

opportunity of making excursions, at proper seasons, of prying into every corner, and cleaning those parts which are observed to be clogged or encumbered. Still attentive to its web, the spider, from time to time, cleans away the dust that gathers round it, which might otherwise clog and incommode it : for this purpose, it gives the whole a shake with its paws ; still, however, proportioning the blow so as not to endanger the fabric. It often happens also, that from the main web there are several threads extended at some distance on every side : these are, in some measure, the outworks of the fortification, which, whenever touched from without, the spider prepares for attack or self-defence. If the insect, which is entangled in the web, be a fly, it springs forward with great agility ; if, on the contrary, it be the assault of an enemy stronger than itself, it keeps within its fortress, and never ventures out till the danger be over. Another advantage which the spider reaps from this contrivance of a cell, or retreat behind the web, is that it serves for a place where the creature can feast upon its game with all safety, and conceal the fragments of those carcasses which it has picked, without exposing to public view the least trace of barbarity,