Cape Sable and Key West in 1919

By WILLIS S. BLATCHLEY

Editor's note: Reprinted from *In Days Agone:* with the long subtitle "Notes on the Fauna and Flora of Subtropical Florida in the Days When Most of Its Area was a Primeval Wilderness," Indianapolis, The Nature Publishing Company, pp. 271-296. The author was collecting insect specimens but provides many descriptions of people and natural conditions that elaborate on his title. In 1922 he might have travelled from Homestead to Flamingo by highway. The Tamiami Trail was opened in 1928 to cross-state traffic. In a footnote he notes that he later made the trip from Dunedin to Homestead in seven hours over a paved road all the way, via Tampa, Sarasota, Fort Myers, Naples and the Tamiami Trail. Other changes were coming rapidly too. In another note he reports going back to East Cape twice, driving from the Lodge at Royal Palm Park. Hurricanes in 1926 and 1928 had changed the surface a great deal, and fire had destroyed the clubhouse. Copy supplied by a volume in the University of Miami's Florida Collection.

Wednesday, February 12, 1919. —Once again the Red Gods call me—call me with a fervor which will not be denied—and so again I leave Dunedin for the place where they abide. That at present is Cape Sable, the most southern point of the mainland of this country, and now a place very difficult to reach. I have learned that a "Cape Sable Land Co.," having its headquarters at Lakeland, owns or controls a large area a few miles east of the East Cape; that they have a so-called "Club House" there and that they make occasional trips to it from Lakeland, using automobile, train and boat. By correspondence I find that their agent leaves on Saturday and that, as I am a naturalist, not a prospective customer, I can for $15.00, go with him as far as Homestead, where he leaves his automobile. To-day therefore, I left Dunedin by bus and arrived at Lakeland at 2:45 P.M. Securing a room at the place where I stopped last year, I called upon the agent and found that his trip had been postponed till Monday, so that I will have four days here when two would have been more than enough.

Thursday, February 13, 1919. —Taking with me a lunch, so that I could collect all day, I went out to Lake Parker and farther north along its shore than I was a year ago. It was a poor day for an outing, as the sky was overcast and the wind very strong.

Beneath chunks at the edge of the cypress covered margin of the lake I again found the slimy salamander frequent, six or eight being uncovered. Here also, sometimes in company with the salamander, I uncovered a long, very slender reddish-yellow myriapod, two of them being coiled around large masses of their yellow eggs. Beneath other chunks I found my only two Florida examples of a medium sized (15—18 mm.) black carabid, *Dicoelus elongatus* Dej. From other members of its genus it is known by all the elytral intervals being equal, convex or carinate, and by its elongate form. It ranges from Connecticut, west and south to Illinois and Texas and is frequent throughout Indiana, but very rare in Florida.

From a bunch of Spanish moss I beat a single specimen of *Pseudomus sedentarius* (Say), a robust little weevil heretofore known only from Ormond and Enterprise, Florida. I have since taken a single specimen at Gainesville by beating holly and another at Royal Palm Park from a decaying leaf of the royal palm.

Sitting on the porch of an empty house near the lake shore I enjoyed my lunch—as I always do—after several hours strenuous work. I afterwards entered the confines of a large nursery and was collecting from wild shrubs near its margin when the proprietor, with arms waving, came running toward me. For the first and only time in Florida, I was ordered off my collecting grounds. I told him who I was and what I was doing but it made no difference. He claimed that I would introduce some strange and injurious bug into his nursery, when I was only trying to rid his premises of some that were already there. He walked by my side, berating me and protesting against my trespassing, until we reached a gate and I was beyond his domain.

Friday, February 14, 1919.—Once again I went out for the day, this time to Lake Hollingsworth, two miles southwest of the city limits. As its shores are of muck, I could only beat, sweep and turn over chunks. From Spanish moss I beat a number of examples of the "broad-nosed grain weevil," *Caulophilus latinasus* Say, a little reddish-brown species, one-eighth of an inch long and with a broad, cylindrical beak. It is a subtropical form, recorded in this country from South Carolina to Florida; the larvae feeding upon dried cereals, Indian corn and the seeds of alligator pears. From the moss I also beat a pretty little clerid, *Hydnocera verticalis* Say, not before recorded from the State but rather common in the north.

