British Bryological Society
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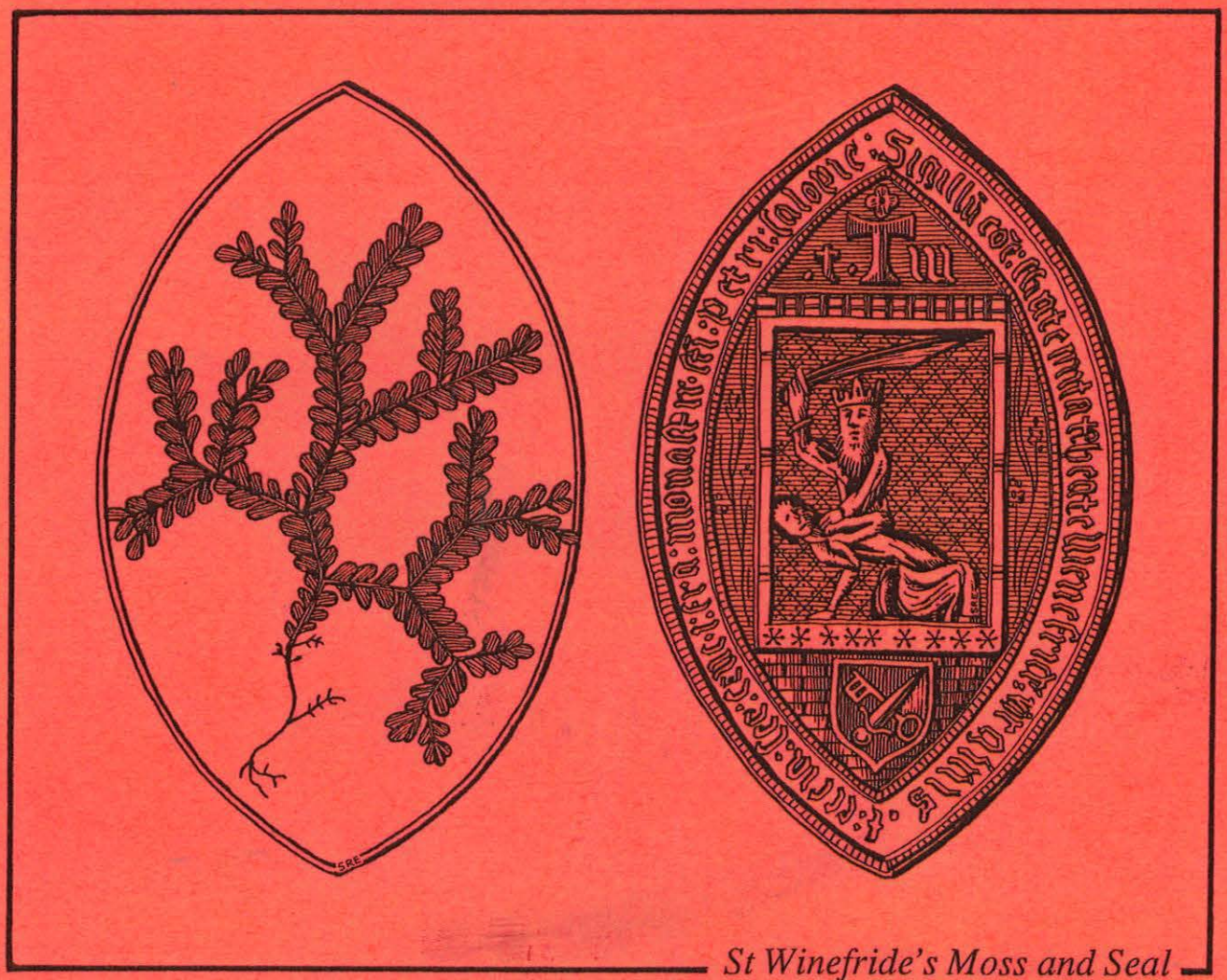
Mosses in English Literature



St Winefride's Moss and Seal

SEAN R. EDWARDS

BRITISH BRYOLOGICAL SOCIETY
CARDIFF
1992

A ROLLING STONE GATHERS NO ....

MOSSES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE collects together 290 quotations in the English language concerning mosses or liverworts, dating from over 2000 years ago to the present. It investigates the literary ecology of moss.

In all, the publication does four things:

1) it assembles all of those better known but scattered references to moss that crop up from time to time.

2) it investigates many of these, presenting a summary of already published and also new information.

3) it presents a wide selection of lesser-known moss quotations. This is perhaps the most important part of the volume, as it enables an extensive overview of the changing way moss has been perceived over the centuries. Public attitude is important to anyone studying a specialist subject, and is ignored at peril.

4) on a lighter note, the quotations make fascinating reading. Try, for example, the following trivial questions:

Which British saint used moss to heal?
Which moss is associated with a British saint's death?
Who wrote the mossiest poem?
What moss grew thick upon the skulls of men and women?
Which English moss proverb dates back to 42 BC, and how?
Why is moss a super-plant?
Why is/was moss associated with death?
Which British wild-flower is most associated with moss?
Which moss saved the life of a famous explorer?
Why are mosses becoming less popular?
Why are mosses associated with dreams?
Is there moss in the Holy Bible?
Who called himself the "Bard of the Mossy Cot"?
Which king wore only moss for fifteen years?
Which great English writer and critic wrote: "Look under the moss, there, it cannot be sage! What can that queer thing be?" -- "'tis a saxifrage"?
Which less well known British writer wrote (of moss): "amid their freaks the loveliest forms are found in Polynesian creeks"?

These and many other questions about moss are answered (more or less) in **MOSSES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.**

BRITISH BRYOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The British Bryological Society is a charitable organisation devoted to the world-wide study of mosses and allied plants. It holds regular meetings (both paper-reading and field) and produces a Journal for scientific papers, a more newsy Bulletin, and other publications. Membership consists of both professional botanists and ecologists, and amateur naturalists. It is open to anyone interested.

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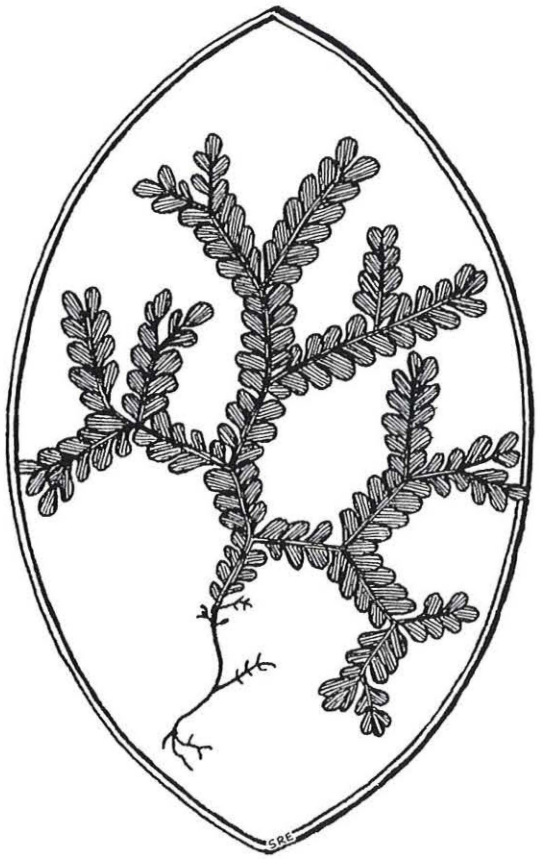

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Illustration of St Winefride's moss and seal, re-drawn from Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* (1784), vol. I, plate VI.

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Mosses in English Literature

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This volume is dedicated to
Professor Paul W. Richards, C.B.E., Sc.D., and to Dr Eustace W. Jones.

Mosses in English Literature

Sean R. Edwards
Manchester Museum, Manchester University, UK

INTRODUCTION

This volume brings together quotations about mosses and liverworts from English literature and poetry. It considers the literary associations or purpose of these plants, and thus explores their popular mythology. Since this reflects and also influences public attitudes towards bryophytes, it is directly relevant to those who are interested in or who study them.

SELECTION OF QUOTATIONS

Moss, bog, liverwort, lichen or fungus

The word moss has always been used to refer to boggy ground as well as to the plants themselves, and both aspects of the word almost certainly have the same origin in northern European languages (Bradley, 1908). Quotations that refer clearly to boggy ground have been excluded, but see the section *Stagnation and barrenness*. Onions (1966) says that the first "formal" reference in English to moss meaning the plant rather than boggy ground, is found in the 12th century; this may refer to the "*Durham Plant-Name Glossary*" (1100-1135), but see Aelfric (993-996).

It is to be expected that the word moss should include all bryophytes (as it does in other European languages), although only Saint Winefride's Moss (Caxton, 1485) can be identified as a liverwort. Moss may also be used loosely to encompass algae and mould, as well as other moss-like plants such as Iceland Moss (a lichen) and Spanish Moss (a flowering plant, see Longfellow, Townsend). Grey moss probably usually refers to lichen (Clare; Longfellow; Masefield; Spenser), but generally quotations that are clearly not referring to bryophytes have been omitted.

Excluded categories

Although it may be fairly clear what is meant by general literature and poetry, these are less easy to define. This volume is primarily concerned with how non-bryologists or non-scientists see bryophytes. The obvious categories for exclusion are bryological floras or papers, or works by authors who are particularly concerned with moss, but the dividing line between such works and the second included category (see below) is weak, particularly in the field of popular natural history.

Included categories and selection within them

The entries here fall into three loose categories. The first and smallest contains quotations concerning moss that are popular or generally known outside bryological circles, including those by Aelfric, Bacon, Betjeman, Browning (*Two Poets ...*), Caxton, Coleridge (*The Rime ...*), and Publilius Syrus.

The second category comprises those entries that are known amongst bryologists, or which indicate a special interest in mosses; this includes quotations by Browning (*Para-*

celsus), Clare (*Shadows of Taste*), Dana, de la Mare (*The Magnifying Glass*), Loomis, Hooke, Megaw, Park, Pope, Ruskin, Wodehouse, Wordsworth (*The Thorn*), and possibly Saunders, and the "Anonymoss" contribution. Works of popular natural history include Gerard, Thompson, and White, and there is a distinct subcategory typified by Victorians such as Gardiner and Stark; see the section *Rural-romanticism to natural history*. The quotations from Bartram and Crundwell, which might have been excluded as being from a bryological source, have been allowed because they have previously been quoted, and thus are quotations in the established sense rather than just references or extracts.

The remainder constitutes the third category. These are most important because they illustrate how bryophytes are generally presented in literature, indicating the changing way moss is perceived. They may consist of just passing mention like "mossy path" or "mossy stones" from Nature Poets, or may equally be associated with concepts such as death and decay. The large number of such references meant that most had to be omitted, and only a few were selected somewhat arbitrarily as representative, or of particular interest. In several cases, such as with Wordsworth and Clare, minor references are listed in the notes after main entries. It is hoped that those references that have been selected are representative of those excluded.

Nonetheless, whole areas of literature have not been touched, and only a small fraction of the possible quotations will have been found. Such a collection of quotations can at best be only a selection, and could never be complete. For example, only six popular children's authors are included (Keene; Mooney; Murschetz; Potter; Ransome; Uttley), plus two children's poets (de la Mare: *Books*, *The Magnifying Glass*; and *The Song of the Mad Prince*, and Reeves); these are important because they may influence the growing mind towards or against favourable attitudes concerning moss.

CHANGES IN LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF MOSS

Moss is used not just as a literary alternative to grass, or because it is quite good for rhyming.

Dr E.W. Jones comments (*in litt.*): "It is remarkable that the early references associate moss with discomfort, disease and death; mosses are not regarded as objects of admiration. The interesting question is when and why did the change take place and the association became not merely romantic but also pleasurable." Analysis of the collection is not feasible because of its selective nature, and also because the frequency of particular associations will be biased by the independent frequency of the associated words or concepts. Moreover, interpretation of associated meanings must often be subjective, and the author's intended or subconscious associations may never be known. However, there are evident general trends in the use of the word moss, though sadly it is clear that negative associations persist. Moss may still be said to have an image problem.

Malign to benign?

Perhaps because of boggy associations (see next section) including ritual burial (Stead *et al.*, 1986), and because mosses are seen to do well on tombstones, the word was associated with "discomfort, disease and death". But apart from Shakespeare (*Titus Andronicus*) and possibly Gerard at about 1600, all such references found are 19th or 20th century (Browning: *St. Martin's Summer*; Byron: *The Death of Calmar and Orla*, *Elegy on Newstead Abbey*; Coleridge: *Lines Written ...*; de la Mare: *Not Only*; Drinkwater; Hildreth; Holmes; Jackson; Masefield; Ruskin: *Modern Painters*; Scott: *Old Mortality*; Tennyson: *Claribel*; Townsend; and possibly Wordsworth: *The Thorn*). Southey's *To Horror* (1791) possibly fits here as well as anywhere, as does Smith's

Fiend of the moor. Associations with old age and decay bridge a similar period, from Shakespeare (*Henry IV*, *As You Like It*, *Timon of Athens*), through Southey (*Madoc in Wales I:VI*, *Erillyab*), C. Brontë and Jackson, to de la Mare (*The Dark Chateau*).

Other negative associations range further back. Moss is linked with filth from Ovid (see Dryden), through Spenser (*Faierie Queene*) to More (1680), and with poverty from the 14th century (Anon.: *Romance of Sir Orfeo*; Anon.: *Kynge Roberd of Cysille*), through Milton (*Il Penseroso*) and Wordsworth (*Address to my Infant Daughter*, *Simon Lee* ...), to the 20th century's de la Mare (*Groat nor Tester*). Links with poverty grade to 19th century neglect and overgrowth (Browning: *St. Martin's Summer*; Byron: *Oscar of Alvar*; Scott: *Old Mortality*; Southey: *Inscriptions XI: In a Forest*; Woodworth, where an alga is probably meant), and possibly to de la Mare again (*The Little Old Cupid*). These apparently improving relationships may only reflect changing social conditions.

