

net to the outskirts of Bagley Wood, near Oxford. On a sandy knoll I saw several dull green beetles running about with extraordinary activity, but succeeded in pouncing upon several and putting them in to my tin collecting box. (N.B.—I did not then know the virtues of the “laurel-bottle” as a mode for almost instantaneous destruction of insect life.)

I had also seen plenty of shining blue flies on the wing, but, in my ignorance, I mistook them for blue-bottles, and did not trouble myself about them. Presently, however, one of these flies settled on the sandy knoll, folded its wings, and to my profound astonishment became a beetle, and ran away almost as swiftly as it had flown. Of course I caught as many as I could and betook myself homewards.

I had been all the time conscious of a rather powerful odour somewhat resembling the perfume of sweet-briar leaves, but had no idea that the beetles were in any way connected with it. But when I reached my room and opened the box, the fragrant odour that rushed out of it showed at once that in was exhaled by the beetles.

The potency and permanence of this odour are almost remarkable. I had put a pair of kid gloves in the same pocket which contained the tin collecting box, and though the box was tightly closed the gloves retained the sweet-briar-like perfume for many days.

On setting some of them in the attitude of flight, the instantaneous change of colour, from metallic blue to dull green, was at once explained. The upper surface of the abdomen was shining blue, while the wing cases (*elytra*) were dull green. Consequently, when the insect alighted the wings were folded upon the abdomen, and then covered by the closed *elytra*.

I have used the word “dull green”

to express the colour of the wing cases, because they present that appearance to the unassisted eye. But if the insect be placed beneath the half-inch object glass of a good microscope, and a brilliant light concentrated upon it, the observer is almost dazzled with the brilliancy and variety of the colours which bedeck it.

If a feather from the head or breast of a humming-bird be placed under the microscope, half its gorgeous colours vanish. But with the Tiger Beetle the effect is reversed, for it would be impossible for the keenest human eye even to imagine the jewelled glories of the Tiger Beetle's *elytra*.

The interest of this beetle does not cease with its personal splendour, its activity over the ground or in the air, or, in fact, with its existence in the perfect state. While a larva or grub it is quite as interesting in its way. It is not by any means a pretty larva, and, in fact, is rather an ungainly-looking creature, grey-brown in colour, with six little legs, so feeble that they can hardly drag their owner over the ground, its head armed with two long curved jaws, and having one of its “segments” or rings of the body very much swollen, and furnished with a couple of stout hooks.

Although it does look ungainly on a smooth or even a level surface, it becomes a different being when in its own home. It makes in the ground an almost perpendicular burrow, out of which it never ventures until it assumes the perfect form. Yet, as is evident from the shape of the jaws, it is predacious, and, moreover, requires a large and constant supply of living prey.

How is it to obtain that prey while it is imprisoned in its burrow?

That it should catch its insect prey by fair chase, as it does after it has assumed its perfect form, is manifestly impossible, and it must therefore