

ing cliffs have been thrown toward the centre of the valley, in large piles of angular blocks of gneiss and mica slate, in the spaces between which grow gnarled birches and spruces that must be used as ladders and bridges whereby to scramble from block to block, by every one who would cross or ascend one of these rivers of stones. These "gulfs" of the White Mountains are similar to the "cirques" of the Alps, and various explanations have been given of their origin. To me they have always appeared to be of the same nature with the "chines" or bays with precipitous ends seen on rocky coasts, and which are produced by the action of the surf on the softer beds or veins of rock. They testify to the raging of the waves for long ages against the sides of what are now lofty mountains. This, we know, must have occurred in the great Pleistocene submergence; but in mountains so old as those now in question, it may have in part been effected in previous periods.

At the head of the ravine we paused to rest, to admire the wild prospect presented by the ravine and its precipitous sides, and to collect the numerous plants that flower on the surrounding slopes and precipices. Here, on the 19th of August, were several large patches of snow, one of them about a hundred yards in length. From the precipice at the head of the ravine poured hundreds of little rills, and several of them collecting into a brook, had excavated in the largest mass of snow a long tunnel or cavern with an arched and groined roof. Under the front of this we took our mid-day meal, with the hot August sun pouring its rays in front of us, and icy water gurgling among the stones at our feet. Around the margin of the snow the vegetation presented precisely the same appearances which are seen in the low country in March and April, when the snow banks have just disappeared—the old grass bleached and whitened, and many perennial plants sending up blanched shoots which had not yet experienced the influence of the sunlight.