

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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to it ourselves. More than that, it is bad economics from the farmer's standpoint, for the world's markets set the price on our wheat, our cattle, our hogs, and most everything we have to sell. The manufacturer bases the price for his commodities on actual costs, but the farmer's interests are not so well safeguarded. The price we get for farm commodities is decided not by what we produce alone, but by a general summing up of what all the producing countries of the earth have to offer from their surplus stores.

In some communities baseball clubs have been formed, leagues have been organized, and a series of games provided for. This is to be highly commended. It gives the young folk an opportunity to engage in wholesome, manly sport, while old and young look on and enjoy it. Where this has been the custom, the whole community would turn out to see the game and support the boys, without much loss of time. There should be sport and games organized in every community, but supporting them is vastly different from a set half-holiday with nothing definite in view.

Charity Begins at Home.

BY SANDY FRASER.

One o' the proverbs that I have heard noo an' again, ever since I was a youngster, is the one that says that "Charity begins at home." It's the handiest proverb for some people that ever was written. It lets them oot from under a lot o' obligations and saves them considerable money in the course o' a life-time. When the meenister asks them for a contribution for Foreign Missions they want to ken what's the matter wi' attendin' tae Home Missions first. And when the collection is being taken up for Home Missions they gie it as their opinion that the needs o' their ain particular church ought to be looked after, since the preacher's salary is behind, and so on. Then when they are asked to make up this shortage and help their church oot o' a hole, they remind themselves o' the fact that "charity begins at home," and their conscience permits them to put that five-dollar bill awa' in the box in the sideboard drawer, instead o' into the empty pocket o' their meenister. It's human nature, I suppose, or one phase o' it, anyway. But it's that sayin' about charity and the place where it is supposed to begin, that backs them up

in their policy o' lookin' oot for number one and lettin' the rest o' the world shift for themselves, as best they can.

We've had an example o' this tendency not sae far frae hame, within the last couple or three weeks. I'm referrin' tae the salary boost that was proposed for oor members o' the Legislature at Toronto. Whae'er chap sprung that scheme was a believer in the auld proverb, "I'm thinkin'." Na doot it was at his mither's knee that he learned that "charity begins at home." Anyway there is little doot but that he thought he would meet na opposition in gettin' a Bill o' that nature through the Legislature. But for once in a thousand years condections weren't favorable for the law-making salary-booster. He'd forgotten that a bunch o' kind o' half-decent farmers had managed to get control o' the Government in this Province last fall, and that they had a leader chap by the name o' Drury. It was this wee fact that upset a' his calculations.

When the Bill was first brought up the press o' the auld political parties juist took it for granted that it wad go through. No ither outcome had ever been heard o'. Here's a wee bit o' an editorial frae one o' these papers: "Those persons in Ontario who talked and hoped for reform and economy under an agricultural administration are being sadly disappointed, for the calls on the treasury are loud and insistent. Premier Drury in his first enthusiasm, stated that the Prime Minister's salary was too high by \$3,000, for which remark he was praised on the one hand and laughed at on the other. Now there is a reaction from such a lofty plane, on the part of the legislators, for the whips of the three parties are urging that the sessional allowance be raised from \$1,400 to \$2,500. With such unanimous support the raise should come, and then if the two thousand five hundred is not sufficient a double session might be held. Legislators are able to look out for themselves as well as their constituencies."

The editor who wrote that last sentence was pretty sure that the auld unwritten law o' "every man for himself" was still in force. He will be sittin' up, these days, an' rubbin' his eyes and thinkin', maybe, it was all a dream.

But the fact that these salary-boosters failed in their first stempt won't hinder them in making a second. Watch oot for them next session. They're like an auld French-Canadian representative o' Prescott County doon here, who was elected tae the House o' Commons at Ottawa a guid many years back. One o' his opponents asked him, the day after the election, what he was "going to Ottawa for, anyway?" "I'm goin'," he replied, "for my t'ousand dollar."

The idea o' workin' for the interests o' his county or country had never bothered him any mair than it has some o' those that we have been sending to Ottawa an' Toronto since. But he was less afraid o' comin' oot wi' the truth than they are noo-a-days. Like the chap that was asked what he did durin' the Great War, "Weel," he replied, "I did mair than a guid many ither men I was acquainted wi', I lived through it."

But, as I was sayin', there's a bunch o' these fellows that are makin' themselves comfortable in Queen's Park that really think they are no' gettin' pay enough for takin' a couple or three months holiday. For it's naethin' less or more. All the majority o' them ever do is to vote. And they don't even have to think about how to do that. They appoint a man, at the beginnin' o' the session, to dae their thinkin' for them.

I'm no' against payin' the Premier an' the ither Cabinet Ministers guid fair wages. They're on the job maist o' the time and, na doot, earn their money. But gin the rest o' the bunch dinna like their job an' the wages that gae wi' it, why don't they gae oot on strike like men an' let us elect itherers to tak' their places. They knew what the pay was when they were tryin' their best to get us to send them up to Toronto last fall and gin they don't like it noo I guess we all ken where there's men waitin' to step intae their shoes.

