

the Pylæ Ciliciæ, which open upon Tarsus;* the Thermopylæ (or the "Hot Gates"), near Mount Cæta, immortalized by the heroic devotion of Leonidas and his Three Hundred; and the Caudine Forks,† where the glory of the Roman Eagles was so pitifully humiliated. Between Sweden and Norway, near Skiaerdal, one of these gates is formed by two precipitous walls; a very similar one is found in the Dovrefeld. In the United States there exist some remarkable examples in the abrupt openings through which the Hudson has forced the mountain-barriers. Some of the "gates" in the Andes have a depth of 5000 feet.

We shall notice at more detail a few of the defiles rendered celebrated by historical associations.

The *Col de Pertus*‡ has been from all time the natural route across the eastern chain of the Pyrenees. It was traversed by Hannibal, on his way into Gallia, and by Cæsar and Pompey, before Iberia became a Roman province. Several centuries later, the Goths poured through the same defile to establish themselves in Spain on the ruins of the Roman supremacy; and when they, in the eighth century, were in their turn expelled by the Arabs, the latter forced the Col de Pertus, descended upon France, and were only arrested by the great victory which Charles Martel won over them at Tours.

The defile of the Dariel, or "Gates of the Caucasus," is thus described by Blanchard, who traversed it in 1857, on his route from Tiflis to Stavropol.

"Of all the mountain-passes which I have explored, this is the most imposing. Figure to yourself two immense walls of rock rising perpendicularly, and nearly to the limit of eternal snows, and at their foot a torrent, foaming and furious, interrupted in its course by immense boulders detached from the neighbouring mountain; a road sometimes scarcely ten feet wide, a width which has often been attained only by making it bound, in the form of a semi-vault, over the rocks of the perpendicular wall;—such is the picture. The pen cannot convey any idea of the savage grandeur which this passage exhibits; this impregnable Thermopylæ, whose master is also master of the military road penetrating from Europe into Asia."

Gorges and ravines are numerous enough in countries abounding with hills and table-lands; they invariably lead to the most open valleys. In travelling along the ridge which overhangs them, we frequently arrive upon their very brink before discovering them. Their origin is generally due to the destructive action of a violent torrent, or to crevasses produced by a sudden fracture or convulsion of the soil.

* [This is now called by the Turks *Göleh Bógház*. It was traversed by the younger Cyrus, and by Alexander the Great. Niger attempted to defend it against the Emperor Septimius Severus in A.D. 197.]

† [The pass known to the Romans as the *Furculæ Caudinæ* is supposed to have been the narrow valley of the Isclero, between Santa Agata and Moirano.]

‡ [Identical with the *Summus Pyrenæus* of the ancients.]