

An article in *Engineering* gives facts concerning the progress of the Trans-andine Railway of South America. This railway crosses the Andes at a height of 10,450 feet, through a tunnel three and one-tenth miles in length, which is far above the level of any European lines, the Rigi Pass being 5,753 feet, and the St. Gothard 3,788 feet, above sea level. The distance from Buenos Ayres to Valparaiso is about 871 miles, and construction has been going on, on this railway, for nearly twenty years. At the Atlantic end 640 miles of line are completed, while at the Pacific end eighty-two miles are laid, leaving 149 to be built.

IMMENSE SPIDERS.—Far up in the mountains of Ceylon there is a spider that spins a web like bright, yellowish silk, the central net of which is five feet in diameter, while the supporting lines, or guys, as they are called, measure sometime ten or twelve feet; and riding quickly in the early

morning, you may dash right into it, the stout threads twining around your face like a lace veil, while, as the creature who has woven it takes up his position in the middle, he generally catches you right on the nose, and, though he seldom bites or stings, the contact of his large body and long legs is anything but pleasant. If you forget yourself and try to catch him, bite he will, and though not venomous, his jaws are as powerful as a bird's beak, and you are not likely to forget the encounter. So strong are the webs that birds the size of larks are frequently caught therein, and even the small but powerful scaly lizard falls a victim. He usually throws the coils about the head till the wretched victim is first blinded and then choked. In many unfrequented dark nooks of the jungle you come across most perfect skeletons of small birds caught in these terrible snares, the strong folds of which prevent the delicate bones from falling to the ground, after the wind and weather have dispersed the flesh and feathers.

PUBLIC OPINION.

WRITING IN THE LINDSAY SCHOOLS.—We can fully corroborate from personal knowledge all that Mr. McIntyre says as to the unsatisfactory penmanship of the public and high school pupils. Our school board could not adopt a course that would be more beneficial to the pupils or more popular with parents than by requiring ample attention to be paid to penmanship in the high as well as the public schools.—*The Canadian Post* (Lindsay).

MANNERS.—We have on various occasions called attention to the brusque, uncouth and uncourteous demeanor of

the pupils attending the public schools of this country. So marked is this want of courtesy, that it is frequently referred to by the press in different parts of the country. Recently the *Empire* had a timely editorial bearing on the same great defect in the education of Young Canada. The same thing is complained of by some of our American exchanges. The defect is, therefore, evidently pretty wide in extent. Success in life frequently depends as much on the gentlemanly manners and courteous demeanour as on scholarship and ability. It is manifest that this important factor should receive more attention than it gets.—*The Barrie Advance*.