

**OBSERVATIONS MADE AROUND BAR-SUR-AUBE,
FRANCE, WITH A LIST OF THE CARABIDÆ
FOUND THERE.**

BY ALAN S. NICOLAY, New Brunswick, N. J.

A member of the American Expeditionary Force is not usually in a position to give much time to anything but his war duties and when I sailed for France I had reconciled my mind to the fact that entomology must be forgotten until the fracas was over. The day of the armistice (November 11, 1918) found me in Bar-sur-Aube which is some seventy miles back of Verdun and in what was called "the advanced section." This town lies on the River Aube which is a branch of the famous Marne and after the armistice was used for a time as the headquarters of the First American Army.

We hung around a few days awaiting orders and finally I was picked to go to one of the many small villages in the vicinity and billet troops returning from the trenches. I was to live with a French family and except for seeing to it that the troops were properly quartered when they remained over night my time was pretty much my own. This struck me as an excellent opportunity to get in a little collecting and part of the time I was given to stock up with supplies (one can buy absolutely nothing in the average French village), I devoted to getting a few things necessary to the handling of Coleoptera. As all my earthly possessions were carried in a blanket roll on my back, there was no possibility of taking along anything but a few small boxes. Having great respect for army courts martial, I refrained from using cyanide and substituted chloroform. Even this I had difficulty in getting as the druggists were not allowed to sell it without a doctor's certificate, but I finally persuaded him to let me have a little. More trouble still was met with when attempting to impress on him with the help of my meager knowledge of French, that I desired some flannel and small cardboard boxes. The first article being the same in the French language as the English was readily

procured, but to get a few miserable boxes required wild gesticulating and repeated glances at my guide book, "The American Soldier in France," which was written for ordinary use but did not meet the needs of an entomologist. Empty cardboard boxes seemed to be an unknown article and it was with the greatest difficulty that he was persuaded to dump out some buttons and pins, after which I was charged a price worthy of the reputation the storekeepers had made for themselves with the soldiers.

On November 15, I set out for the town of Bligny which is some eight miles north of Bar-sur-Aube. This section is very beautiful and wild for France and while quite hilly it is not exactly mountainous. The brooks are clear and unpolluted although passing through many towns and the country, thickly dotted with small villages, is clean and fresh without any trace of the rubbish heaps so common in our own land. The forests are dense and consist chiefly of deciduous trees but there is a fair sprinkling of pines and evergreens. A large lumber camp close by and run by the government which supervises all the cutting of timber owing to its great scarcity, would no doubt have furnished excellent collecting during the summer. In the wooded areas, a thick, velvety carpet of moss covers the ground, while lichens grow everywhere on rocks, trees, and small bushes in great profusion. Bunches of mistletoe are very plentiful among the higher branches of trees and snails of all sizes and many species are common in damp localities.

The weather never gets so extremely cold as in our Northeastern States and their November corresponds with our October. During the fall and winter it rains literally weeks at a time converting the country into one big mud puddle. The days are quite warm (on December 12 the temperature registered 80° for a short time, but this is of course exceptional); however the nights are chilly and the very heavy frosts make the vegetation look in the morning as if it were covered with glass. There are insects flying all the year round, such as Tipulidæ, *Eristalis tenax*, certain Hemiptera and Coleoptera, etc. Coccinellidæ may be found among the pine needles, crickets can be heard on warm sunny days throughout the winter, while grasshoppers appear very much alive in the always green grasses.

The borders of a small pond just outside of Bligny furnished me with the best collecting. Back in the hills the Carabidæ and other Coleoptera were not over plentiful (during the winter anyway), but under bark and leaves in the immediate vicinity of the water "the pickings" were excellent. The French have a habit of cutting the branches of the trees for kindlings and this makes the trunks swell up and gradually assume the shape of puff-balls. Finally tiring of such harsh treatment the trees "gave up the ghost" and under their loose bark I reaped a rich harvest. Carabidæ were most plentiful but a goodly sprinkling of Staphylinidæ, Chrysomelidæ, Silphidæ, Nitidulidæ, etc., were met with. The most interesting thing about the insects was their remarkably close resemblance to our species from the North Atlantic States, over half of the genera and some species being common to both continents.

I paid special attention to the Carabidæ and with the kind help of Mr. C. W. Leng and Mr. C. Schaeffer have worked up my material in this family with the following results.

From November 15 to December 18, 125 specimens were taken representing 9 genera and 19 species. Of these one (*Badister bipustulatus*) occurs also with us, probably being imported from Europe in nursery or similar stock. Of the nine genera seven (*Nebria*, *Bembidion*, *Panagæus*, *Oodes*, *Badister*, *Pterostichus*, and *Platynus*) are represented in our fauna, while the remaining two (*Demetrias* and *Odacantha*) are so close to certain of our genera that the synonymy of the latter might well be questioned.

The species of Carabidæ taken are as follows:

NEBRIA Latr.

N. brevicollis Fabr. Rare under stones in wooded hills.

BEMBIDION Latr.

B. gilvipes Sturm. Common under bark around pond.

B. fumigatum Duft. One under leaves along brook.

B. biguttatum Fab. Not rare.

PANAGÆUS Latr.

P. crux major Linn. Eight specimens, all from under bark around pond.

OODES Bon.

O. helopioides Fab. One specimen.

BADISTER Clairv.

B. bipustulatus Fab. One specimen under bark around pond.

B. peltatus Panz. Two from under bark.

PTEROSTICHUS Bon.

P. strenuus Panz. Three specimens.

PLATYNUS Bon.

P. ruficorne Goeze. One under boards (U. S. mess tables).

P. obscurus Herbst. Common under bark around pond.

P. sexpunctatus Linn. One pair from under moss around pond.
Closely resembles our *cupripennis* but larger and more brilliant.

P. viduus Panz. One under bark.

P. viduus var. *moestus* Duft. One under bark.

P. scitulus Dej. Very common, almost every piece of bark around pond having many specimens beneath it.

P. fuliginosus Panz. With preceding and equally abundant.

P. thoreyi Dej. One specimen.

DEMETRIAS Bon.

D. imperialis Germ. Rare under bark.

ODACANTHA Pay.

O. melanura Linn. This odd species closely resembling those of our genus *Casnonia* was locally common under bark around pond.

ABOUT BOMBUS AMERICANORUM F.

BY CHARLES ROBERTSON, Carlinville, Illinois.

In Trans. Am. Ent. Soc., 38:405-7, Mr. Henry J. Franklin makes several statements about the synonymy of *B. pennsylvanicus* and *americanorum* which are quoted and commented on in the following order:

1. That the scutellum of the figure is yellow is an indication that *fervidus* was the species represented. This, however, is not proof, as there are specimens of both *americanorum* and *auri-*



Nicolay, A S. 1920. "Observations made around Bar-sur-Aube, France, with a List of the Carabidae found there." *Bulletin of the Brooklyn Entomological Society* 15, 11–14.

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