

to be already fifty years old. I was told that the swamp in which it grew had been burnt at least half a century before, and had been re-peopled from a few stocks that escaped the conflagration, or perhaps by the seeds of the preceding year.' (r) From which it would seem, that the number of the concentric circles in the young cedar being found to correspond so nearly with the known lapse of time within which it must have grown, after all the old ones had been destroyed, might have induced this botanist to speak of this fact as a corroboration of the general opinion; yet he merely states the circumstance, and leaves the matter to the judgment of the reader. But in another place he has distinctly given us to understand, that however disposed to treat this opinion with respect, he himself had no great confidence in its correctness. In treating of the hemlock spruce, (*abies canadensis*,) he says, 'The hemlock spruce is always larger and taller than the black spruce; it attains the height of seventy or eighty feet, with a circumference from six to nine feet, and uniform for two-thirds of its length. But if the number and distance of the concentric circles afford any certain criterion of the longevity of trees, and the rapidity of their vegetation, it must be nearly two centuries in acquiring such dimensions. (s)

The inferences deducible from the apparent number of concentric layers found in the trunk of a tree, upon an inspection of a transverse section of it, is, however, a kind of evidence which can only be obtained by a posthumous examination. Such examination of the bodies of animals are common, and have often been found very instructive in relation to the purposes for which they have been made; but it is believed such an examination never was made with a view to ascertain the age of the animal, or when it would attain such a maturity as would give the greatest value and utility to its body, or that of similar animals. *Post mortem* examinations of the bodies of animals, are often made with a view to ascertain points of comparative anatomy; to observe the organization of the body, so as thereby the better to understand how living creatures of the same species should be treated in health, or in disease; or to ascertain what may have been the immediate

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(r) 2 Mich. Am. Sylva, 341.—(s) 2 Mich. Am. Sylva, 318. 'In a field of arid sandy loam, long under the usual cultivation, a piece of five or six acres was covered by a second growth of pines thirty-nine years old, as supposed from that number of rings being counted on some of the stumps. The largest trees were eighteen or twenty inches through.'—*Ruffin on Calcareous Manures*, chap. 13.