

was nigh ; perhaps the child cried to Him for aid, and He heard her, and saved her by means of the cat."

Lady Mary was much interested in all that Mrs. Frazer had told her ; she remembered having heard some one say, that the snake would swallow her own young ones, and she asked her nurse if it were true, and if they laid eggs.

"The snake will swallow her young ones," said Mrs. Frazer ; "I have seen the garter snake open her mouth and let the little ones run into it when danger was nigh ; the snake also lays eggs, I have seen and handled them often ; they are not covered with a hard brittle shell, like that of a hen, but a sort of whitish yellow skin, like leather ; they are about the size of a black-bird's egg, long in shape, some are rounder and larger. They are laid in some warm place, where the heat of the sun and of the earth hatches them ; but though the mother does not brood over them as a hen does over her eggs, she seems to take great care of them, and defends them from their many enemies, by hiding them out of sight, in the singular manner I have just told you. This love of offspring, my dear child, has been wisely given to all mothers, from the human mother down to the very lowest of the insect tribe. The fiercest beast of prey loves its young, and provides both food and shelter for them ; forgets its savage nature to play with and caress them. Even the spider, which is a disagreeable insect, fierce and unloving to its fellows, displays the tenderest care, and the greatest wisdom in providing a safe retreat for them : the finest silken cradle she spins, in which to wrap the eggs, and leaves it in some warm spot, where she covers them from danger ; some glue a leaf down and overlap it, to secure it from being agitated by winds, or discovered by birds. There is a curious spider, commonly known as the nursing spider, which carries her sack of eggs with her, wherever she goes ; and when the young ones come out they cluster on her back, and so travel with her ; when a little older, they attach themselves to the old one by threads, and run after her in a train."

Lady Mary laughed, and said she should like to see the funny little spiders all tied to their mother, trotting along behind her.

"If you go into the meadow, my dear," said Mrs. Frazer, "you will see on the larger stones some pretty shining little cases quite round, they look like grey satin."