

# **TREE GOSSIP**

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Tree Gossip by Francis George Heath

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**FRANCIS GEORGE HEATH**

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BY

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THE NEW EDITION OF GILPIN'S "FOREST SCENERY."

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"OUR WOODLAND TREES," "SYLVAN SPRING," "AUTUMNAL LEAVES,"  
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## PREFACE.

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HIS little volume might have been greatly extended if it had been designed to include gossip upon the most easily accessible facts of tree life. But it is intended to deal, in a popular manner, with subjects outside those usually discussed in books on trees. It is concerned, in short, mainly, with the byeways of tree life. The general subject has attractions for a very large public—larger now than ever before; for trees were never so much valued and loved as they are in the present day—and the Author trusts that the particular phase of it discussed in the following pages, and the method of discussion, may please and interest his readers.

The alphabetical arrangement of the contents has been adopted for convenience of reference.

F. G. H.

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## TREE GOSSIP.

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### Age.



SO remarkable is oftentimes the duration of tree life, that the question of Age becomes a very interesting one. But how is Age determined? In exogenous trees, or those whose additions to substance take place outwards, annual growth in bulk is shown by a series of concentric 'rings;' so that by cutting the trunk across and counting these rings the growth in years is indicated. Unfortunately this test of Age can only be applied after the tree is cut down, and only a rough approximation, therefore, can be made to it when a tree is standing in its glory and beauty. Yet it is interesting to know, even so late, how long

has been the period of existence. The register of Age, however, is curiously irregular, and is affected by many different circumstances—the growth in successive seasons being affected by these circumstances, and the width of the rings being wider or narrower, according to the more or less favourable conditions of growth during the periods corresponding respectively to the rings. Cold and warmth, drought and moisture, supply the most important reasons for the difference. The absence or the crowding of other trees; the reaching by the roots, at certain stages of growth, of a greater or less amount of nutriment; atmospheric changes occasioned by the proximity or otherwise of populations, are amongst other causes which affect tree development. The variation may be instanced in the case of a Scotch Fir cut down at the Age of two hundred and seventy-two years. The cut across the trunk was at a height of five feet from the ground, and the radial width of the first set of rings, corresponding to the first ten years, was 0·36 of an inch. The width for the next ten was 0·51 of an inch; for the third ten, to thirty years, 0·60 of an inch; for the ten completing forty years, 0·28 of an inch. The greatest radial width of its annual growth was for the ten years which completed its fiftieth year, in which period the radial width was 2·11 inches. In the next ten the