

continually closing together, when changes in underlying configuration permit. Two fractured surfaces pressed tightly unite again as one mass; and a patch shivered into ten thousand fragments becomes solid and transparent under the lateral squeezing to which it may become subjected. So, to whatever extent the ice-sheet may be shattered, it is continually healing, and tends to return to the condition of a sound and solid mass. Thus the tourist, picking his way among the séracs, and jumping the bottomless chasms, hears frequently the detonation of some new split, which is echoed back from the red pinnacles of Mont Maudit, which rises on his left. These themselves hurl down rocky fragments to keep alive the watchfulness of the traveler, and place material on the back of the glacier to be borne gradually but steadily down toward the valley.

The common glacier-field just mentioned strikes the sharp upper limit of a mountain salience, which slopes down to the valley of Chamonix, and separates two mountain valleys. This prominent dividing point is the Aiguille de la Tour. As the common ice-mass impinges against it, the ice parts to the right and left like a river. Down the western valley flows the ice-stream known as the Glacier de Taconnay. Down the eastern valley flows the greater stream known as the Glacier des Bossons, having the little village of Bossons at its foot. Another valley lies still farther west, and the common ice-field of Mont Blanc fills it with a stream known as Glacier de la Gria.

These three glaciers descend to the valley on the west of the pretty village of Chamonix. On the east are three others. The nearest is the celebrated Mer de Glace, the lower part of which is called the Glacier des Bois, with the little village of Bois at its foot. The snowy eastern slope of Mont Blanc and Mont Maudit (Mo-deé) feeds an enormous glacier which, to an observer from the valley of Chamonix, lies behind the pinnacled summits of Charmoz and Midi. This is the Glacier du Géant, and it forms the western tributary of the Mer de Glace. Into the head of the Mer de Glace comes the Glacier