

ward, the body of a large spider not long dead,—a spider whose bulk was at least three times as great as that of its intending sexton. On arriving within twelve inches of the sepulchre the insect left the corpse, and hastened thither to ascertain, as I cannot doubt, whether or not the orifice was large enough for its admission: it was not so, and the grave-digger resumed his work enlarging, though but very slightly, showing thus how true his eye was, the opening he had made. Returning to the spider he dragged it onward, and, still running backward, pulled it after him within the hole; and I noticed that so nice had been the calculation, there was exactly sufficient space for the passage of the body—sufficient, but not a hair's-breadth to spare.

The insect soon once more emerged, and immediately commenced filling in the grave, a work he speedily though carefully accomplished. And when that work was completed, he ran round and round with great celerity upon the surface, scattering the gravel in all directions with his feet, with the undoubted object of obliterating every, the faintest mark by which his *cache* might be discovered: and so effectually was this portion of his operation executed, that half an hour subsequently I was unable, though I searched diligently and anxiously, assisted too by eyes far keener than my own, eyes that had also watched the whole transaction, to find it out myself.

Meantime, having sent for my net, I, not without some feelings of compunction, captured the little workman, and putting him to death by the shortest possible method, made a sketch of him for future reference.

Now, what was the object of the little creature in conveying beyond the ken of other insects the booty it had discovered? My first impression was that it was an *Ichneumon*, and that it was about to deposit its eggs within the body of the spider; but *Ichneumons*, I believe, invariably make use of living caterpillars for that purpose; and after having effected my capture, I could discover no trace of an *ovipositor*. I imagine, therefore, that it must have intended to make a meal, or many meals off the carcase: but why it should have expended so large an amount of time, and given itself so much trouble on that account, I confess I am unable to determine.

A reflection, and I conclude. How slender is the line of demarcation separating instinct from reason! and how marvellous the Creative Power that could have imparted to an insect so in-