

The Life of the Grasshopper

the nature and the properties of the plant which she adopts as her home.

I pick the insect out of its froth with the tip of a hair-pencil and place it on some other plant, of an opposite flavour, letting the strong come after the mild, the spicy after the insipid, the bitter after the sweet. The new encampment is accepted without hesitation and soon covered with foam. For instance, a *Cicadella* taken from the bean, which has a neutral flavour, thrives excellently on the spurges, full of pungent milky sap, and particularly on *Euphorbia serrata*, the narrow notch-leaved spurge, which is one of her favourite dwelling-places. And she is equally satisfied when moved from the highly-spiced spurge to the comparatively flavourless bean.

This indifference is surprising when we reflect how scrupulously faithful other insects are to their plants. There are undoubtedly stomachs expressly made to drink corrosive and assimilate toxic matters. The caterpillar of *Acherontia atropos*, the Death's-head Hawk-moth, eats its fill of potato-leaves, which are seasoned with solanin; the caterpillar of the Spurge-moth browses in these parts on the upright red spurge (*Euphorbia*