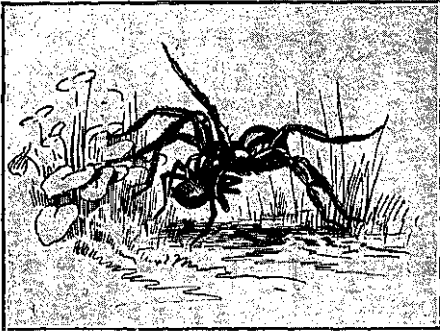


his utmost endeavour to overcome. Among many animals the males have to meet a certain amount of inconvenience from the coquetry of the females, but in the case of



A terror to her poor little husband.

spiders the coquetry passes into the hungry determination of a ferocious giantess; and without any fear of being called sentimental, the gentle man may truly say, "Love me or I die." If the female spider were not so cruel, so hideous, so repulsive, one would like to think of her as a Diana, with her passionate devotion to sport and contempt for the male sex, mighty hunter as the male is too, even as Nimrod. For this hunting Goddess Diana had a terrible "down" on men, just as Mistress Spider has. She killed her own huntsman for only looking at her! And Orion, for making love to Aurora, she also put to death, leaving nothing of him but his belt of three lights in the heavens!

Our word "spider" is merely the masculine of which "spinster" is the feminine, both words originally meaning "one who spins."

The Maori word "Punga-were-were" is very descriptive of the spider's habits, indeed, all the Maori names of flora and fauna repay study. The natives seem to grasp the main feature, and their lovely, flexible, poetical language clothes the idea with a name. It is not well, however, to ask questions indiscriminately as to the meaning of Maori names, for the natives are adepts in the art of

"double entendre." "Punga" means an anchor, or to "fix with an anchor," and "were-were" is "to hang," or "be suspended." In this name, therefore, are contained the ideas of anchoring the threads by attachment to a fixed point, and of suspension by means of a cable when the anchor is dropped, if one may use such an expression, for a spider always escapes pursuit by dropping suddenly from its perch, but letting out cable as it falls, so as to be able to climb back when the danger is over. Not only does this provide a way of return, but if the cable gets mixed up among foliage, etc., it still forms a thread-clue to the labyrinth for the return journey.

No, the spider is not an insect, but classed with six other orders,



Mistress Spider.

including the scorpion, daddy-long-legs, sheep tick, and cheese mite as an "Arachnidan"—"Arachne" being Greek for spider—and the difference between these and insects is considerable. The spider is the cruel enemy and devourer of the