

tribe in question, I shall abstract, as briefly as I can, the main features of his account. Having formed the foundation of her net, and drawn the skeleton of it, by spinning a number of rays converging to the centre, she next proceeds, setting out from that point, to spin a spiral line of unadhesive web, like that of the rays, which it intersects, and to which she attaches it, and after numerous circumvolutions, finishes it at the circumference. This line, in conjunction with the rays, serves as a scaffolding for her to walk over, and it also keeps the rays properly stretched. Her next labour is to spin a spiral or labyrinthiform line from the circumference towards the centre, but which stops somewhat short of it; this line is the most important part of the snare. It consists of a fine thread, studded with minute viscid globules, like dew, which by their adhesive quality retain the insects that fly into the net. The snare being thus finished, the little geometrician selects some concealed spot in its vicinity, where she constructs a cell, in which she may hide herself, and watch for game, of the capture of which she is informed by the vibrations of a line of communication between her cell and the centre of her snare.

The insects that frequent the waters require predaceous animals to keep them within due limits, as well as those that inhabit the earth, and the water spider* is one of the most remarkable upon whom that office is devolved by her Creator. To this end her instinct instructs her to fabricate a kind of *diving-bell* in the bosom of that element. She usually selects still waters for this purpose. Her house is an oval cocoon, filled with air, and lined with silk, from which threads issue in every direction, and are fastened to the surrounding plants; in this cocoon, which is open below, she watches for her prey, and even appears to pass the winter, when she closes the opening. It is most commonly, yet not

* *Argyroneta aquatica.*