Saturday, February 15, 1919.—I again went out to Lake Parker, but was careful to keep out of the nursery grounds. The yellow jessamine, queen of Florida's winter blooming vines, is now in full blossom, its pleasing fragrance wafted to me from afar by the strong wind—which

seemingly forever blows. My day's quest yielded me little but what I have before taken.

An old fisherman showed me a siren or "mud eel," *Siren lacertina* L.. that he had caught last night on his trot line. It is apparently not often seen in Florida but is probably common enough in its chosen haunts. I searched for it for years in Indiana and finally got eight of them by following for a few rounds a man who was plowing up a recently drained marsh. He said that he had plowed up several hundred of them, none over 15 inches in length.

Sunday, February 16, 1919.—The morning is very cold and with a raw wind still blowing. I went out east along the railway but there was no good collecting ground for three miles and that was fenced in by a wire fence so tight and high that I could not enter. Beyond it a quarter of a mile there is a dense thicket where I worked a while and then passed through it to the edge of a vast grassy marsh. I did not care about entering the water, but remembering my experience of last year with the saw-grass near Moore Haven, I spread out my rubber blanket, cut off clumps of the tall cattail-like grass and pulled them apart over it. In this way I got four specimens of a small weevil new both to my collection and to science. This I afterward described as *Barilepton robusta.* It is a robust sub-cylindrical species a third of an inch long, black, densely clothed with fine gray hairs. I have since taken it from the same plant on the shores of Lake Butler, near Tarpon Springs, 50 miles northwest of Lakeland.

Living with this weevil between the basal leaves and stems of the grass were two other beetles unknown to me. One, of which only a single specimen was taken, was a small weevil, *Conotrachelus coronatus* Lec., heretofore known by only two specimens taken by Schwarz at Enterprise, Fla. I have since taken another, the fourth one known, at Gainesville, Fla. Of the other six examples were taken. It is a buprestid, *Taphrocerus puncticollis* Sz., the largest member of its genus, and was described from Enterprise and Ceda Keys. I have since collected it by sweeping in a saw-grass marsh at Royal Palm Park.

With these three prizes in my bottle I was content to call it a day and tramped back the four miles to my room. Here I packed and made ready for the long automobile trip to Homestead.

Monday, February 17, 1919.—There was a heavy frost this morning and the land agent's old car gave him trouble, so that we did not get started till 8:20. There were five of us in the car, the agent and driver, another man, a prospective customer of his, two ladies who went along for the trip, and myself. As in these days there are no closed cars I suffered much from the cold in the forenoons of the first two days. In order to get on a good road the agent went northeast to New Smyrna,

then 268 miles down the east coast, on what is now the Dixie highway, to Homestead. I will not dwell on the trip. There were several detours over sandy roads, much tire trouble, one blow-out occurring when we were six miles from any town. Another car came along and the agent paid its owner $40.00 for a tire worth about ten. It took us three full days to reach Homestead, where we arrived at 7:30 P.M. on Wednesday night. There were no vacant rooms at the hotel. The landlord finally found us a bed in an attic room of a private house, where the agent and I tried to sleep. The bed sagged in the middle. He was a big man and filled the middle—but at last—"came the dawn."

As there is no road from here to the Club House near Cape Sable, the agent left his car and we took the morning train on the East Coast railway for Long Key, 62 miles southwest, arriving there at 9 o'clock. Here we went on board a small launch belonging to the land company, which makes the trip from the Club House across the 30 miles of the Florida Bay once a week for mail and supplies. Due to engine trouble and rough water we did not reach the dock of the Club House till 3:45. This dock is a narrow two-boarded affair extending out a quarter of a mile before it reaches water deep enough for the boat.

The "Club House" is a large frame building raised on piling six feet above the ground. Belonging to it are half a dozen "cottages," tents with board floors furnished with a fair bed, a wash stand, kerosene lamp and two chairs. Both bed and doorway are supplied with mosquito netting. The charge is $2.50 per day for "cottage" and board, of which latter more anon.

