

period. We must bear in mind, however, that under certain contingencies the high mountain summits might have been clad in snow and ice, like Greenland, and the Alpine plants might have been able to live only on their margins.

Further, it would be easy to show that the Alpine plants of Mount Washington would thrive under such conditions as those supposed, at the sea level; a low and equable temperature, with a moist atmosphere, being that which they most desire, and their greatest enemy being the dry parching heat of the plains of the temperate regions. Those of them, such as *Potentilla tridentata* and *Alsine Grœnlandica*, which occur in low ground within the limits of the United States, are found under shaded woods, in damp ravines, or on the moist sea-coast; and as we follow the coasts northward, we find these plants, on these and on neighbouring islands, in lower latitudes than those in which they occur inland. This is well seen in Northern New Brunswick and in the south shore of the St. Lawrence, where several northern species occur in shady and moist localities. I have, for example, collected *Cornus Suecica* and the Alpine birch in such places. When the summer mists roll around the summit of Mount Washington, it is in every respect the precise counterpart of an islet anywhere on the coast of America, from Cape Breton to the Arctic seas, and when winter wraps everything in a mantle of snow, all these lands are in like manner under the same conditions. So, in the Pleistocene period, though the islets of the White Mountains may have experienced a less degree of winter cold, they must have had very nearly the same summer temperature as now; and as this is the season of growth for our Alpine and Arctic plants, it is its character that determines the suitability of the locality to them.

Those stupendous vicissitudes of land and water which have changed the aspect of continents, and swept into destruction races of gigantic quadrupeds, have dealt gently with these