

The Life of the Grasshopper

are the Ants. I have seen them nibbling at the ends of the Cicada's legs; I have caught them tugging at the tips of his wings, climbing on his back, tickling his antennæ. One, greatly daring, went to the length, before my eyes, of catching hold of his sucker and trying to pull it out.

Thus worried by these pigmies and losing all patience, the giant ends by abandoning the well. He flees, spraying the robbers with his urine as he goes. What cares the Ant for this expression of supreme contempt! Her object is attained. She is now the mistress of the spring, which dries up only too soon when the pump that made it flow ceases to work. There is little of it, but that little is exquisite. It is so much to the good, enabling her to wait for another draught, acquired in the same fashion, as soon as the occasion presents itself.

You see, the actual facts entirely reverse the parts assigned in the fable. The hardened beggar, who does not shrink from theft, is the Ant; the industrious artisan, gladly sharing his possessions with the sufferer, is the Cicada. I will mention one more detail; and the reversal of characters will stand out even more clearly. After five