After getting settled in my tent I went out for a short time to get the lay of the surrounding country and to do a little beating. Two small weevils proved to be my only catch of importance. Of these there were two specimens of a little shining black cossonid weevil with very short and broad beak. This I beat from dead limbs of buttonwood and afterward described as *Pentarthrinus brevirostris* sp. nov. The other, my first specimen of the very slender-bodied little barid, *Stenobaris avicennia* Linell., was taken from black mangrove. The types of Linell were from Punta Gorda. I have since taken it at Chokoloskee and it is known only from extreme southern Florida.

There are three Cape Sables, the Northwest, the Middle and the Eastern. The Club House is three miles east of the latter, while a stretch of six miles of a fine sand beach intervenes between the Eastern and Middle capes. The land forming these two is occupied to within 50 yards of the water's edge by coconut groves, which contain 50,000 or more bearing trees.

The country about the Club House differs much from other parts of

Florida, being for the most part a low, flat region devoid of pine, saw palmetto and sand, the three dominant features of the usual south Florida landscape. The soil, or rather the surface, is a grayish marl or comminuted limestone and, except along the brackish inlets and sloughs, supports only a prairie-like vegetation of weeds and grasses. The houses, few and widely scattered, are raised high above the ground to avoid the tides which, during hurricanes or violent storms, often cover the country for miles. There is no fresh water and rain water collected in large square surface concrete cisterns furnishes the supply for the settlers. Along the inlets and in the lower depressions are the so-called hammocks, composed of a dense growth of subtropical shrubs and trees among which Spanish bayonet, tall cacti and other thorn-bearing vegetation so abound that collecting has to be done mostly along the margins. A single phrase from my notebook, viz., "a few fair things and a million mosquitoes," was the average record of each day's collecting while here. In fact, late in the afternoon or on sultry days, a "million" would be a very low estimate of the mosquito population. Several times they drove me out of the hammocks onto the open prairie where there was a little air stirring but very poor collecting.

Friday, February 21, 1919.—The breakfast hour at the Club House is 7:30, so that I shall be late each day in getting started to work. This morning I walked west along the narrow sandy beach to the East Cape. This beach was piled high with winrows of sea-grass, shells and other sea debris, beneath which I took a few tenebroid and staphylinid beetles and earwigs. Reaching the tip of the cape proper I stood for a while on the southernmost point of the mainland of the United States. It is said to be nearly 50 miles farther south than any point in Texas. A channel of deep water runs in close to shore and along the beach were great winrows of shells, mainly "angel's-wings," *Pholus costatus* L. This mollusk, which burrows in colonies 10 inches to a foot deep in the sand and ooze of the sea bottom, is seldom found alive on the beach, but here were thousands of the detached valves, some of them 6 to 8 inches in length. They are white, bear on the outer side peculiar ridges and grooves, and in a way conform in outline and sculpture to the usual pictured representation of the expanded wings of angels, hence the common name. The animal is said to be a staple article of food in the markets of Havana and Key West.

The only structure on this cape is an old shed used for the storing of supplies for the people who once or twice each year gather the nuts. The trees are none of them over 40 feet high, but the coconuts, now almost ripe, are most of them too high to reach with any pole I could find, and I had no accommodating monkey or small boy to climb for them. I finally succeeded in bringing down two, and after some trouble got a hole

through their "eyes," so that for the first time I drank the juice or "milk" from a nut fresh from the tree. It was sweet and very agreeable to the palate of a thirsty man.

Near the center of this grove there is a grave with a concrete monument and inserted bronze plaque, the inscription reading:

"Guy M. Bradley
1870—1905.
Faithful unto Death.

As Game Warden of Monroe County, Florida, he gave his life for the cause to which he was pledged."

He was murdered while striving to protect the snowy egrets and other herons from the vandalism of the outlaws who were killing the nesting birds to satisfy the vanity of woman and the greed of man.

The collecting on the cape proper was poor. From the roots of some bunches of grass I sifted my first specimen of a small brick-red chrysomelid beetle, *Coptocycla repudiata* Suffr. It was described from Cuba and is known in this country only in Southern Florida as far north as Dunedin and Haw Creek. A single specimen of a curious little anthribid weevil, *Euxenus piceus* Lec., was found crawling along the beach. It usually occurs on dead leaves of cabbage palmetto.

