

ENTOMOLOGY.

WORM-SNAKES AND SNAKE-WORMS.

Upon rare occasions and at long intervals, the field-naturalist in his rambles comes across a strange grayish old-rope-like object lying on the ground but moving forward very slowly and bearing a remarkable resemblance to some strange kind of snake. These are known as "worm-snakes" and are made up of myriads of the grayish or leaden-coloured larvæ called "snake-worms" which are the maggots of certain gnats belonging to the genus *Sciara*. These gnats are superficially somewhat like mosquitoes but have much more conspicuous antennæ, and have also the important difference of habit that they do not bite. The maggots of several kinds of these gnats have gregarious habits and some may be found in dense masses under the bark of trees. When full-grown the snake-worms are about $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch long and a little thicker than an ordinary pin, of a dirty white colour, tapering slightly to each end and with a tiny black shining head. When about to change to the pupa state, they congregate in vast numbers, form processions and migrate, sometimes long distances, in search of a suitable place to complete their transformations.

The following interesting account of one of these curious migrations is written by our correspondent, Mr. T. N. Willing, of Sylvan Glade, Olds, Alberta: "While at Prince Albert on the 20th of July last, my attention was called to a very strange sight. At first glance it appeared like a snake about five feet long, which tapered from the head to the tail and moved slowly along the ground. Upon closer examination this rope-like object proved to be composed of a vast number of whitish larvæ, of which I am sending you some samples in alcohol. These larvæ had moved in a body about 30 feet from where their trail was first seen, issuing from underneath a wood pile. They all kept together in the form of a snake, the head being about half an inch thick, one and a half inches wide, and two inches long. From this head the body tapered from one inch wide down to a single larva. Upon drawing a stick across the body of this snake of worms, so as to scatter them, they immediately closed up again and completed the continuity of the mass. I enquired the next day what had become of