

mona speaks of herself as a "moth of peace," Act I., sc. 3; and in *Coriolanus*, "You would be another Penelope, yet they say all the yarn she spun, in Ulysses' absence, did but fill Ithaca full of moths," Act I., sc. 4. The reference in this last passage is probably to the tapestry moth, *Tinea tapetzella*.

DIPTERA.—The most numerous of Shakespeare's entomological allusions are to the two-winged flies. As a fitting image of littleness and meanness he makes use of the gnat, as where Simonides says that princes who are not given to hospitality:

Are like to gnats which make a sound, but killed,  
Are wondered at.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre, Act II., sc. 3.

And where Biron mocking at the love-sick King of Navarre:

O me, with what strict patience have I sat  
To see a king transformed to a gnat.

Love's labour's lost, Act IV., sc. 3.

But the diminutive is used with much feeling and affection, where Imogen, speaking of the departure of her banished lord, says:

I would have broke my eye-strings; crack'd them, but  
To look upon him; till the diminution  
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle,  
Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from  
The smallness of a gnat to air.

"Cymbeline," Act I., sc. 4.

There is knowledge both of human nature and of natural history, in the rebuke which Antipholus of Syracuse administered to Dromio of Syracuse.

Because that I familiarly sometimes  
Do use you for my fool, and chat with you,  
Your sauciness will jest upon my love,  
And make a common of my serious hours.  
When the sun shines, let foolish gnats make sport,  
But creep in crannies, when he hides his beams.

Comedy of Errors, Act II., sc. 2.

The Flea (*Pulex irritans*) is spoken of in at any rate seven passages:—"Henry V.," Act II., sc. 3, and Act III., sc. 6; "Merry Wives of Windsor," Act IV., sc. 2; "Twelfth Night," Act III., sc. 4; "All's Well that Ends Well," Act IV., sc. 3; "Taming the Shrew," Act IV., sc. 3, and 1st Part K. Henry IV., Act II., sc. 1; always in a trifling sense.

Shakespeare's allusions to the breeze-fly or gad-fly of the ox (*Tabanus bovinus*) are forcible. In Troilus and Cressida Nestor, replying to Agamemnon, to illustrate the difference between "valour's show" and "valour's worth," says that in Fortune's

— ray and brightness  
The herd hath more annoyance by the brize  
Than by the tiger; but when the splitting wind  
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,  
And flies flee under shade, why then the thing of courage  
As rous'd with rage, with rage doth sympathize.

Act I., sc. 3.

And in Antony and Cleopatra, Scarus cries out against the Egyptian Queen who was hastening from the fight off Actium:

Yon ribald-rid nag of Egypt

The brize upon her like a cow in June  
Hoists sails and flies.

Of the many allusions to flies made by Shakespeare, some are used in a slighting and contemptuous sense, as when Timon of Athens calls his false friends

Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,  
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,  
You fools of fortune, trencher friends, time's flies.

Act III., sc. 6.

Gnats

Flea