

One summer day I was lying on my back watching the swallows darting after mosquitoes, when a strange object drifted over my head. I thought at first it was as far above me as the swallows, and so it seemed much bigger than it really was. It looked like an elephant being carried off by an aeroplane. And what do you suppose it was? a wolf-spider being carried off by a digger-wasp. My old interest in wasps was at once aroused. I followed that digger-wasp till she lit on a sand-bank about two rods away. Dropping the wolf-spider, who lay very meekly on his back, Mrs. Digger-wasp began fussing around, flirting her wings, tossing her antennae, and twiddling her toes in a most remarkable manner. Whatever could she be up to? Ha! there it stood revealed—the mouth of a yawning cavern, the entrance to Mrs. Digger-wasp's burrow. So that is what she had been doing; removing the camouflage. When the tunnel was once disclosed she lost no time in seizing the spider and dragging him within.

While waiting for the digger-wasp to re-appear, I noticed a small green wasp lurking behind a grass-stem and peeping out occasionally. She was evidently waiting too.

Presently Mrs. Digger-wasp came out of her hole, carefully closed the opening with a bit of leaf and some loose sand, and was just preening her wings for flight, when she suddenly stopped, perfectly still, as though she were frozen. Her eyes, however, glowed with angry fire. She had caught sight of the green wasp, and, without a moment's warning, she dashed with the speed of a hawk at her lurking enemy.

Did the green wasp try to fly away, or did she put up a fight? She did neither. The moment she saw that she was detected she rolled up into a tight little green ball with nothing but her wings exposed. The digger-wasp tried again and again to sting this cunning creature, but I am afraid she did not succeed, for when the digger-wasp finally flew away with an angry buzz, the green wasp cautiously unrolled herself and made a bee-line for the digger-wasp's nest. She was much smaller than the digger-wasp and quickly burrowed under the dead-leaf door and entered the tunnel.

I was curious to know what it all meant, but it was useless to hurry. So I patiently waited until the green wasp crept from under the leaf, covered up her tracks as well as she could, and flew away. Then I opened up the tunnel and found three spiders, all apparently dead. These I put into a box.

For nearly two weeks I examined these spiders daily and found that they were not dead but only paralyzed by the sting of the digger-wasp. They began to move their legs and I thought they might revive. But, alas! their fate was sealed. One day when I opened the box I saw two legless grubs feeding on the wolf-spider. In a day or two there was nothing left of him but his legs. The other spiders were in turn devoured and I began to think it would be necessary to catch some spiders to feed these voracious grubs when they surprised me by changing into cocoons.