

CHAPTER VII.
FERNS AND FERN ALLIES.

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OWING to the sandy or heavy nature of the soil in and about Toronto, and the comparatively dry atmosphere, the representatives of this group of plants are not numerous, and the individual species, on the whole, are rather medium-sized. In certain localities throughout the province, however, where conditions of soil and moisture are suitable, magnificent specimens are often found. In the northern part of the province specimens of the Bracken fern, for example, have been found to attain a height of six or seven feet, and in one locality in the eastern part of the province the Boulder fern, where protected by a shaded limestone cliff, has been observed to produce fronds five feet in length; the average size for both these being perhaps about two to three feet. There are many localities, too, throughout the province where typical rock-loving ferns are numerous, such as at Niagara and Credit Forks, where the rocks are chiefly calcareous. Here occur such species as Purple Pellaea, Narrow-leaved Spleenwort, Maiden-