

solely; other Insects have their swarms at certain seasons, as in the case of the New Holland butterflies before noticed; and the beetles afford several instances of it. About the time of the summer solstice, the solstitial beetle* may be seen and heard buzzing in vast numbers over the trees and hedges, and a little earlier the cockchafer† does the same, and many others of the same family.‡ Lacordaire observed, in Brazil, that two species of *diamond beetles*§ clustered so on some kinds of Mimosa, that the branches bent under the weight of their glittering burden.||

The same author mentions a curious distinction between the luminosity of the glow-worms and fire-flies in Brazil, which has been confirmed to me by a gentleman sometime resident in that country. In the former, he says, the light perpetually scintillates, but in the latter it is constant;¶ the kind of glow-worm most common in that part of America, belongs to a tribe in which the shield of the thorax does not cover the eyes, and the female is winged as well as the male.** Thus in these little illuminators of tropical nights we have a kind of mimic stars and planets, the former of which are so numerous as to fill the air with their scintillations.

The immediate object of this faculty, in these beetles, and in other insects, has not been clearly ascertained; as the females are usually most luminous, it may be to allure the male; or, as most insects fly to the light, it may also bring their prey within their reach; or, again, it may be a defence from their own nocturnal enemies;††

* *Rhizotrogus solstitialis*.

† *Melolontha vulgaris*.

‡ *Hoplia*, &c.

§ *Entimus imperialis*, and *nobilis*.

|| *Ann. des Sc. Nat.* xx. 161.

¶ *Ibid.* 247.

** In the Introduction to Entomology (ii. 407), this genus is named *Pygolampis*, after Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.* l. iv. c. 1.

†† *Vol. i.* p. 224.