

## POPULAR AND PRACTICAL ENTOMOLOGY.

## FRESH WOODS AND PASTURES NEW.

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## II.

Just east of the city, overlooking the Lift Lock, stands a high hill, bare of trees. Yet even this naked hog's back has points of interest; for example, a month ago I discovered that a strange family had established squatter's rights on the face of it; they had come from the far west, but whether hobo-fashion, bumping it along the railway, or as stowaways in one of the large grain boats so often seen (by politicians and farmers) plying back and forth on the Trent Valley Canal, I do not know. Their godfather was a Russian, Hieronymus Grindel, and Gray describes them as "rarely adventive" eastward; rare or not, they have certainly arrived at Peterborough and come to stay: *Grindelia squarrosa*, the Gum-plant or Tar-weed. But the chief point of interest in this hill just now is the extensive view it affords of Peterborough's environs. It was from its summit as a vantage ground that I first spied a long stretch of thickly wooded country, about a mile south of the Lift Lock and running east as far as the eye could see. The nearest point in this line of forest is Burnham's wood.

My first expedition to this discovered a number of newly-felled pines on a side-road near the Burnham farmhouse and orchard. These were visited two or three times in June, and besides the common Menchammi, Clerids and Buprestids of the white pine, I captured seven specimens of *Acanthocinus obsoletus*, a light grey beetle with extremely long antennæ; it is very fond of resting on the under side of the trunk of pine trees in their first season of decay. I once captured nearly a score of these in the first half of June on a single pine, that in falling had lodged in the crotch of a neighbouring tree. I took also five specimens of a *Neoclytus*, which I think is *longipes*: head, thorax and body black, with three grayish-white lines of pubescence on each elytron; viz., a vertical crescent at the base, an oblique median line, and a transverse wavy line near the apex. I have taken it before on white pine, and have never found it on any other tree; the kindred species, *erythrocephalus*, reddish-brown in colour with yellow marks



on the elytra, prefers hardwoods, especially oak, hawthorn and maple. Towards the end of June I captured on the same pine trunks a specimen of *Leptostylus sex-guttatus (commixtus)*.

Rather nearer the wood was a swamp of willow and alder, and early in June, while testing out the local distribution of *Chrysomela*, I spied the graceful outline of a longicorn's antenna projecting over the edge of an alder leaf just above my head. The sun was near the zenith, and I could see through the leaf the oblong shadow of the insect's body. By mounting on a large overturned pine stump I could just reach up to the leaf and carefully closed my finger and thumb over the quarry. I then broke off the leaf with my free hand and succeeded in transferring my capture to the cyanide bottle. To my surprise this proved to be a pair of longicorns—the male barely a third the size of the female. I had never seen the beetle before. It was *Batyle ignicollis*, but, so far, I have been able to learn nothing of its life-history.

The wood itself was a somewhat low-lying hardwood with hemlock intermingled; a couple of paths ran through it that had been used in the spring at the gathering of maple sap. Near one of these paths were some stumps and also a large fallen tree of basswood. The first find I made was in fresh fungus on one of the stumps. Here I captured fully a score of a certain staphylinid: apparently all in the same colony, yet (according to cabinet methods) there were specimens here of five or six species. I am glad to see that Blatchley is suspicious of this unnatural system of classification. If there is any value in field observation, his suspicions are more than justified. The beetle was *Oxyporus*, and my specimens showed every sort of gradation from black to yellow, answering to three or four of Blatchley's specific descriptions, and probably several others not given in Blatchley. Half of them, no doubt, simply varietal and based on a single capture.

About the sheaf of leaves sprouting round the stump I took one or two specimens of *Saperda vestita*, and, on the trunk of the fallen basswood in the first week of June a treat was in store for me that I had not had for seven years or more, immense numbers of the basswood *Saperda* emerging from the bark or ovipositing on the trunk. There is a certain season, early in June, and no other (in my experience) when this sight is possible. Two or three



days later, and this tree showed hardly one insect for every score at the earlier date.

It was quite early in June, too, that I found, resting on the underside of a limb of the tree, very hard to discern in the shadow, a fairly large grey beetle; about the size of *Urographis fasciatus*, but abundantly distinct (when the two are set side by side); moreover, what to me seemed more important than all, frequenting basswood. Often as I have found *Urographis*—sometimes in considerable numbers—it has always been on oak, maple, or some other tree with exceedingly hard and close-fitting bark. So I set representatives of six or seven related genera, including the true *Urographis*, alongside of my stranger. The elytra of this latter were rounded at the tip, the hind tarsi all small, and the scape of the antennæ short and bulging; it was most like *Acanthoderes*, or *Acanthocinus*. These, unfortunately, were at opposite ends of the Tribe *Acanthoderini*; the subdivision of genera in the tribe is based on the shape of the antennal scapes. In my beetle these were strongly clavate. Apparently, then, it was *Acanthoderes*; but that genus proved to have dorsal tubercles. My beetle had three shining black spaces on the disk of the thorax, corresponding in size and position to such tubercles, but not in the least gibbous. I then went a step further back to the tribal distinction (between *Acanthoderini* and *Pogonochærinini*); this depends on the shape of the front coxal cavities. With some misgiving, I immersed one of my three specimens of the beetle in hot water—a baptism which fortunately did no damage. As soon as the joints were relaxed and the surface dry, I went on with my scrutiny. The coxal cavities were distinctly angulated. I turned to the Tribe *Pogonochærinini*, and had the joy of identifying beyond a shadow of doubt, even to the species, and that from LeConte and Horn's masterpiece of generic classification; *Hoplosia nubila*: a beetle *sui generis*, so that the description in the key was no less than a detailed etching of the very object before me. The description tallied in every stroke, and to cap it all I found the following notes: In LeConte & Horn—"the genera of this tribe are dispersed by Lacordaire among three groups; the genera have a characteristic habitus, with the exception of *Hoplosia*, which resembles a *Graphisurus*, but with the antennæ of *Acanthoderes*; and in Blatchley—" *Hoplosia nubila* is said to breed in dry twigs of beech and LINDEN."



