

gather knowledge of our Ontario ferns, were *Polypodium* (including *Phegopteris*), a genus in which the indusium is wanting, *Aspidium* and *Asplenium*.

It was with no small curiosity that I set out next season to search for ferns in Ontario. I began in May and by the end of June had got 17 species. I found, however, that a beginner can seldom be certain of identification until the frond is in fruit. For instance, I got a young fern early in June whose frond tapered in both directions, the pinnae longest in the middle and shortening gradually above and below. I made sure it must be the New York Fern and transplanted some to a pot in my window stand. I was away all the summer, but my plants were cared for and on my return I found my New York Fern (*Aspidium noveboracense*) with the known contrariety of things taken for granted had fruited out into a Silvery Spleenwort (*Asplenium thelypteroides*). Mistakes like this are bound to occur in the case of a beginner, and some species more than ordinarily variable defy identification even by an expert until in fruit. In the case of the Silvery Spleenwort, however, an experienced eye will have no difficulty in determining; for it is covered on stipe and rhachis with white somewhat bristly hairs, while the New York Fern is perfectly smooth and the stipe itself is much more slender.

Altogether my first season yielded me 50 species, and more hours, days and weeks of solid enjoyment than anyone can be aware of who has never collected ferns. For not only are they beautiful in themselves but their haunts and homes are among the most charming in all nature. Ferns in their native surroundings are far more than ferns in themselves, even though the charm of surroundings, if not due to the ferns, is always enhanced by them. Emerson's "Each and All" will remind you how subtle and how complex a thing is environment. But even a fern in itself is a thing of beauty and a joy forever; and to the collector who cares to press and mount specimens of our native ferns, there is no plant that yields anything like as good results. Flowering plants when pressed generally lose their natural colours and always their distinctive outline and shape; ferns on the other hand if carefully pressed retain their natural green unchanged and are with few exceptions flat and growing in a single plane—ready pressed, so to say, by Nature. A green fern well mounted on a sheet of white paper or cardboard is a delight to the eye and in the grey days of winter a pleasant reminder of summer's golden prime.

My first collecting ground was in the neighborhood of Port Hope, a limestone district but with almost no rock, the limestone