than Camp XLII, but because of the character of the ground and the weather that prevailed. At a very early hour in the morning it was snowing smartly, and the mountains were so closely wrapped about with clouds that we might easily have fancied ourselves engulfed by a Polar night. Unfortunately not one single glimpse of the glaciers was to be seen, so that I was unable to secure a much-needed general view of this stupendous range of mountains, nor did I get any opportunity to take the compass-bearings of the peaks and glaciers the situations of which I had already noted from the other side. Upon reaching the summit of the pass we found ourselves in the centre of one of the most furious hailstorms it has ever been my lot to experience. It utterly exhausted us, it numbed us, it made us drowsy, our faculties for work sank to the lowest ebb. And the downfall continued the whole of the day with only one half hour's interval, though it mostly assumed the form of snow and rain. Before we had proceeded very far we were thoroughly wet through, and the increase of weight thus occasioned in our baggage added yet further to our difficulties.

The *thalweg* which leads up to the pass is extremely flat, appearing merely as a very slight indentation of the slope, surrounded by soft, rounded outliers. Thus, at any rate at first, the ascent was as gentle as could be; but just before reaching the pass, we were well sensible of it. Down the middle of the glen, though there was no distinctly eroded watercourse, flowed a trickling rivulet. We had to ride in the water, that being the only place where the ground would bear the weight of our horses and camels; to leave it for a couple of meters, or even for one meter, was to run the risk of being swallowed up in the boggy and treacherous morass. Nowhere was hard rock visible, nothing but sand, powdery earth, and water, the whole forming a thick porridge-like mass, which was evidently slipping or gliding downwards *en masse*. Of course we did not actually *see* the mass in movement, for it moves inconceivably slowly; but that the mass really was in movement was quite evident from the vast number of marginal and transverse cracks showing all over the slopes, except in those places where they were held together by moss and thin yak-grass. To have ventured out amongst these cracks, or rather fissures, would have been perilous, for they formed dark lines, convex downwards, with ramparts between. The only places in which the ground was firm enough to bear were the actual watercourses and the occasional spots where moss grew. The more this spongy mass becomes soaked with rain and other precipitation, the more readily it moves and the boggy it grows. That period of the year was therefore the least favourable of any for crossing over such a pass; the only time at which one might hope to traverse it without especial difficulty would be in the winter, for then the whole of the surface would be frozen, covered as it were with a coating of frozen ground which would check the descending movement of the boggy coverlet. It is of course only natural that a range, which is so deficient in hard rock as this is, and in which more-over denudation has advanced so far, should be flat and compressed; it is even pres-