

branches out freely all the way up. The next subject of astonishment is the variety of stages of growth among the timber. The tiny sapling, not long enough for a walking-stick, may be seen springing up beside the mouldering prostrate stem of a departed patriarch of the forest. Between these extremes every gradation may be seen at any place where one chooses to look, giving an impression of calm undisturbed nature and venerable antiquity. Another novelty, and perhaps the most striking of all, is the sight of so much fallen timber. Many trees die and decay, but yet remain erect, either because their roots hold, or because their stems are kept in place by the support of their still living neighbours. Others lose their stability, and topple over upon those next them. Every angle of inclination among these decaying stems may be observed. You can ride below some of them, though with the risk of having your hat switched off by some unobserved branch. Others you may walk your horse over, and an animal accustomed to the work acquires wonderful dexterity in surmounting these obstacles. But when the trunks approach the ground, or when they lie piled across each other, as they so continually do, you must ride round them; so that in those parts of the forest where fallen timber is plentiful your progress becomes provokingly slow and laborious. To us, however, everything was fresh. We rode on, hour after hour, in a kind of new world, gradually ascending till we found ourselves on the crest of a wide valley filled with pine-forest up to the brim, yet with stripes of green meadow peeping out here and there along its centre. From the farther side of this great depression rose the fine snow-streaked summits of the chain. The descent was less easy than the ascent had been, for the trees had fallen thickly down the steep declivity, which was further roughened by rocky ledges and