

or pendent branches, each tree covering a considerable area, and being closely interwoven with others, so that they surround the mountain with a formidable hedge about a quarter of a mile broad. The innumerable dead boughs, which, after growing for a time, during a series of milder seasons, to a greater height, have then been killed by the keen blast, present a singular appearance. They are forked and leafless, and look like the antlers of an enormous herd of deer or elk. This thicket opposed a serious obstacle to those who first ascended the mountain thirty years ago. Dr. Francis Boott, among others, whose description of his ascent in 1816, given to me in London several years before, made me resolve one day to visit the scene, was compelled, with his companion, Dr. Bigelow, to climb over the tops and walk on the branches of these trees, until they came to the bald region. A traveler now passes so rapidly through the open pathway cut through this belt of firs, that he is in danger, while admiring the distant view, of overlooking its peculiarities. The trees become gradually lower and lower as you ascend, till at length they trail along the ground only two or three inches high; and I actually observed, at the upper margin of this zone, that the spruce was topped in its average height by the common reindeer moss (*Lichen rangiferinus*). According to Dr. Bigelow,* the upper edge of the belt of dwarf firs is at the height of 4443 feet above the sea. After crossing it we emerged into the bald region, devoid of wood, and had still to climb 1800 feet higher, before arriving at the summit. Here our long cavalcade was seen zigzagging its way in single file up a steep declivity of naked rock, consisting of gneiss and mica schist, but principally the latter rock intermixed with much white quartz. The masses of quartz are so generally overgrown with that bright-colored yellowish-green lichen, so common on the Scotch mountains (*Lichen geographicus*), that the whole surface acquires a corresponding tint, visible from a great distance. This highest region is characterized by an assemblage of Alpine or Arctic plants, now no longer in flower, and by a variety of mosses and

* See his excellent account of an ascent of Mount Washington in 1816, Boston Medical Journal, vol. v. p. 321.