

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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settlement, settlers to be allotted not more than 40 acres each, and to receive from the Government by way of a loan sufficient money to purchase stock and such implements as are required and to assist settlers until such time as they can become self-sustaining, such advances to be a charge against the land, and to be payable in installments covering a period of years."

This is virtually a settlement of "little landers" such as have accomplished much in some districts, but the objectionable feature is the bonus which the Government must advance, in many cases, with absolutely no security. This class of worker or "non-worker" who would probably take advantage of such a privilege would not be able to invest much capital in the venture, and after the Government had established him and he resulted in a failure and the proportion of such would no doubt be large, the depreciated implements and perhaps dead live stock would be the only assessable property as well as the land which already belonged to the State. All such recommendations are very crude and immature, and indicate the touch of the man inexperienced in rural work and leadership. Soup kitchens and city-provided lodgings are objectionable in the extreme, but the advice of our city fathers in their efforts to repopulate the country is rather lopsided.

The land, no doubt, will receive many of the people now out of work, and a successful solution of the labor problem will be brought about by a more extensive cultivation of the soil. Not only that land which lies far from town and remote from the city, but many sub-divisions idle, unproductive and unsightly will be made to yield bread for the populace instead of unearned increment for the speculator. Rural and urban leaders should combine in an effort to alleviate the stress which will probably be felt severely this coming winter. It is a broad and many-sided question which men of only one mind and one vision cannot bring to a satisfactory issue.

Boyhood Chores.

By Peter McArthur.

Because the bean rows are not far apart and the weeds are thick, the boy who is cultivating needs another boy to ride the horse and keep it from stepping on the beans. When the necessity was pointed out to me I gave orders accordingly, and gave the matter no further thought until I happened to go out to the bean field. But as soon as I saw a hot, harassed, scowling, scolding boy perched precariously on top of the driver and digging his heels into her ribs in his attempts to make her obey the orders he was getting from the boy between the cultivator handles my heart went out in sympathy. The years rolled from me and I could understand the boy's feelings without asking him to explain why he was so mad and discontented. If I am not mistaken, I once rode more miles between corn rows on the top of a horse that was high in bone and low in tallow than I ever expect to ride in an automobile. And in those days the fields were stumpy and the rows crooked, and the horses were sprawling brutes that didn't seem able to step anywhere except on hills of corn, and the mosquitoes got at a fellow's bare legs when he had both hands busy and couldn't slap them, and

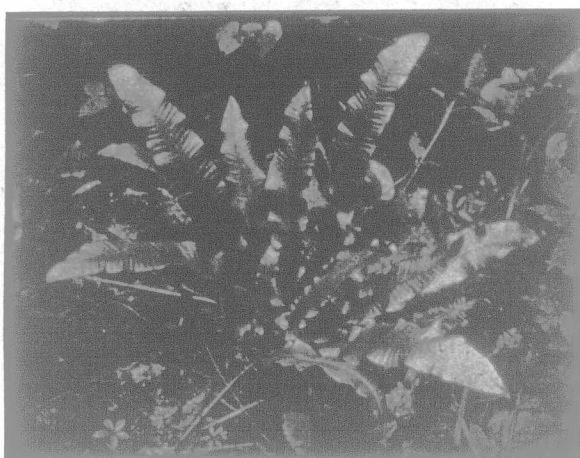


Fig. 1—Hart's-tongue Fern.

the days were longer than they are now. Besides, there were worse jobs than riding the horse for the cultivating. They had a kind of hay-rake that could only be worked by having a boy ride the horse while the man who was doing the raking held the handles and made the thing tumble over so as to release the hay at the windrow. Every time the rake tumbled the horse was relieved of his load and jumped forward in a way that jolted the boy from the cradle to the grave. Cultivating corn in the old days was a picnic compared with raking hay, and raking hay was a joy ride compared with pulling peas. When peas were being pulled the horse had to be backed every time we got a bunch, so that the rake could be pulled out and lifted over without shelling the peas. Between driving, backing, starting and stopping the rider of the horse became hot, chafed, tired and enraged to the point of tears, and every day the sun stood still miraculously so that dinner-time and stopping time never seemed to come. As I looked back I felt that the boy who was riding the plump driver in a nice,



Fig. 2—Holly Fern.

smooth field was really having a good time compared with times that I knew about.

