

JACK'S INSECTS

EDMUND SELOUS



*A classic living science book
used by Charlotte Mason*

Jack's Insects

- Charlotte Mason Recommended—Originally published in 1910, *Jack's Insects* is a classic living science book that Charlotte Mason used in her schools. Records indicate that she recommended it for children in Form II (grades 4–6).
- Living Science—In true Charlotte Mason style, fascinating facts about insects are couched in a living story. You'll learn about butterflies, caterpillars, plague locusts, carding bees, cicadas, katydids, and more, and from the (often conceited) insects themselves. (Oh, yes, these insects are quite the characters!)
- Original Illustrations—J. A. Shepherd created more than forty-four pen and ink drawings to illustrate the story of *Jack's Insects*. We have tried to preserve the integrity of these original illustrations, presenting them as they appeared in the early 1900's edition, including their hand-drawn border lines.

Thank you for your interest in *Jack's Insects*.
We hope you enjoy the enclosed chapter
of this classic living science book!

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Jack's Insects today!**

JACK'S INSECTS



BY
EDMUND SELOUS

WITH FORTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS BY
J. A. SHEPHERD

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Simply Charlotte Mason is pleased to make available this title that Charlotte Mason used in her PNEU schools. Records indicate that she recommended this book for Form II (grades 4–6), children around ages 9–11.

As with many books about nature, this book should be read with discernment. Although the information about insects presented in the book is good, the viewpoints and opinions expressed are the original author's and we do not necessarily agree with all of them.

Though printing techniques have progressed over the years, we tried to preserve the integrity of the original illustrations as they appeared in the early 1900's edition, including the hand-drawn border lines.

We hope you enjoy this classic living science book.

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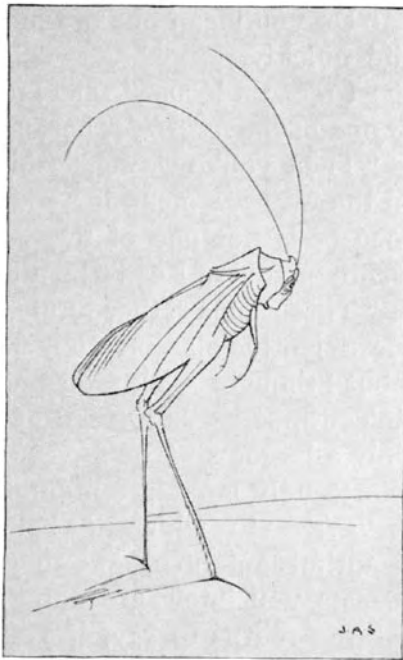
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CHAPTER 9

A VERY DISTINGUISHED MUSICIAN

Oh, Jack, look!" cried Maggie. "Here's another enormous green grasshopper."

"Pardon me," said the new arrival, who, big as he was, compared to one of our grasshoppers, was yet a very pretty and slenderly made creature, of a beautiful apple-green colour, and with long, delicate antennae, so thin at the ends that one could hardly see where they left off. "Pardon me, I am a katydid. My figure is slight, almost feminine, though *I* represent the tuneful sex. Enormous! No, indeed, and as for being a grasshopper, I am



"Pardon me, I am a katydid"

not one of the *Acridiidae*, which are what *I* call grasshoppers. Therefore *I* am not one."

"Aren't you?" said Maggie, in a very surprised tone of voice.

"Certainly not," said the Katydid. "That is not my true position in the animal kingdom."

Maggie had only an "Oh" to say to this, but she thought to herself, "If he isn't a grasshopper, I'm sure he looks like one." Even Jack was a little surprised, at first, but he thought that perhaps "grasshopper" was not a sufficiently grand word for such an elegant-looking insect.

"You don't look like a locust, Mr—Mr Katydid," he said, "at least not like those I've been talking to. But perhaps you are one, all the same."

"Do you mean one of the *locustidae*?" said the Katydid quickly.

