

The Fable of the Cicada and the Ant
ditions for knowing all about these things.
Then whence did the blunders in his story
arise?

The Greek fabulist had less excuse than
La Fontaine for portraying the Cicada of
the books instead of going to the actual
Cicada, whose cymbals were echoing at his
side; heedless of the real, he followed tradi-
tion. He himself was but echoing a more
ancient scribe; he was repeating some legend
handed down from India, the venerable
mother of civilizations. Without knowing
exactly the story which the Hindu's reed had
put in writing to show the danger of a life
led without foresight, we are entitled to be-
lieve that the little dialogue set down was
nearer to the truth than the conversation
between the Cicada and the Ant. India, the
great lover of animals, was incapable of
committing such a mistake. Everything
seems to tell us that the leading figure in the
original fable was not our Cicada but rather
some other creature, an insect if you will,
whose habits corresponded fittingly with
the text adopted.

Imported into Greece, after serving for
centuries to make the wise reflect and to
amuse the children on the banks of the