

CHAPTER XVI.

ALPINE AND ARCTIC PLANTS IN CONNECTION WITH GEOLOGICAL HISTORY.

THE group of the White Mountains is the culminating point of the northern division of the great Appalachian range, extending from Tennessee to Gaspé in a south-west and north-east direction, and constituting the breast bone of the North American continent. This great ridge or succession of ridges has its highest peaks near its southern extremity, in the Black Mountains; but these are little higher than their northern rivals, which at least hold the undisputed distinction of being the highest hills in north-eastern America. As Guyot¹ has well remarked, the White Mountains do not occur in the general line of the chain, but rather on its eastern side. The central point of the range, represented by the Green Mountains and their continuation, describes a great curve from Gaspé to the valley of the Hudson, and opposite the middle of the concave side of this curved line towers the almost isolated group of the White Hills. On the other side is the narrow valley of Lake Champlain, and beyond this the great isolated mass of the Adirondack Mountains, nearly approaching in the altitude of their highest peaks, and greatly exceeding in their geological age, the opposite White Mountain group. The Appalachian range is thus, in this part of its course, supported on either side by outliers higher than itself. The dense grouping of mountains in this region is due to the resistance offered by the old Adiron-

¹ *Silliman's Journal.*