

and especially the wings, of its prey. The wasp at first aimed in vain repeated thrusts with its sting at its little antagonist. Pitying the wasp, after allowing it to struggle for more than an hour, I killed it and put it back into the web. The spider soon returned; and an hour afterward I was much surprised to find it with its jaws buried in the orifice, through which the sting is protruded by the living wasp. I drove the spider away two or three times, but for the next twenty-four hours I always found it again sucking at the same place. The spider became much distended by the juices of its prey, which was many times larger than itself.

I may here just mention that I found, near St. Fé Bajada, many large black spiders, with ruby-colored marks on their backs, having gregarious habits. The webs were placed vertically, as is invariably the case with the genus *Epeira*: they were separated from each other by a space of about two feet, but were all attached to certain common lines, which were of great length, and extended to all parts of the community. In this manner the tops of some large bushes were encompassed by the united nets. Azara<sup>1</sup> has described a gregarious spider in Paraguay, which Walckenaer thinks must be a *Theridion*, but probably it is an *Epeira*, and perhaps even the same species with mine. I cannot, however, recollect seeing a central nest as large as a hat, in which, during autumn, when the spiders die, Azara says the eggs are deposited. As all the spiders which I saw were of the same size, they must have been nearly of the same age. This gregarious habit, in so typical a genus as *Epeira*, among insects which are so bloodthirsty and solitary that even the two sexes attack each other, is a very singular fact.

In a lofty valley of the Cordillera, near Mendoza, I found another spider with a singularly-formed web. Strong lines radiated in a vertical plane from a common centre, where the insect had its station; but only two of the rays were connected

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<sup>1</sup> Azara's Voyage, vol. i. p. 213.