But they've certainly got their nerve along wi' them when they propose to hand over to themselves a greater proportion o' the taxes they have levied on the rest o' us. And that wi'oot sae much as a "by your leave." I dinna ken anither job on the face o' the earth where the servants can raise their ain wages until they hae at least informed their master o' their intentions and given them some chance to say whether they like the proposition or not. I'm thinkin' better than ever o' Premier Drury for not lettin' these chaps get their fingers intae the provincial money-box. Let him stick tae that policy and a guid many o' us will be beginnin' tae think that, whether the farmers ken little or much, there's no' that slow when it comes tae pickin' a Premier.

We've had a guid many sermons on the virtues o' economy from oor different Governments in the course of the past few years and it's a richt too, gin they set us the example as weel. But when a mon starts talkin' tae me about the necessity o' workin' harder an' exercisin' greater economy, and at the same time tries tae get his hand intae my pocket to relieve me o' the results of the habits o' economy that I already possess, I'm thinkin' it shouldna be oot o' the way to come tae some sort o' an undertakin' wi' him sae that he might be brought to see the error o' his ways. Inconsistency is anther o' them lang words, but gin the meaning o' it were made clear tae some o' these chaps they wad be surprised how weel it fitted their case.

Pastures have been very backward this spring and live stock have kept them down. Make ample provision for the summer and autumn months when lean pastures may again be expected.

Nature's Diary.

BY A. BROOKER KLUGH, M.A.

The ferns are now uncoiling their feathery fronds and in wood and swamp these half-uncoiled fronds stand like croziers. All the true ferns, that is the species of the family Polypodiaceae, are alike in this respect, that their leaves are coiled in the bud and "unwind" in unfolding. In some cases these new fronds are produced from a crown which still bears evergreen leaves of last year's growth, in other cases all the fronds are produced from year to year, and only the crown or the rootstock persists.

The manner in which ferns reproduce was a mystery for ages. It was thought that they must produce seeds like flowering plants, but as nobody had ever detected either flowers or seed it was supposed that the seed was invisible. Since this was thought to be the case it was imagined that the possession of this seed would confer the gift of invisibility, and Shakespeare is only reflecting



Fig. 1—Croziers of the Ostrich Fern.

this common belief of his time when he says, "We have the receipt of fern seed; we walk invisible." It was not until 1648 that the sporangia were noticed and the spores themselves were not detected until 1669, while it was not until 1808 that the full life-history of a fern was worked out.

The life-cycle of a fern, which may be followed by anyone with the aid of a hand-lens, is as follows:—

On the back of the frond in most species, or in groups on special fronds in such species as the Ostrich Fern, Sensitive Fern and the Cinnamon and Royal Ferns, are little groups of spore-cases. These groups are known as sori or fruit-dots. Figure 2 shows a section through a sorus, and Figure 3 shows one of the spore-cases or sporangia. In most ferns the sori have a covering, called the indusium, and the shape of the sorus, and consequently of the indusium, varies greatly in the different species. In the Wood Ferns (Aspidium) it is kidney-shaped, in the Spleen-worts it is long and either straight or curved, in the Bracken they form a raised line round the margin of the frond, and so on.

When the spores are mature the sporangium ruptures, at the point shown by the break in Figure 3, half of the sporangium bends slowly backwards and then flips suddenly forwards, scattering the spores.

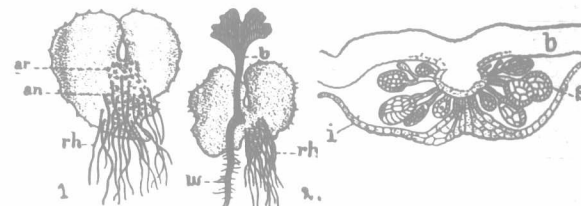


Fig. 4—Prothallia of a Fern. Fig. 2—Sorus, or Fruit Dot.

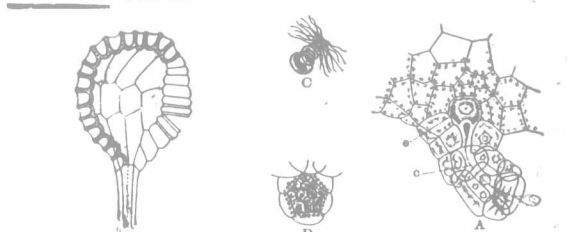


Fig. 3—A Sporangium. Fig. 5—A Archegonium. Showing point of rupture, much enlarged. With egg and canal.

When a spore germinates it gives rise to a small, flat, thin, green, heart-shaped body known as the prothallium. These prothallia may be found in large numbers under ferns in midsummer, the best place to look for them being on the surface of moist, rotten logs, as on account of their minute size they are difficult to detect on the soil. The prothallium is attached to its substratum by hair-like rhizoids, by means of which it obtains the water necessary for its growth. At its pointed end it bears the male organs, known as antheridia, and at the notched end the female organs, called archegonia. A prothallium with these organs is shown at 1 in Figure 4. The male organs contain little ciliated bodies termed antherozoids, which enter the canal of the archegonium and fertilize the egg at the bottom of this canal. Figure 5 shows these structures under high magnification. From this fertilized egg the young fern plant develops, the little frond coming up at the notched end of the prothallium as shown at 2 in Figure 4.