On a second visit to this tree in the first half of June I had the good luck to capture a second specimen, and this year at the same date on a similar log in a wood farther east I captured a third.

At the end of June, some miles west of Peterborough, on a torn limb of basswood (in which the sap was probably fermenting) I took a specimen of *Leptostylus macula*, and out of curiosity revisited the tree in Burnham's wood. Here on one of the upper branches I found—apparently waiting for me—its duplicate.

In this same month of June, while following a path through the wood, I caught sight of a very beautiful chrysalis fastened to the underside of a leaflet of butternut. It was short and broad, white with black markings; it appeared to be thick through and ornamented with ridges or prominences on the face of it; visions of a brand new chrysomelid floated before me. Unfortunately the leaf of butternut was firmly attached to a stem 12 or 14 feet up the tree. As I circled round the base of it, with my eye glued on the chrysalis, no doubt I made a good picture for an up-to-date version of Æsop's fables—The Fox and the Grapes. Well, there was no help for it! If I wanted that chrysalis, I'd got to climb. The revival of a long disused habit—like that of climbing trees—sometimes recalls interesting memories. It is said that the late Prof. Bain, of Aberdeen, soon after the publication of Darwin's "Descent of Man," was found crawling about his study floor in the hope of recovering some of the long-lost sensations of primitive man before he assumed the erect habit. Who knows but that I might, on the same atavistic principle, retrieve some arboreal memory from quadrumanous ancestors as they swung nimbly down the forest aisles. Here goes, anyway! and I approached the tree. Somehow it didn't look so simple as speeling up the drying-green posts at the age of ten; for one thing, it seemed hard to get close enough to the tree to embrace it; but, as soon as I laid my cheek to the bark and threw my arms about the stem, my shins and feet seemed to correlate instinctively, and up I swarmed. Nor was it so much force of gravity that stopped me half way up, as the ludicrous thought of a new chapter in Dickens, adding yet another to the long list of undignified attitudes involuntarily struck by the immortal Samuel Pickwick. Assuredly if anyone



caught me before I caught that chrysalis, I should be haled off to the nearest lunatic asylum. The thought of the chrysalis spurred me up the few feet remaining, and when I did slide down to the ground, it was not empty-handed. The discovery of three more of these pupæ, not many yards further on and within easy reach, was a trifle disconcerting; but if (I reflected) this did eventually prove a new beetle, four specimens were none too many. Little did I know then that hundreds of this creature—a regular colony—were hiding in the bushes just round the corner, chuckling up their sleeves, probably, at the amazing spectacle of Pickwick heaving his bulk up a butternut tree. Its very name, when I came to discover it, seemed a piece of mocking irony—*Anatis*, the Innocent.

I followed the path along to the north end of the wood, through a belt of cedars, to look at a fine colony of Adders' Tongue Fern, and then turned west. After skirting the edge of the wood for a space, the path presently dipped in again among the trees. Here and there I passed a glade grown up with Early Elder, and suddenly was arrested by a gleam of bright prussian blue and yellow among the leaves. This contrasted colour-scheme characterizes one of the moths as well as a Lampyrid beetle; and more than once I had been disappointed in this way, when I fancied myself stalking and about to bag the famous Elder-borer (*Desmocerus palliatus*). But to-day must have been my lucky day, or some of the Little People had admired my efforts at tree climbing and were determined to reward me as only fairies can. It was no changeling grass-moth or fire-fly this time, but the genuine Knotty Cloak. On the same shrub I found a pair of these borers a moment later, and in the little glade, among the thickets of Elder, I captured seven specimens of this beautiful beetle in about an hour—always on the under side of the foliage or crawling on the stem. I don't think I looked for any thing else all the afternoon than the Early Elder, and I returned home with fifteen of the beetles. Once I knew where and when to look for the Elder-borer, it became a common capture. That season I took over seventy, between June 20 and July 25, nearly always on Early Elder growing in woodland glades, and generally on the foliage. It is not so frequent a borer in the Late Elder, and I have never found it on the flower-clusters of that plant, which blossoms at the end of June.



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