Boys on the modern farm probably work just as hard as the old-time boys, and perhaps some of them dislike the work just as much—though I hope not—but in most cases the work is entirely different. Spudding thistles out of the growing crops was once a standard job for the small boy, but I do not think I have seen a spud in many years, and I am sure that it is many years since I have seen one used. The introduction of self-binders did much to slacken the war against

thistles. In the days when grain was bound by hand a great deal of it had to be bound while the dew was on it because the thistles were so bad. On farms where there were small boys an attempt was usually made to keep the thistles in check by having them chiseled out with a spud before the grain headed out. But when the self-binders came and made it possible to bind thistles just as easily as clean grain the boys were emancipated, and the farmers who wanted to fight the weeds did it by summer-fallowing or by the clean cultivation of hoed crops. The spud is altogether too slow for modern methods of farming, though if the truth were known I would not be surprised to find that many a man now high in the public life of our country made "up his mind to leave the farm while spudding thistles in an oat field."

Another job of old-time importance disappeared with the rail fences. Before there were wire fences and handy gates on the farms it was quite customary for boys or even girls to spend many of those terribly long days we used to have, in watching gaps while the crops were being hauled in. When the farmer was working in the fields all day he did not seem to mind letting down the fence and putting it up every time he went to the field or returned, but when hauling in time came around the gap had to be left open so that the work could be done with a rush, and someone had to watch it so as to keep the cows or sheep or pigs out of the grain. And the cattle they had then were different from the kind we have now. Our modern cows, sheep and pigs are mostly fat and lazy and look as if they were posing to have their picture taken for "The Farmer's Advocate," but the old-time "critters" were lean, greedy, sneaky brutes that could not be trusted for a minute. Even when they were at the farthest corner of the field and as far away from the gap as they could get it was never safe to make a run to the house to "get a piece," for just as soon as a fellow's back was turned they would make a run for the gap and get into mischief. But all this is ancient history. I doubt if even the farms where there are rail fences are without gates, and it is many years since I saw a boy "minding a gap."

Another job that still survives to some extent but used to be more familiar is that of herding cattle. Every once in a while we see a large field, half of which is left to hay while the other half is sown to grain. After the hay has been cut it is not unusual to turn in the cattle to pasture on the stubble and along the fences, and then someone must herd them away from the grain. Once in a while I see a boy at this job, and I am reminded of times when I had to do the same lonesome chore myself, but my memory of herding is mostly pleasant, for I had learned to read before I had to do it and with a book in my hand the time did not hang too heavily. And the reading I did at such times still comes back to me associated with the fields and cattle. During the past few months part of an old Scotch song that I read while herding in one of the fields comes back constantly as I think of the war. Its peculiar pathos struck me as a boy and I committed it to memory without efforts, and now it comes back with a poignant significance. I am not sure that I can quote the Scotch correctly for I have not seen the song in print since those boyhood days, but this is the way memory gives it back to me:

"At een i' the gloamin'
Nae yonkers are roamin'
Mang steeks wi' the lassies at bogle to play.
But ilk ane sits dreary
Lamenting her dearie—
The flowers of the forest are a' wede away."

The news of St. Julien and Langemarck may thrill us with pride, for the heroism shown was the heroism of Canadian boys, but when we reflect on the price that is being paid for the lustre they have shed on Canada,—the land which our fathers conquered from the forest—we all realize, and some with tears, that "The flowers of the forest are a' wede away."

Nature's Diary.

A. B. Klugh, M.A.

The birds are now mostly silent, except for a few persistent singers, such as the Red-eyed Vireo and the Wood Pewee. Bird music is now largely replaced by insect music. Most of the insect music is made by the members of the order Orthoptera that order to which belong the Grasshoppers, Locusts, Crickets and Katydid. The sounds made by these insects cannot really be called singing, since no vocal apparatus produces it, but is termed stridulation, that is a noise produced by the rapid rubbing together of two roughened surfaces. Various parts of the insects' anatomy are used in producing these sounds, usually two wing-covers, or a leg and a wing-cover.

A very rare Fern in North America is the