

Ohio, they found the whole region covered with an uninterrupted forest, and tenanted by the Red Indian hunter, who roamed over it without any fixed abode, or any traditional connection with his more civilized predecessors. The only positive data as yet obtained for calculating the minimum of time which must have elapsed since the mounds were abandoned, have been derived from the age and nature of the trees found growing on some of these earthworks. When I visited Marietta in 1842, Dr. Hildreth took me to one of the mounds, and showed me where he had seen a tree growing on it, the trunk of which when cut down displayed eight hundred rings of annual growth.* But the late General Harrison, President in 1841 of the United States, who was well skilled in woodcraft, has remarked, in a memoir on this subject, that several generations of trees must have lived and died before the mounds could have been overspread with that variety of species which they supported when the white man first beheld them, for the number and kinds of trees were precisely the same as those which distinguished the surrounding forest. 'We may be sure,' observed Harrison, 'that no trees were allowed to grow so long as the earthworks were in use; and when they were forsaken, the ground, like all newly cleared land in Ohio, would for a time be monopolised by one or two species of tree, such as the yellow locust and the black or white walnut. When the individuals which were the first to get possession of the ground had died out one after the other, they would in many cases, instead of being replaced by the same species, be succeeded (by virtue of the law which makes a rotation of crops profitable in agriculture) by other kinds, till at last, after a great number of centuries (several thousand years, perhaps), that remarkable diversity of species characteristic of North America, and far exceeding what is seen in European forests, would be established.'

* Lyell's Travels in North America, vol. ii. p. 29.