

it, and slowly pressed the enemy back. In half an hour the shots sounded so far away that the Captain of the picket company was sure that no scattering shots could reach his men, so he shouted—"Fall in, men. Sergeant, call the roll."

The roll-call showed that, as was usual during night attacks upon pickets, the enemy's bullets had done more damage to trees and bushes than to flesh and blood. Every name was responded to until the sergeant called, "Rickaby."

There was no response. The sergeant moved a little to one side, and shouted—"Jack Rickaby!"

Then the Captain, who was standing near the sergeant, exclaimed—"Where is that boy? Does any one know?"

No one answered.

"Go on with the roll-call," said the Captain, clasping his hands behind him, and sauntering away. The remaining men answered to their names, but they did not speak as loud as the others had done, and as soon as the company broke ranks there was a general interchange of opinion.

"I hope he's merely captured," said old Browley, whose own boy had been at school with Jack.

"It won't take long to find out," said the Captain. "Attention! Deploy as skirmishers; forward—march! Go slowly; look over the ground carefully."

There were very ugly thoughts about the enemy as that skirmish line moved forward. Soon after leaving the breastwork one of them stopped and stooped down; several others were about him at once, but the body on the ground was not Jack's; it was that of a wounded enemy, who begged for water and a surgeon. Some one gave him a canteen as the line moved on. Another halt proved a false alarm, caused by an overcoat lying on a log; but a moment later old Browley's voice was heard from end of the line to the other, and the whole company felt solemn at once; for what Browley said was—"Oh! isn't this awful?"

The men nearest Browley saw the old man kneel and place his hands on a figure which they recognized as that of the little drummer. Jack was lying on his breast, his arms outspread; and as the men drew near they heard Browley say—

"Cold and stiff! He must have been killed by one of the first shots. Oh, boys, this is awful! He was just the age of my Tom; and Tom wanted to enlist, too."

"Recall the line," said the Captain. "Bring him to the rear—carefully."

Two or three men handed their guns to others, and stooped to pick up the body, but old Browley said—"One man can do it better than more." Then he put his arms around the figure, which hung limp as it was raised from the ground. Suddenly the company was startled by a single utterance. It came from Jack Rickaby. It was pitched very high, and it sounded thus—

"Ow-w-w-w!"

"Only wounded, thank Heaven!" exclaimed old Browley. "Where are you hit, little chap?"

"I'm not hit," said Jack Rickaby, "but I'm squeezed almost to death. It's real mean to tease a fellow just because he's sleepy."

"He doesn't know what's happened," muttered Browley. "He fainted as soon as he was hit, like lots of them do. Don't get excited, boy; tell us where it hurts."

"My ribs!" screamed Jack. "You're breaking them. Let go of me!" and the supposed corpse wriggled and kicked until it got out of Browley's arms and upon its feet, where it stood erect, rubbed its eyes, and then indulged in a long yawn.

"You little scoundrel!" exclaimed the Captain, seizing the drummer by both shoulders, and shaking him soundly; "why didn't you retire with the rest of us?"

"Retire?" drawled Jack; "when?"

"When the enemy advanced, of course."

"What enemy?"

"The only enemy there is in this part of the country. Didn't you hear the firing?"

"What firing?"

The Captain made an impatient gesture, and exclaimed—"Don't you know enough to wake up when a whole brigade tramples on you?"

"What brigade?"

"Attention, company!" roared the Captain, abruptly. Then he marched his men back to the breastwork.

As soon as arms were stacked and ranks broken, old Browley seized Jack's arm and said—

"See here, little fellow, next time you go to sleep while you're with the picket, just be obliging enough to lie on your side, won't you, and put something under your head for a pillow; instead of sprawling like a dead man? I want you to understand that you've nearly killed me."

"And the rest of us too," muttered the Captain.

TALKS ABOUT INSECTS.

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF PROF. FLETCHER, THE
DOMINION ENTOMOLOGIST.

BY W. HAGUE HARRINGTON.—NO. 2.

"Among
The silver-tasseled poplars the brown bees
Murmur faint dreams of summer harvestries."

—Lampman.

The winter existence of our insects is one of inactivity and apparent lifelessness, a state which exists also among many larger animals, such as the bear, who retires to his den during the cold weather, and is popularly reported to subsist by sucking his paws. This torpid state, known as hibernation, enables animals to survive the winter which would otherwise perish from cold and lack of food. Insects hibernate, or pass the winter, in one or other of the four stages of their existence—egg, larva, pupa, or imago—the stage varying with the different kinds of insects. Among those which do so in the imago, or perfect form, are a few butterflies, and many beetles, bugs, ants, etc. On the first warm sunny day after the snow has gone, the air will swarm with tiny forms, which have awakened from their sleep of half a year, and which seem as glad as ourselves to find that the cold winter is ended.

It is now time for us to start off to find our little friends, and to watch their curious modes of life. To understand them properly we must have collections to study, and if these collections are properly made and cared for, they will always be full of interest to their makers, and will enable them to give pleasure and instruction to their friends when the winter evenings come again.

Our first collections will be chiefly of beetles, unless we go in for ants, of which a great many varieties may now be found under stones. As the days become warmer other forms will rapidly appear, until they be-