However, related to such negative associations as neglect, are more benign concepts. Nesse (1679) uses moss figuratively to indicate accumulated useless dross. Hawthorne (1846, 1st reference) uses moss more favourably to represent the accrued debris of time, even a reward for the achievement of years, or something of value. This surely is the essential meaning of the "rolling stone" proverbs, listed under Tusser and Shaw, which date back to Publilius Syrus (*c.* 42 BC) or before. Moss-covered or mossback is used to this day, to indicate reclusive or fusty old minds (Buchan; de Vere, 2nd reference; Pile; Wollstonecraft), and similarly moss(y-)back was used as a back-woods settler (see notes after Buchan), and thence a conscript-dodger (de Vere).

Of course until quite recently (and even still today) the word moss encompassed other lower plants such as fungi, so associations with decay and neglect may not refer particularly to bryophytes. All this has been a bane to the popular image of bryology, not helped to this day by the commercial interests in promulgating horticultural moss-killers.

Stagnation and barrenness

Some references to moss lean towards associations with stagnation, due to the alternative but related meaning of boggy or marshy ground. The boggy marshy meaning has always run in parallel, to the present day, and this may overlap with or flavour references to the plants themselves (Gash; Hecht; Tennyson: *Mariana*, 2nd mention; Townsend: *Untitled*). See also references to *Sphagnum* in the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES. Surprisingly, these are all 19th or 20th century.

Mosses (including lichens) are also associated with barrenness and bare places, evidently because they grow (or can be most easily seen) where or when other plants do poorly. References range from the 16th to the 20th century (Spenser: *Shepheard's Calender*; Shakespeare: *Cymbeline*, *Titus Andronicus*; Coleridge, 1816; Browning, 1878; Masefield, 1919). In 1965 Silkin associates moss with urban stuntedness and barrenness. However, in many of these cases, moss may represent the spark of green, or optimism in an otherwise bleak place; see also the section *Resurrection, healing and potency*.

Loneliness and solitude, shadows, dreams and haunting

Understandably, moss is more associated with wild places than with crowded urbanisation. Literary links with loneliness, solitude and wilderness are frequent from the 18th century (de la Mare; Hood: *Autumn*; Masefield; Park; Parnell; Pope: *The Dunciad*; Scott; Shelley: *Rosalind and Helen*; Stark; Townsend; Wilson; Wordsworth: *The River Duddon*). Similarly, moss occurs in association with shade or shadow in Browning (*St. Martin's Summer*), Clare (*Shadows of Taste*, and *Reccolections* ...), Cowper (*The Shrubbery*), Davis, Dana, Day-Lewis, Drinkwater, and Hildreth.

Associations with dreams or delirium are interesting, and occur from the 19th century (Clare: *Careless Rambles*; de la Mare: *The Dark Chateau* and *The Song of the Mad Prince*; Ford; Keats: *The Fall of Hyperion -- A Dream*, and: *Epistle to J.H. Reynolds*; Lee (1969); Rossetti: *Dream Land*; Shelley: *Fragments*; Smith: *Dreamthorpe*; Whittier: *A Dream of Summer*; Wordsworth: *Memorials of a Tour in Italy*). Perhaps these relate to associations with sleep and pillows (see the section *Miscellaneous associations*). Associations with haunting (Hood; de la Mare; Mooney) are related both with tombstones and haunted houses. Keene's moss-covered mansion is eerie with an air of foreboding. These relatively recent associations may also relate to progressive urbanisation, with moss being linked to the insecurity of the less familiar and less civilised wilderness.

Links with the mind vary in significance, but occur in works by Clare (*Shadows of Taste*), Keats (*Ode to Psyche*), Megaw, Park, Pope, and Tolkien.

Rural-romanticism to natural history

The Latin poets presented a mossy Arcadian idyll which was translated by Dryden (1631-1700) and others, and which may have influenced later English works. But the rural-romantic association of moss was evident long before Dryden, with Spenser (1552-1599: *The mourning Muse of Thestylis*) being the earliest found. The romantic, restful and more pleasing aspects of moss gained in ascendance, through Milton (1667, 1671), and Pope (who marvels at the variety and number of the different kinds of mosses) and possibly Gray ("lap'd in Elysium" when visiting Keswick in 1769) in the 18th century, into the "Romantic period" of the early and mid 19th century.

Mosses positively flourished during the Romantic period. Increasing industrialisation encouraged literary escape into the rural idyll, now relatively more characterised by pollution-sensitive mosses. It may be hard to define the English Romantics, but predictably the bulk of the moss quotations come from this loose category or period; see quotations from the "Lake Poets" Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey (no doubt helped by the association of these poets with the Lake District and the West Country) and from Blake, the Brontës, Browning, Byron, Clare, Crabbe, Keats, Scott, Shelley, Tennyson, and indeed Dorothy Wordsworth.

But in particular, mossy rural-romanticism is typified by the Wordsworth "group", including Coleridge, Crabbe and Clare (Furst, 1976), and also by Browning, Keats and Shelley. Wordsworth, like most other Romantics, generally uses mosses in passing to paint a pleasant rural scene, although in *The Thorn* (1798, written in Somerset) the mosses are almost heroic, providing a beauteous, comforting and protective blanket for the dead infant. He marvels at the variety of colours and form of mosses. Even so, both in *The Thorn* and *The River Duddon*, mosses can be not only beauteous or brilliant, but also melancholy or sullen (though the latter may refer to boggy ground). Wordsworth appreciates different types of moss (including lichen) and regards them differently. Ruskin's enthusiasm for mosses fifty years later was also influenced by the Lake District. Hudson (1904) may represent the tail of the Victorian romance, and Yeats is surprisingly unmossy for a prolific poet from the Emerald Isle.

A curious phenomenon that rode on the back of the rural-romantic wave lay in the popular Victorian books instructing (often younger) readers in natural history, and which contained little moral homilies or extracts of (often unattributed) verse concerning the wondrous works of God seen in tiny things. These have generally been excluded, except for some examples from Gardiner (1846, 1849) and Stark (1860). Similar books include Bagnall (1896), Fry (1908), Russell (1908), and F.E. Tripp (1868).

In the 20th century, rural-romanticism (at least as far as mosses are concerned) seems to be in retreat. Wodehouse (1935) nicely illustrates its place in a past age, and

Tolkien's reference is very much to ages and indeed worlds past. The rural-romantic quest has been largely replaced by an interest in more sober works of natural history which are not considered here. Kipling (1865-1936), Betjeman (1906-1984) and Gorky (1920) do use mosses to conjure a slightly more down-to-earth rural-romantic mood, and Rushdie (1981) does so to evoke a primitive Arcady. Byatt's (1990) reference is in a poem she attributes to a fictitious early Victorian romantic poet, thus this represents a modern view of Victorian poetry.

Descriptive interest and close inspection of small plants

The theme of objective descriptive science runs from *Hunter 100* (1100-1135), through Bacon (1627, which is, however, rather tainted with negative associations) and herbals such as Gerard's (1597, also somewhat morbid), Hooke (1665), White (1775), and ending with modern floras. Generally such references have been excluded, unless like the above they are of particular interest. Flora Thompson's (1922-1927) descriptive interest probably owes more to the Romantics than to objective science, and see also the Victorian popular natural history books in the section *Rural-romanticism to natural history.*

However, a closer inspection of moss is occasionally evidenced by poets and writers who have not set out with the intention of objective interest. Most writers see moss from a distance, noticing no more detail than perhaps its texture; Megaw (1934, chapter X) blames nature poets for this, citing Wordsworth's *The Thorn.* But there are some notable exceptions. De la Mare's *The Magnifying Glass* and Browning's *Paracelsus* (written when he was only 23 and evidently had good close sight) stand almost alone, apart from Park's involuntary perspective. Also (perigonial?) cups are mentioned in Wordsworth's maligned *The Thorn,* and in Browning's *By the Fire-side* in which also "elf-needled" might mean young fruit; see also the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES.

The humble nature of mosses has been noted with admiration throughout recorded history, from King Solomon (if hyssop be moss) to Tolkien, who both choose moss as the "least" in contrast to the greatest trees. Other authors (Clare: *Shadows of Taste*; Ruskin: *Modern Painters*) marvel at the interest and beauty in such apparently small and insignificant plants.

Resurrection, healing and potency

Four 19th century authors at least (Blake, 1803; Hardy, 1881; Hawthorne, 1846; Whittier, 1847) have seen in mosses regeneration, renewal or rebirth, due to their fresh revival in damp weather from apparent death, or to their fresh growth at the end of winter. In another sense, Aelfric and Park both vouch for the recuperative qualities of moss, and Saunders lauds the healing qualities of *Sphagnum*; see also Lee (1969).

The alliterative association with mistletoe (Coleridge: *Christabel*; Shakespeare: *Titus Andronicus*; Southey: *Madoc in Wales I:XIV, Llaian* -- probably lichen) may imply magical properties, and Ford used moss (possibly lichen) in an albeit evil potion.

Miscellaneous associations

In addition to the associations already mentioned, the word moss occurs in particular conjunction with several other words.

Four major groups of words are rather predictably associated with moss. Fountains, wells, springs, brooks, streams and rivers, are often mossy; the references are too

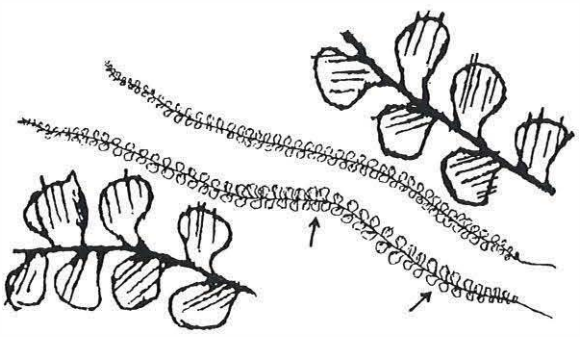


Fig. 1. St.Winifrids-Well Lichenastrum. From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: LXIX 8. Enlargements taken from arrowed parts.

numerous to list, and are probably no more worthy of note than associations with stones, paths, ways or tracks. Cave, cavern, cell or nook are recorded here as associated with moss at least twelve times. Associations with bed, nests, pillows, or sitting, resting, sleeping or lying on moss -- including Dorothy Wordsworth's daffodils (in note), and Dana (verse X, not included here) -- are also too common to list. For the derivation of the name of the moss genus *Hypnum*, from the Greek for sleep, see Scott (1988).

Ten other recurring associations are worth noting. Violets often grow in moss (C. Brontë: *The Wood*; E. Brontë: *Poem* November 11 1838; Browning: *The Two Poets ...*, *St. Martin's Summer*, *Paracelsus* part IV; Hemans; Rossetti: *One Day*; Ruskin: *Iteriad*; Shelley: *Prometheus Unbound*, etc.; Whittier: *Wordsworth*; Wordsworth: *Louisa: She Dwelt ...*); every one of these references is 19th century.

Moss is associated with ivy (C. Brontë: *Mementoes*; Dorr; Shakespeare: *The Comedy of Errors*; Tennyson: *The Lotos-eaters*), but as with mistletoe, the link may be just that both are green in winter. Also, it is hardly surprising that poems about nightingales (Clare; Coleridge; Keats; Turner) might also mention moss, or that moss might be associated with thyme (Cowper; Anon.: 2nd *Untitled*). Velvet, silk or fur is often used to describe moss (Anon.: 1st *Untitled*; Clare, several times; Gardiner, 1849; Hardy: *Far from the Madding Crowd*; Marvell; Ruskin three times; Shakespeare: *Cymbeline*; Silkin; Twain; Wodehouse; White), as is jewel, diamond or ruby (Davies; Loomis; Ruskin; Wellesley), and of course emerald which refers as much to colour (Byatt; Thomas; and (indirectly?) Lee, 1947; etc.). Associations with fairy/faierie or goblin occurs five times.

Association with hair or tresses occurs with St Winefride's moss, in Gerard (see Fig. 2), Shelley (*Rosalind and Helen*), Smith, and also less significantly in Bacon, Clare (in nests), Milton and Peake, not to mention (unrelated?) links with maidenhair (Byatt; Turner; *Funaria hygrometrica* in Dillenius, see Fig 10; *Polytrichum commune* in White); the contexts in this broad group range from love to horror. The association with feathers in the titles of three poems (Davies; Day-Lewis; Graves) seems coincidental and of no significance, despite the feathery nature of feather-mosses. However, moss is deemed suitable to be favourably associated with saints three times (Aelfric; Caxton; Cowper).

Humour

Almost all quotations involving mosses or liverworts are totally lacking in humour, with the possible exception of Loomis, Peake, and maybe those concerning the Skull Moss. This is no doubt to be expected from the nature of the subject, but is nonetheless a pity.

IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES

In most quotations, the species is unidentifiable. However, there are some notable exceptions. The earliest is that from Caxton (1485), referring to St Winefride's Well

(Holywell, Flint). St Winefride was decapitated in the 7th century by the spurned Prince Caradoc, and a well sprang from the spot where her head came to rest. The sweet-smelling moss that grew round the well was said to represent her hair (Linden, 1748). Pennant (1784) relates the story, and his illustration is reproduced here (cover and title page). The "moss" was probably the scented liverwort *Chiloscyphus* (Grolle, 1969; Dr E.W. Jones, pers. comm. 1988). The toothed leaves shown in Dillenius (1741), see Fig. 1, are an engravers's artefact, otherwise *Lophocolea fragrans* seemed a possibility. Also the issue is confused by Pennant's violet-smelling red-staining alga "*Byssus Jolithus*" (now *Trentepohlia*) that was said to represent the saint's blood. Dr Jones has identified a specimen in Morison's herbarium (OXF) labelled "Muscus odoratus fontanus Salopiensis sub aquis nascens e fonte D. Winifredae desumptus" as *C. pallescens*, but this presumably came from the St Winifred's Well at Woolston, Shropshire. A specimen at Manchester Museum herbarium (MANCH) labelled "Holywell, Flintshire, G. Davies" (possibly about 1857) is typical *C. polyanthos* (Fig. 3), but might not be from the well itself. The well was visited in 1989 when the water had been chlorinated at source for several years; neither *Chiloscyphus* nor *Lophocolea* could be found, though other bryophytes were present.

