

glen. Subsequently the glen trends still further towards the north, and then after once more fording the muddy stream, we came to Ak-tasch (4681 m.), or the White Stone, a name which alludes to a little knoll of marble that there crops up out of the floor of the glen. But apart from this the prevailing rocks all day were fine-grained and black.

The weather was less favourable. In the forenoon the sky was only half clear, but afterwards it became mantled with dark clouds and a strong wind met us in the teeth. In the evening we even had a slight fall of snow; it was fine and whirled about in the wind.

The next day it snowed briskly at Ak-tasch, and we decided to stay there and give the horses an opportunity to nibble the last grass they were likely to get for some days. The snow came down thick, but was of the finest. The wind blew hard, so that the ground in the vicinity of our camp became only partly covered, for the snow was mostly blown away as fast as it fell. Our Ladakis were however of opinion that this snow-fall would not make it impossible to cross over the Karakorum; at the most it would only render it a little more difficult.

Immediately south-west of our camp we discovered three small glaciers and to the north a fourth. They are streamers from an ice-field which caps the higher parts of the mountains. Very short and very steep, none of them get down to the bottom of the glen. They are fissured at the edges and crossed in front by horizontal bands of dirty ice. At that time however they were enveloped in impenetrable clouds of whirling snow, which swept like drift-sand along the bottom of the glen and the sides of the mountains. After the bright, temperate, and glorious weather which we had experienced in the deep-lying glens we were again plunged into Polar winter.