

The Life of the Grasshopper

have enabled me to enter into certain details of which Réaumur could not dream.

The first Cicadæ appear at the time of the summer solstice. Along the much-trodden paths baked by the sun and hardened by the frequent passage of feet there open, level with the ground, round orifices about the size of a man's thumb. These are the exit-holes of the Cicada-larvæ, who come up from the depths to undergo their transformation on the surface. They are more or less everywhere, except in soil turned over by the plough. Their usual position is in the driest spots, those most exposed to the sun, especially by the side of the roads. Equipped with powerful tools to pass, if necessary, through sandstone and dried clay, the larva, on leaving the earth, has a fancy for the hardest places.

One of the garden-paths, converted into a little inferno by the glare from a wall facing south, abounds in such exit-holes. I proceed, in the last days of June, to examine these recently abandoned pits. The soil is so hard that I have to take my pickaxe to tackle it.

The orifices are round and nearly an inch in diameter. There is absolutely no rubbish around them, no mound of earth thrown up