"I mean a locust," said Jack, "but I suppose a locust is one of the *locustidae*, because——"

"Then you're wrong," said the Katydid. "A locust, in the way *you* mean it—I mean to say, what *you* call a locust—is not one of the *locustidae*, so, as *I am* one of them, of course I can't be a locust."

"That seems rather funny," said Jack, "because——"

"Scientific classification *is* funny," said the Katydid, "but I thought *you* knew something about it. A locust," he continued, "as *you* are accustomed to think of it, is only a larger sort of grasshopper, and they both have short, ugly-looking antennae, like horns. Now the *locustidae*—to which *I* belong—have long, graceful, beautiful antennae, and they are also musical, which locusts, you know, are not. Remember, please, for the future—that is to say, if you *want* to be an entomologist—that a locust can never be one of the *locustidae* however much it may try to, and that we, who do belong to the *locustidae*, are not what you *call* locusts, though, properly speaking, perhaps, we may claim to *be* locusts, because locusts and *locustidae* ought to mean the same thing."

"But why don't they, then?" said Jack.

"Oh, it's been arranged so," said the Katydid.

"It's rather confusing," said Jack.

"Perhaps it is," said the Katydid, "but scientific people have done it, so we've got to put up with it—and be grateful."

"But couldn't they change it?" asked Maggie.

"Change it!" said the Katydid, looking quite shocked, "why, it's established. It's been going on for ever so long, you know."

"I don't see what that matters," said Maggie. "When a thing's ridiculous *I* think it ought to be changed."

"Nobody shall change me into a locust," said the Katydid, "that is to say, not an unmusical locust, with short, clumsy antennae, like horns. As for the proper kind—I mean a musical locust with antennae like these—that is what I am really, already, only you had better not call me one, but only a *locusta* or a *locustid*, or one of the *locustidae*, or we really *may* be getting confused."

To both Jack and Maggie it seemed as if they had been getting confused, for some time, and they didn't feel quite sure whether the Katydid was really a locust, without the name of one, or was only called so, in Latin, without really being one—for *locusta* is Latin for a locust, Jack said to himself. As for his not being a grasshopper, they felt sure that was wrong, but he was evidently too proud to think himself one. But at any rate he was a katydid, and they thought the best way was to remember that; though, as for what a katydid was, "Why, it's just a large green grasshopper," said Maggie to herself, "and a very pretty one."

"You've heard of me, of course," said the Katydid, resuming the conversation. "At least, I suppose you have, because I'm famous."

"What are you famous for?" asked Maggie.

"Why, for giving concerts, to be sure," the Katydid answered. "Our musical abilities are very great—in fact extraordinary. They are confined to the males, it is true, but *I* am a male katydid."

"I don't think I've heard of you," said Maggie.

"Dear me, what ignorance!" remarked the Katydid aside, and Jack, who knew all about it, said, "Why, don't you know, Maggie? Those things that sit on the trees, in America, and say, 'Katy did, Katy did, she did' all day and night. It's in all the good insect books, but I didn't know they were like that."

"Then we're in America, I suppose," said Maggie. "It was Australia just before."

"United States, America," said Jack, with confidence. He had only read of katydids there.

"*I* call it the woods," said the Katydid, "and those other names seem to me nonsense—at least they have no meaning for me. You are in my own woods that I have known from infancy, and I am here to welcome you, and to ask you to one of our concerts."

"Oh, thank you," said Maggie—for it was at her, more particularly, that the Katydid had looked—"it's very kind of you; but do you really give them?—I mean real ones," she added, feeling that she had said something wrong, and wishing to make it better; but the Katydid didn't seem to think it at all better, for it looked hurt, and said, with a little quiver of its antennae, "I would not ask you to a sham concert, you know."

"Oh, she didn't mean that," said Jack.

"Oh no, indeed," said Maggie. "I wouldn't have said anything so rude. Only I was surprised, because I thought it was only we who gave real concerts."

"If *you* would rather invite *me* to a concert first," said the Katydid, "*that* would be very kind of *you*."

"I'm afraid we can't," said Maggie, "because—because we never do, you know."

