

tion of the many genera and species comprised in the family *Elateridae*, the remainder of this paper will be devoted to a few brief remarks on some of the more interesting foreign and native ones.

Westwood states that the Elaters are less rich in species than the Buprestians, but that they are more generally distributed. About four hundred and fifty North American species are given by Le Conte in his classification, of which, perhaps, one-fourth are found in Canada. During the past summer I collected in the immediate vicinity of Ottawa fifty species, while of Buprestians I only obtained about half that number.

There are perhaps no click-beetles that in form, size or markings are striking when compared with many other families of beetles; they vary but slightly in shape, are of moderate size, and of dull hues generally. One genus, however, (*Pyrophorus*, containing 30 or more species) is indeed worthy of notice from the power of light-emitting possessed by its members. If sombre by day they are the brightest of all insects when darkness shrouds the world. I have before me a specimen of *P. noctilucus*, the celebrated "fire-fly" of the West Indies and Central America, called by the Spaniards *cucujo*. Figure 51 represents this insect both at rest and on the wing. It is nearly an inch and a-half long, (the elytra being exactly an inch from base to tips,) and has a tawny grey appearance, caused by a covering of short yellowish hairs on a black surface.

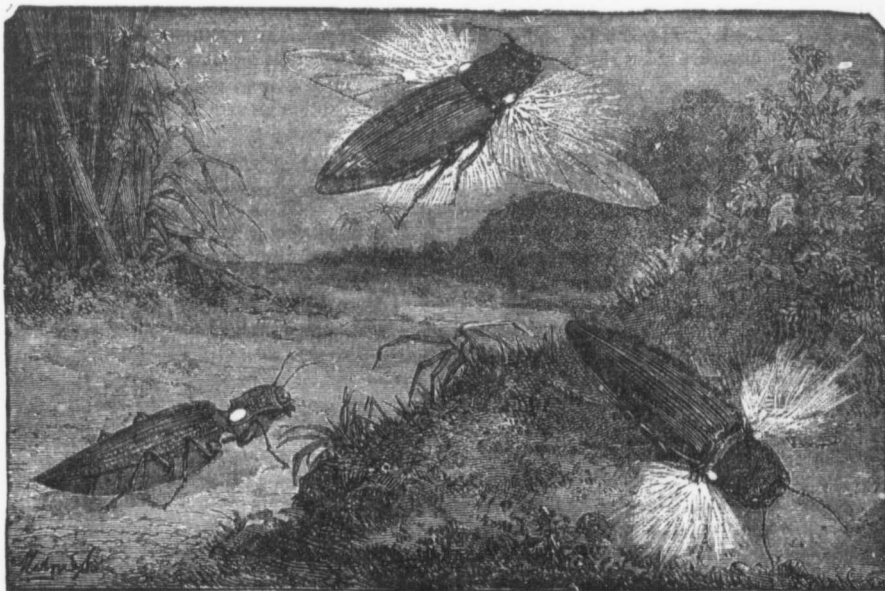


Fig. 51.

Its most important features are two smooth, convex yellow spots, or tubercles, on the thorax—one on either side—from which at night, when the beetle is alive, streams a strong greenish light, far surpassing that of our own "fire-flies," or, correctly speaking, "fire-beetles." When the beetles are on the wing another patch beneath the body emits a bright orange-tinted light.

These beetles and their larvæ feed on the sugar-cane and do great damage to the plantations, being in some places very numerous, so that the air at night is starred in every direction with their myriad meteor-like fires. The natives, ever ready to connect the visible with the unseen, call them, not unpoetically, the vehicles of departed souls, or in other places they are said to be the souls themselves flitting about the earth they have left, so that to kill one might be to crush the soul of a departed friend. Such beliefs in connection with certain insects, snakes, and other animals have often been prejudicial to savage welfare by protecting obnoxious creatures from destruction.