Browning's elf-needled moss with fairy cups could be a *Polytrichum*, if not a mixture of species of the lichen genus *Cladonia*. Similarly, W. Wordsworth's moss in *The Thorn* might be *Polytrichum piliferum* or *P. juniperinum* with red perigonial cups (Fig. 12), but the vermilion dye could also refer to apothecia of intermingled *Cladonia coccifera*; the next few lines do indicate several *Cladonia* species. In Thomas' *The Penny Whistle* the moss might be *Funaria hygrometrica* (Fig. 10) or *Ceratodon purpureus* (Fig. 9), both of which favour bonfire sites.

There has been much speculation on the identification of the bizarre moss that grew upon the skulls of men, so gruesomely illustrated in Gerard (*q.v.*), see Fig. 2. Perhaps it was only a perpetuation of a grisly joke; Gerard's personalised account of the fabled Barnacle Geese may well indicate that he had a humorous streak and liked to play on the credulity of his audience. But the Skull Moss is mentioned by other authors and this lends some credence to the possibility of such an improbable plant. Fruticose lichens such as *Usnea*, *Pseudevernia*, *Evernia* and *Ramalina* do not seem likely, although Gerard's chapter "Of ground Mosse" includes lichens, as well as ferns and allies, possibly a leafy liverwort, and a flowering plant. Dr E.W. Jones (*in litt.*) thinks it was (if it ever existed) almost certainly fungus mycelium. Scott (1988), who should be read for a full history of the story, concludes after exhaustive investigation that it was probably fictitious. If it were a moss, then the most likely species is *Tetraplodon mnioides* (Fig. 4) which may still be found on the bones of dead cattle and sheep; it is

Fig. 2. *Muscus ex cranio humano.* Mosse growing upon the skull of a Man. From Gerarde, (1597) *Herball.*

of course just possible that with changes in burial practices over recent centuries in Northern Europe, the moss may now be extinct due to the destruction of its habitat.

The silver-green moss in Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* must be *Bryum argenteum* (Fig. 6), and the velveteen cushions are recognisable as *Tortula ruralis*, see Fig. 5 (Dr E.W. Jones *in litt.*). Crabbe's (1812) rare moss in secret shade which was found in the rushy moor, possibly refers to *Paludella squarrosa* (Roy Perry *in litt.*). John Betjeman tempts identification with "gold-starred moss" (possibly the flowering plant *Sedum acre*), as does Thomas with his vivid description of moss on the eponymous path. Gash, Peake, Macneice and Saunders name their moss, at least to genus, and Tennyson's second reference in *Mariana* is possibly *Sphagnum* too. Gilbert White gives full description and name to *Polytrichum commune* (Fig. 11).

Mungo Park not only wrote of his stimulating moss, but also collected it, and it was named by Mitten as a new species, *Fissidens parkii*. See Fig. 7.

SOURCES

Sources for the quotations are various. Most entries came from contributions by members of the BBS and colleagues, from systematic searches through anthologies and collected works of major poets, etc., and from chance discoveries. Works by famous or classical authors such as those with sizable entries in Dictionaries of Quotations, have been regarded as eligible sources. Popular works have been of more interest than obscure works.

Dictionaries of quotations and similar works have proved useful, although several (Benham, 1913; Tripp, R.T., 1970; Cohen & Cohen, 1960, 1980; Colombo, 1974) have not a single entry under moss. There is no reference to moss in any of the 867 sundial inscriptions collected by Gatty (1890), but perhaps moss prefers shady tombstones where it will, in time, have the last word.

Concordances reveal that, hardly surprisingly, there is no mention of moss in the Bible (Cruden, 1845; Walker, 1895; Collins, 1983), but see the note after the entry for Hooke. Concordances also reveal that Blake mentions moss 6 times (Erdman, 1967), Browning 32 times (Broughton & Stelter, 1924), Byron 6 times (Young, 1975), Chaucer not at all in any possible spellings (Tatlock & Kennedy, 1927; Davis *et al.*, 1979), Clare 34 times (Grainger, 1983, prose writings only), Dryden 15 times (Montgomery, 1957), Keats 38 times (Becker *et al.*, 1981), Milton 5 times (Lugram and Swaim, 1972), Poe 6 times (Bradford *et al.*, 1941), Shakespeare only 6 times (Bartlett, 1894; Schmidt, 1902), Shelley 37 times (Ellis, 1892), Spenser 13 times (Osgood, 1915), Tennyson 23 times (Baker, 1914), Wordsworth 77 times (Cooper, 1911), and Yeats 5 times (Bradshaw, 1894; Parrish, 1963). Most of these are poetry only, and all have been checked.

The Oxford English Dictionary (Bradley, 1908; Burchfield, 1976; Simpson & Weiner, 1989) has been a useful source, where, however, many entries are only rather arbitrary examples of the word "moss" in usage.

Finally, *The Bryologist* used at least 33 quotations involving bryophytes (and others involving lichens), as boxed fillers, from 1966 to 1975, and these provided 19 entries here. Those interested should refer to all these works, where further references will be found that have not been included.

Sources have been indicated for each entry. The word "*in*:" is used to indicate a place where that entry was quoted; the word "*fide*:" is used where the reference has not been traced in context of the whole work in which it occurred.

THE QUOTATIONS

The quotations are ordered alphabetically according to the author's surname if known, otherwise according to the name of the publication or other source. References are not usually specific to a particular edition or publication; thus the dates given are either for the date of first publication (if known, given after the name of the publication), or for the life of the author (given after the author's name for first entry). Anonymous entries are given at the end. In order to save space, lines of verse in the notes after each entry run on; new lines are indicated by capital letters. Initials in square brackets indicate people who contributed or drew items to my attention, whether they were found independently or not; see ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Aelfric. *August 5, St Oswald, King and Martyr* (993-996). (*in*: Skeat, 1890). [MD].

A certain man fell on ice and broke his arm,
and lay in bed very severely afflicted,
until some fetched to him, from the aforesaid cross,
some part of the moss with which it was overgrown,
and this sick [man] was forthwith healed in sleep
in the same night, through Oswald's merits.

The aforesaid cross had been erected in Northumbria by Oswald. The healing properties of the moss compare with the life-saving qualities of Park's (*q.v.*) plant, although Aelfric predictably gives the credit to Oswald. See also Saunders.

Arnold, Matthew (1822-1888). *Tristram and Iseult. I, Tristram*

Idle as a mossy stone.

This is possibly based on the rolling stone proverbs (see Publilius Syrus, etc.), though with different implications. Arnold makes 8 other references to moss, according to Parrish (1959).

Bacon, Francis (1561-1626). *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627; 1826 edition, Basil Montagu), Century VI: Experiments in consort touching the rudiments of plants, and of the excrescences of plants, or super-plants (Articles 536, 542). (part *in*: Fry, 1908). [PWR].

The Scripture saith, that Solomon wrote a Natural History, "from the cedar of Libanus, to the moss growing upon the wall;" for so the best translations have it. And it is true that moss is but the rudiment of a plant and, as it were, the mold of earth or bark.

.....

The moss of trees is a kind of hair; for it is the juice of the tree that is excerned, and doth not assimilate.

Bacon's classification of mosses as "super-plants" may seem a little grand, but he means only epiphytes (or parasites or "excrescences"), and it is clear from his descriptions that he does not rate moss highly. See also under Hooke, for Solomon's moss.

Bartram, John. In an undated letter, about 1740, to Mark Catesby. (*fide*: Richards, 1950; *The Bryologist*, vol. **69** (1966) p. 262).

Before Dr Dillenius gave me a hint of it, I took no particular notice of mosses, but looked upon them as a cow looks at a pair of new barn doors.

Betjeman, John (1906-1984). *An Archaeological Picnic.*

In this high pasturage, this Blunden time,
With Lady's Finger, Smokewort, Lovers' Loss,
And lin-lan-lone a Tennysonian chime
Stirring the sorrel and the gold-starred moss,
Cool is the chancel, bright the altar cross.

See comments under the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES.

Betjeman, John. *A Subaltern's Love-song* (1945). (*in*: Burchfield, 1976).

The scent of the conifers, sound of the bath,
The view from my bedroom of moss-dappled path,
As I struggle with double-end evening tie,
For we dance at the Golf Club, my victor and I.

Bible, The: see under Hooke, Robert.

Blake, William (1757-1827). *Vala, or The Four Zoas* (completed 1803?), Night the Ninth (being the Last Judgment), lines 606-608.

.... "What are we, & whence is our joy and delight?
Lo, the little moss begins to spring & the tender weed
Creeps round our secret nest."

See note after Tolkien. Also, Blake reiterates Milton's: **Hairy gown and mossy Cell,** in his *Description of Illustration to Milton's Il Penseroso.*

Brontë, Charlotte (1816-1855). *Mementoes* (1846), lines 21-32. [AC].

All in this house is mossing over;
All is unused, and dim, and damp;
Nor light, nor warmth, the rooms discover --
Bereft for years of fire and lamp.
.....
And outside all is ivy, clinging
To chimney, lattice, gable grey;
Scarcely one little red rose springing
Through the green moss can force its way.

Moss is also used somewhat sombrely in *Jane Eyre* (chapter 28, or vol. III chapter 2): **moss-blackened granite crag,** but later: **a low mossy swell was my pillow.** In *The Wood* (verse 17) the inevitable violets (albeit white ones) are meant in: **And ne'er did dew so pure and clear Distil on forest mosses green.** [KC].

Brontë, Emily Jane (1818-1848). *Untitled poem* (4 December 1838). [AC].

The mute bird sitting on the stone,
The dank moss dripping from the wall,
The garden-walk with weeds o'ergrown,
I love them -- how I love them all!

She makes several other mentions of moss, for example: **moss-bedded fountain** (*Poem* dated November 11, 1838); and referring to violets in: **... that wood flower that hides so shy Beneath its/the mossy stone** (December 18, 1838, verse 7). [KC].

Browning, Robert (1812-1889). *By the Fireside*, xxxiv (lines 166-170).

Silent the crumbling bridge we cross,
And pity and praise the chapel sweet,
And care about the fresco's loss,
And wish for our souls a life's retreat,
And wonder at the moss.

Earlier in the same poem (lines 59-60) occurs: **the fairy cupped Elf-needled mat of moss**; see the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES, and CHANGES IN LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF MOSS: *Descriptive interest .... .*

Browning, Robert. *Paracelsus* (1835), part I, lines 40-43. (part *in*: Fry, 1908). [PWR].

Each family of the silver-threaded moss --
Which, look through near, this way, and it appears
A stubble-field or a cane-brake, a marsh
Of bulrush whitening in the sun: laugh now!

See further comments under section CHANGES IN LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF MOSS: *Descriptive interest .... .* In *Paracelsus*, part IV, line 543, occurs: **No mossy pillow blue with violets.**

Browning, Robert. *The Italian in England.*

The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping through the moss they love

Browning, Robert. *St. Martin's Summer*, v & viii.

Headstone, footstone moss may drape, --
Name, date, violets hide from spelling, --
But, though corpses rot obscurely,
Ghosts escape.
.....
And yon -- which shimmer mid the shady
Where moss and violet run to rankness --
Tombs or no?

Browning is hard to quote from economically; his grammar and consequence are often obscure.

Browning, Robert. *Two Poets of Croisic*, Introduction, i (1878). (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. 70 (1969) p. 139; Bartlett, 1957).

Such a starved bank of moss
Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
Violets were born!

Buchan, John (1875-1940). *Three Hostages*, chapter 10. (*in*: Burchfield, 1976).

The fact is I was becoming such a mossback that I had almost stopped reading the papers.

Burchfield gives other meanings of mossback, including homesteader, settler, and pioneer farmer. In this case it means a fusty old recluse or academic. See also under de Vere.

Byatt, A.S. The Fairy Melusine in: *Possession* (1990). Chatto & Windus. [JJ].

This rock was covered with a vivid pelt
Of emerald mosses, maidenhairs and mints

Two lines from a long poem (chapter 16) "The Fairy Melusine".

Byron, Lord G.G. (1788-1824). *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), Canto I verse XIX, and Canto IV verse CXVI.

The mountain-moss by scorching skies imbrowned
.....
The mosses of the Fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops

Byron mentions both drought-tolerant and water-loving mosses in one (long) poem. In *Elegy on Newstead Abbey* occurs: **yet lingers 'mid thy damp and mossy tombs**. Another mossy tombstone occurs in *The Death of Calmar and Orla*: **Live to raise my stone of moss; live to revenge me in the blood of Lochlin.** But in *Oscar of Alvar*: **Why grows the moss on Alvar's stone?**, Alvar is an abandoned turreted castle.

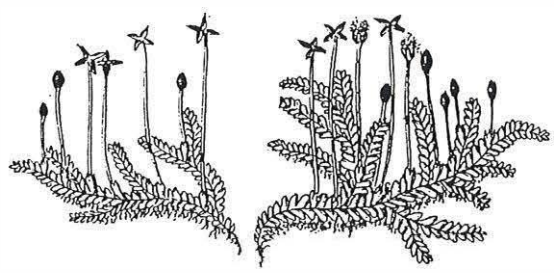


Fig. 3. The short creeping Trichomanes-like Lichenastrum, with many flowers. (*Chiloscyphus polyanthos*). From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: LXX 9.

Caxton, William (*c.* 1421-1491). The Life of S. Winifred, in *The Golden Legend* (1485) (Jacobus de Voragine) (ed. F.S. Ellis, 1900).

> **. . . and the moss that groweth on these stones [in the said well] is of a marvellous sweet odour, and endureth unto this day.**

Bradley (1908) gives: **The mosse that groweth upon the sayde stones smellyth lyke encense.** Dillenius (1741) describes and illustrates: **Lichenastrum trichomanoides aquaticum odoratum fontis S. Winifridae**: St.Winifrids-Well Lichenastrum [ARP]; see Fig. 1. See also further comments under the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES, and the cover, title page, and Fig. 3.

Chambers, Ephraim (d. 1740). *Cyclopaedia* (1727-1741). (*fide*: Bradley, 1908).