"Don't you?" said the Katydid. "I thought you said you did."

"I didn't mean we gave them ourselves," said Maggie; "some people, I meant."

"Even if we did give concerts," said Jack, "we couldn't give one here, in the woods, because we haven't any instruments."

"Oh, come," said the Katydid, "you've got your wing-cases. At least"—he was looking curiously at both of them—"I suppose those queer-looking things on your thoraxes *are* wing-cases, and, if they are, why not scrape them together? That's how I play."

"They're not wing-cases," said Jack. "It would be no use our having wing-cases because we've not got wings to go under them. We don't fly, you know."

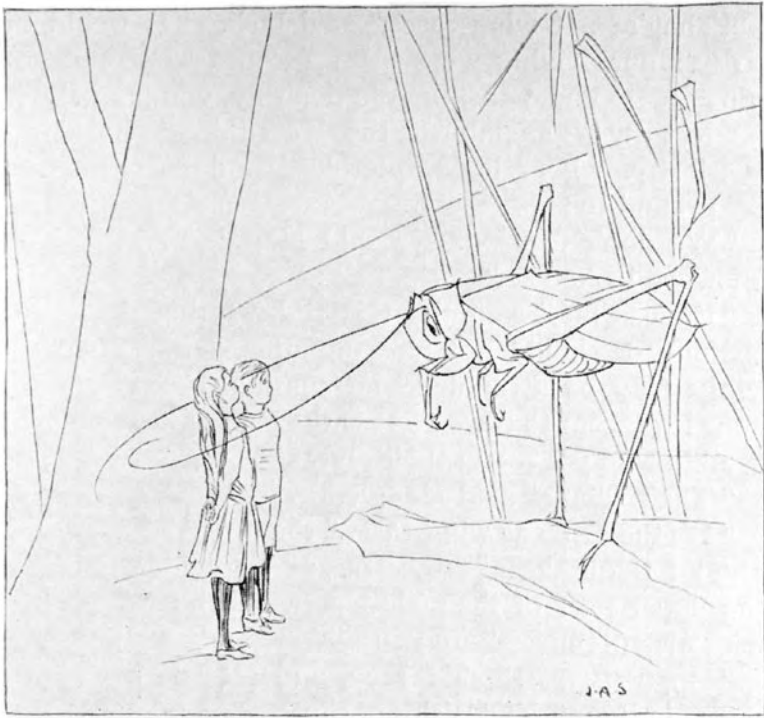
"Not fly!" exclaimed the Katydid. "That *is* an inferiority. Poor little apteroids! and so clumsy on the ground too!"

"We don't feel clumsy," said Maggie, "and I didn't know we looked so."

"Excuse me," said the Katydid, "I thought it was obvious, or should not have mentioned it. But your wings may be atrophied," he continued, "as some of your legs seem to be. That is the case with some poor beetles, who yet retain their elytra."

"Their what?" said Maggie.

"It's the same as wing-cases," the Katydid answered, "and I think these"—by "these" he evidently meant the upper part of their clothes, which he was feeling with his antennae—"are yours."



“Poor little apteroids!”

“Oh, nonsense!” said Jack, and Maggie exclaimed, rather indignantly, “We’re not insects, you know.”

But the Katydid didn’t seem to hear them, but went on passing his long delicate antennae all over Jack’s coat and Maggie’s bodice, as though he were a much better judge of the matter. “And yet I don’t know,” he said at last, “they certainly don’t seem adapted for scraping. These sheaths”—he meant Jack’s two coat lappets—“might perhaps do something if they overlapped more, and were harder; but you seem to be too softly made. Besides, you open in front instead of at the back, which is a mystery to me, though perhaps it would not affect the sound, if only you were less flabby. As for you,” he went on, speaking to Maggie, “you are harder, but then *you* don’t seem to open at all. If you did, and these rough excrescences”—it must have been buttons or braid or hooks or something

that he meant—"could be superimposed on one another, the result might be passable, but as it is—no, I'm afraid you're neither of you musical."

