

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, Manager.

Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"
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1. THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE is published every Thursday. It is impartial and independent of all cliques and parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most practical, reliable and profitable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, stockmen and home-makers, of any publication in Canada.
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the grain spread out upon a barn floor and this repeated till every kernel is coated. The pile is then covered with canvas and left three or four hours after which it is dried and sown. Forty gallons of the solution is said to be sufficient to sprinkle between thirty and forty bushels of grain.

Burning the People's Telegrams.

The underground workings of Government which are being unearthed in Manitoba have brought to light several matters with which the people of Canada are none too well pleased. Crookedness seems to have been rampant and whether it was fostered most in the breast of the liberal or conservative party it matters not so long as the house-cleaning is complete and the Royal Commission, acting in behalf of the people and the Crown, do their duty. One complication which threatened to accentuate the seriousness of the case was the burning of the telegrams transmitted over the wires of the Great Northwestern Telegraph Company. It was supposed that they were significant and should be produced for the consideration of the Commission. Much to the astonishment and surprise of all they had been burned and the people were deprived of important evidence relating to the matter they were investigating. The President of the Company issued a statement to the effect that confidence in the secrecy of such communications as passed over the wires must be maintained and that the Company was justified in destroying copies of such messages.

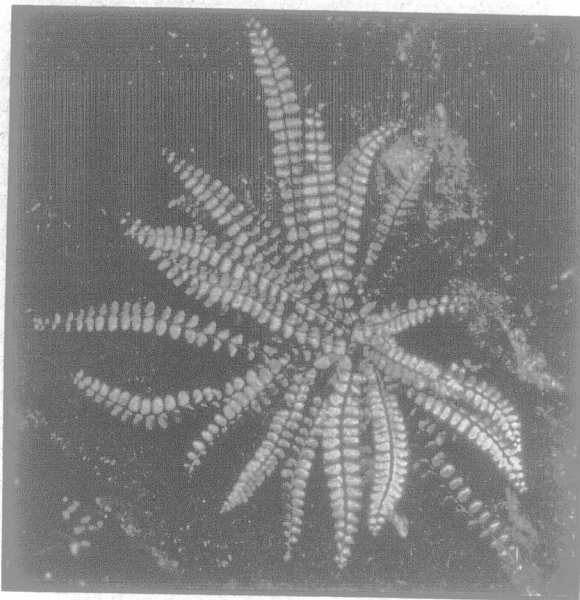
The President's statement has not vindicated the company or justified the action in the eyes of the people. Forgetting the proceedings at Winnipeg and caring not whether the late Government is guilty or innocent so long as the truth is known, are we to suppose that the wires joining the Atlantic and Pacific and erected for personal and public business by charter from the people are to be a carrier of messages from crook

to crook, or traitor to traitor without chance of exposure? If the company must go to such limits of secrecy in order to maintain the confidence of an honest clientele there is something wrong with the patrons of the wires, the majority must be dishonest.

Business men do not approve of the destruction of telegrams for in many cases they are the only records of business transactions intact. A public servant then whose energies and efforts are the people's and in whose service he is employed, should not wish to withhold from them copies of the messages sent in their behalf. If the telegram is personal as friend to friend or colleague to colleague it is a reflection upon the character of both if the contents must be kept a secret. The startling aspect of the whole affair was the cremation of business telegrams as well as personal and private which had been entrusted with the G.N.W. lines for transmission and safe-keeping. It appears that the rights of many had been ignored to protect a few. Assuming that the majority of Canadians are honest it is no more than right for the Crown to demand the production of messages transmitted over the wires in this Dominion. The absence of a certain amount of privacy might be taken advantage of by a few but when the people as a whole rise up and demand investigation of matters concerning their homes, their Government and their country no company or private individual should be allowed to destroy evidence of vital importance to all.

The Harvest of Scoundrels.