The most interesting form taken was swept from low herbs just back of the sandy beach. It is a slender subcylindrical cerambycid, afterward described as *Heteracthes sablensis* sp. nov., a third of an inch long, dark chestnut brown, elytra with tips truncate, feebly spined, and with a large oval yellow spot at base and the apical fifth wholly yellow. The unique type is still the only specimen known.

For supper to-night we had a stew of wood ibis, "flint heads" or "iron-bills," as the natives call them. They are very fair, but I would have preferred stewed chicken. I had killed specimens of this ibis on my Kissimmee trip, but Hay and I did not consider them fit for food, though we ate their cousin, the white ibis.

Saturday, February 22, 1919.—There grows in abundance along the edges of low hammocks in this region a very thorny shrub or small tree, the saffron plum or buckthorn, *Bumelia angustifolia* Nutt. It belongs to the sapodilla family, reaches a height of 20 feet, has narrow, peach-like leathery evergreen leaves, numerous axillary clusters of small greenish-white flowers and an oblong, edible fruit, three-fourths of an inch in length. Like the Spanish bayonet if oten grows in dense clumps along the margins of the hammocks, forming for them a veritable chevaux-de-frise, through which no man can pass. From its foliage and dead limbs I beat more insects while here than from all other plants together. Among the more interesting beetles taken only on this *Bumelia* were *Scymnillus*

elutheroe Csy., a very small black coccinelli, described from the Bahamas, and not before recorded from this country; *Toxonotus fasciculatis* (Schon.), a prettily marked medium sized anthribid frequent on the dead branches; *Erodiscus tinamus* Lec., a peculiar, long-snouted shining black weevil known only from southern Florida; *Conotrachelus floridanus* Fall, frequent on the dead branches, also confined to this section of the State; *Lembodes solitarius* Boh., a small cryptorhynchid with a thick grayish spongy crust concealing the sculpture of the whole upper surface. It is usually considered rare, but 30 or more were beaten from the dead limbs of the *Bumelia.*

There was also beaten from this saffron plum a single specimen of that most handsome of Florida weevils, *Metamesius mosieri* Barber, a third of an inch long, black with front and hind margins of thorax and basal half of elytra bright red. The types were from Cayamas, Cuba and Paradise Key, Royal Palm Park. From the latter place I have since taken it in some numbers.

The forenoon was spent in beating this and other shrubs along the edges of isolated hammocks. The interior of these hammocks are so filled with thorny and spiny vines and shrubs that the collector can do little within them. He cannot use the sweep net and can open and use his umbrella only with much difficulty. One of the most common of these nuisances is a slender stemmed climbing or sprawling cactus, *Acanthocereus pentagonus* (L.). It often grows to a length of 25 feet, sending out numerous branches, each with three to five sharp angles, each angle armed with vicious spines an inch or more in length. Like other cacti it has no leaves and its large white flowers open only at night, so it is often called a "night-blooming cereus." Around this and often covering it and other shrubs with great tangled masses of its branches is the "pull and haul back" or "devil's claws," *Pisonia aculeata* L., a shrub or vine which often climbs to the tops of tall trees by aid of its strong hooked thorns. Simpson rightfully calls it the "vilest shrub in Florida." There are also numerous species of greenbrier or smilax and other vines, all ready to scratch or trip any one bold enough to try to work his way through these hammocks.

One of the more interesting beetles taken to-day in numbers is the most slender-bodied of our cerambycids, *Spalacopsis costulata* Csy. It is a third of an inch long with antennae as long or longer. The color is gray mottled with small black dots. When at rest it stretches the antennae straight out in front of body, then hugs its support as closely as possible, its hues so blending with that of the bark that it is almost invisible. Depending on this protective mimicry it usually remains motionless until picked up, though most of those taken were beaten into the umbrella.

I also swept in some numbers from low herbage just back of the shore of the bay the types of a little melyrid, *Attalus australis* Blatch. It is only one-sixteenth of an inch long, shining blue-black, femora black, tibiae and tarsi pale. It has not since been taken by me or recorded elsewhere.

