

THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

WHITE MOUNTAINS, NEW HAMPSHIRE.

The accomplished author of "America and the Americans" thus writes regarding this portion of the United States:—"This is one of the wildest regions in the United States. From the top of the stage we have a wide prospect over forests, pastoral valleys, ravines, and dingles; Mount Lafayette rising before us in solemn majesty, and behind us, far as the eye can reach, an undulating country, stretching away towards the frontiers of Canada. For the first 3 miles the drive lies through a tangled wood, and up an ascent so steep that our team occasionally pauses. The road is so narrow that the trees touch the carriage on both sides at the same time, and so rough that passengers hold on firmly for their lives; yet the coachman drives his team as hand with the utmost ease and skill."

During nine or ten months of the year, the summits of the mountains are covered with snow and ice, giving them a bright and dazzling appearance. On every side are long and winding gullies, deepening in their descent to the plain below.

These mountains are situated in the county of Coos, in the N. part of the State. They extend about 20 miles, from S. W. to N. E., and are the more elevated parts of a range extending many miles in that direction. Their base is about 10 miles broad, and are the highest in New England; and, if we except the Rocky Mountains, and one or two peaks in North Carolina, they are the most lofty of any in the United States.

Although these mountains are 65 miles distant from the ocean, their snow-white summits are distinctly visible, in good weather, more than 50 miles from shore. Their appearance, at that distance, is that of a silvery cloud skirting the horizon.

The names here given are those generally appropriated to the different summits: *Mount Washington* is known by its superior elevation, and by its being the southern of the three highest peaks. *Mount Adams* is known by its sharp, terminating peak, and being the north of Washington. *Jefferson* is situated between these two. *Madison* is the eastern peak of the range. *Monroe* is the first to the south of Washington. *Franklin* is the second south, and is known by its level surface. *Lafayette* is known by its conical shape, and being the third south of Washington. The ascent to the summits of these mountains, though fatiguing, is not dangerous; and the visitant is richly rewarded for his labour and curiosity. In passing from the Notch to the highest summit, the traveller crosses the summits of Mounts Lafayette, Franklin, and Monroe. In accomplishing

this, he must pass through a forest, and cross several ravines. These are neither wide nor deep, nor are they discovered at a great distance; for the trees fill them up exactly even with the mountain on each side, and their branches interlock with each other in such a manner that it is very difficult to pass through them, and they are so stiff and thick as almost to support a man's weight. After crossing Mount Franklin, you pass over the eastern planacle of Mount Monroe, and soon find yourself on a plain of some extent, at the foot of Mount Washington. Here is a fine resting-place, on the margin of a beautiful sheet of water, of an oval form, covering about three-fourths of an acre. The waters are pleasant to the taste, and deep. Not a living creature is to be seen in the waters at this height on the hills; nor does vegetation grow in or around them, to obscure the clear rocky or gravelly bottom on which they rest. A small spring discharges itself into this pond, at its south-east angle. Another pond, of about two-thirds its size, lies north-west of this. Directly before you, the pinnacle of Mount Washington rises with majestic grandeur, like an immense pyramid, or some vast Kremlin, in this magnificent city of mountains. The pinnacle is elevated about 1500 feet above the plain, and is composed principally of huge rocks of granite and gneiss, piled together, presenting a variety of colours and forms. The ascent is made on horseback.

In ascending, you must pass enormous masses of loose stone: but a ride of half an hour will generally carry you to the summit. The view from this point is wonderfully grand and picturesque. Innumerable mountains, lakes, ponds, rivers, towns, and villages meet the delighted eye, and the dim Atlantic stretches its waters along the eastern horizon. To the north is seen the lofty summits of Adams and Jefferson; and to the east, a little detached from the range, supported on the north by a high ridge, which extends to Mount Jefferson; on the north-east by a large grassy plain, terminating in a vast spur, extending far away in that direction; east, by a promontory, which breaks off abruptly at St. Anthony's Nose; south and south-east by a grassy plain, in summer, of more than 40 acres. At the south-eastern extremity of this plain a ridge commences, which slopes gracefully away towards the vale of the Saco, upon which, at short distances from each other, arise rocks, resembling in some places, towers; in others, representing the various orders of architecture.