

The "luce" is, of course, the fleur-de-lis, or flower-de-luce, and the "coat," Robert Shallow's coat of arms. In the association of the "familiar beast," with "love," we are reminded of the "lousy and lecherous" of one of our modern ballad-writers.

Shakespeare makes at least eight allusions to the louse. One of them conveys the strongest expression of contempt that can possibly be imagined: "I care not to be the louse of a lazar." (*i. e.* of a man afflicted with loathsome diseases). *Troilus and Cressida*, Act V., sc. 1.

ORTHOPTERA.—"Shall we be merry?" asks Prince Henry in 1st Part of *K. Henry IV.*, Act II., sc. 4. "As merry as crickets," answers Poins. The cheerful note of the cricket (*Acheta domestica*), produced by the rubbing together of the notched edges of the insect's upper wings, must have been a familiar sound to Shakespeare. When all is quiet around the hearth the note arises in many an English dwelling. But a very slight noise will startle the insect, and cause a cessation of its music. So the little Mamillius in a *Winter's Tale*, says that he will tell his story *so softly*, that "yon crickets shall not hear it," Act II., sc. 1.

Amongst the equipments of Queen Mab is a "whip of cricket bone." *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I., sc. 4. The "winter cricket" is spoken of in the *Taming of the Shrew*, Act IV., sc. 3.

I find but one allusion to locusts—that made by Iago when speaking of Othello and his countrymen.

These Moors are changeable in their wills:—fill thy purse with money; the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida.—*Othello*, Act I., sc. 3.

The species mentioned here is doubtless *Edipoda migratorius*, which often visits Morocco, and is used for food.

The grasshopper is mentioned in *Romeo and Juliet* Act I., sc. 4, where the cover of Queen Mab's wagon is said to be made of the wings of grasshoppers.

ARACHNIDA.—In the *Merchant of Venice* we have an instance of the skill with which the great poet could draw, even from the work of a disgusting insect, a fitting illustration to enhance the attractions of an admired lady.

— Here, in her hair,
The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
A golden mesh, to entrap the hearts of men,
Faster than gnats in cobwebs.

Act III., sc. 2.

A different kind of weaving is spoken of in the 2nd Part of *K. Henry VI.*, Act III., sc. 1:

My brain more busy than the labouring spider
Weaves tedious snares to trap mine enemies.

And in *Othello*, Act II., sc. 1, where Iago says to himself,

With as little a web as this
Will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio.

And yet again in *K. Henry VIII.*, Act, I., sc. 1, where it is said of Wolsey:

— Spider-like
Out of his self-drawing web, he gives us note
The force of his own merit makes his way.

With wonderful effect Shakespeare makes use of the Spider in shewing the power of imagination.

There may be in the cup
A spider steep'd, and one may drink, depart,
And yet partake no venom; for his knowledge
Is not infected: but if one present
The abhor'd ingredient to his eye, make known
How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,
With violent hefts:—I have drunk and seen the spider:
Winter's Tale, Act II., sc. 1.