Sunday, February 23, 1919.—This morning a Dr. King, who is in charge of the Club House, and I took the one mule-wagon, the only vehicle kept here, and drove across the prairie, eight miles eastward, to Flamingo, the solitary settlement on the coast between here and Homestead. A number of deserted houses were passed along the way which had been abandoned by settlers who had grown tired of the isolation, the ever present hordes of mosquitoes and occasional hurricanes. We also passed about five miles out a school house, a square unpainted building set high in piling. At Flamingo the principal building is the home of Uncle Stephen Roberts, a pioneer and original settler, who has been here 17 years. This house, a two-story gray unpainted shack, and the half dozen or more one-story ones of his sons and in-laws, comprise the settlement. I left Dr. King and went out to a near-by hammock bordering a grove of lime trees, where I collected until noon. We had brought our lunch with us, but on returning I found King and the family at dinner. They insisted that I join them, which I did in a kitchen which smelled to heaven of cockroach stink. The main items of the meal were wild duck stew, gingerbread and limeade.

After dinner I went out with a boarder who is burning charcoal in a buttonwood clearing a mile and a half away. There he had 390 bags, the result of his winter's work, piled up ready to be hauled out to a schooner and then taken to Key West. A cord of the buttonwood yields ten bags of the fuel.

A surveying party had recently cut a narrow trail through a large hammock north of his pits. I was thus able to penetrate the hammock and beat dead branches along the sides of the trail. By so doing I got a number of good beetles, among them the unique type and as yet the only known example of a new ptinid, *Ptinus tuberculatus,* an eighth of an inch long, head and thorax reddish-brown, elytra darker; thorax bearing four large conical tubercles, each with a tuft of short erect yellowish hairs. This peculiar thorax reminds me of the spiked collar often worn by aristocratic Boston bull terriers. Another good catch was one of the two type specimens of *Acalles sablensis* Blatch., a small robust cryptorhynchid weevil, reddish-brown with patches of white scales on thorax and elytra. The other cotype was taken a few days later from a dead branch of the saffron plum. A third specimen has since been found at Chokoloskee, the three representing the species to date.

Mr. Roberts raises a number of turkeys, but many of them are killed each year by wild cats which are numerous in this region. The whole country is unfenced and his horses and cows are kept in corrals at night, and his hogs on two small islands three miles off shore, where they live partly on fiddler crabs, which are nearly as common as the mosquitoes. We took home in the wagon several bushels of limes and also two men who had left the Club House yesterday to hunt on Whitewater Bay, but had found the water too shallow to use a boat. The poor mule had a big load to pull and we did not reach home till 8:30.

Monday, February 24, 1919.—I went out northwest for three miles along a prairie road which some negroes from Key West were using to haul charcoal from their pits to a landing east of the Club House. The collecting, except from the *Bumelia,* was poor, there being few insects on the herbage in the prairie. One of the many strange thorny plants along the margins of the hammocks is the gray nicker bean, *Guilandina crista* (L.), a sprawling shrub, with bipinnate leaves, one to two feet long, their petioles and the stems armed with stout hooked prickles; flowers in racemes, dull yellow, one half inch across; pods oval, two or three inches long, thickly covered with straight needle-like prickles. All these thorns and prickles catch and tear, and they and others of their kind leave the collector at the end of a day with his clothing in shreds and his nets torn in many places.

My main catch to-day was the two type examples of *Bagous pictus* Blatch., a small, prettily marked erirhinid weevil, swept from herbage along the edge of the beach. It has not since been recorded elsewhere. My first specimen of the scarce black tenebrionid, *Blapstinus alutaceus* Csy., were beaten from dead branches of the saffron plum. My other two specimens were taken at Key West by sifting dead leaves.

A morning glory, *Ipomoea cathartica* Poir, grows everywhere along the margins of the hammocks and the beach, its vines often trailing over and hiding low shrubs beneath its tangle of leaves and stems. Its pinkish-purple flowers are very pretty in the sparkling dew of the morning, but like those of the moonflower, close forever by noon.

The meat supply has run low, the main dish for supper to-night being stewed coot or mud hen, which the foragers had brought in. It tastes very good to a hungry man, but I would not wish it for a steady diet.