> **There is also a kind of greenish moss growing on human skulls that have been long exposed to the air, called *usnea humana*, or *muscus calvarius*. The ancients make a deal of use of it as an astringent.**

See also Gerard.

Clare, John (1793-1864). *Reccolections after a Ramble.*

On the Arches wall I knelt
Curious as I often did
To see what the sculpture spelt
But the moss its letters hid.

In *Noon* (lines 57-58) occurs: **Therefore leave the shadeless goss, Seek the springhead lin'd with moss**; ("goss" is gorse).

Clare, John. *The Flitting*, lines 81-88.

Where moss did unto cushions spring
Forming a seat of velvet hue
A small unnoticed trifling thing
To all but heavens daily dew
And Davids crown hath passed away
Yet poesy breaths his shepherd-skill
His palace lost -- and to this day
The little moss is blooming still.

In *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1827) Clare mentions moss 13 times, mostly in the short section "February". The monthly distribution is 0:5:1:1:3:0:0(2):1:1:1:0:0; (an earlier rejected and very long "July" had two mentions). See also Spenser's *The Shepheарde's Calender*.

Clare, John. *Shadows of Taste*, (MS 1832), lines 107-110. (*in*: Hawksworth & Seaward, 1977).

But he, the man of science and of taste,
Sees wealth far richer in the worthless waste,
Where bits of lichen and a sprig of moss
Will all the raptures of his mind engross.

Clare, John. *Careless Rambles*, lines 12-14.

-- and in my fancys dreams
As mid the velvet moss I musing tread
Feel life as lovely as her picture seems.

Clare described himself as **Bard of the mossy cot** ("*By Clare -- to be placed at the back of his portrait to Inskip by Mrs Prichard*", 1849). He mentions moss liberally in his poetry, including: **mossy arms** (of Elm); **... bank**; **... barn**; **... cell(s)**; **... elm**; **... farm**; **... fountain**; **... grey**; **... ground**; **... nest**; **... pads**; **... rails**; **... root(s)**; **... round**; **... thatch**; **... thorn (tree)**; **... wall**; **... willow**; plus **moss ball**; **... bed**; **... to build**; **... clad**; **... and grass**; **... and hair**; **... and leaves**; plus **beds of moss**; **Chaffinches carry the ...**; **fringed with ...**; **green ...**; **matted ...**; **stools o' ...**; **upon the ...**; **velvet ...**; **warped the ...**; plus **green mosses, mossed**, and other combinations. Two references occur in *The Nightingales Nest* (though none in *The Nightingale*). Many of these refer to nests, as in the 34 references (Grainger, 1983) [DEC] in his prose writings.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772-1834). *Christabel* (1816), pt. I. [KC].

And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest misletoe

Compare with Shakespeare's: **moss and baleful mistletoe** (*Titus Andronicus*). In Conclusion to pt. I of *Christabel*, occurs: **mossy leafless boughs**. All of these relate to barrenness or bareness.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Lines Written in the Album at Eblingerode* (1799). [MJ].

Heavily my way
Downward I dragged through fir groves evermore,
Where bright green moss heaves in sepulchral forms
Speckled with sunshine

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* (1798), pt. VII. (*in*: Oxford, 1941 and 1975).

He kneels at morn and noon and eve --
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss, that wholly hides
The rotted old Oak-stump.

The mossy stone Of Solfar-kapper in *The Destiny of Nations* is taken from *De Lapponibus* by Leemius. In *The Ballad of the Dark Ladie* occurs: **The brook falls scatter'd down the rock: And all is mossy there! And there upon the moss she sits**; this is similar to: **Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell** in *The Nightingale* [MJ]. In *The Foster Mother* occurs: **He found a baby wrapped in mosses** [MJ]. Coleridge also makes passing references such as: **mossy track**; **... ground**; **... apple-tree.**

Coles, W: see under Gerard.

Cowper, William (1731-1800). *The Shrubbery* (1782).

The saint or moralist should tread
This moss-grown alley, musing, slow
They seek like me the secret shade,
But not, like me, to nourish woe!

The six-line: ***Inscription for a Moss-house in the Shrubbery at Weston*** (1793?) (*in*: Bradley, 1908) does not mention moss further. Cowper mentions mosses in passing, as in: **moss-cushioned** in *The Yardley Oak* [KC].

Cowper, William. *The Task* (1785), I. (*in*: Bradley, 1908). [TH].

Hence, ankle deep in moss and flowery thyme,
We mount again

Crabbe, George (1754-1832). *Tales of the Hall* (1819).

All green was vanished save of pine and yew,
That still displayed their melancholy hue;
Save the green holly with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread

In *The Lovers's Journey* (from *Tales in verse*, 1812) occurs the three lines: **Here may the nice and curious eye explore How Nature's hand adorns the rushy moor; Here the rare moss in secret shade is found**; see comments under the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES. Was: **farmer Moss, in Langar Vale**, (in *The Widow's Tale*, 1812) so named to evoke a bucolic peasant?

Crundwell, A.C. (1970). Infraspecific categories in Bryophyta. *Biol. J. Linn. Soc.* vol. **2**, pp. 221-224.

Bryophyta ... are the wrong size. If human beings were the size of, say, cockroaches the taxonomy of a meadow would present problems of the sort that we now meet in tropical rain forest, while many bryophytes that are now distinguishable with difficulty or not at all by the specialist would be easily recognised and even given vernacular names by the cockroach in the street. ..... Bryophytes are of little economic use. The best way to stimulate research in the group would be to discover antibiotics in them, to prove that smoking them cures lung cancer, or to eat them with gusto in front of a

television camera. As it is, there is no money in them.

A paraphrased version of the above extract, to the effect of: **"The trouble with mosses is that they are the wrong size, and there is no money in them"** has been heard several times, attributed to Alan Crundwell. Its popularity justifies its inclusion here, together with its origin.

Dana, Robert Henry, Senior (1787-1879). *The Moss Supplicateth for the Poet* (*in*: Stedman, 1900; Berhardt, 1986; and part *in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **75** (1972) p. 616)

Though I am humble, slight me not,
But love me for the Poet's sake;
Forget me not till he's forgot,
For care or slight with him I take.

For oft he passed the blossoms by
And turned to me with kindly look;
Left flaunting flowers and open sky,
And wooed me by the shady brook.

The first two of nineteen verses; another five are in *The Bryologist*.

Davies, W.H. (1871-1940). Moss and Feather, in: *Ambition*, (1929).

Her shadow shows this Stone her frame,
But not her plumpness, round and simple;
Could she but see what moss she has,
To jewel every dimple --
Could this rich Stone but see her face,
Would she lie idle in one place?

Compare with Ruskin (1859).

Day, Helen Evelyn. (*fide*: Russell (1908) p. 94)

. . . mosses, like love, make even the ugliest objects beautiful, for they hide all defects with their own loveliness.

Day-Lewis, Cecil (1904-1972). *From Feathers to Iron* (1931). (*in*: Burchfield (1976)).

The virgin spring moss-shadowed near the shore.

Day-Lewis' translation of *The Georgics of Virgil* (1940), Book Three, line (143-)144, reads: **along Full streams, where moss is growing and the bank most green with grass**. The original ***muscus ubi et viridissima gramine ripa, speluncaeque tegant*** . . . , has yielded variously: **Mossy Caverns** (Dryden); **emerald with grass and moss; where the moss billows softly; where moss abounds; where there is moss; lush with moss and herbage**; and simply: **mossy**. Thus the original Latin (*c*. 36-29 BC) may be of less interest than the licence it gave to various English translators to interpret moss poetically. In *Passage from Childhood* occurs: **You will forgive him that he played Bumble-puppy on the small mossed lawn . . .** [ARP].

De la Mare, Walter (1873-1956). *The Dark Chateau*, lines 17-20.

All vacant, and unknown;
Only the dreamer steps
From stone to hollow stone,
Where the green moss sleeps.

De la Mare, Walter. *Not Only.*

Not only ruins their lichens have;
Nor tombs alone, their moss.

Lichen and moss the lone stones greened, occurs in *Haunted* (see also Hood's *The Haunted House*). In *The Magnifying Glass*, for children, occurs the couplet: **Of but an inch of moss A forest -- flowers and trees;** compare with Gardiner (1849), and see further comments in section CHANGES IN LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF MOSS: *Descriptive interest .... .*

De la Mare, Walter. *The Little Old Cupid*, lines 1-8. [AC].

'Twas a very small garden;
The paths were of stone,
Scattered with leaves,
With moss overgrown

In *The Song of the Mad Prince* occurs: **Who said, 'Green dusk for dreams, Moss for a pillow'?** [LO], and in *Groat nor Tester* occurs: **And some poor men for pillow have A mossy wayside stone.**

De Vere, Maximilian Schele. *Americanisms* (1872) p. 283. (*in*: Bradley, 1908).

The *Mossy-back* . . . was the man of the South, who secreted himself in a remote forest, or an inaccessible swamp, in order to escape conscription. His name was derived from the quaint fancy that he was determined to keep in hiding till "the moss should grow on his back --" as German students used to call the oldest veterans at the university *Bemooste Hallpter* (moss-covered heads).

De Vere uses the word ***Mossybank***; from the lines that follow, this must be a misprint, as corrected by Bradley. **Moss-back** is an alternative. The term is cognate with **moss-trooper** (or just **mosser**), meaning marauders, freebooters, thieves or convicts who went to ground in the mosses of the Scottish Borders during the mid-17th century (Simpson & Weiner, etc.). See also Buchan.

Dorr, Julia Caroline Ripley (1825-1913). *With a Rose from Conway Castle.* (*fide*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **75** (1972) p. 212).

Thou knowest how softly on the castle walls,
Where mosses creep, and ivies far and free
Fling forth their pennants to the freshening breeze,
Like God's own benison this sunshine falls.

Drinkwater, John (1882-1937). *Who were before me.*

Now grief is in my shadow, and it seems well enough
To be there with my fathers, where neither fear nor love
Can touch me more, nor spite of men, nor my own teasing blame,
While the slow mosses weave an end of my forgotten name.

Dryden, John (1631-1700).

Dryden mentions moss fifteen times, thirteen of these in translation. Most of these are unremarkable rural-romantic, including: **Mossy Pillows** (Juvenal); **Mossie Caves; Moss their Beds** (Ovid); **Mossy Bow'r; Edg'd round with Moss; mossy seats; Mossy Springs; mossy beds by crystal streams; cave of Mars dress'd with mossy greens;**

mossy Fountains; furr'd with moss (Virgil); see also under Day-Lewis. Unusual in this collection is: **The Roofs were all defil'd with Moss, and Mire** (*First Book of Ovid's Metamorphosis*); in fact all three of Ovid's references have variously negative associations.

Durham Plant-Name Glossary: see *Hunter 100*.

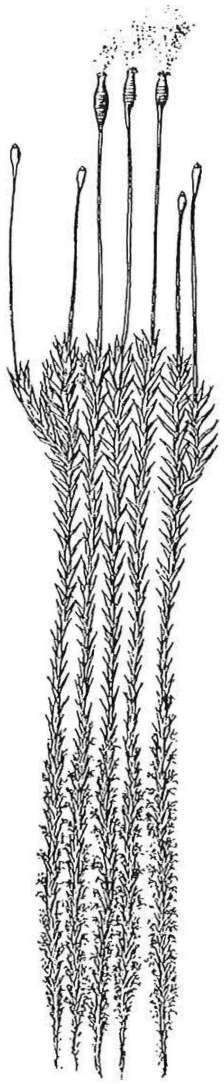


Fig. 4. The narrow-leaf'd slender Cruet-Bryum. (*Tetraplodon mnioides*?). From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: XLIV 4.

Ford, Ford Madox (1873-1939). *The Fifth Queen* (1906), Part Two: The House of Eyes, chapter I. [ST].

> **A grave and bearded man was found to cup her. He gave her a potion composed of the juice of night-shade and an infusion of churchyard moss. Her eyes grew dilated and she had evil dreams.**

Although the most active ingredient was presumably night-shade, the moss (possibly lichen) must have had some intended effect, at least in Ford's mind.

Gardiner, William. *Twenty Lessons on British Mosses* 2nd edition (1846). [ARP; JWF].

> **O! let us love the silken moss**
> **That clothes the time-worn wall;**
> **For great its Mighty Author is,**
> **Although the plant be small.**

The start of a 28 line poem; this little book is full of similar unattributed verse. A supplementary volume designated the Second Series (1849) [ARP] also includes many such poems, from which the following extracts are taken: **"What forests tall of tiniest moss Clothe every little stone! What pigmy oaks their foliage toss O'er pigmy valleys lone! . . ."** (compare with de la Mare (*Not Only*), and: **"Dim world of weeping mosses! . . .**", and: **Would man, thought I, but imitate the moss, And thankfully enjoy what Heaven bestows, How much of sorrow would he flee! . . .**, and: **"The velvet moss a fairy carpet seems; . . .**". See section SELECTION OF QUOTATIONS: *Excluded categories ...* .

Gash, Jonathan. *The Sleepers of Erin* (1983), chapter 17. William Collins, London. [AS].

> **"Lovejoy. What am I doing here, wet through, talking about sphagnum moss when I could be warm and cosy miles away doing something useful? I must be off my head!"**

Sphagnum moss is used here as a euphemism, or in mock erudition, for bog or peat. See Fig. 8, and see also Peake.

Gerard. *Herball* (1597), chap. 162: Of ground Mosse.

> **This kinde of Mosse is found upon the skulls or bare scalps of men and women, lying long in charnell houses or other places, where the bones of men and women are kept together: it groweth very thicke, white, like unto the short**

mosse upon the trunke of old oakes: it is thought to be a singular remedie against the falling Evill and the Chin-cough in children, if it be poudered, and then given in sweet wine for certaine daies together.

W. Coles (*Adam in Eden*, xv.31, 1657, *fide*: Bradley, 1908) says: **The last [sort] which is the mosse of a dead Mans Skull is oftner brought out of Ireland, than found with Us.** John Parkinson (1640) *Theatrum Botanicum*, says: **It is a whitish, short kind of moss, somewhat like the moss of trees.** Hooke (1665, *q.v.*) says that he would make no mention: **of the Moss growing on the skull of a dead man, which much resembles that of Trees**. See also Chambers, and further comments under the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES, and Fig. 4.

