

natural grey colour, which were almost as handsome and strong as those made with common silk; and he published a dissertation concerning the discovery. But M. Rheaurmur being appointed by the Royal Academy to make a further enquiry into this new silk work, raised several objections and difficulties against it, which are found in the Memoirs of the Academy for the year 1710. The sum of what he has urged amounts to this: that the natural fierceness of the spiders renders them unfit to be bred and kept together. Four or five thousand being distributed into cells, fifty in some, one or two hundred in others, the big ones soon killed and eat the less, so that in a short time there were scarce left more than one or two in a cell; and to this inclination of mutually eating one another, M. Rheaurmur ascribes the scarcity of spiders, considering the vast number of eggs which they lay. But this is not all; he even affirms that the spider's bag is inferior to that of the silkworm, both in lustre and strength, and that it produces less matter to be manufactured. The thread of the spider's web, he says, only bears a weight of two grains without breaking, and that of the bag bears thirty-six. The latter, therefore, in all probability, is eighteen times thicker