

The Life of the Fly

problems solved by chemistry, yet another ray of sunshine was reserved for me, adding its gladness to that of my success. Let us go back a couple of years. The chief-inspectors visited our grammar-school. These personages travel in pairs: one attends to literature, the other to science. When the inspection was over and the books checked, the staff was summoned to the principal's drawing-room, to receive the parting admonitions of the two luminaries. The man of science began. I should be sadly put to it to remember what he said. It was cold professional prose, made up of soulless words which the hearer forgot once the speaker's back was turned, words merely boring to both. I had heard enough of these chilly sermons in my time; one more of them could not hope to make an impression on me.

The inspector in literature spoke next. At the first words which he uttered, I said to myself:

'Oho! This is a very different business!'

The speech was alive and vigorous and imageful; indifferent to scholastic commonplaces, the ideas soared, hovering gently in the serene heights of a kindly philosophy. This time, I listened with pleasure; I even felt stirred. Here was no official homily: it was