

The threads with which the spider spins her web, are drawn out through little holes from that large round part of her body, in which there is a constant supply of the substance from which they are formed. These threads, fine as they are, can bear a weight many times greater than that of the spider who spins them. Spiders employ their webs for three purposes; for their snares to catch unwary flies and other insects, for lining their own dwellings, and for their cocoons. A cocoon, as you may recollect in the history of the silk-worm, is the name which is given to the substance in which insects fold themselves when they die, or change their state, and in which they also wrap their eggs.

Some species of spiders are gifted with an instinct for building. Their habitations are found in a red clay soil, into which they bore long narrow passages like the tubes of a pipe. They line the *walls* of these little dwellings with mortar, and then cover them with a soft silky substance drawn from their bodies; the door which closes them is curiously formed of layers of earth and cobweb, and is furnished with hinges of such a kind that it will shut of itself when the spider rushes out.

The water spider usually lives quite underwater, and fastens her dwelling to the plants or bushes which grow on or below the banks nearest her. This kind of house is an oval cocoon formed of web, and lined with the same silky substance I have described; from all parts of this cocoon, threads issue which fasten it securely to the plant or bush most convenient to the spider. This cocoon she fills by a very curious contrivance with air, for you know she could not breathe under the water