

as it were, covered over with two or three setting nets, drawn the one over the other. When the dogs attempted to hunt, their eyes were so blinded and hoodwinked that they could not proceed, but were obliged to lie down and scrape the encumbrances from their face with their forefeet, so that finding my sport interrupted, I returned home musing in my mind on the oddness of the occurrence. As the morning advanced, the sun became bright and warm, and the day turned out one of those most lovely ones which no season but the autumn produces; cloudless, calm, serene, and worthy of the south of *France* itself. About nine an appearance very unusual began to attract our attention, a shower of cobwebs, falling from the very elevated regions, and continuing, without any interruption, until the close of the day. These webs were not single filmy threads, floating in the air in all directions, but perfect flakes or rags; some were an inch broad, and five or six feet long, which fell with a degree of velocity which showed that they were considerably heavier than the atmosphere. On every side as the observer turned his eyes might he behold a continual succession of fresh flakes falling into his sight and twinkling like stars as they turned their sides to the sun.

White . . . dismisses the strange and superstitious notions formerly current about these webs, and says that there is no doubt that they are the real production of small spiders, which swarm in the fields in fine weather in autumn, and have a power of shooting out webs from their tails, so as to render themselves buoyant and lighter than air.

There is still much to be learnt about the aeronautics of these little spinners. . . . What has been added to general knowledge is a fact which accounts for the sudden, astonishing, incalculable numbers of the creatures that simultaneously ascend into enormous tracts of air on the fine days in autumn. "Ballooning" appears to be the regular amusement, not of one or two particular spiders called "gossamer spiders," but of the innumerable young of many kinds of web-making species. Most of our young spiders are hatched in the autumn, and though they vary much in fertility, some laying only fifty, and others as many as two thousand eggs, the average is high. As soon as the young spider is out of the egg it is able to spin, and it also has an innate knowledge of how to use the thread to the best advantage. Young spiders seem aware that while very small they can use floating threads as aerial sails far better than when they have grown older and heavier, and very sensibly they use this power, as it would seem, purely as a means of enjoyment. Older spiders will spin a long thread and keep lowering themselves from a beam or branch with the set purpose of being blown across a space they wish to cross, elongating the

thread just as any one might lengthen the wire of a pendulum in order to increase the swing at the bottom. But the young spider throws out its threads and lets itself be carried away and upwards for the fun of the thing. It is certainly not in search of prey, for that would be found nearer the ground. They have been seen to stand on tiptoe, with upturned abdomen, and to go on spinning threads and allowing them to float on the wind till the sail so set carried them off on their aerial voyage, to sport in the currents and vapors of the upper regions of the sky. . . . Every one knows how readily air parts with its water in the condition of vapor, and deposits it upon spiders' webs in the form of drops of dew, upon the ground, and upon posts, trees, and palings. It seems natural that the webs of thread when floating in the air should also gain weight from condensing vapor, and so descend as Gilbert White saw them. The matting of the earth as the air cools towards sunset is often a wonderful sight. In the Thames Valley meadows the threads lie in such sheets that they sometimes reflect the rays of the setting sun as if from lakes of water. In these fallen threads it is difficult to find an insect entangled; yet the finest webs of the geometrical spiders which abound at the same season are often quite encumbered with the bodies of minute gnats and flies.

Dr. Andrew D. White lately delivered a lecture at Cornell University on the need of better education. We are glad to see that he advocated the study of the Bible in schools. He said: "No man's training can be finished without it. I would have readings in the schools from the sacred book—the story of Joseph and the sermon on the Mount and the wonderful writings of St. Paul. An educated man who has not those in his memory is to be pitied."—*Every Other Sunday*.

In the Trustees' section of the Kings County, N. B., Teachers' Institution a resolution was passed recommending to the Board of Education that a regulation be passed authorizing a Trustees' Meeting, composed of at least one trustee from each district in the inspectorate, at the same time and place as the County Institute. Notice was also given of a motion to provide for the appointment of a lady member on each board of school trustees.