

The existence of many forests over the same tracts of country, by which they are now occupied in Europe, have been known to stand as they now do for many centuries past; but whether their continuance has been kept up by the prolonged life of the greater proportion of the trees of which they are composed; or altogether, like nations of human creatures, by a succession of generations, leaving no individuals now alive of all those of which they were formerly composed, there seems to be no means of ascertaining. Most of the forests of our own country are, from all appearances, of as long standing as any others on the face of the globe; and there are doubtless many lofty trees now growing which had given umbrage to *Powhatan*, that distinguished chief of many tribes. But beyond the time of the first settlement of our own country by Europeans, all our knowledge in relation to it can only be derived from inference and conjecture.

On considering the slow growth of most forest trees; and on observing in all ancient forests how few appearances there are of any changes or renewals, there is much reason to believe, that the most durable of forest trees have an almost indefinite length of life. (*k*) The white mulberry was introduced into Virginia about the year 1623, for the purpose of rearing silk worms; (*l*) and some of the same species of mulberry trees, which had been set out in Georgia, for a similar purpose, were, in 1802, alive at an hundred years of age. (*m*) The Norway spruce fir, (*abies picea*), is allowed to be one of the tallest trees of the old continent. The finest stocks of it are straight bodied, from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty feet in height; and from three to five feet in diameter; and are said to be a hundred years in acquiring that size. (*n*) The common elm, (*ulmus campestris*), is reckoned one of the finest trees of the temperate zone of Europe. Several stocks of it, which had been planted in France about the year 1580, survived in 1819; that is, were about two hundred and forty years of age; and had then attained twenty-five or thirty feet of circumference, and eighty or ninety feet of height. (*o*) In France, at Sancerre, in the department of the Cher, one hundred and twenty miles from Paris, there was, in 1819, in existence a chesnut tree, (*castanea vesca*), which, at six feet from the ground, was thirty feet in circumference. Six

---

(*k*) Roget Anim. and Veget. Physi. pt. 4, c. 3, note.—(*l*) 1 Virg. Stat. 126, 420, 520; 2 Burke's His. Virg. 142.—(*m*) 2 Mich. Am. Sylva, 185.—(*n*) 2 Mich. Am. Sylva, 304.—(*o*) 2 Mich. Am. Sylva, 225.