Tuesday, February 25, 1919.—This morning I took a lunch and walked along the shore to the East Cape, where I drank some fresh coconut milk and collected for a while; then went up along the bay about three miles to the house of Judge H. C. Low, the caretaker of the coconut groves on the capes. He is an intelligent man who has lived in this region for 27 years, part of the time at Flamingo. He came here from Ohio on account of

rheumatism, of which he has been wholly cured. His house is a one-room shack braced fore and aft with long poles to withstand the hurricanes. Coconut trees surround it, but on one side is a little garden where he raises tomatoes, sweet potatoes, guavas and figs. A good ripe tomato fresh from this garden was the best thing I have tasted since I left home.

After talking a while we went up to the Middle Cape, one of the most beautiful spots I have seen in Florida. A bare triangular beach of shell and sand extends out 500 feet into deep water, a channel, 5 to 15 feet in depth, running in close to its shore. Sharks are very plentiful in this deep water. At the very point of the cape we saw one which Low said was 15 feet long. On the way up I had seen a score or more of them; also numerous porpoises which at short intervals jumped straight up wholly out of the water, instead of swimming in an undulating way as they do in the bay at Dunedin. Back of this beach which, between the two capes, averages 100 yards or more in width, is the living green wall of coconut trees. Back of them is a sombre hammock and then a dreary mangrove swamp, reaching north to Whitewater Bay. Low says there are 60,000 coconut trees in the two groves. Some of the trees bear 100 or more nuts each year. The owners get $70 a thousand for them in Miami and Key West, but have trouble in getting help to gather them.

At 3 P.M. I started back for the 9-mile tramp to the Club House, taking with me in memory's cells a picture of this Middle Cape which will last while life remains.

My prize capture during the day was the type of a new weevil, *Pseudoacalles maculatus* Blatch., which I swept from herbage on the East Cape. It is a sixth of an inch long, piceous black, prettily marked with spots of pale scales on the upper surface. I have since taken two of them at Royal Palm Park. But one other species of the genus, *P. nuchalis* (Lec.), occurring in South Carolina and Florida, is known.

Wednesday, February 26, 1919.—The cook at the Club House has a garden two miles east in the grounds surrounding an abandoned house. Dr. King took the mule and wagon and drove up there for turnips and beets, the only things left growing after the heavy frost of a month ago. I rode up with him and walked back, collecting on the way. The tracks of coons and wild cats were very plentiful along the roadway, and also in places those of a much larger cat, probably the Florida panther.

One of the vilest trailing or sprawling herbs on these prairie flats is the "poor man's plaster," or "stickleaf," *Mentzelia floridana* Nutt. It grows to a length of 6 feet, has very brittle stems, alternate ovate lobed leaves and bright yellow flowers nearly an inch in width. The whole plant, including the seed pods, is densely clothed with minute barbed stinging hairs. If one touches it or walks near it all parts of it break away

and cling tenaciously to clothing and shoes; in fact so tightly that the cannot be scraped off, but remain until they wear away. The plant occur frequently in open places in South Florida and also in the Bahamas.

In one place I came near stepping on a ground or pygmy rattlesnake which had the body prettily marked with red spots. I have seen none of the big diamond rattlesnakes which Simpson says are very common in this region. In fact up to this time in all my tramping about Florida I have never happened upon one of them alive.

My noteworthy insect captures were few along the prairie road. From the roots of tufts of grass I sifted 20 or more examples of the little *Coptocycla,* one of which I took at the East Cape last Tuesday, and in the midst of the only hammock I entered I beat a number of examples of the prettily marked little barid weevil, *Catapastus albonotatus* Linell, the only ones I have ever taken. It was described from Key West and Lake Worth and is not known outside this State.

In the afternoon I worked for a time along the beach, turning over drift and beating the foliage of buttonwood and saffron plum. From beneath the former I took a second specimen of my *Cryptorhynchus schwarzi,* previously mentioned, and from the buttonwood secured two examples of a scarce weevil, *Conotrachelus belfragi* Lec., known only from Texas and Florida. I had taken a single specimen at Eustis, the first one previously known from this State.

On my last beating of the *Bumelia* I was delighted to find in the umbrella a fine female of the giant katydid, *Stilpnochlora couloniana* (Sauss.). It is the largest tettagonid occurring in the eastern United States, the females reaching to a length to tips of wings of three and a quarter inches, the males but little smaller. I had one from Eustis, and though recorded by others from a number of stations in the State, I have since taken it only at Chokoloskee. Its ranges includes Cuba, the Isle of Pines and Florida.

