

annuals, but, like the *Hypnum splendens* and others among the hair-cap mosses, are perennial.

Let us raise the thick mat of velvety messes that are so minute and so closely packed. It presents a uniform smooth surface, and it seems a pity to disturb it in its beauty, but we would look beneath and see what its work has been during the past years.

A bed of rich black friable mould, the residue of the annual decomposition of these tiny mosses, meets the eye; below that mould we find layers of decaying wood, a loose network of fibrous matter. The cellular tissues have disappeared, and with the least pressure of hand or foot the whole fabric falls into a powdery mass.

The very heart of the wood has yielded up its strength and hardness under the influences of the agencies brought to bear upon it. A few more years and that fallen tree will be no more seen. The once mighty tree, with the mosses and lichens alike, will have returned their substance to Mother Earth. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

The little plants that penetrated to the heart of the vegetable giant of the woods have done their work, and are no more needed. The gases have been set free and restored to the atmosphere.

Let us sum up the work and see its results. The elements and the wood of the tree have fed the lichens and mosses. The mosses have been a warm sheltering home for myriads of insect larvæ, which have gathered up many fragments during their infant state, all tending