Gorky, Maxim (1868-1936). *My Apprenticeship* (*c.* 1920). [NH].

A thick carpet of moss lay underfoot .....

..... and I particularly liked to see how the crumpled moss stood up again after her feet had flattened it.

Graves, Robert R. (1895-1985). *Feather Bed*, II (1923). (*fide*: Burchfield, 1976).

By falls of scree, moss-mantled slippery rock.

Gray, Thomas (1716-1771). *Ode on the Spring* (MS 1742). [EWJ].

Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade.

There is no moss in *An Elegy wrote in a Country Churchyard* (1751), where it might have been expected.

Fig. 5. The hoary branched Country Bryum, with clawed Heads. (*Tortula ruralis*). From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: XLV 12.

Hardy, Thomas (1840-1928). *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874). [EWJ; PWR].

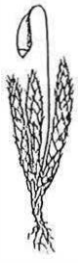
Soft brown mosses, like faded velveteen, formed cushions upon the stone tiling .... A gravel-walk leading from the door to the road was encrusted at the sides with more moss -- here it was a silver-green variety.

See comments under the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES, and Figs. 5 and 6.

Fig. 6. The Catkin-stemm'd Silver Bryum, with pendulous Heads. (*Bryum argenteum*). From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: L 62.

Hardy, Thomas. *A Laodicean* (1881).

Thence he could observe the walls of the lower court in detail, and the old mosses with which they were padded -- mosses that from time immemorial had burnt brown every summer, and every winter had grown green again.



Hawthorne, Nathaniel (1804-1864). *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846), (VIII) Buds and Bird Voices. [AS; IT].

> **Human flower shrubs, if they will grow old on earth, should, besides their lovely blossoms, bear some kind of fruit that will satisfy earthly appetites, else neither man nor the decorum of Nature will deem it fit that the moss should gather on them.**

The Manse of the title was indeed an "old mossgrown country parsonage", but the mosses are more metaphorical, being the accumulation of philosophical digressions and tales that constitute the book. In two places, Hawthorne sees in moss a symbol of renewal: (I) [After rain] **the mosses of ancient growth upon the walls looked green and fresh, as if they were the newest things and afterthought of time**; (VIII) **Thank Providence for spring! .... The moss on our timeworn mansion brightens into beauty**. See also note after the first Thoreau entry, and Keene.

Hecht, Anthony. *An Autumnal.* (*fide*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **74** (1971) p. 532).

> **Down at the stonework base, among the stump --**
> **Fungus and feather moss,**
> **Dead leaves are sunken in a shallow sump**
> **Of energy and loss**

Hemans, Felicia Dorothea (1793-1835). *The Palm-tree* (1818). (*in*: *The Bryologist* vol. **77** (1974) p. 683).

> **Through the laburnum's dropping gold**
> **Rose the light shaft of orient mould,**
> **And Europe's violets, faintly sweet,**
> **Purpled the moss-beds at its feet.**

Herrick, Robert (1591-1674). *To Robin Red-brest* (1648?)

> **Laid out for dead, let thy last kindenesse be**
> **With leaves and mosse-work for to cover me.**

Hildreth, Charles Lotin. *Implora Pace.* (*fide*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **75** (1972) p. 614).

> **I stood within the cypress gloom**
> **Where old Ferrara's dead are laid,**
> **And mused on many a sculptured tomb,**
> **Moss-grown and mouldering in the shade.**

Holmes, Oliver Wendell (1809-1894). *The Last Leaf.* (*in*: Bartlett, 1869; Whitney, 1890).

> **The mossy marbles rest**
> **On the lips that he has prest**
> **In their bloom,**
> **And the names he loved to hear**
> **Have been carved for many a year**
> **On the tomb.**

In *The Cambridge Churchyard* occurs: **The mosses creep, the gray stones lean**. Holmes makes other, less grave, reference to moss.

Hood, Thomas (1799-1845). *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, lines 440-441 (verse 49).

.... rich moss, whose brown
Burns into gold as the warm sun goes down

In *The Haunted House* (line 70) occurs: **No footstep mark'd the damp and mossy ground** (see also de la Mare's *Haunted*); in *Ode: Autumn* occurs: **Alone, alone, Upon a mossy stone** (lines 39-40).

Hooke, Robert. *Micrographia* (1665), Observ. XXI: *Of* Moss *and several other small vegetative Substances*. Royal Society. (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **70** (1967) p. 285).

Moss is a Plant, that the wisest of Kings thought neither unworthy of his speculation, nor his Pen, and though amongst Plants it be in bulk one of the smallest, yet it is not the least considerable: For, as to its shape, it may compare for the beauty of it with any other Plant that grows ...

In the same chapter Hooke says: **.... a most perfect Vegetable, wanting nothing of the perfections of the most conspicuous and vastest Vegetables of the world, and to be of a rank so high, as that it may very properly be reckon'd with the tall Cedar of *Lebanon*, as that Kingly Botanist has done.** This refers to: "**the hyssop that springeth out of the wall**" (in the Old Testament of The Holy Bible, *I Kings*, chapter 4, verse 33) which King Solomon studied and compared with the Cedar of Lebanon (Balfour, 1885; Richards, 1950, 1981; and see also under Bacon). However, Zohary (1982) thinks the hyssop "ezov" was *Origanum syriacum*, and Hepper (1981 revised 1985) thinks it was probably *Capparis spinosa*; neither author considers the possibility of moss. See also note after Gerard for another quotation from Hooke, and section CHANGES IN LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF MOSS: *Descriptive interest* .... .

Hudson, W.H. (1841-1922). *Green Mansions -- A Romance of the Tropical Forest* (1904), chapter V.

It was a human being -- a girl form, reclining on the moss.

This is the first meeting of the two lovers in the fatal romance of the title.

Hunter 100, "*Durham Plant-Name Glossary*", Durham Dean and Chapter manuscripts (1100-1135). (*in*: Lindheim, 1941, entry 244; Bradley 1908).

Musc*us* mose

See section SELECTION ... : *Moss, bog, liverwort, lichen or fungus.*

Jackson, Helen Hunt (1830-1885). *Coronation.* (*fide*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **74** (1971) p. 74; Bartlett, 1957).

On the king's gate the moss grew gray;
The king came out. They called him dead
And made his eldest son one day
Slave in his father's stead.

Jameson, Anna: see under Publilius Syrus.

Keats, John (1795-1821). *Ode to a Nightingale*, iv (*in*: Oxford, 1975). [KC].

But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

Keats, John. *Lines on the Mermaid Tavern.* (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **72** (1969) p. 89; Bartlett, 1957).

Souls of Poets dead and gone
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

Keats, John. *To Autumn* (1820), part I.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core

This well-known quotation usually omits the last two lines included here.

Keats, John. *Endymion* (1818), book IV, lines 711-712.

The mossy footstool shall the alter be
'Fore which I'll bend, bending, dear love, to thee.

In book II, (lines 665-668), occurs: **.... where little caves were wreath'd So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd Large honeycombs of green, and freshly teem'd With airs delicious.** In *Ode to Psyche* (1819) (*in*: Bradley, 1908) occurs: **And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees, The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep.**

Keats, John. *The Fall of Hyperion -- A Dream* (1856), lines 28-29.

Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound
Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits

Association with a dream occurs again, in *Epistle to J.H. Reynolds* (1848, written 1818), lines 34-35: **You know it well enough, where it doth seem A mossy place, a Merlin's Hall, a dream.**

Keene, Carolyn. *The Mystery of the Moss-Covered Mansion* (*Nancy Drew Mystery Stories 29*) (1973). [KE].

In this popular children's story, moss-covered refers to an old (though well-preserved) house in jungly woods; the connotations are eeriness and foreboding. Compare with Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse.*

Kings, I: see under Hooke, Robert.

Kipling, Rudyard (1865-1936). *The Spring Running.*

Then, perhaps, a little rain falls, and all the trees and the bushes and the bamboos and the mosses and the juicy-leaved plants wake with a noise of growing that you can almost hear ...

.....

The mosses curled deep and warm over his feet ...

Kipling also mentions: **moss-cankered oak**, in 'They', a short story in *Traffics and Discoveries* (1904) (*in*: Burchfield, 1976).

Langland, William (1362-1399). *The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman* (C-Text) passus XVIII, lines 13-14. (*in*: Skeat, 1886 revised 1954; Bradley, 1908; Whitney, 1890).

Paul *primus heremita* - hadde parroked hym-selve,
That no man myght se hym - for much mos and leues

"Parroked" means enclosed, or shut in; "leues" means leaves.

Lee, Laurie (b. 1914). *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*. (1969).

Fantasies of water rose up and wrapped me in cool wet leaves, ... and filled my mouth with dripping moss.

Part of Lee's deliriums of thirst, when walking across Spain. In *April Rise* (from *The Bloom of Candles*, 1947) occurs: **Pure in the haze the emerald sun dilates, The lips of sparrows milk the mossy stones** [ARP].

Longfellow, Henry (1807-1882). *The Spirit of Poetry* (*in*: Russell, 1908).

. . . . . the silver brook,
From its full laver pours the white cascade;
And, babbling low amid the tangled woods,
Slips down through moss-grown stones with endless laughter.

Longfellow, Henry. *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), part II.

As he lay asleep and cumbrous
On the summit of the mountains,
Like a rock with mosses on it,
Spotted brown and grey with mosses.

Other references to moss in *Hiawatha* include: (Introduction) **Over stone walls grey with mosses**; (III) **There among the ferns and mosses**; (XII) **Lay the great trunk of an oak tree, Buried half in leaves and mosses.** In the Introduction and II, lichens are probably meant. Many other of his moss references are to Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia*) a flowering plant, for example: **Bearded with moss**, and: **trailing moss**, and: **banners of moss**, all in *Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie* (1847) [ARP].

Loomis, Charles Batrell. *Classic Ode* (19th century). (*fide*: Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Scientific American*, December 1982, vol. **247**(6) p. 19).

Scarcely one
Peristome veils its beauties now,
but then --
Like nascent diamonds, sparkling
in the sun,
Or sainfoin, circinate, or moss
in marshy fen.

An example of nonsense poetry, but involving at least some superficial knowledge of mosses. A chaff-like structure called the calyptra (the word derived from the Greek for veil) covers the young moss capsule; when the calyptra and underlying lid are shed, a beautiful miniature, often flower-like structure called the peristome is revealed around the opened capsule mouth.

Macneice, Louis (1907-1963). *Iceland.*

Houses are few
But decorous
In a ruined land
Of sphagnum moss

Marvell, Andrew (1621-1678). *Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax* (1650?-1653), LXXV (lines 593-597). [MJ].

Then, languishing with ease, I toss
On Pallets swoln of Velvet Moss;
While on the wind, cooling through the Boughs,
Flatters with Air my panting Brows,
Thanks for my Rest ye *Mossy Banks*

Masefield, John (1878-1967). *Vagabond.* (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **73** (1970) p. 736; Bartlett, 1957).

Dunno about Life - it's jest a tramp alone
From wakin'-time to doss.
Dunno about Death - it's jest a quiet stone
All over-grey wi' moss.

In *Reynard the Fox* (or *The Ghost Heath Run*) (1919), occurs the lines: **He raced the trench, past the rabbit warren, Closegrown with moss which the wind made barren,** [ARP].

Megaw, W.R. (1885-1953). *Ulota* (1934), The Quota Press, Belfast. [SWG; PWR; AS].

" .... the rich freshness of the mossy mantle which rests the mind of man more than he knows .... It is the secret of youthfulness -- so close to our eyes that we miss finding it."

It is hard to select an extract that is representative of Megaw's romantic novel woven around mosses, so out of touch with today's soulless science; few would now describe bryologists as: **the far-flung brotherhood of those who search for, know and admire the humble moss-plants of every land.**

Meredith, George (1828-1909). *Dirge in the Woods.*

A wind sways the pines
And below
Not a breath of wild air;
Still as the mosses that glow
On the flooring and over the lines
Of the roots here and there.

Millay, Edna St. Vincent (1892-1950). *The Fawn.* (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **77** (1974) p. 494).

He lay, yet there he lay,
Asleep on the moss ....

Milton, John (1608-1674). *Il Penseroso*, lines 167-169 (1645). [EWJ].

And may at last my weary age
Find the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell

The last line is reiterated by Blake (*q.v.*).

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost* (1667), Book V, lines 391-392.

Raised of grassy turf
Their table was, and mossy seats had round

In Book IX, line 589, the serpent says: **About the mossy trunk I wound me soon.** It is Satan again, who says: **In wood or grove, by mossy fountain side**, in *Paradise Regained* (1671), Book II, line 184.

Mitten, William: see under Park, Mungo.

Mooney, Bel. *The Stove Haunting* (1986), chapter 13: In the Churchyard, Methuen.

-- mossy tombstones weathered to soft and mellow shades of grey and gold, ... with beautifully cut lettering overgrown with lichen and moss.

More, Henry (1614-1687). *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos, or the Revelation of St John the Divine Unveiled*, p. 353 (1680). London. (*in*: Bradley, 1908).

.... the rest being no part of that ... Christianity, but at best mere moss and filth added to it.

Murschetz, Luis. *Mole* (1972 as *Der Maulwurf Grabowski*, first published in English 1973, by Methuen).

He dug a lot of tunnels. Then
he fetched some dry moss
to sleep on and lay down
with his head between his paws.
Mole had found his new home.

Compare with Rossetti, notes after *Dream Land*.

Nesse, Christopher. *A Distinct Discourse and discovery of the person and period of Antichrist* (1679), "Ded." (*fide*: Bradley, 1908).

Nobility .... is but the moss of time.

Nicholson, Norman: see under Wordsworth's *A Guide* ....

Orfeo, The Romance of Sir: see under Anon.

Oswald, Saint: see under Aelfric.

Park, Mungo. *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799), chapter XVIII. (*in*: Crum, 1973; etc.). [EWJ; PWR; AS].

