

King Lear, Act IV., sc. 6; Romeo and Juliet, Act II., sc. 3, and Act II., sc. 4; Hamlet, Act II., sc. 2, Act IV., sc. 3, Act V., sc. 1, and Act V., sc. 2, and Titus Andronicus, Act IV., sc. 1.

COLEOPTERA.—Shakespeare's allusions to beetles are very fine and telling. What can be more so than this:

Ere to black Hecate's summons  
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hum  
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done  
A deed of dreadful note.

Macbeth, Act III., sc. 4.

The expression "shard-borne," is not quite correct. The elytra of the beetle are uplifted during flight, it is true; but the gauzy wings that ply beneath them are the sustaining and propelling instruments. What particular species of beetle (if any), Shakespeare had in his mind when he penned these words we cannot tell. The Dor-beetle, *Geotrupes stercorarius*, is a striking object, and flies in the dusk, and may have attracted his attention.

Scarcely less beautiful than the reference given above, is that to *Lampyris noctiluca*:

The glow-worm shews the matin to be near  
And 'gins to pale his ineffectual fire.

Ibid, Act I, sc. 1.

Another fine passage is found in Measure for Measure, Act III., sc. 1.

— Dar'st thou die?  
The sense of death is most in apprehension;  
And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,  
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great  
As when a giant dies.

Here, of course, the intention is not to give an increased idea of the pains of the beetle, but to make us think less of the death-throes of the giant—the giant suffers as little as the beetle.

What a conception of depth is conveyed to us in the words:

— How fearful  
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!  
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
Show scarce so gross as beetles.

King Lear, Act IV., sc. 6

By Caliban in The Tempest, Act I., sc. 2, and by the fairies in Midsummer Night's Dream, beetles are spoken of as things to be dreaded.

In the 2nd Part of King Henry IV., Act II., sc. 4, there is a very curious metaphor:

His face is Lucifer's privy kitchen,  
Where he doth nothing but roast malt-worms.

The malt-worms are the larvæ of *Tenebrio molitor* and *Tenebrio obscurus*.

Other references to beetles will be found in Midsummer Night's Dream, Act III., sc. 1; Taming of the Shrew, Act IV., sc. 1; Antony and Cleopatra, Act III., sc. 2; and Cymbeline, Act III., sc. 3.

HEMIPTERA.—In the Merry Wives of Windsor, Act I., sc. 1, is an amusing play upon the word "luc." Slender exalting Robert Shallow, "Justice of the Peace and *coram*," and "*cust-alorum*," and "*ratolorum*," and "*armigero*," says:

All his successors, gone before him, have done 't; and all his ancestors that come after him, may; they may give the dozen white luses in their coat.

To which Sir Hugh Evans, the Welsh chaplain replies:

The dozen white louses do become an old coat well, it agrees well passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies—love.

The passage shews that Shakespeare had not forgotten his early escapade, and angry slur upon Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote:

If lousy is Lucy, as some folks miscall it,  
Then Lucy is lousy whatever befall it.