"I don't play, anyhow, or sing either, if that's what you mean," said Jack rather crossly, for somehow, though he didn't and had never wanted to, or cared much to hear anybody else play or sing, yet it had never struck him before that he was not musical, and he didn't like hearing it said of him. "But Maggie does," he went on, brightening up again—for this seemed a capital answer—"she plays the piano, and not badly either, I can tell you that."

"Indeed?" said the Katydid doubtfully—again he was busy investigating—"the general construction would hardly have led me to suppose so. True, the antennae, as I must suppose them, are astonishingly numerous, and would catch the vibrations, but true organs of hearing seem wanting—only two pairs of legs apparently, and but one of those free. However, perhaps they are here" (by "here," apparently, he meant Maggie's elbows)—"though the *chitin* seems soft and unhealthy—apparently structureless. As for you," he continued, after a further examination of Jack, "your principal legs are not soldered, but the antennae are remarkably short, and I don't think *you can* be musical."

"I don't know what you mean by our antennae," said Jack, "but if you mean our hair, as you seem to, we don't hear with that, or with our legs or arms either."

"Don't you?" said the Katydid, as if he thought that very curious.

"Oh no, Mr Katydid," said Maggie, who could hardly help laughing. "We've got our ears to hear with, you know," and she touched them both with her fingers.

"What, those two funny flaps?" said the Katydid. "I should not have thought of them as the medium of any pleasurable sensation. However, I am glad they are useful"—and as he said this (with an emphasis on the "useful") he waved his long, slender antennae slowly, yet gracefully, as though he thought *they* were beautiful—as indeed they were, in their own way.

"But what do *you* hear with, then?" said Maggie—she didn't see any ears on his head, certainly, but still she thought they must be there, only inside it—for as for what the Katydid had seemed to imply, she thought that could only be joking.

"What do I hear with?" said the Katydid, as if he wondered how

such a question should be asked him. "Why, with my legs, to be sure—primarily," he added. "My antennae are also efficient in a minor degree."

"Your legs and antennae, Mr Katydid!" cried Maggie, who could hardly believe it.

"Certainly," said the Katydid, "but my legs come first, as I told you."

"But haven't you ears then?" said Maggie.

"What I mean," said the Katydid, "—though I should hardly have thought an explanation was necessary—is that my legs *are* my ears. The organs of hearing are there situated, and, to judge by my sensations, I should think they must be in my knees. As for my antennae, they play, as I say, a secondary part only. I may not really hear with them, but they are sensitive to aerial vibrations. Perhaps you would call it thrilling. All I know is that when our concerts are very effective I turn them this way and that, and the sounds seem to trickle all down them. In fact, I seem to thrill all over me, but I really hear with my legs."

"How *funny!*" cried Maggie—for she thought things funny because they were new to her, as a great many quite scientific people do, too.

"Not a bit more funny than to hear with a pair of flaps," said the Katydid.

"It isn't quite, that, you know," said Jack, who had read a few facts in anatomy. "It's not the ears, really, but something inside them—I mean inside the head—that we hear with."

"Most extraordinary!" said the Katydid. "To have ears in one's head instead of in the joints of one's legs. Astonishing! But let us never forget," he continued, with an impressive wave of his antennae, "that what is unusual should not, for that reason, be received as incredible."

"But we always hear in that way," said Maggie. "It's your way of hearing that seems wonderful to us."

"That," said the Katydid, "is the lesson which I wished to convey."

"Oh, I see, sir," said Maggie—and Jack too began to realise that the way in which he was made might seem as funny to the Katydid, or any other insect, as the way in which the Katydid was, did to him.

"So you're musical, are you?" said the Katydid, reopening the conversation after a slight pause.

"Oh, I don't know about that," said Maggie, who was not at all a conceited girl.

"I do," said Jack. "Yes, she is musical, Mr Katydid, or else she couldn't

play the piano. She plays it very well too. You know you do, Maggie."

"I am delighted to hear it," said the Katydid, coming nearer, and laying one of his antennae on Maggie's shoulder. "Then we are kindred spirits, and I request that you will afford me the very great pleasure of hearing that part of you which you call your piano."