> **I considered my fate as certain, and that I had no alternative, but to lie down and perish ... At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification, irresistibly caught my eye. I mention this to shew from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation ... Can that Being (thought I), who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image? -- surely not! Reflections like these, would not allow me to despair. I started up, and disregarding both hunger and fatigue, travelled forwards assured that relief was at hand; and I was not disappointed.**

The event occurred in what is now Mali when Park was exhausted and despairing, after being robbed of horse and belongings in a desolate spot. The quotation is particularly interesting, not just because of the potential newspaper headline: "Moss Saves Life of

Fig. 7. *Fissidens parkii* Mitten; Interior of Africa, M. Park, H.2244 (Herb. BM).

World-Famous Explorer", but also because Mungo Park had the presence of mind to collect the plant, on midday August 25, 1796, at "13°3'N 5°30'W" according to his 1799 map (about 12°45'N 8°7'W in fact). He made two other collections of moss, all three being *Fissidens* species. William Mitten (1860) examined them and wrote of one: "This is probably the species gathered by Park when reduced to a deplorable state, and the contemplation of which so revived him as to enable him to proceed and obtain succour." Mitten described the moss as a species new to science, and named it *Fissidens parkii,* see

Fig. 7. This story so pleased Victorian bryologists that at least one (Stark, *q.v.*) wrote a poem about the event, and two (Gardiner, and F.E. Tripp) honoured our somewhat similar *Fissidens bryoides* with the common name "**Mungo Park's Moss**". Compare also with Oswald's moss (see under Aelfric).

Parkinson, John: see under Gerard.

Parnell, Thomas (1679-1718). *The Hermit*

Far in a wild, unknown to public view,
From youth to age a reverend hermit grew;
The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well:
Remote from man, with God he pass'd his days,
Prayer all hid business, all his pleasure praise.

Poem used as an epigraph for chapter 16 of Scott's *Ivanhoe I* (*q.v.*). [KC].

Peake, Mervyn (1911-1968). Crown Me with Hairpins, *in*: *A Book of Nonsense*, (1972). [MJ].

Tired aunts who live on sphagnum moss
Are quite the best to ask ....

See also Gash.

Piers the Plowman: see under Langland, and Publilius Syrus.

Pile, Stephen: see under Wollstonecraft.

Pope, Alexander (1688-1744). *The Dunciad Variorum* (1743), Book IV, lines 449-450.

The mind, in Metaphysics at a loss
May wander in a wilderness of Moss.

Warburton comments in a footnote appended to the word Moss: **"Of which the Naturalists count I can't tell how many hundred <above three hundred -- 1742> species. < ... In a *Plan of Mr Pope's Garden*, J. Searle, 1745, 'Moss of many sorts,' both living and petrified, is several times mentioned.>."**

Pope, Alexander. *Moral Essays in Epistles to Several Persons*; Epistle I to Sir Richard Temple, Lord Cobham (1731), lines 15-18. [PJL].

There's some Peculiar in each leaf and grain,
Some unmark'd fibre, or some varying vain:
Shall only Man be taken in the gross?
Grant but as many sorts of Mind as Moss.

Pope comments in a footnote appended to the word Moss: **"There are above three hundred sorts of Moss observed by Naturalists."** This compares with Warburton's note in *The Dunsiad*. Pope also mentions moss in his poem *Sylvan Delights*: **Oh deign to visit our forsaken seats, The mossy fountains, and the green retreats.**

Potter, Beatrix (1866-1943). *The Tale of Timmy Tiptoes.* [KC].

He found himself tucked up in a little moss bed, very much in the dark, feeling sore; it seemed to be under ground.

Beatrix Potter is more objective about moss than Alison Uttley, for example: **busy pushing moss under the thatch**; and in *The Tale of Mr Tod*: **rooted up the moss and wood sorrel**; and: **grubs up the moss so wantonly**. [all KC].

Publilius Syrus (*c.* 42 BC). (Lyman, translator, 1856, Saying 524; *in*: Bartlett, 1957).

A rolling stone gathers no moss.

This is possibly the oldest English version of the best known quotation concerning moss, from the collection of 1087 Sayings extracted by Lyman from the works of the Roman wit and playwright Publilius Syrus. But neither Proverb 524 nor any of the other 734 in Duff & Duff (1935) could be related to this sentiment. Bartlett (1957), Bradley (1908), and Whitney (1890) list many versions. See also Tusser. The variant: **That selde moseth the marbelston that men ofte treden** occurs in *Piers the Plowman* (version of Skeat, 1886 revised 1954, Text A, passus X, lines 100-101); versions are given in Kane (1960), Bartlett, and Whitney. Developments of the proverb are given in Stevenson (1974): **As the rolling stone gathers no moss, so the roving heart gathers no affections** (Anna Jameson: *Studies -- Sternberg's Novels*), and by Shaw (*q.v.*). Arthur Ransome refers in footnote (*Swallowdale*, 1931, chapter VII) to a fictitious(?) work: "***Mixed Moss.* By a Rolling Stone. Pub. 1930, 8th edition 1931.**" by Captain Jim Flint, alias James Turner.

Ransome, Arthur: see under Publilius Syrus.

Reeves, James (1909-1978). *Slowly*. [DD].

Slowly the hands move round the clock,
Slowly the dew dries on the dock.
Slow is the snail -- but slowest of all
The green moss spreads on the old brick wall.

The second of two verses.

Roberd (Robert), King, of Cysille (Sicily): see under Anon.

Roethke, Theodore (1908-1963). *Moss-Gathering* (1946). (*in*: Berhardt, 1986). [MF].

Moss-Gathering

A short poem about gathering: "**the spongy yellowish moss of the marshes**", of "**the kind for lining cemetery baskets**"; "**But something always went out of me when I dug those loose carpets . . . As if I had committed, against the whole scheme of life, a desecration.**"

Rossetti, Christina Georgina (1830-1894). *Winter Rain.* [AJ].

But for rain in Season.
We should find no moss

This quotation bridges two verses, but nonetheless stands fairly on its own.

Rossetti, Christina Georgina. *Dream Land.*

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore

In the poem: *Winter*, Rossetti says: **Plump housekeeper dormouse has tucked himself neat, Just a brown ball in moss with a morsel to eat.** Compare this couplet with Murschetz. In *Goblin Market* occurs the couplet: **Backwards up the mossy glen Turned and trooped the goblin men**; and in *One Day*: **But primrose and veined violet In the mossful earth were set** (*in*: Simpson and Weiner, 1989).

Rushdie, Salman (b. 1947). *Midnight's Children* (1981), p. 171. Jonathan Cape. [MJ].

The neanderthal moss-covered hut of a Goojar tribal

This echoes the huntsman's **moss-grown hut** of Wordsworth, to similar effect.

Ruskin, John (1819-1900). *Notes on some of the Principal Pictures in the Rooms of the Royal Academy*, No. V (1859). (*in*: Tripp, F.E., 1868).

Rocks overlaid with velvet and fur, to stand on in the first place. If you look close into the velvet you will find it is jewelled and set with stars in a stately way.

On the painting Val d'Aosta, by J. Brett; possibly not moss. Compare with Anon. (*fide*: Russell, 1908), and Davies. According to Fry (1908), Ruskin thought **"that the pine-apple is really a moss"**, albeit apparently tongue-in-cheek.

Ruskin, John. *Iteriad* (1832), Book Fourth, lines 627-628. (*in*: Sleath, 1983). [KC].

We gathered the moss to distinguish its kind,
Which the banks of the road in thick drapery lined

Two further samples from *Iteriad* are worth mentioning; in Book First, line 105, occurs: **Here, neath the thick moss, the wood violets grew**; and in Book Second, lines 104-106, occurs the comic: **"Look under the moss, there, it cannot be sage! What can that queer thing be?" -- "'tis a saxifrage,"**. Ruskin was between eleven and thirteen when these lines were written.

Ruskin, John. *Modern Painters*, volume V (1860), pages 102-103. (*in*: Bagnall, 1896 [PWR]; Sleath, 1983).

Meek creatures! the first mercy of the earth, visiting with hushed softness its dintless rocks; creatures full of pity, covering with strange and tender honour the scarred disgrace of ruin -- laying quiet finger on the trembling stones, to teach them rest. No words, that I know of, will say what these mosses are. None are delicate enough, none perfect enough, none rich enough. How is one to tell of the rounded bosses of furred and beaming green, -- the starred divisions of rubied bloom, fine-filmed, as if the Rock Spirits could spin porphyry as we do glass, -- the traceries of intricate silver, and fringes of amber, lustrous, arborescent, burnished through every fibre into fitful brightness and glossy traverses of silken change, yet all subdued and pensive, and framed for simplest, sweetest offices of grace? They will not be gathered, like the flowers, for chaplet or love-token; but of these the wild bird will make its nest, and the wearied child his pillow.

And, as the earth's first mercy, so they are its last gift to us. When all other service is vain from plant and tree, the soft mosses and gray lichen take up their watch by the head-stone. The woods, the blossoms, the gift-bearing grasses, have done their parts for a time, but these do service for ever. Trees for a

builder's yard, flowers for the bride's chamber, corn for the granary, moss for the grave.

This effuse praise of moss is quoted in full by both Bagnall and Sleath, but is so remarkable as to merit inclusion here as well. For more of Ruskin's writings on moss, refer to Sleath (1983).

Ryle, J.C., Bishop of Liverpool (*fide*: Tripp, F.E. 1868, 1888). [ARP].

Nothing is useless in creation. The tiniest insects, the smallest mosses, have their uses.

The Rev. J.C. Ryle becomes the Bishop of Liverpool in Tripp's later editions.

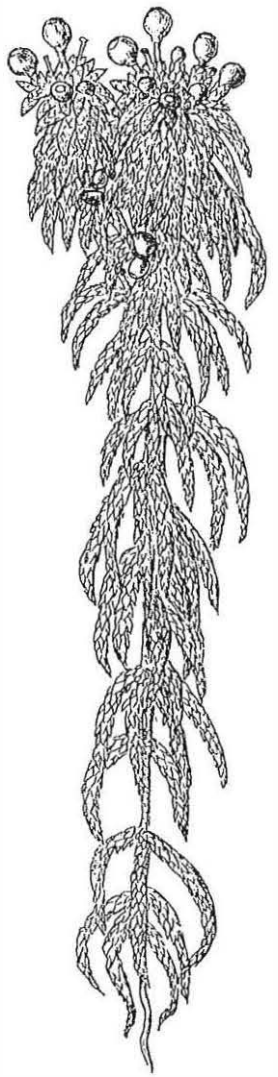


Fig. 8. The larger soft and hollow-leaf'd Bog Sphagnum. (*Sphagnum palustre*). From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: XXXII 1.

Saunders, A. Muriel (?, "A.M.S.") *Sphagnum Moss* (printed sheet, origin unknown, from the William Wright-Smith archives of Royal Botanic Garden Edin burgh). [DGL via RJF].

The doctors and the nurses
Look North with eager eyes,
And call on us to send them
The dressing that they prize,
No other is its equal --
In modest bulk it goes,
Until it meets the gaping wound
Where the red life blood flows,
Then spreading, swelling in its might,
It checks the fatal loss,
And kills the germ, and heals the hurt --
The kindly Sphagnum Moss.

An extract from a 48 line poem that was probably distributed during the First World War to encourage *Sphagnum* gathering. The author is marked only as A.M.S. who, according to the BBS records [ARP], could be A. Muriel Saunders. See Fig. 8.

Scott, Sir Walter (1771-1832). *Old Mortality*, chapter I: Preliminary. [KC].

"The monuments .... are half sunk in the ground, and overgrown with moss.

.....

"Yet, although moss has been collected on the most modern of these humble tombs during four generations of mankind, the memory of some of those who sleep beneath them is still held in revered remembrance.

The moss is cleaned from the inscriptions on tombs: **"in the most lonely recesses of the mountains ..."**. Scott also often mentions moss in passing, for example: **moss-grown stones** (*The Bride of Lammermoor*, chapter 4); **mossy banks** (*Waverley*, chapter 22); and in *The Lady of the Lake*: **Some mossy bank my couch must be** (canto I, stanza xvi, line 5); **While moss and clay and leaves combined** (stanza xxvi, lines 10);

moss-grown rocks (canto III, stanza xv, line 3). In *Ivanhoe I*, chapter 16, he mentions a rude hut: **having its crevices stuffed with moss mingled with clay**; the chapter also begins with an epigraph taken from Parnell's *The Hermit* (*q.v.*). [KC].

Scott, Sir Walter. *The Lord of the Isles* (1815), canto III, xiv. (*in*: Bradley, 1908).

On high Benmore green mosses grow.

Shakespeare, William (1564-1616). *Henry IV Part I*, act III, scene I. (*in*: Bradley, 1908; Skeat, 1882; Bartlett, 1894; Schmidt, 1902).

Diseased nature often breaks forth
In strange eruptions: ....
which ....
Shakes the old bedlam earth, and topples down
Steeples, and mosse-grown towers.

In *Timon of Athens*, act IV, scène III, occurs: **Will these moss'd trees, That have outlived the eagle, page thy heels ... ?** (*in*: Bartlett, 1894; Schmidt, 1902). Accordking to Schmidt (1902), moss'd, in the Old Editions, was written as moist (Bradley, 1908, says moyst); in this context the meaning must still have been mossed. And in *As You Like It*, act IV, scene III, occurs: **Under an old oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age** (*in*: Bradley, 1908; Skeat, 1882; Bartlett, 1894; Schmidt, 1902; Whitney, 1890).

Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus*, act II, scene III. (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **70** (1967) p. 283; Bartlett, 1894; Schmidt, 1902).

A barren detested vale, you see it is;
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,
O'ercome with moss and baleful mistletoe:
Here never shines the sun; here nothing breeds,
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven

Shakespeare, William. *Cymbeline*, act IV, scene II. (*in*: Bartlett, 1894; Schmidt, 1902).

Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none

Shakespeare, William. *The Comedy of Errors*, act II, scene II. (*in*: Bartlett, 1894; Schmidt, 1902).

If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,
Usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss

Shaw, George Bernard (1856-1950). *Misalliance* (1914), section Mobilization. (*in*: Burchfield, 1976).

