

THE SPIDER'S THREAD.

IN a recent lecture at Boston, Mass., Professor Wood dealt with the phenomena of spider life. The female is larger and much fiercer than the male, who, while paying his addresses, is in constant peril, frequently losing some of his legs. In one tribe the female is 1,300 times as large as the male. The spider's thread is made up of innumerable small threads or fibres, one of these threads being estimated to be one two-millionth of a hair in thickness. Three kinds of thread are spun: one of great strength, for the radiating or spoke lines of the web. The cross lines, or what a sailor might call the ratlines, are finer and are tenacious—that is, they have upon them little specks or globules of a very sticky gum. These specks are put on with even interspaces. They are set quite thickly along the line, and are what, in the first instance, catch and hold the legs or wings of the fly. Once caught in this fashion, the prey is held secure by threads flung over it somewhat in the manner of a lasso. The third kind of silk is that which the spider throws out in a mass of flood, by which it suddenly envelopes any prey of which it is somewhat afraid, as, for example, a wasp. A scientific experimenter once drew out from the body of a single spider 3,480 yards of thread or spider silk—a length little short of three miles. Silk may be woven of spider's thread, and it is more glossy and brilliant than that of the silkworm, being of a golden color. An enthusiastic entomologist is said to have secured enough of it for the weaving of a suit of clothes for Louis XIV.

It has been the plan of my life to follow my convictions at whatever personal cost to myself.—*Garfield*.

KNOWLEDGE is in every country the surest basis of happiness.—*Washington's First Annual Address*.

GREAT is truth, great is liberty, great is humanity, and they must and will prevail.—*John Adams*.