"I don't understand," said Maggie.

"He thinks you play in the same way that he does," said Jack. "He doesn't know what a piano is. How can he? He thinks it's part of you, you know."

"Oh, good gracious, no," said Maggie, with a little laugh. "My piano's not here, Mr Katydid. It's at home, and that's a long way off, now, you know, because we're in America."

The Katydid stood staring, for some time, at Maggie with his great, hard, smooth, queer-looking eyes (just like two pebbles they were, Maggie thought, that one has had cut and polished) without saying anything. Evidently he was too astonished to speak, and when, at last, he did, it was only to repeat her words.

"Not here!" he cried. "Your piano's not here?"

"Oh no," said Maggie, "I left it at home, of course. I couldn't have brought it with me, because it's too big and too heavy to carry."

The Katydid was silent again for quite a long time, and then he said rather severely: "Then am I to understand that you have a musical region, but that, somehow, you take to pieces and can go about without part of you, as it were?—really, I hardly know how to express myself. So essential a part too!"

"Oh no, it isn't that, Mr Katydid," said Maggie, trying to look serious. "My piano isn't a part of me. It's something else, you know."

"Something else!" said the Katydid. "Then do you really mean to tell me that you and your musical region are two persons, and that one of you never goes about with the other?"

"It's not two persons," said Jack (who thought he would try to explain it), "because the piano isn't a person at all. It's a thing, and no more alive than—than that stick is."

"Thank you for the compliment," said the stick, as it rose slowly upon six long slender legs, and began to walk away—for it wasn't a stick, really, but a walking-stick-insect.

"Your illustration has failed," said the Katydid.



The stick rose slowly upon six long slender legs

“Well!” exclaimed Jack, for he was astonished, and so was Maggie, in spite of their recent experiences. “Well, *I’m*—Are you really alive, Mr Walking Stick?”

“Oh, it’s no use trying to talk to him, now,” said the Katydid. “He’s too much offended. Besides, he was only introduced parenthetically—we’re not in his proper chapter. So your piano,” he continued, turning to Maggie, “is no more alive than that stick?”

“I meant a real stick,” said Jack. “But everything here, almost, looks as if it was something else.”

“It’s an instrument,” said Maggie, “and not alive at all. If you were to drum with your legs, or something, on a hollow tree or branch, and call that *your* instrument, it would be the same sort of thing.”

“Imagine me doing so!” said the Katydid. “I should not call *that* music. No, no, true music should be a part of oneself. However,” he continued, “I begin to understand what you mean, though the idea is so strange to me that it requires an effort to accept it. Many, in my position, would not accept it, for efforts of this kind are always painful, and, with inferior

minds, ineffective. However—You will excuse me if, for some moments, I allow the conversation to drop.” After this the Katydid sat silent, for a little, and it was evident from the way in which his antennae were quivering that he was making an effort. At length he raised his head and got into a more comfortable attitude—up to then it had been very stiff and constrained.

“It is not as if I were a narrow-minded insect,” he went on. “I can accept a good deal—in fact, I have to, even amongst the members of my own family, who, of course, though often you would not think it, are more or less nearly connected with me. You see, the right way of playing is with the elytra, or wing-cases, thus”—and, as he said “thus,” the Katydid raised his, a little, and vibrated them so rapidly that their edges looked quite misty, whilst out of the mist came a shrill little sound that almost made Maggie jump (as for Jack, he was not musical). “That is the highest form of production,” he continued, stopping suddenly. “You may ask any authority—that is to say, any katydid—you like; they will all tell you the same. Still it cannot be denied that there are other ways in vogue, and that, though the result is inferior, it is yet music. I allow that, and therefore I cannot be called narrow-minded.”

“Oh no, Mr Katydid,” said Maggie, “I’m sure nobody could think that of you.” Jack, who was less polite, said nothing, but only thought to himself, “I wish he’d get on and give us his concert.”

