

backward, and therefore incapable of making the smallest progressive motion. Thus, famished and rapacious as it ever seems, its prey must come to it, or rather into the snare provided for it, or the insidious assassin must starve.

But Nature, that has denied it strength or swiftness, has given it an equivalent in cunning, so that no animal fares more sumptuously, without ever stirring from its retreat. For this purpose, it chooses a dry sandy place, at the foot of a wall, or under some shelter, in order to preserve its machinations from the rain. The driest and most sandy spot is the most proper for it; because a heavy clogged earth would defeat its labour. When it goes about to dig the hole where it takes its prey, it begins to bend the hinder part of its body, which is pointed, and thus works backward; making, after several attempts, a circular furrow, which serves to mark out the size of the hole it intends making. Within this first furrow it digs a second, then a third, and afterwards others, which are always less than the preceeding. Then it begins to deepen its hole, sinking lower and lower into the sand, which it throws with its horns, or feelers, towards the edges. Thus, by repeating its labours all round, the sand is thrown up in a circle