The patriotism of some people appears to be measured by what they can make out of the great war. Like a searchlight or an X-ray it brings out in vivid contrast the bad and the good. Red Cross toilers in town and country gladly stitch their fingers to the bone that comforts may go forward to the boys at the front. Men scrimp and save counting it a privilege to meet the



Maidenhair Spleenwort.

growing burdens of taxation in order that the needs and honor of the country be sustained while the first thought of looters at the capitals of the country is to fatten themselves like greedy vultures on the sufferings of others. But the mass of the people, thank Heaven, are not so minded and are revolting against rascality in places high or low in a way that is bringing the guilty to book and compelling others to disgorge. Nor is Canada alone in such glaring examples of sham loyalty and the genuine article. Old Country newspapers lately, to hand tell of a firm of Glasgow iron merchant's convicted of shipping ore to "our friends, the Messrs. Krupp" for which they were sentenced to six months imprisonment and a £2,000 fine, getting off easy so the public thought. In happy contrast with such small-souled knaves we have recorded the case of G. & J. Weir, an important engineering firm of Cathcart, whose directorate unanimously and voluntarily offered after deducting necessary establishment charges, to turn over all profits arising from the manufacture of shells, to organizations carrying out relief or Red Cross work which the war

has necessitated and which are supported by voluntary subscription. The firm furthermore offered at the expiry of present contracts to produce shells for the Government at net cost and if required all such future productions to be carried on in conjunction with the proposed Glasgow National Shell factory. Such sturdy and independent Scottish patriotism stands out in refreshing contrast with the junk shop policy of political contract hunters who want to know how much they can squeeze for themselves or their friends by the price of blood.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. Klugh, M.A.

A little fern which is not uncommon on moist, shady, mossy rocks in limestone regions is the Maidenhair Spleenwort, shown in our illustration. The little fronds of this fern are from three to four inches in length, the stipes (stems) are black and shining and the pinnae (leaflets) are dark green. The term Maidenhair incorporated in its name is due to the fact that the whole frond resembles somewhat a pinna of the Maiden-hair Fern.

There are several plants which are commonly termed ferns which are not ferns at all. For instance the so-called Asparagus Fern is really an Asparagus—a plant closely allied to the vegetable of that name and belonging to the Lily Family. But probably the best example of an incorrect name is the case of the so-called Japanese 'Air Fern', which has for some time been largely sold as a house decoration. In the first place it is not a fern, not even a plant, but a Hydroid, a colonial stationary marine form of animal life. It does not live on air, but when alive is found in the ocean, and as sold does not need air or anything else to live on, as it is dead, dried and dyed green. Lastly it did not come from Japan but from the North Sea, and was prepared in Germany.

There are a great many birds which are more frequently heard than seen. One of these is the Black-billed Cuckoo, a bird which is fairly common in the East. This species is about twelve inches in length, and is slim and graceful in build. It is a fawn colored bird with a long tail and a long, gently-curved bill.

The Black-billed Cuckoo has two main notes. One is a very loud and far-carrying "Cuc-cuc-cuc-cuc-cow-cow-cow-cow-cow-cow" the 'last few "cows" being separated by long pauses. The other note is much softer and is an oft-repeated "Cuc-cuc-cow—Cuc-cuc-cow."

The Cuckoos are particularly valuable birds to the farmer on account of their fondness for hairy caterpillars. Many birds avoid hairy caterpillars as much as possible, but the Cuckoos seem to prefer them to smooth ones. So much of their fare consists of hairy larvae that when the stomach of a Cuckoo is examined it is found to be lined with the bristly hairs of these caterpillars. In a season like the present when Tent Caterpillars are a pest the Cuckoos do a great deal of good.

Besides the Black-billed Cuckoo we have another species—the Yellow-billed Cuckoo—which is not as common as the former in most parts of the East. It differs from the Black-billed in having the lower part of the bill yellow, and having the outer tail-feathers black, with broad white tips.

Neither of our Cuckoos have the habits of the well-known Old-World Cuckoo of dropping their eggs in the nests of other birds, and leaving them to be hatched by the foster-parents. This habit of the European Cuckoo is thus the same as that of our Cowbird and the results are the same—the young parasite is larger, gets practically all the food and the rightful nestlings are either starved to death or ejected over the edge of the nest by the intruder. Our Cuckoos are however honest birds, building a nest of their own, though truly it is usually rather a loosely constructed affair, so thin that one can often see the eggs through the twigs of the bottom. There are one or two cases on record in which our Cuckoos have fallen from grace and slipped an egg into the nest of another species.

Now is the season when young birds are just starting to fly and it is the duty of every owner of a cat to see that the cat does not prey upon these flutterers on uncertain pinions. Some cats are inveterate bird-hunters and such cats should at once be disposed of. Some will contend that cats are necessary to keep down mice and rats, but such is far from being the case—it can be done more efficiently by traps and poison. And because a cat is well fed it is no guarantee that it will not kill birds, some of the best-fed cats will do so, not from hunger but from a love of killing.

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