

The Life of the Grasshopper

welcome and with a reply which has remained proverbial and is the chief cause of the little creature's fame. Those two short lines,

*Vous chantiez! J'en suis bien en aise.
Eh bien, dansez maintenant,¹*

with their petty malice, have done more for the Cicada's celebrity than all her talent as a musician. They enter the child's mind like a wedge and never leave it.

To most of us, the Cicada's song is unknown, for she dwells in the land of the olive-trees; but we all, big and little, have heard of the snub which she received from the Ant. See how reputations are made! A story of very doubtful value, offending as much against morality as against natural history; a nursery-tale whose only merit lies in its brevity: there we have the origin of a renown which will tower over the ruins of the centuries like Hop-o'-my-Thumb's boots and Little Red-Riding-Hood's basket.

¹ You used to sing! I'm glad to know it.
Well, try dancing for a change!