We keep repeating the silly old proverb that a rolling stone gathers no moss, as if moss were a desirable parasite. What we mean is that a vagabond does not prosper

Compare with entries under Tusser, and Publilius Syrus.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1792-1822). *Alastor* (1816).

. . . . . Soft mossy lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms
Minute yet beautiful . . . . . .
. . . . . He did impress
On the green moss his tremulous step
. . . . . .
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,
Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss
. . . . . .
Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
The struggling brook
. . . . . .
The rivulet,
Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine
Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell
Among the moss with hollow harmony
Dark and profound.

Alastor has six references to moss in all. In *Laon and Cythna* (*The Revolt of Islam*) (canto IV, ii, lines 6-8) occurs: **We came at last To a small chamber, which with mosses rare Was tapestried.** In other poems Shelley mentions: **mossy slope**; **... tracks**; **... seats**; **... bough**; **moss-inwoven turf**; **and from the moss violets and jonquils peep**.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Ode to the West Wind*, III (1819). (*in*: Oxford, 1941, 1975, 1979).

And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! . . . .

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Prometheus Unbound* (1819?), act II.

And the gloom divine is all around,
And underneath is the mossy ground

There are other mossy references in *Prometheus Unbound*, including: **and all around are mossy seats**, and: **between the close moss, violets interwoven.**

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Fragments of an Unfinished Drama* (also titled: *The Magic Plant*), lines 225-227.

. . . . reflections
Of every infant flower and star of moss
And veined leaf in the azure odorous air.

These lines are spoken of a dream.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Rosalind and Helen* (1819), lines 1027-1030.

. . . . and with my tresses
When oft he playfully would bind
In the bowers of mossy loneliness
His neck

Silkin, Jon (b. 1930). *Moss* (*Flower Poems*) (1965). (part *in*: *The Unofficial Countryside*, Richard Mabey). [DD].

Quiet, of course, it adheres to
The cracks of waste pipes, velvets,
Velours them; an enriching
Unnatural ruff swathing the urban 'manifestation'

Part of a 35 line poem. Silkin himself comments that "*Moss* is a poem concerned about urban creatures whose sensuous shrinkage affects their capacity to propagate." He associates moss with stuntedness and barrenness (in one sense or another). Another poem *Breaking Us* (1976) starts: **Moss sprinkles its cry; in the bowed Fields of wheat, poppies Flutter themselves.**

Smith, Alexander (1830-1867). *Dreamthorp - A Book of Essays written in the Country* (1863), essay: A Lark's Flight. [AS].

Ultimately he knelt before her, and laid his head on her lap. You can fancy her consternation when glancing down she discovered that, *instead of hair, the head was covered with the moss of the moorland.* . . . . It was the Fiend, of course ---.

Solomon, King: see under Hooke, Robert.

Southey, Robert (1774-1843). *To Horror* (1791).

On some old sepulchre's moss-canker'd seat

Southey, Robert. *Madoc in Wales I:VI, Erillyab* (1805).

There had his quiver moulder'd, his stone axe
Had there grown green with moss, his bow-string there
Sung as it cut the wind

In the same work *I:XIV, Llaian* occurs: **. . . the crooked apple-trees Grey with their fleecy moss and misseltoe**; moss here is probably the lichen *Usnea*. More romantic mossiness occurs in *Roderick the last of the Goths XXI: The Fountain in the Forest* (written in Keswick, 1809-1814): **There was a little glade, where underneath A long smooth mossy stone a fountain rose**, and *Inscriptions V: For a Tablet on the Banks of a Stream* (1796) starts: **Stranger! awhile upon this mossy bank Recline thee**. However, *Inscriptions XI: In a Forest* ends: **. . . Cleanse thou then The weeds and mosses from this letter'd stone**. Southey makes other minor mossy mentions, either as as lichen (in: *The Cataract at Lodore*) or boggy ground (in: *Written on the First of December*).

Spenser, Edmund (1552-1599). *The mourning Muse of Thestylis*. [EWJ].

Come forth, ye Nymphes, come forth, forsake your watry bowres,
Forsake your mossy caves, help me to lament.

Spenser, Edmund. *Faierie Queene* VI, X verse vii (1590). [EWJ].

And at the foote therof, a gentle flud
His silver waves did softly tumble downe,
Unmard with ragged mosse or filthy mud.

Spenser, Edmund. *Shepheard's Calender* (1579), Januarie, lines 31-35. [EWJ].

You naked trees, whose shady leaves are lost,
wherein the byrds were wont to build their bowre,
And now are clothed with mosse and hoary frost,
Instede of bloosmes, wherwith your buds did flowre.

Spenser, Edmund. *Shepheard's Calender*, Februarie, lines 102-104, 110-114. [EWJ].

There grew an aged tree upon the greene,
A goodly Oake sometimes it has beene,
With arms full strong and largely displayed
.....
But now grey mosse marred his rine,
His bared boughes were beaten with stormes
His toppe was bald, and wasted with worms,
His honor decayed, his branches sere.

Grey moss is most likely lichen. Clare also has a *The Shepherd's Calendar*, nearly 250 years later.

Stark, R.M.. *A Popular History of British Mosses* (1860). (*in*: Crum, 1973). [NH; JI]

Sad, faint, and weary, on the sand
Our traveller sat him down; his hand
Cover'd his burning head.
Above, beneath, behind, around,
No resting for the eye he found;
All nature seem'd as dead.

One tiny tuft of Moss alone,
Mantling with freshest green a stone,
Fix'd his delighted gaze;
Through bursting tears of joy he smiled,
And while he raised the tendril wild,
His lips o'erflow'd with praise.

Oh! shall not He who keeps thee green,
Here in the waste, unknown, unseen,
Thy fellow-exile save?
He who commands the dew to feed
Thy gentle flower, can surely lead
Me from a scorching grave.

This quotation refers to Mungo Park's (*q.v.*) moss. Another verse along the same lines is credited to "another poet", so far untraced. Stark includes several bits of verse and poetry, sometimes uncredited (see two entries under "Anon.") and probably also by Stark himself. The five page eulogy ***The Mantle of Moss*** yields such gems as: **Splachnum and Sphagnum with the polished gleam Of graceful urn by mountain streamlet feed, Mingled with "squarrose Fork Moss"**, and later: **. . . and amid their freaks The loveliest forms are found in Polynesian creeks.** [NH; AJ]. See also section SELECTION OF QUOTATIONS: *Excluded categories ...* .

Stoddard, Elizabeth Drew (1823-1902). *November* (1895). (*fide*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **75** (1972) p. 615.)

I find sweet peace in depths of autumn woods,
Where grow the ragged ferns and roughened moss;
The naked, silent trees have taught me this,--
The loss of beauty is not always loss!

Tennyson, Alfred (1809-1892). *In Memoriam A.H.H., Obiit MDCCCXXXIII* (1849), I, lines 1-4. (*in*: Clymo and Hayward, 1982). [AC].

I held it truth, with him who sings
.....
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

This apparently mossless reference in Clymo and Hayward refers to the growth of *Sphagnum* (Fig. 8); but later in the same poem (LXXXIX, lines 43-44) occurs: **We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran, The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss.** Bradley (1908) quotes the couplet from *Claribel*, II: **At noon the wild bee hummeth About the moss'd headstone.**

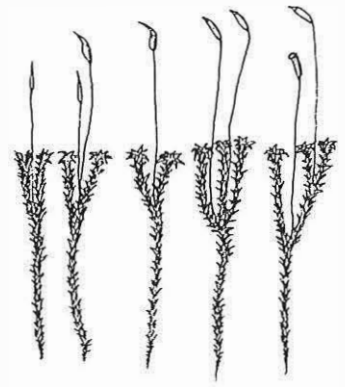


Fig. 9. The Star-topp'd Redshank Bryum. (*Ceratodon purpureus*). From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: XLIX 51.

Tennyson, Alfred. *Mariana* (1830). (the first part is *in*: Swan, 1904; also in the 1964 film *My Fair Lady*, though not in Shaw's *Pygmalion*).

With blackest moss the flower pots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
.....
About a stone-caste from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept

The first probably refers to a blue-green alga, and the second possibly to *Sphagnum*.

Tennyson, Alfred. *The Lotos-eaters: Choric Song* (1833), I, lines 8-11. (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **69** (1966) p. 139; also vol. **73** (1970) p. 175; Stevenson, 1974). [WSL].

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

Thomas, Edward (1878-1917). *The Path* (1922). [MP].

The path, winding like silver, trickles on,
Bordered and even invaded by thinnest moss
That tries to cover roots and crumbling chalk
With gold, olive, and emerald, but in vain.
The children wear it. They have flattened the bank
On top, and silvered it between the moss
With the current of their feet, year after year.

In *The Penny Whistle* occurs: **The mossed old hearths of the charcoal-burners**, [MP].
See comments under the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES, and Figs. 9 and 10.

Thompson, Flora (1876-1947). *The Peverel Papers* (1922-1927).

> **So much has been said and written in praise of the turf which does so much towards making our country the "green and pleasant land" it is, that the share of the mosses in that direction has generally been overlooked. Yet it is told us upon good authority that one-fourth of the total area of our wild open spaces is covered with moss.**
>
> .....
>
> **The liverwort has no place in the modern pharmacopoeia; its only mission now is to delight the eye and refresh the soul of man. This it does to perfection for no fern in a tropical forest could be more delicately fashioned or more pellucidly green than these tiny fronds, so infinitesimally small, yet massed in such perfect loveliness ...**

The "good authority" has not been traced, but does not seem to be either James Boswell, Samuel Johnson, or William Cobbett.

Thoreau, H.D. (1817-1862). *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849), chapter: Wednesday. (misquoted by Bartlett, 1957; also by *The Bryologist*, vol. **72** (1969) p. 546).

> **Even the death of Friends will inspire us as much as their lives .... their memories will be encrusted over with sublime and pleasing thoughts, as monuments of other men are overgrown with moss, for our friends have no place in the graveyard.**

Bartlett misquoted Thoreau, substituting: **their monuments**, for: **monuments of other men**, and omitting the relevant last nine words (and also giving the wrong chapter). *The Bryologist* presumably copied from Bartlett or a common source. The misquotation is kindly to moss, likening it to the accumulation of sublime and pleasing thoughts; however, the true quotation has the opposite meaning, regarding moss in contradistinction to such things. Thoreau mentions moss in passing several other times (Sunday and Monday being the only moss-free days), including "Mosses from the Manse" (meaning *Mosses from an Old Manse*) which had been published just three years earlier by fellow Concordian Nathaniel Hawthorne (*q.v.*).

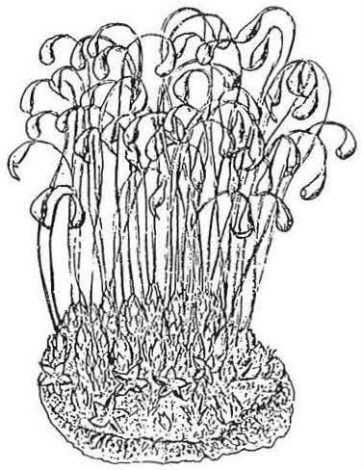


Fig. 10. The Golden bulbed Bryum, with Pear-fashion'd bowing Heads; Little Goldilocks, or Golden Maiden-Hair. (*Funaria hygrometrica*). From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: LII 75.

Thoreau, H.D.. *Walden* (1854), chapter: The Pond in Winter.

> **[The life of the wild fisherman] passes deeper in Nature than the studies of the naturalist penetrate, himself a subject for the naturalist. The latter raises the moss and bark gently with his knife in search of insects; the former lays open logs to their core with his axe, and moss and bark fly far and wide.**

Although moss is peripheral to this quotation, it is interesting on its own account, sniping gently at the dilettante naturalist. It is, surprisingly, the only real reference to moss found in all 100,000 words of *Walden*; the only other found is: **moss-grown**, used in simile for an ice heap.

Tolkien, J.R.R. (1892-1973). *The Silmarillion* (1977), (Valaquenta: Quenta Silmarillion).

Yavanna ... is the lover of all things that grow in the earth, and their countless forms she holds in her mind, from the trees like towers in forests long ago to the moss upon stones or the small and secret things in the mould.

This sentiment of Tolkien echoes that of King Solomon (see under Hooke). Also, it is tempting to compare Tolkien with Blake (*q.v.*). Yavanna is a Vala ("angelic power"), and the Vala of Blake is a female heavenly (or "universal") power though of a very different nature. There may be a connection, at least etymological. However, to extend these links to moss would be at best tenuous. See further comments in section CHANGES IN LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF MOSS: *Descriptive interest* .... .

Townsend, Mary Ashley (1832-1901). *A Georgia Volunteer* (1882). (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **75** (1972) p. 615).

Far up the lonely mountain-side
My wandering footsteps led;
The moss lay thick beneath my feet,
The pine sighed overhead.

The mossy path led by a soldier's grave. In an untitled poem (*fide*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **75** (1972) p. 122) Townsend says: **The cypress swamp around me wraps its spell, With hushing sounds in moss-hung branches there**; presumably Spanish Moss *Tillandsia* (a flowering plant).

Trollope, Anthony (1815-1882). *Orley Farm* (1861-1862), chapter III.

The air here was always damp with spray, and the rocks on both sides were covered with long mosses, as were also the overhanging boughs of the old trees. This place was the glory of The Cleeve, and as far as picturesque beauty was concerned it was very glorious.

Turner, W.J. (b. 1889). *The Search for the Nightingale.*

I watched the water trickle down dark moss
And shake the tiny boughs of maidenhair

Tusser, Thomas (1524?-1580). *Housewifely Admonitions.* (*fide*: Oxford, 1941, 1975, omitted from 1979). Also: *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry -- Good Husbandly Lessons* (1557). (*fide*: Bartlett, 1869, 1957, in part).

The stone that is rolling can gather no moss
For master and servant, oft changing is loss.

The above much quoted version has not been traced, for example in Hartley (1931). However, the couplet: **The stone that is rouling can gather no mosse, who often remooueth is sure of losse,** is found in Tusser (1580), verse 46. See also Publilius Syrus.

