

**THE ANCIENT STONE  
CROSSES OF DARTMOOR  
AND ITS BORDERLAND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649561643

The Ancient Stone Crosses of Dartmoor and Its Borderland by William Crossing

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THE  
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DARTMOOR AND ITS BORDERLAND.



Marchant's Cross.

Devon NOTES AND QUERIES / 112 Pt. 211  
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# Ancient Stone Crosses of Dartmoor and its Borderland.

BY

WILLIAM CROSSING

A  
AUTHOR OF

*"Amid Devon's Alps," "Tales of the Dartmoor Pixies,"*

*"A Hundred Years on Dartmoor," etc.*

REVISED EDITION

Illustrated by T. A. Falcon, M.A.

In many a green and solemn place,  
Girt with the wild hills round,  
The shadow of the Holy Cross,  
Yet sleepeth on the ground.

RICHARD JOHN KING,

*The Forest of the Dartmoors.*

Exeter

JAMES G. COMMINS

1902

(110)





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## PREFACE.

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IN my former notices of the Stone Crosses of the Dartmoor country, those existing on the moor, and those to be found in the cultivated portions of the border parishes, were dealt with in separate books. In the following pages these two are combined, and much new matter, rendered necessary by the altered state of some of the objects described, has been added. This has required some re-casting, and renders the present in great measure a new book.

Some of the remarks prefixed to my earlier description of the Old Crosses of the Moorlands I venture to repeat here. I stated that my explorations on Dartmoor had extended over many years, and had enabled me to gather much of interest pertaining to its history, its customs, and its objects of antiquity. My researches in that region of tor and stream I have never tired of pursuing, a love for its dear old hills, extending back as far as memory will carry me, attracting me to its wild solitudes, where, by the side of the stone circle and the moss-covered cairn, we seem to stand on the borderland between the present and the distant past.

How much of poetry is there in the memorials of a people who lived on these hills, and who saw the moor as we see it now ages ago. There is truly a rich reward offered to the student of our antiquities, which is denied to those who look with indifference upon the remains of a bygone day. The light shed by the grey stones of the Celt, enables us to read something of the past, and as we advance to

historic times, and find the menhir no longer reared upon the heath, and that the circle and the dolmen cease to be upraised, the symbol of that faith which is the salvation of fallen man, rough-hewn from the moorstone block, takes their place, and the lamp is kept brightly burning.

But these memorials which testify to the presence of men who set up by the green paths of the moor the emblem of their religion, have, in many instances yielded to the rude buffetings of the wintry blast, or have been cast down by those in whom, in a later day, these rudely fashioned stones could call up no tender feelings. Too often have I discovered an old cross overturned and partially hidden from view by the heather, its broken shaft and mutilated arms silently upbraiding the carelessness that permitted it to remain prostrate on the ground.

To chronicle the existence of such as were previously unknown and to collect evidence, if such might be discovered, respecting the time and purpose of their erection, as well as of those of which mention had been made by others, has been to me a very pleasant and congenial task; and the happy days spent on the breezy hills of Dartmoor in my search for these relics, which the companionship I enjoyed rendered happier still, will never be forgotten.

These remarks were written some fifteen years ago, and Dartmoor is now to me as ever it was. But previous to their appearance I had made an appeal in behalf of the stone crosses of that old-time region, and it has been a source of gratification to me to find that what little I have done has not been without its effect. Since I first drew attention to these memorials about fifteen of them have been re-erected, and once more are seen by the wayside and in the villages as they were of old. Such evidence respecting the particular purposes they were designed to serve as I could bring together, my knowledge of the topography of the district enabled me the more clearly to read, and to draw the