

minute shells,—and that embedded in the marl they find the skeleton of a mastodon. Judging from data furnished on the eastern side of the Atlantic, the pilgrim, who has been asserting, in opposition to his neighbour, the antiquity of the American woods, argues from these appearances that the moss deposit must be of great age, and the underlying skeleton of an age greater still. Mosses in Old England, containing three tiers of stumps, are demonstrably as old as the times of the Roman invasion. Even the Roman axe has in some instances been found sticking in the lower trunks; and at least the huge unknown skeleton just found in the moss must, he urges, be quite as ancient as the times of Agricola or Julius Cæsar. His antagonist, however, challenges the inference. The previous question has, he asserts, first to be settled. The rate of growth of the American wood and the American shells has to be determined ere any calculation can be founded on either the three tiers of stumps or the overlying or intervening deposits of vegetable matter, or yet on the thickness of the shell-marl which underlies the whole. For if, as he contends, the growth of animals and vegetables be, as is possible, very rapid in the new world, the moss and shells, instead of being at least sixteen or seventeen hundred years old, may not be above sixty or seventy years old, and the huge animal beneath may have been living only eighty or a hundred years ago. At length, however, the required *unit* of measurement turns up. In cutting a tree for the erection of his hut, the pilgrim who maintains the opposite side of the argument finds it strongly marked by the annual rings. And there can be no doubt that the rings *are* annual ones. Between the tropics, when rings occur at all, they may indicate the checks given to vegetation by the dry seasons; and as the year has in certain localities two of these, each twelvemonth may be represented in the tree, not by one, but by two rings. But in the latitude of New England,