

REVIEW'S QUESTION BOX.

H. G. L. S.—Yesterday (September 30) there was a great deal of the enclosed white, filmy material hanging to fences and drifting through the air. Please answer through the REVIEW if it is the work of spiders or caused some other way.

It is probably the remnant of a spider's web. Mr. John Dearness, of London, Ont., to whom the specimen was submitted says: "The fibre under the microscope is much finer by comparison than milkweed down or cotton. It is finer too than raw silk. On burning it yields a proteid odour that is not unlike that of silk, horn or wool. Under the microscope and with the flame I cannot find much difference between it and the spider's web. I am not able to improve on your correspondent's theory."

I. B. M. asks for information about Mrs. Alexander, the writer of some of the selections in the school readers.

Stedman's "Victorian Anthology" gives the following note: "Cecil Frances Humphries born at Strabane, Ireland, 182—. Daughter of Major Humphries. Married Rev. William Alexander, afterwards Bishop of Derry, in 1850. Her publications, consisting of stories and poems for children, were issued anonymously. She edited the "Sunday Book of Poetry" in the "Golden Treasury Series." Mrs. Alexander's "Hymns for Little Children" has gone through many editions. Her best known production is the hymn "There is a Green Hill Far Away."

E. W. F.—Can you give me any information regarding the insect that has been causing the destruction of the leaves of the white birch (*Betula alba*) during the past season?

The ravages of a little moth (*Bucculatrix canadensisella*), have been the cause, eating the green food-matter of the leaves. The latter died early in the season presenting a dried, withered appearance and causing them to fall early. The result will be no permanent injury to the trees, unless there are borers or other insects at work in the stems and branches. The trees will be weakened slightly no doubt by these ravages, just as a sickness would weaken a human being, but they may be relied upon to put forth their green leaves and resume their functions next spring as usual.

C. S. B.—What are the "cones" on the willow branch sent herewith? There is also a reddish gall or swelling on the leaves. The cones are found on the ends of the branches of the willow known as *Salix cordata*. I have not seen them on other species, but the reddish galls are

seen on this and other willows. Can you give me any information regarding these curious shapes. I have also seen swellings on the stem of the golden-rods, asters and other plants. Are they of the same nature?

Our correspondent has referred to an interesting subject, and one that has attracted considerable attention among nature students. These galls or swellings are the homes of insects which live in them comfortably during the winter in a torpid or semi-torpid condition; then at the approach of spring they begin to show signs of life and activity, thrive upon the juicy material which forms their homes—eat their houses, so to speak—and emerge in another form to renew their depredations. By cutting through these galls our correspondent may find the larva comfortably ensconced within.

Mr. A. D. Hopkins, in charge of Forest Insects Investigations of the United States Department of Agriculture, has kindly furnished the REVIEW with much of the information contained in the answers to this and the preceding questions. Concerning the willow galls he says: "The large gall is known as the willow cone gall caused by a gall gnat, technically known as *Cecidomyia strobiloides*. This is quite a common gall on the willows of the northern United States. Apparently there is not much known about its life history, except that the adult insect flies in April and May and deposits its eggs in the bud, causing the gall to commence growing. It attains its full size by the middle of June. The larva is said to remain in the gall until the following spring when it changes to the pupa and the fly escapes. The other smooth reddish gall on the leaf is known as the willow apple-gall and is caused by a saw-fly (*Pontania pomum*)."

Mr. Thomas Speed, pardon attorney of the governor of Missouri says: "About 75 per cent. of felons are untrained in any honest or useful trade. Most criminals are thieves; men, for the most part, try to get a living dishonestly because they have not learned to get it honestly. They steal, who have not learned to work. An hour's hand work a day in every schoolroom in the land, running through all the grades from the kindergarten to and including the high school, would give to every man, woman and child of the rising generation at least the rudiments of an honest, useful and profitable occupation; and would make of the next generation of Americans the most productive and the most industrially efficient race the world has ever seen. I believe that every criminologist will agree with me when I say that for every dollar so expended, two dollars will be saved in the lessened cost of crime."—*School Education*.