

A valley is frequently formed by a projecting angle of one of the two branches which serve as its enclosing rampart, in such wise that there remains but a narrow passage through which the traveller can penetrate ; such a passage is named a *Pass* or *Defile*. We must add, however, that the words *col*, *defile*, *pass*, *passage*, are often confounded by writers, and that their exact signification is not very well established.



FIG. 76.—THE CIRQUE OF GAVARNIE (THE PYRENEES).

The aboriginal inhabitants of every country establish themselves at the outset in the low, sheltered, and fertile valleys: hence, the *cols* or *passes* which provided them with an access to the outer world have sometimes received the name of "Gates of the Nations." Let us mention, for example, the *Porta Vestphalica*, which the river Weser traverses; the Gates of the Caucasus (*Caucasice Pylæ*); the Pass of Issus, near the Syrian Gates, in the Taurus chain, rendered famous by the victory of Alexander the Great over Darius Codomanus;