

**WHO WERE THE
FIRST WEAVERS?**

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Who Were the First Weavers? by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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BRUCE AND THE SPIDER



WHO WERE
THE FIRST WEAVERS?

" Each man,
Each shell, each crawling insect, holds a rank
important in the plan of him who framed
This scale of beings."

LONDON:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1874.




WHO WERE THE FIRST WEAVERS?

CHAPTER I.

THE SPIDER AND ITS WEB.

“They spread their nets, whether they be
In poet's tower, collar, barn, or tree.”

HEN the youthful reader takes up this little volume, he will probably be tempted, at first, to look upon it as some dull, dry, uninteresting, but very learned and perhaps valuable treatise on *Weaving*; and on the claims of different persons to be considered the inventors of certain wonderful looms, spinning-jennys, and other ingenious

methods for converting the tissue of plants into cotton and linen, or the wool of sheep and goats into sound broadcloth.

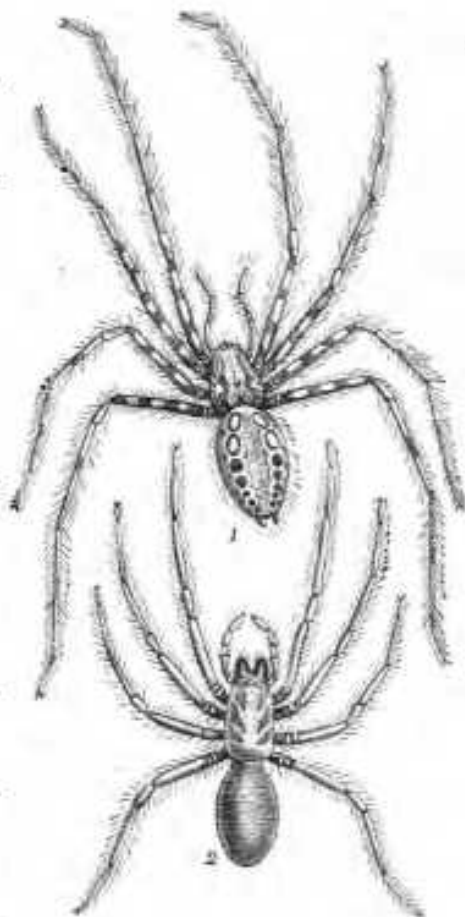
But of no such matters am I going to discourse to-day. Long before man discovered the uses of wool or flax or cotton, there were little weavers at work among the woods and groves of the young world,—industrious little weavers, which, without the aid of machinery other than was afforded by their own bodies, spun a woof of such exquisite fineness that our most ingenious mechanism has never been able to surpass, nay, to equal it; and of such remarkable strength, that a single thread will bear the pressure of thirty times its own weight!

These weavers were the first in the field, and they are still at work!—or rather, I should say, their descendants are now at work; and you cannot go forth into your garden on a bright spring morning without seeing the most superb specimens of their manufacture hung from bough to bough, or

spread along the leafy hedge, as if to challenge your admiration.

The weavers I speak of are, as you will have guessed, the SPIDERS!

There are silly people in the world who profess to be frightened at these curious and interesting insects;* who scream and shriek when one of them crosses their path, or makes its appearance on the shining wall.



1. HOUSE SPIDER. 2. CAVE SPIDER.

The most absurd superstitions were at one time

* They are popularly called insects, although they have eight legs instead of six, and breathe through gills situated under the belly.

entertained concerning them. Would you believe that it was thought unlucky to kill a spider? Now, I need hardly tell you that no such thing as luck, or chance, or want of luck, exists in this world. All that occurs is the result of certain unchangeable laws, which have been decreed by the Divine Governor of the universe. So far as we follow up and obey these laws, so far may we expect to enjoy peace of mind and a contented conscience: if we break them, the result must always be unhappiness, and trouble, and sore affliction. To kill a spider, then, is, or under most circumstances will be, cruel—just as it is cruel to ill-treat *any* animal or form of life whatsoever; but there is no other reason why it should be unlucky.

And there is no reason why the little spiders often met with in fields and woods, and vulgarly called *money-spiders* or *money-spinners*, should be considered omens of good fortune, if not destroyed or injured, or removed from your person when first observed.

You are not so silly as to think that the events and changes of life can in any way depend on the appearance of a tiny spider!

In the diary of an eccentric but clever individual, Elias Ashmole, the founder of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, may be found the following passage: "I took early in the morning a good dose of elixir, and hung three spiders about my neck, and they drove my ague away." Perhaps the elixir—whatever that may have been—*had* a good effect; but no boy or girl who reads these pages will fancy that "three spiders" suspended to a person's neck could be of any genuine benefit to him.

Still, I am prepared to confess that the spider is really a wonderful creature. Who that admires the beautiful gossamer threads embroidering leafy hedge and flowering bush like fairy net-work, would imagine they were woven by one apparently so insignificant, and even contemptible? But if you ask, How does it weave them? Whence does it obtain