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## THE AUTHOR OF ATHYRIUM ALPESTRE.

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THERE has been great confusion as to the authorship of the combination, *Athyrium alpestre*. In the folio edition of his *Ferns of Great Britain and Ireland* (1857), Thomas Moore, treating the plant as *Polypodium alpestre* (t. vii), cited the synonym "ATHYRIUM ALPESTRE, *Rylands, in litt.*"; and some subsequent authors, Christensen, *Index Filicum*, fasc. iii. 139 (1905), Butters, RHODORA, xix. 203 (1917) and Fernald, RHODORA, xxx. 48 (1928) have *correctly* used the combination, *A. alpestre* (Hoppe) Rylands. Some others, however, have written *A. alpestre* (Hoppe) Nylander; such authors as Milde, *Filices Europae et Atlant.* 53 (1867) who called it *A. alpestre* "Nyland. teste Moore," Nyman, *Conspectus*, 864 (1883), Holmberg, *Skandnaviens Flora*, i. 19 (1922) and Becherer, *Bericht. d. Schweizer. Bot. Gesellsch.* xxxvii. 145 (1928).

When we go to Milde we find the reference for the combination carried back to Moore ("teste Moore"); and, singularly enough, Moore, himself, in all his works subsequent to his publication of "ATHYRIUM ALPESTRE, *Rylands, in litt.*" ascribed the combination to Nylander! The preface to the folio work was dated March 20, 1855, and the copy in the library of the Gray Herbarium was received in Cambridge on November 11, 1857. Yet, in Moore's *Handbook of British Ferns*, ed. 3 (1857), the preface of which was dated August 31, 1857, indicating publication later than the folio work, Moore gives "ATHYRIUM ALPESTRE, Nylander" (p. 59); again, in his *Nature Printed British Ferns* (octavo), i. 76 (1859) Moore gives *A. alpestre* Nylander, this time "according to Ledebour"; and shortly after



(February, 1860) in *Index Filicum*, Moore again ascribed the name to Nylander.

Moore's reason for thus changing the author from Rylands to Nylander was apparently his belief that Nylander had antedated Rylands; but, following out the clue given by Moore's "*Nylander*; according to Ledebour," we find Ledebour, *Flora Rossica*, iv. 510 (1852-53), making the note under *Polypodium rhaeticum* (= *Aspidium alpestre* Hoppe): "Species quoad genus dubia, e sententia cl. F. NYLANDER *Athyrii* associanda." But, so far as I am able to find, Nylander did not actually publish the combination and its first semi-valid publication (in synonymy only) was when Moore ascribed it to Rylands. Not only did Moore give Rylands as the author; he quoted a convincing letter from Rylands upon the subject: "Mr. Rylands, of Warrington, who regards the plant as an *Athyrium*, has communicated the result of some observations made in 1855 . . . , from which the following passages are quoted:—  
' . . . that it has the true indusium of an *Athyrium* I think cannot be further disputed.'"

It should be clear, then, that RYLANDS, as originally used by Moore, was not a misprint for Nylander, as some have inferred, and that Nylander actually did not make the combination *Athyrium alpestre* ascribed to him. Thomas G. Rylands was a microscopist living at Warrington and he published various papers on microscopy, including one in 1844 on the nature of substances found on the roots of *Monotropa Hypotitys*, another (in 1855) on snow crystals observed at Warrington, and another (in 1860) on the markings of *Diatomaceae*. His detailed letters quoted by Moore show that he was an accurate student of the ferns. He should stand as the undisputed author of *Athyrium alpestre*.

GRAY HERBARIUM.

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NOTES ON THE FLORA OF SWANTON, VERMONT.—It has been my custom for many years to spend my vacation at my old home and birthplace at Swanton, Vermont, and to roam again the beautiful fields, pastures and woodlands where I spent my boyhood days. During the all too brief period of an August vacation, it has been a great pleasure to list the plants of my native place; and it was an added pleasure the past year to add a new plant to the Vermont state list.



Fernald, Merritt Lyndon. 1929. "The author of *Athyrium alpestre*." *Rhodora* 31, 165–166.

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