

two thousand feet high, shutting out most of the gentler slopes lying above. The scenery was magnificent, but we wearied of limitations. We longed to see the upper parts of the narrow tributary valleys, which hung on the sides of the main valley and poured forth huge fans and cones of angular gravel from their mouths, high above the floodplain of the main stream. We were also eager to investigate the glaciers, whose gleaming fronts, unhidden by moraines, peered out from lofty hanging valleys, and the high peaks which, according to the map, rise 25,000 feet above the sea. We could not understand the origin and history of the mountains without a view of their upper parts.

Starting at 4 A. M. on the 27th of May from a height of 13,800 feet, I rode up the steep talus slope of an old moraine to an elevation of 16,000 feet, where the ponies had to be sent back. Then, from six o'clock till noon, I toiled on alone over sliding talus slopes, struggled through soft snow up to the hips, or climbed with hands and feet up slopes of naked rock. I had chosen the mountain illustrated opposite page 76, because from the valley it appeared comparatively easy to ascend, but at noon, though I had reached a height of 20,500 feet, a white slope of snow of a thousand or more feet still rose steeply ahead. To go on, alone as I was, would have been folly, for it had taken a full hour to climb the last three hundred feet, and the mixture of smooth cliffs and soft snow ahead looked even worse than what I had already surmounted. I was tempted to think that I was exhausted and cold, and had a headache from the exertion and altitude, but a seat in a warm, sunny nook, and the sound of a little bird singing