Our suppers at the Club House are supposed to be the principal meal of the day. They have had no fresh meat except wild water fowl. To-night they served us stewed die-dapper or hell-diver. As I am always willing to try any dish *once,* I went to it. It was tender and very good—better than the coots we had a few nights ago. There are plenty of large cooter turtles about the ditches of the prairie, but the cook evidently passed them up as being too hard to catch and dress. I am always willing to try a turtle twice or even oftener if properly cooked.

Thursday, February 27, 1919.—This morning I bade farewell to the Club House at Cape Sable, as the boat is going out on its weekly trip. It is the only place in all my ramblings where I paid $2.50 a day for a tent and stews of iron-heads, coots and hell-divers. It is located in a wild and

lonely region which every few years is swept by hurricanes and subject always to the barrage of a million mosquitoes. Its only redeeming feature is that it is still almost as the God of Nature made it—when he had much else on hands and so was in a hurry.

When the boat had gotten four miles away from the dock the captain discovered that they had forgotten the mail and so had to return for it. About half way across the bay we saw a black-headed or laughing gull, *Chroicocephalus atricillus* (L.), standing erect on a small plank and merrily riding the waves. We also passed close by Sandy Key, a spit about half a mile long and half as wide, which the government has reserved as the site for a future light house.

The boat reached Long Key at 12:20. It is a fishing resort for the high and mighty, patronized by millionaires and presidents. I paid $1.00 for only a fair dinner at the hotel, but it was so much better than I had been getting that I was satisfied. There were the wrecks of two aeroplanes in the shallow water which were not there last Thursday. Another one had recently made a forced landing on the prairie about a mile from the Club House at Cape Sable and had been stripped of everything but the engine by the natives. These planes were all from the big airport at Key West and were owned by the government. The loss of several thousand dollars each was but a drop in the bucket of the several billions spent in aviation equipments by a frenzied nation in time of war. The public, or you and I, eventually pay the bills, but the "public be damned" as far as the ones who control the expenditures care.

As the train for Key West was not due until 4:45 I went out along the sandy beach in search of what I might find. The only thing worthy of note was about 30 specimens of the big chrysomelid tortoise beetle, *Chelymorpha geniculata* Boh., which was mating on and beneath its host plant, the goat's-foot morning glory. It was after dark when my train reached Key West, but I was fortunate enough to get a good room in a private house for $1.00 a day.

Friday, February 28, 1919.—After breakfast I bought a box lunch at a restaurant and took a street car out to the end of its run, which was on a county road, several miles from my room. The island of Key West has been visited by many entomologists and its insect fauna is well known. The conditions for collecting are, however, poor and growing worse. This is due to the lack of vegetation and fresh water. Only a few stunted shrubs and trees remain on the island, and all the herbage near the city is closely grazed by the cows and goats of its poorer classes.

On the flowers and foliage of a large purple morning glory I took in numbers that very handsome greenish-blue weevil, *Pachnoeus litus* (Germar). It is known only from Florida, where it is said to be injurious to the

foliage of the orange, and to that of limes on the southern keys. With it were numerous specimens of *Artipus floridanus* Horn, the most common weevil found at Key West. By sifting dead leaves near the cemetery I found the small carabid, *Selenophorus fatuus* Lec. in some numbers, and with them my main catch of the day, nine specimens of a dytiscid, *Copelatus debilis* Sharp, a Central American species not before known from this country. I was much surprised to find this water beetle on dry land and in a place where there was no fresh water. It may, however, be a sumaritime species breeding in brackish or salt water pools, some of which were within 200 yards. From all other species of *Copelatus* it is easily known by having only five striae on each elytron.

Saturday, March 1, 1919.—I worked this morning along the west shore, near where I was on yesterday. From the foliage of the seaside grape, I beat 18 specimens of the very robust weevil, *Pseudomus inflatus* Lec., and by sweeping in the low scant herbage along the margin of tidal lagoons I took eight examples of a little dull red weevil bearing numerous patches of large gray scales on its upper surface and with the lower one densely clothed with smaller scales. It is *Smicronyx halophilus* Blatch. and is not recorded except from this, its type station.

