



UNWELCOME NEIGHBORS.

There are some creatures with which it is not pleasant to come into close contact, although they be harmless in themselves. This was the experience of Mr. Fred Ober, as he describes it in his "Camp in the Caribbees." One night the tents of his party were pitched in a wood near the coast, and a bed of fresh leaves was made up for him. He goes on to say:

Later I was awakened by a rustling among the leaves as of objects crawling over them. I put out my hand and drew it back in terror. It had come in contact with the biggest bug in the world. Its back seemed as hard as iron and its mandibles were as long as my finger. I could hear it burrowing through the leaves and feel it crawling over me, and unable to endure it, I sprang up, and with a cry rushed to the open air. The perspiration rolled off me and my hands twitched nervously.

My native boys lighted a torch and examined the leaves. When they drew out three beetles almost as large as my hand, and I regarded them with terror, they burst into fits of laughter.

"Ah, monsieur very fear; he 'fraid of razor-grinder."

"What's that you call it?"

"Persons say 'razor-grinder.'"

"Does he grind razors?"

"Ah, no! but he make noise like he make to grind. Hark zat noise!"

Through the forest sounded a sharp whizzing, the like of which is made by the perambulating razor- and knife-grinder.

The beetle is provided with two long mandibles above his mouth. With these, as with a thumb and finger, he seizes hold of a small branch of a tree, and with his wings he whirls himself around, slowly at first, but increasing so rapidly that it produces a continuous whirr. He keeps this up until the limb is severed.

My largest specimen of this beetle measures six and a quarter inches. Such beetles are named Hercules, and they bear their title modestly, for they do not presume upon their size and strength to annoy man nor their insect neighbors. They are strict vegetarians, and lead a happy and innocent life on the treetops or on the ground.