

far as they have gone, afford perhaps the only, or certainly the least questionable evidence as to the growth and age of forest trees. In such cases it has been observed, that oaks and beech are not fit for use, as timber, until they attain about fifty or sixty years of age; but that the Scotch fir, (*pinus sylvestris*,) larch, (*larix*,) ash, and chesnut, become fit for use after a growth of twenty or thirty years. The larch, in particular, than which there is no tree in England of quicker growth, is said, on an average in favourable situations, to increase until fifty years of age, at the rate of half an inch in diameter and two feet and a half in height each year. Instances are mentioned where in Scotland, young oaks, valuable for their bark alone, are usually cut at from twelve to twenty-five years old. (i)

I do not understand, however, that any of these historical accounts of the plantations of forest trees have, as yet, covered as much as the lapse of an hundred years. They make no mention of the expectation of life that may be attributed to any such trees; nor do they speak of the average term of the existence of any of them. It has been said that in England the oak attains an age, in some instances, of more than a thousand years; but that the beech, the ash, and the sycamore, (*acer pseudo platanus*,) most likely never live half so long. But all plants, as well as all animals, are alike subject to the inexorable law of mortality, as is sufficiently shewn by the bountiful provision made by nature for their reproduction. Hence, and from the well known fact, that all plants are subject to diseases, it necessarily follows, that all trees, like animals, have an average and ultimate term of existence beyond which their lives are rarely extended, or cannot be prolonged. (j)

(i) Rees' Cyclo. v. Plantation.—(j) Rees' Cyclo. v. Timber; Thompson's Chem. b. 4, c. 2, s. 13, and c. 3, s. 6; Roget's Animal and Vegetable Physiology, part 4.

LOUDON, in his *Arboretum Britannicum*, states that the oldest oak in England is supposed to be the parliament oak, so called from the tradition of Edward I, holding a parliament under its branches in Clifton Park, belonging to the Duke of Portland, this park being the most ancient in the island. It was a park before the conquest, and seized as such by the conqueror. The tree is supposed to be fifteen hundred years old. The tallest oak in England was the property of the same nobleman; it was called *the duke's walking-stick*, higher than Westminster Abbey, and stood till of late years. The largest oak in England is the Calthorpe oak, Yorkshire, measuring seventy-eight feet in circumference where the trunk meets the ground. The *three shire oak*, at Worksop, was so called from covering parts of Yorkshire, Nottingham, and Derby; it had the greatest expanse of any recorded in this island, dropping over seven hundred and seventy-seven square yards. The most productive oak that of Gelond's, in Monmouthshire, felled in 1810. Its bark brought £200. And its timber £670, (about \$4,000)