In the afternoon I went down to the docks and watched a big fleet of sponge boats come in from a two weeks' cruise. Their decks were covered with great piles of large sponges, 6 to 10 on a strand. They do not dive for them as do the Greeks at Tarpon Springs, but gather them with hooks in clear water 7 to 12 feet in depth.

I am always interested in these maritime vocations of man and in the men themselves who get by strenuous toil, direct from Nature's great store-house, the sea, many things which it so freely offers. Far and wide the water stretches, deep and shallow it varies, yet everywhere it yields its gifts to those who seek them by honest toil. Fish, shells, lobsters, crabs, sponges, turtles and a host of other things old ocean freely gives. Rough and rugged, yet kind of heart and generous of soul, the men who make their living in this, their own wild free way, asking no odds, fawning not at the heels of so-called "higher ups," seeking only; some days full of luck, others barren of catch—hope ever in their souls, the element of chance, the daily gamble ever lending zest and pleasure to their lives.

For supper to-night I tried "green turtle steak." It might have been horse meat for all I know. At any rate it had a fine flavor, but was rather tough.

Sunday, March 2, 1919.—Last evening when I turned on the light there were two large cockroaches on the walls in my room. I succeeded in catching one of them and found it to be the large brown roach, *Periplaneta brunnea* Burm., a house-dwelling circumtropical species,

nearly an inch and a half in length and exuding a very vile odor. It is a adventive from Cuba which in this State occurs mainly in the southern counties.

My morning's trip to-day was out southwest of the city to near the old fort. Here beneath shreds of bark of a gumbo-limbo I took two pairs of the "muskmare," or large striped walking-stick, *Anisomorpha buprestoides* (Stoll). It occurs frequently throughout Florida, at this season usually mating, the female stretched out on stems of weeds and bearing her diminutive mate, less than one-half her size, on her back. When disturbed or picked up she exudes from glands beneath the pro-thorax a white milky fluid which has a peculiar, though somewhat pleasing odor, recalling that of the common "everlasting" of the north. This excretion is doubtless used as a defense against certain enemies to which its taste or odor is repugnant.

From low herbage near the old fort I swept a single and my only specimen of the little coccinellid, *Psyllobora nana* Muls., a Cuban and Jamaican species known in this country only from the Florida keys. With them were a half dozen specimens of my *Paragoges minutus,* a little spotted brown weevil heretofore known only from the unique type taken at Fort Myers in 1911. I always rejoice when I find additional examples, especially at a new station, of any species founded on a single specimen or even a single pair, as such a find puts the species firmly "on the map," and removes any doubt that the type may have been a freak or hybrid.

The afternoon was spent in resting and reading, and for supper I had a meal which tickled not only my gullet but my stomach. It consisted of green turtle soup, broiled sea crawfish, hashed browned potatoes and ice cream, a feast fit for the gods, all for only 80 cents.

Monday, March 3, 1919.—I went out for the forenoon by trolley to its terminal, and worked back close along the tidal pools in the limestone rock, taking on the way two species of *Scymnus* new to my collection, viz., *S. dichrous* Muls. and *S. bivulnerus* Horn, the former a West Indian species not before recorded from this country, the latter described in part from Key West. In the roadway I found lying on its back, alive and kicking, my only specimen of a large oval, gray scaly tenebriod, *Branchus floridanus* Lec. It was described from "Florida" and Schwarz lists it as "On Atlantic seashore, very rare."

Additional specimens of *Copelatus debilis* Sharp and *Smicronyx halophilus* Blatch. were taken by sifting and a few of the little weevils, *Anthonomus varipes* Duval by sweeping.

My collecting at Key West forever finished I went back to my room and packed my belongings ready for the steamer "Miami," plying between Havana and Tampa, due to leave to-night at 8 o'clock.

As my trip to the Okeechobee region last year was productive mainly of water beetles, this one, when I came to sort, mount and label my specimens, abounded in Rhynchophora or weevils. More than 40 species of these were taken in my week's stay at Cape Sable and half as many at Key West. At the former place most of them were hibernating in Spanish moss, bunches of dead leaves or in dead wood, but a number were active on the foliage of the saffron plum. Many of these were new to my collection, six of them (as well as four of other groups) new to science, and a number of others furnished the first records for the United States.