

## The Life of the Grasshopper

is to extract an almost neutral liquid, just as the roots draw it from the soil; she does not admit to her fountain the fluids worked up into essential principles. The liquid that trickles forth under the insect's gimlet and forms a bead at the bottom of the foamy mass is perfectly clear.

I have gathered this drop on the spurge, the arum, the clematis and the buttercup. I expected to find a fire-water, pungent as the sap of those different plants. Well, it is nothing of the kind; it lacks all savour; it is water or little more. And this insipid stuff has issued from a reservoir of vitriol.

If I prick the spurge with a fine needle, that which rises from the puncture is a white, milky drop, tasting horribly bitter. When the Cicadella pushes in her drill, a clear, flavourless fluid oozes out. The two operations seem to be directed towards different sources.

How does she manage to draw a liquid that is clear and harmless from the same barrel whence my needle brings up something milky and burning? Can the Cicadella, with her instrument, that incomparable alembic, divide the fierce fluid into two, admitting the neutral and rejecting the pep-