

Or when La Pucelle says of the dead Talbot, whom Sir W. Lucy had enquired for under many sounding titles :

Here is a silly, stately style indeed !  
The Turk, that two and fifty kingdoms hath,  
Writes not so tedious a style as this.—  
Him, that thou magnifiest, with all these titles,  
Stinking, and fly-blown, lies here at our feet.  
1st Part of K. Henry VI., Act IV., sc. 7.

Occasionally the references are made vindictively, as when Iago exclaims :

——“ Call upon her father,  
Rouse him ; make after him, poison his delight,  
Proclaim him on the streets, incense her kinsmen,  
And though he in a fertile climate dwells,  
Plague him with flies.”

Othello, Act I, sc. 1.

At one time the fecundity of flies in hot weather, affords the poet an apt simile to denote the fickle populace:

Impairing Henry, strength'ning, mis-proud York,  
The common people swarm like summer-flies ;  
And whither fly the gnats but to the sun ?  
And who shines now, but Henry's enemies ?  
3rd Part of K. Henry VI., Act II., sc. 6.

At another it serves to indicate excessive conceit. Biron says of “ figures fantastical :”

—— These summer flies  
Have blown me full of maggot ostentation.  
Love's Labour's Lost, Act V., sc. 2.

Often the allusion has a tragic ring, as when poor blinded Gloucester cries in his despair :

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods ;  
They kill us for their sport.  
King Lear, Act IV., sc. 1.

And when, in Cymbeline Sicilius Leonatus, addressing Jupiter, says :

No more thou thunder-master show  
Thy spite on mortal flies.  
Act V., sc. 4.

Among the references to flies are two that show how closely Shakespeare had observed these insects. In K. Henry V., Act V., sc. 1, he places in the mouth of the Duke of Burgundy the words :

Like flies at Bartholomew-tide, blind, though  
They have their eyes ; and then they will endure handling,  
Which before would not abide looking on.

St. Bartholomew's day comes on the 24th of August ; under the old style it would be September 4th, when the flies in the cool English autumn would be growing dull and sluggish. But an allusion shewing more close attention even than that is found in Othello, Act IV., sc. 2.

——O, ay, as summer flies are in the shambles,  
That quicken even in blowing.

It is not every one who knows that the flesh-fly, *Sarcophaga carnaria* is ovo-viviparous ; but Shakespeare knew it.

The sheep-tick, *Melophagus ovinus* is mentioned once in the plays.

—— I would rather be a tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance.  
Troilus and Cressida, Act III., sc. 3.

Other references to flies will be found in The Tempest, Act III., sc. 2 ; As You Like It, Act IV., sc. 1 ; Winter's Tale, Act IV., sc. 3 ; King John, Act IV., sc. 1 ; 2nd Part K. Henry IV., Act III., sc. 1 ; 2nd Part of K. Henry VI., Act I., sc. 2 ; Troilus and Cressida, Act II., sc. 3 ; Antony and Cleopatra, Act II., sc. 2 and Act III., sc. 2 ; Cymbeline, Act IV., sc. 2 ; Titus Andronicus, Act III., sc. 2, and Act V., sc. 2 ; Pericles, Prince of Tyre, Act IV., sc. 1, and Act IV., sc. 4 ;

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