

"SNOW-WORMS."

BY ARTHUR GIBSON.

An interesting occurrence of these so-called worms was brought to the writer's attention in February last. Mr. Lawrence W. Watson, of Charlottetown, P.E.I., sent to me some living specimens of coleopterous larvæ, with the statement that they were abundant in a field which was covered with ice of several inches thickness. In a second letter dated March 5th, Mr. Watson says: "I am now able to give you further particulars concerning the larvæ of which I wrote to you a short time ago. The first lot of specimens were collected on February 14th. February 11th, and 12th were fine, cold days. On February 13th we had a thaw followed by cold, and strong wind. February 14th was very cold. The second appearance was on February 23rd. On the 20th there was rain, but frost at night; 21st and 22nd were fine, cold days. On the 23rd it was cold and there were some snow flurries. Upon this occasion the larvæ were not so numerous. On the former appearance there were about two or three to the square foot of ground; upon the second occasion they were more scattered. To-day they are very numerous and occur more in bunches. March 2nd was mild with snow at night. The 3rd was fairly mild; yesterday we had a "silver thaw." To-day it is mild. In every case the larvæ were found in fields and 50 or 100 yards from trees. They were not seen on bare ground, always on ice or snow of a depth of two to six inches. To-day they are very active on snow."

Some of the larvæ sent by Mr. Watson were forwarded to Dr. L. O. Howard, the United States Entomologist, at Washington, D.C. As Dr. Howard's letter in reply gives much interesting information I quote it in full:—

"The larvæ sent by you with your letter of February 26th, and which were found alive on ice at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, are what are known as 'snow-worms.' These are the larvæ of the Lampyrid (Telephorid) genus *Telephorus*, commonly called soldier beetles. They hibernate in the ground among the roots of grasses and when, in wintertime, a peculiar combination of climatic conditions prevails—melting snow, the ground soaked with water, the temperature above freezing point—the larvæ appear above ground, often in enormous numbers of specimens, and crawl about on the surface of the snow. Such climatic conditions, however, do not occur every year, and consequently the interesting phenomenon of seeing multitudes of snow-worms is by no means a common one. However, single specimens of *Telephorus* larvæ may be seen every year on the surface of snow.