

not more than a stone's throw from the tide-water mark. The railway is here bordered by thickets of brush that fence both sides, and make an open lane not much wider than the roadbed. The sun was just sinking behind the heights of Arlington, and the air was decidedly cool as I reached the track. In spite of the chill, or more properly, I suppose, because of it, the lane through the underbrush was occupied by dancing swarms of *Trichocera* that hovered at various heights from three feet to ten, each swarm maintaining itself in a fairly constant position, except when a whiff of air blew it about. Occasionally these assemblies would coalesce or subdivide, but not often. The swarms were of all sizes, from a dozen or two individuals up to hundreds.

It required several minutes of close attention to get an intelligent idea of the individual movement within each collection of dancers. The first impression was of chaotic activity, a sort of delirious motion without order or purpose. And it was only by singling out and following an individual that the riddle was read. Each fly went through three movements, and repeated these continually, a slow curving rise for ten or fifteen inches, a rapid perpendicular fall, and a peculiar swaying flight that affected the exact position of the swarm in the air. Even after the movement had been analyzed, a look through the swarm at an object beyond gave the former effect of whirling atoms and rapid motion.

A sweep of the net through a swarm revealed, as I had expected, that only males were performing the airy incantation. But the "canto" was unheard, probably because of the much slower wing-motion of the *Tipulidæ* as compared with the smaller and more active midges, with their high-keyed song. At any rate, I was unable to hear any sound from even the largest swarm.

Creeping cautiously beneath a well-defined body of dancers, I was able to watch them clearly outlined against the fast-darkening sky and see every movement. No females were observed to fly into the swarm, yet before I left for home I was able to distinguish a difference in the swing of the flies, that indicated the presence of a female. Just what the difference was is hard to describe, but somehow the dancers, instead of neatly avoiding each other as before, would interfere, the lines of flight seemed to be more angular and less graceful, a series of tackles could be distinguished as if a number of small fights were in progress, until finally a pair would drop from the swarm, clumsily steering for the grass and bushes that bordered the open.