

4. AMERICAN SILVER FIR—*Abies Balsamifera*.

*Description.*—This species of Fir is sometimes called Balsam Fir, and sometimes Silver Fir. It is found in the coldest regions of North America; in New Brunswick it does not constitute masses of wood, but is disseminated, in greater or less abundance, among the Hemlock and Black Spruces. Its height rarely exceeds forty feet, with a diameter of from twelve to sixteen inches. The body tapers from a foot in diameter at the surface of the ground, to seven or eight inches at the height of six feet. When standing alone, and developing itself naturally, its branches, which are numerous and thickly garnished with leaves, diminish in length in proportion to their height, and form a pyramid of perfect regularity. The leaves are six or eight lines long, and are inserted singly on the sides, and on the top of the branches; they are narrow, rigid, and flat, of a bright green above, and a silvery white beneath, whence the name of the tree is probably derived. The cones are nearly cylindrical, four or five inches long, an inch in diameter, and always directed upwards; this characteristic belongs also to the Silver Fir of Europe, and distinguishes these species from others of the Fir tribe, whose cones are turned towards the earth.

*Properties and Uses.*—The wood of the Silver Fir is light and slightly resinous; it is very white, except the heart, which is sometimes yellowish. A cubic foot, when seasoned, weighs only twenty five pounds; yet like other kinds of Fir it is stiff, and does not bend much under a considerable weight. It lasts longer in the air, than in water, and its principal use, hitherto, has been in the form of inch boards, for the outside covering of farm-buildings. The great abundance and cheapness of White Pine and Spruce, have caused the wood of the Silver Fir to be much undervalued.

The well known Fir Balsam is procured from this tree. It is naturally deposited in vesicles on the trunk and limbs, and is collected by bursting these tumours and receiving their contents in a shell or cup. The fresh turpentine thus obtained is a greenish, transparent fluid, of an acrid, penetrating taste; it has been highly celebrated in England for medicinal and other purposes, and is there generally designated Canada Balsam. It makes a very fine transparent varnish for water-color paintings, which does not become darker with time.

The Indians use the Fir Balsam as a remedy for several internal complaints, and they also apply it externally in cases of fresh wounds. Their practice in this respect, has been adopted by the Settlers in remote districts, but it is really very improper and dangerous in many cases. When given inconsiderately, it produces heat in the bladder, and when applied to wounds, it causes inflammation and acute pains.

When camping in the forest, Hunters, Surveyors, and Lumbermen, adopt the invariable practice of the Indians, in selecting the branches of the Silver Fir for their bed. They are fragrant and cleanly, and when the young branches are broken off short, and properly laid down, the points all in one direction, lapping over each other and thus covering the butts, they form no mean bed. Many a refreshing night's rest has the writer enjoyed upon them, after a long and fatiguing day in the forest, with feet stretched to the camp fire, no covering but a blanket, and the canopy of Heaven above.

**LARCH---*Larix*.**

The trees of the Larch tribe are now most frequently classed under the genus *Pinus*, as members of the Pine family, to which they properly belong; but as this classification is not yet understood in New Brunswick, the only species