Twain, Mark (S.L. Clemens) (1835-1910). *The Innocents Abroad* (1896), chapter III.

velvety mosses ... frosted with a shining dust

Used in simile for the crater of Vesuvius; found when searching for: **Look down upon these moss-hung ruins**, in the same book (*fide*: Burchfield, 1976).

Uttley, Alison (1884-1976). *The Flower Show* (1955).

It was a small, curly branch, silvery with lichen, and inside was a hole lined with moss, leading to a tiny room.

Alison Uttley frequently mentions moss in a way that still enchants children. Other references include: "**The little mossy hole is most attractive,**" and: **the dear mossy roof.**

Virgil: see under Day-Lewis, C, and John Dryden.

Warburton: see under Pope, Alexander.

Wellesley, Dorothy (1889-1956). *Horses on the Fell.*

The burns blow chains of bubbles, spray
The moss, pin-cushioned all around,
Swung bells and stars are drenched all day,
Rock gardens hang above the sound

Wellesley, Dorothy. *Jupiter and the Nun.* (Night on the Alban Hills, 1918).

The amphitheatre green, the jewelled moss,
The rent and dripping trees the only sound

In *The Lost Forest*, part II, occurs: **Here on the boulders is great depth of moss.**

White, Gilbert (1720-1793). *The Natural History of Selborne* (1775). [MH].

While on the subject of rural oeconomy, it may not be improper to mention a pretty implement of housewifery that we have seen no where else; that is, little neat besoms which our foresters make from the stalks of the *polytrichum commune*, or *great golden maiden-hair*, which they call *silk-wood*, and find plenty in the bogs. When this moss is well combed and dressed, and divested of its outer skin, it becomes of a beautiful bright-chestnut colour; and, being soft and pliant, is very proper for the dusting of beds, curtains, carpets, hangings, &c. If these besoms were known to the brush-makers in town, it is probable they might come much in use for the purpose above-mentioned.

See comments under the section IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES, and also Fig. 11.

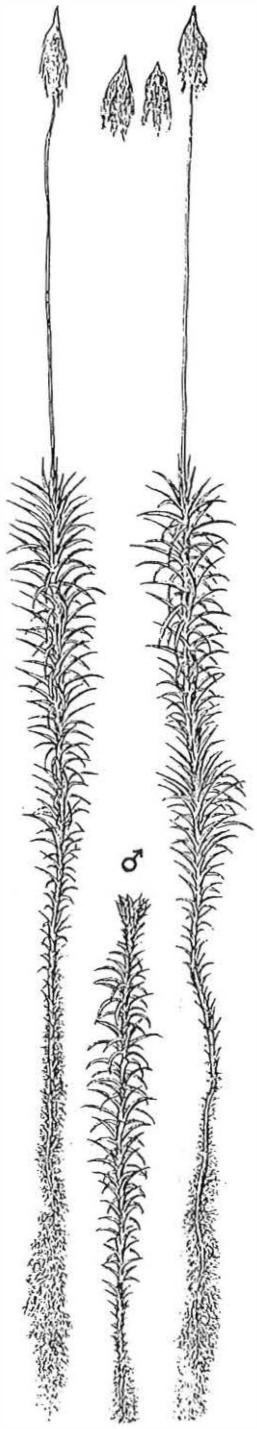


Fig. 11. The common bigger square-headed Bog Polytrichum, or great Goldilocks. (*Polytrichum commune*). From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: LIV 1.

Whittier, John Greenleaf (1807-1892). *The Seeking of the Waterfall* (1878), lines 85-88 (verse 22).

"Then let us trust our waterfall
Still flashes down its rocky wall,
With rainbow crescent curved across
In sunlit spray from moss to moss."

In *Wordsworth* (1851), Whittier echoes that poet's *Louisa: She Dwelt among Untrodden Ways* in the line: **The violet by its mossy stone**. In *The Last Walk in Autumn* (1857), Whittier writes (line 204, XXVI): **And stains these mosses green and gold**.

Whittier, John Greenleaf. *A Dream of Summer* (1847), iv. (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **69** (1966) p. 138; Bartlett, 1957).

The Night is mother of the Day,
The Winter of the Spring,
And ever upon old Decay
The greenest mosses cling.

Willard, Nancy. *Moss* (1981?) (*fide*: Berhardt, 1986).
Berhardt refers to Thomas and Lavine (1981), which has not been seen.

Wilson, John (Christopher North) (1785-1854). *Written at a little Well by the Roadside, Langdale*. [KC].

Thou lonely spring of waters undefiled!
Silently slumbering in thy mossy cell.

Winefride (Winifred), St: see under Caxton.

Wodehouse, P.G. (1881-1975). *Blandings Castle* (1935), chapter 6: Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend. [EWJ].

"Gravel path!" Lord Emsworth stiffened through the whole length of his stringy body. Nature, he had always maintained, intended a yew alley to be carpeted with a mossy growth. And, whatever Nature felt about it, he personally was dashed if he was going to have men with Clydeside accents and faces like dissipated potatoes coming along and mutilating that lovely expanse of green velvet" .... "Well, I think it is a very good idea," said his sister. "One could walk there in wet weather then. Damp moss is ruinous to shoes"

.....

"Oh, and by the way, McAllister," [the head gardener, who hates moss] **said Lord Emsworth, "that matter of the gravel path through the yew alley. I've been thinking it over, and I won't have it. Not on any account. Mutilate my beautiful moss with a beastly gravel path? Make an eyesore of the loveliest spot in one of the finest and oldest gardens in the United Kingdom? Certainly not!"**

Dr Jones comments (*in litt.*): "Much of the story is relevant, but the above extracts .... indicate the general nature of the contest between Lord Emsworth of Blandings Castle on the one hand, and his head gardener abetted by Lady Constance on the other." Lord Emsworth could have taken solace from the mossy gravel paths of Crabbe and Hardy. See also further comments in section CHANGES IN LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF MOSS: *Rural-romanticism* .... .

Wollstonecraft (Godwin), Mary (1759-1797). *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), chapter V, sect. V. (*in*: Bradley, 1908).

Moss-covered opinions ... indolently adopted only because age has given them a venerable aspect.

Two centuries later Stephen Pile writes: **If you want to revolutionise a moss-covered male bastion, send in a woman.** (Diedre & Co. *Telegraph Magazine*, February 17, 1990. London).

Woodworth, Samuel (1785-1842). *The Old Oaken Bucket.* (*in*: Bartlett, 1869, 1957).

The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket, which hung in the well.

Wordsworth, Dorothy (1771-1855). *The Grasmere Journal*, Friday 16 May, 1800. (*in*: Richards, 1950).

I carried a basket for mosses and gathered some wild plants. Oh! that we had a book of botany.

She wrote of her brother's famous daffodils (Thursday 15 April, 1802): **I never saw daffodils so beautiful they grew among the mossy stones about and about them, some rested their heads upon these stones as on a pillow for weariness and the rest tossed and reeled and danced ....** ; this modifies the popular image of tall Dutch hybrids. Dr David Coombe found a copy of Withering's *An Arrangement of British Plants*, in a 2nd-hand shop, evidently (Coombe, 1952) bought by the Wordsworths shortly after this *Journal* entry; the copy was presented to Dove Cottage. Dorothy Wordsworth recorded gathering mosses on six of 437 days at Grasmere, and she also frequently commented on them. Dr Pamela Woof (*Enquire Within*, Radio 4, February 2, 1990) suggested that Dorothy Wordsworth gathered moss for mantelshelf decoration, for a delight in tiny plants, for fuel, and for lining and insulating the moss-hut that the Wordsworths later built in the garden of Dove Cottage.

Wordsworth, William (1770-1850). *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes* .... (1835, 5th edition), Section First; View of the Country as formed by Nature; Winter Colouring. [KC].

The mosses and lichens are never so fresh and flourishing as in winter, if it be not a season of frost; and their minute beauties prodigally adorn the foreground. Wherever we turn, we find these productions of Nature, to which winter is rather favourable than unkindly, scattered over the walls, banks of earth, rocks, and stones, and upon the trunks of trees, with the intermixture of several species of small fern, now green and fresh; and to the observing passenger, their form and colours are a source of inexhaustible admiration.

Later in the same work, he adds: **Nor can I omit again to notice the lichens and mosses: their profusion, beauty, and variety exceed those of any other country I have seen.** Norman Nicholson (b. 1914), refers to Wordsworth's *Guide* in his *To the River Duddon*, lines 12-13: **He made a guide-book for you, from your source There where you bubble through the moss on Wrynose.**

Wordsworth, William. *Address to my Infant Daughter, Dora* (1815).

..... Hads't thou been of Indian birth,
Couched on a casual bed of moss and leaves

Bed occurs again in *The Egyptian Maid* (1835), lines 303-304: **Nina, the good enchantress shed A light around his mossy bed.** Contrast this mossy bed with the less romantic version 500 years earlier in *The Romance of Sir Orfeo* (Anon.).

Wordsworth, William. *The Thorn* (1798) iv. (*in*: Megaw, 1934).

And close behind this aged Thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.
All lovely colours there you see,
All colours that were ever seen;
And mossy network too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been;
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.

The "half a foot in height" is probably the raised earth mound, not the height of the moss. *The Thorn* has twelve references to moss in all, the most found in any classic poem. See further comments under sections CHANGES IN LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF MOSS: *Rural-romanticism* .... and *Descriptive interest* .... and IDENTIFIABLE SPECIES; see also Fig. 12.

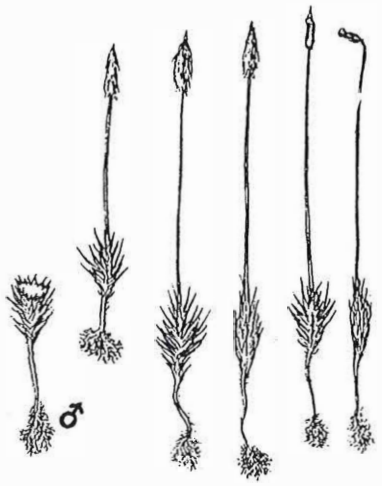


Fig. 12. The small hairy square-headed Polytrichum. (*Polytrichum piliferum*). From Dillenius, (1741) *Historia Muscorum*: LIV 3.

Wordsworth, William. *Louisa: She Dwelt among Untrodden Ways*, ii (composed 1799, published 1800). (*in*: *The Bryologist*, vol. **72** (1969) p. 274.; Whitney, 1890)

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
-- Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

See also John Greenleaf Whittier. In: *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, part III, XL, occurs: **And the fresh air of incense-breathing morn Shall wooingly embrace it; and green moss Creep round its arms through centuries unborn.** (written of a church to be erected).

Wordsworth, William. *The River Duddon*, III & V (1820).

Yet thou thyself has round thee shed a gleam
Of brilliant moss, instinct with freshness rare;
Prompt offering to the Foster-mother Earth!
.....
.... I caught the fitful sound
Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound --
Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to upbraid
The sun in heaven!

See comments under section *Rural-romanticism* .... . Other uses of moss by Wordsworth include: **mossy bower**; **... cave**; **... lodge**; **... nook**; **... root**; **... rock**; **... seat**; **... wall**; and: **moss-grown bar** (of wishing gate); **... root**; **moss-covered floor**; **fleeced with moss**; **lay upon moss by brook**. In: *Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837* (1842) occur: **With dream-like smoothness, to Helvellyn's top, There to alight upon crisp moss** (lines 37-38), and: **pavement skinned with moss** (line 193).

Wordsworth, William. *Simon Lee, The Old Huntsman* (1798).

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.

Yeats, W.B. (1865-1939). *The Priest and the Fairy.*

.... the village priest
.... under a shady oak-tree sat,
Where the moss was spread like his own doormat.

Yeats has just five poetic references (and one in his plays) to moss. Only one of these five is in a work usually included in popular collections, and in this he changed: **By woods of moss** (*The Wanderings of Oisin*, Book I) to: **We passed by woods**, in later editions.

Anon. *Untitled* (*fide*: Stark, 1860 [NH]; Bagnall, 1896 [PWR]; Russell, 1908).

The tiny moss, whose silken verdure clothes
The time-worn rock, and whose bright capsules rise
Like fairy urns on stalks of golden sheen,
Demands our admiration and our praise,
As much as cedar, kissing the blue sky.

An anonymous poem, quoted by Stark (who may be the author), Bagnall and Russell. Some words are rather close to those of Gardiner (1846). Compare also with Bacon (*q.v.*), Hooke (*q.v.*), and *I Kings* (under Hooke).

Anon. *Untitled* (*fide*: Stark, 1860).

He laid him down
Where purple heath, profusely strewn,
And throat-wort with its azure bell,
And moss and thyme his cushion swell.

Anon. *Kynge Roberd of Cysille*, "*Robert of Sicily*" (1370?), lines 368-370 (*in*: Bradley, 1908; Hazlitt, 1864).

Fyftene yere he levyd thare
Wyth rotys, and grasse, and evylle fare,
And alle of mosse hys clothyng was.

Compare with Anon. (*Romance of Sir Orfeo*).

Anon. *The Romance of Sir Orfeo* (14th Century). (*in*: Warren 1906). [EWJ].

With leves and gresse he him writh.
He, that hadde castels and tours,
River, forest, frith with flours,
Now thei it comenci to snewe and frese
This king mote make his bed in mese.

"Mese" is moss. Compare with Anon. (*Kynge Roberd of Cysille*) for another "riches to rags". Compare also with Wordsworth's *Address* .... .

"Anonymoss" *The Bryo-phils!* (1940), B.B.S. Report for 1939, vol. 4(3), p.180. [RF].

Wherever there's a patch of green
The keen bryologist is seen.
In London's heart e'en may he view
The *argent Bryum*, "*cum fructu.*"

An extract of four lines from a 38 line poem.

SUMMARY

This volume lists 290 referenced quotations concerning bryophytes, plus many other passing references, from English literature and poetry. The entries date from the 10th century to the present day, in three cases with origins more than 2000 years ago. The changes in literary purpose or associations of moss are discussed. The volume includes summaries of published and also new information concerning the better known quotations. The identification of species is considered in several cases. Most entries in the list have annotations giving further quotations, cross-references, or other information.

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