

## The Fable of the Cicada and the Ant

trayed by the sap that oozes from the margin. They hasten up, at first with some discretion, confining themselves to licking the fluid as it exudes. I see gathering around the mellifluous puncture Wasps, Flies, Earwigs, Spheg-wasps,<sup>1</sup> Pompili,<sup>2</sup> Rose-chafers<sup>3</sup> and, above all, Ants.

The smallest, in order to reach the well, slip under the abdomen of the Cicada, who good-naturedly raises himself on his legs and leaves a free passage for the intruders; the larger ones, unable to stand still for impatience, quickly snatch a sip, retreat, take a walk on the neighbouring branches and then return and show greater enterprise. The coveting becomes more eager; the discreet ones of a moment ago develop into turbulent aggressors, ready to chase away from the spring the well-sinker who caused it to gush forth.

In this brigandage, the worst offenders

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Hunting Wasps*, by J. Henri Fabre, translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos: chaps. iv. to x.—*Translator's Note*.

<sup>2</sup> For the Pompilus-wasp, or Ringed Calicurgus, cf. *The Life and Love of the Insect*, by J. Henri Fabre, translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos: chap. xii.—*Translator's Note*.

<sup>3</sup> For the grub of the Rose-chaffer, or Cetonia, cf. *The Life and Love of the Insect*: chap. xi.—*Translator's Note*.