

The Life of the Grasshopper

larva ripe for its emergence is hardly able to judge whether the climatic conditions be favourable. Its subterranean weather is too gradual in its changes to be able to supply it with the precise indications necessary for the most important action of its life, its escape into the sunlight for the metamorphosis.

Patiently, for weeks, perhaps for months, it digs, clears and strengthens a perpendicular chimney, leaving at the surface, to keep it sequestered from the world without, a layer as thick as one's finger. At the bottom it makes itself a recess more carefully built than the remainder. This is its refuge, its waiting-room, where it rests if its reconnoitring lead it to defer its emigration. At the least suspicion of fine weather, it scrambles up, tests the exterior through the thin layer of earth forming a lid and enquires into the temperature and the degree of humidity of the air.

If things do not bode well, if a heavy shower threaten or a blustering storm—events of supreme importance when the delicate Cicada throws off her skin—the prudent insect slips back to the bottom of the tube and goes on waiting. If, on the other hand, the atmospheric conditions be favour-