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## FERN HUNTING IN ONTARIO.

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A life-long lover of flowers and ferns, I had been ten years in Canada, roaming the country side for flowering plants before I ventured to tackle the ferns. The fact is I greatly over-estimated the difficulties of identification in these most beautiful of foliage plants. It was only because I had almost exhausted the lists of "finds" in Ontario flowers that I made up my mind to add the pteridophytes to my amateur botanist's list.

The beginning was made in Great Britain five years ago during a botany trip in North Wales and the Lake District. I was agreeably surprised to find identification comparatively easy. The A B C of the art, as I remember, was close and frequent scrutiny of the back of every fern I found. This in July meant inspecting the sori or clusters of spore cases and noticing whether they were covered by an indusium or not; and if so whether this was circular or oblong. By that means I soon grew familiar with the two kinds most rich in species in northern latitudes, the *Aspidia* or Shield Ferns (with circular indusium), and the *Asplenium* or Spleenworts (with oblong indusium). Two of the commonest of British are the Male Fern (*Aspidium Filix-mas*) and the Lady Fern (*Asplenium Filix-femina*); the first of these is not common in Ontario, indeed only doubtfully native to the province, having been found at Roystone Park near Owen Sound; but some other species of *Aspidium* are common to both countries, e.g., *A. spinulosum*, *A. cristatum*, and *A. Thelypteris*. Among the Spleenworts are many species of interest in Europe, though perhaps not more in number or interest than those of North America. The result of a most enjoyable 6 weeks' fern-hunting was familiarity with 13 species belonging to 7 genera. This was in 1905, and on a second visit to England 3 years later, after 2 seasons' collecting in Ontario, I got twice as many in the same time and over the same ground. The fact is, experience to a collector counts for more than anything else. The three genera I found most useful to know, by way of nucleus about which to