

The Fable of the Cicada and the Ant

In corn-sacks of sufficient size;
Then didst thou sue with tearful eyes,

Saying, "Alas! This deadly breeze
"Pursues me everywhere; I freeze
"With hunger; let me fill (no more!)
"My wallet from that copious store;
"Next year, when melons are full-blown,
"Be sure I shall repay the loan!

"Lend me a little corn!"—Absurd!
Of course she will not hear a word;
Thou wilt not win, for all thy pain,
From bulging sacks a single grain.
"Be off and scrape the binns!" she cries:
"Who sang in June, in winter dies."

Thus doth the ancient tail impart
Fit moral for a miser's heart;
Bids him all charity forget
And draw his purse-strings tighter yet.
May colic chase such scurvy knaves
With pangs internal to their graves!

A sorry fabulist, indeed,
Who fancied that the winter's need
Would drive thee to subsist, forlorn,
On Flies, on grubs, on grains of corn;
No need was ever thine of those,
For whom the honied fountain flows.

What matters winter? All thy kin
Beneath the earth are gathered in;