“Yes,” continued the Katydid, “there are facts which, however peculiar, I have to accept. For instance, there is that noisy fellow, the cicada, so persistent in his babble, which I yet allow to be music—of a sort. He produces *his* effects—such as they are—by something inside his abdomen, which he keeps on clicking—in fact, by a sort of rattle, though I believe *he* calls it a drum. That is very different”—again the elytra went up, and again Maggie very nearly jumped—“from the play of one delicately articulated surface on another. Rattles and drums! No, it is not from such instruments that refined effects are to be expected.”

“I wish he wouldn’t speak quite so grandly,” muttered Jack to himself, and even Maggie couldn’t help thinking, “It *is* funny that insects should be so conceited.”

“Then there are the grasshoppers,” the Katydid went on. “*They* scrape their hind legs against the outer surface of their wing-coverts—just as if there wasn’t an inner one! Indeed there are some—*Pneumora*, I think *their*

name is—who don't even employ their wing-coverts for this purpose at all, but have a little notched ridge on each side of their body, to move their legs up and down on—a very awkward substitution, you will admit. The results, of course, are in accordance.”

“Oh, it's all very well,” said Jack, who began to think that the Katydid was having it too much his own way, “but why shouldn't that be as good as scraping them against their wing-coverts—or as scraping two wing-coverts against each other, if it comes to that?”

The Katydid looked at Jack as though he had a very good answer to give, if he thought it worth while to, but all he said was, “You see, *you* are not musical,” and then he turned to Maggie, again, as if she could understand him better. “These are, all of them, very strange ways of producing music,” he said, “and it requires an effort to believe that it can be so, even after one has seen it oneself. But it is nothing—absolutely nothing—to the effort one has to make in order to believe in a creature whose musical region isn't even a part of himself.”

“I suppose it seems funny to you,” said Maggie.

“Funny!” said the Katydid. “However, I have made the effort, so I do believe in him—even,” he added, with a rather sharp look at Maggie, “though I haven't yet heard him play.”

“You needn't keep saying ‘him,’” said Jack, who was getting a little impatient, “because it's ‘her,’ you see. *Im* ‘him,’ you know. Maggie's my sister.”

“What?” cried the Katydid, quivering his antennae again, as if he had another great effort to make. “Then am I to understand that *you* represent the female?”

“I'm a girl, and not a boy, if that's what you mean,” answered Maggie.

“Well!” said the Katydid, “and yet you're the one who plays. A strange reversal of the established laws of nature. Fancy a female Katydid playing!—but I am becoming used to anomalies.”

“To what?” said Jack.

“To things that don't happen with us,” said the Katydid. “That makes them anomalies, you know. However,” he continued, “since one of you can't play, and the other has left whatever she plays with, behind, it's quite evident that *you* can't invite *me* to a concert. So I'll invite you, again—that was my first idea, you know.”

“Oh, thank you, Mr Katydid,” said Jack and Maggie, both together.

They were tired of trying to explain themselves, and thought listening to music would be much nicer.

"It's over there," said the Katydid, pointing to an open space in the forest, with trees and bushes all round it. "Shall we hop?"

"Hop?" said Jack in surprise.

"Certainly," said the Katydid—"that is, if you can. You can't fly, you say."

"I can hop on one leg," said Jack, "but it's rather far for that."

"Oh, it's much too far for me," said Maggie, who had her skirts to think of. "I'm sure I could never do it."

"Not in that absurd way," said the Katydid. "One leg indeed! I meant with two, as I do, of course. However, I don't see how *you* are to hop," he continued, looking at Maggie in a puzzled way, and then he added, as if speaking to himself, "Really, the difference between them is most remarkable. One has a well-defined pair, while the other's are masked—at least partially. Well, then"—this was aloud again—"I suppose the only way is to crawl."

"Crawl indeed!" said Jack. "Why, we'll walk, of course. Legs are to walk with, you know."

"I know that mine are to crawl or to hop with," said the Katydid. "But nature, as I said before, is full of anomalies, and perhaps the best mode of settling it would be for all three of us to get there in his own way."

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