

the liverworts show their direct derivation from the Thallophytes, and more especially from the Green Algæ.

The Mosses, which are generally the only ones known to the uninitiated—and which, in fact, form the principal portion of the whole branch—belong to the second class, or *Leafy Mosses* (*Musci frondosi*, called *Musci* in a narrow sense, also *Phyllobrya*). Among them are most of those pretty little plants which, united in dense groups, form the bright glossy carpet of moss in our woods, or which, in company with liverworts and lichens, cover the bark of trees. As reservoirs, carefully storing up moisture, they are of the greatest importance in the economy of nature. Wherever man mercilessly cuts down and destroys forests, there, as a consequence, disappear the leafy mosses which covered the bark of the trees, or, protected by their shade, clothed the ground, and filled the spaces between the larger plants. Together with the leafy mosses disappear the useful reservoirs which stored up rain and dew for times of drought. Thus arises a disastrous dryness of the ground, which prevents the growth of any rich vegetation. In the greater part of Southern Europe—in Greece, Italy, Sicily, and Spain—mosses have been destroyed by the inconsiderate extirpation of forests, and the ground has thereby been robbed of its most useful stores of moisture; once flourishing and rich tracts of land have been changed into dry and barren wastes. Unfortunately in Germany, also, this rude barbarism is beginning to prevail more and more. It is probable that the small frondose mosses have played this exceedingly important part in nature for a very long time, possibly from the beginning of the primary period. But as their