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A BIT OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.

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In the CANADIAN ENTOMOLOGIST, Vol. XXXV, p. 183, in a paper entitled "A Coleopterous Conundrum," I told of my discovery of an anomalous beetle occurring as a seeming museum pest in my New York collections. In this article I quoted freely the expressed opinions of several well-known coleopterists as to the position and affinities of the singular little insect. My paper, though it contained nothing which was not strictly true, was, unfortunately, written in a somewhat flippant, would-be humorous style, its colloquial diction and tone of levity—if not absolute irreverence—being quite out of place in a scientific periodical. This, as I should have known from sad experience, was a grave error. No conscientious naturalist should possess, or recognize in others the possession of, a sense of humour. As might have been anticipated, painful results followed my blunder. In writing the sketch referred to, I had not dreamed of making a scientific description of the odd coleopter, or of giving a generic or specific name. But I carelessly introduced the following sentence: "Shall I ever find other specimens of what I have sometimes, in chat over my discovery, styled *Ignotus ænigmaticus*?" I wrote the absurd name with a smile, which I somehow fancied would be caught and interpreted aright, even by far-away readers of my humble paper. Eheu! Alas! Alack! How little I realized what I was doing. I was not long in ignorance. For I very soon learned that, all unwittingly, I had, at least in the opinion of some of our most distinguished and learned entomologists, created a genus and species, and I had given to them names which, however ridiculous and inappropriate, must henceforth and forever cling to these dainty little creatures, these curios among coleoptera and perhaps be linked, too, with my own unworthy name. My protests, my plea that I "didn't go to do it," were all in vain. The innocent beetle was referred to constantly by the unfortunate title used so idly, so

lightly at first; its counterfeit presentment appeared each month for a whole year on the cover of an entomological journal thus labelled, and I began to realize, as never before, the irrevocableness of things. I sought advice, and received much and diverse counsel. But the consensus of opinion seemed to be that, as the beetle was now so well known by the name I had unconsciously given, it had best retain it, and that a proper description with figures should be at once published.

I asked my friend, Mr. Frederick Blanchard, to prepare such a description, and he kindly consented to do this. But he courteously insisted upon my name remaining as authority for the specific, if not the generic, title. My first discovery was made in May, 1902. For two years after this I examined my insect boxes at intervals, but found no trace of the little pests. But in May, 1904, I again found them in the same closet where they occurred previously. This time I found with them one specimen of the larviform female and several larvæ. Mr. Joutel, our well-known, careful and skilled artist, made drawings of the beetle in its different stages. Mr. Blanchard for many reasons has been unable until recently to complete the promised diagnosis. I give herewith a description of the species, owning frankly that I could not have written it without much assistance from Mr. Blanchard. Let me add that since I first found *Ignotus* it has been recognized as a pest among the collections of the Public Museum of Milwaukee, as told me by Mr. C. T. Brues. In this case the beetle was found among land shells and other specimens "practically from all parts of the world." Of what country the mysterious unknown is a native we do not know. Perhaps the following description and Mr. Joutel's excellent drawings may assist us to solve the problem. Then, when we learn what euphonious name the unknown enigma bears in some far-away land, and its lately-given title vanishes into that bourne from which no synonym returns, nobody will regret less than its unfortunate sponsor to see it

"Suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange."

THE CHARACTERS OF *IGNOTUS* (PLATES 6 AND 7).

Head suborbicular, constricted far behind the eyes, deflexed and much narrowed in front, the labrum short, transverse, and with the very small mouth a little reflexed, the frontal suture not obvious. The oral organs

are minute and apparently somewhat atrophied, especially in the female, but they have not been so successfully examined as to be clearly understood. The mandibles are minute and rudimentary, and too widely separated to have any function. In the male the maxillary palpi are very small and slender, with a short basal joint, the second longer than wide, the third narrow, not longer than wide, fourth equal to the third in length, subulate. Mentum short and narrow, transverse, arcuate in front, ligula narrower, twice as long as the mentum, palpi apparently of two subequal joints, together not longer than the terminal one of the maxillary palpi. These organs are smaller in the female and still more difficult to verify. The gular sutures are obscure, but sometimes obsoletely indicated in the female when they are approximate in front and diverging behind. The eyes are large, prominent and rather coarsely granulated in the male, quite small in the female, and of few facets somewhat irregularly disposed. An ocellus, smaller in the female, is present between the eyes, within the apex of two converging grooves which arise at the bases of the rather prominent antennal supports. The antennæ are ten-jointed, basal moderate, second shorter, three to six very small and closely articulated, seven to ten very elongate; in the female the antennæ, although of similarly proportioned joints, are very much smaller and shorter.

The pronotum is somewhat trapezoidal, broader in the female, the sides not margined, but inflexed to the subobsolete prosternal sutures, the pubescence of the inflexed portion similar to that of the upper surface, and contrasting with the very sparsely pubescent prosternum. The prosternum is convex and moderately long before the coxæ, not at all separating them in the male, the coxal cavities confluent, and in both sexes broadly open behind. In the female the prosternum is a little shorter before the coxæ, broadly produced and truncate behind between the widely-separated coxæ, its entire length about one-half that of the pronotum.

Mesosternum of the male transverse, slightly sinuate in front, lobed behind and loosely articulated with the metasternum, between the coxæ, sides oblique, the lateral pieces small triangular and subequal, the epimera alone reaching the coxæ.

Metasternum of the male transverse, a little longer than the second and third segments of the abdomen; episterna broad anteriorly, gradually narrowed behind; epimera not observed.

In the female these two segments are more rudimentary or larva-like, the mesosternum being simply transverse without intercoxal development, the coxæ at extreme lateral margin, parapleura obscure. The metasternum is shorter and broader than in the male, in dried specimens with the inflexed hind margin emarginate between the widely separated coxæ, the episterna moderately wide and scarcely narrower behind.

Scutellum small, triangular in the male; in the female the mesonotum is short and distinctly narrower than the other segments; the metanotum again longer, although shorter than the pronotum, and somewhat wider than the mesonotum.

Elytra of male without epipleura.

Coxæ conical and prominent, loosely articulated and mobile, the anterior pair contiguous in the male, the middle and hind pair well separated, the latter a little more widely. In the female, while the body is broader, the coxæ are much smaller, and reaching the same lateral limits become more widely separated.

Middle and hind legs in the male two-thirds as long as the body, the anterior ones shorter; trochanters slender, longer than wide, the femora attached distally; tibiæ a little longer than the femora and without spurs; tarsi slender, a little shorter than the tibiæ, five-jointed, first joint as long as the next two, second, third and fourth gradually shorter, fifth elongate, with small simple claws. In the female the legs are very small and weak, not longer than the width of the body.

Abdomen with seven free subequal dorsal and ventral segments in the male and eight in the female.

The eggs are elliptical, twice as long as wide, translucent, shining, slightly iridescent and minutely longitudinally striate. Length, 5 mm.

The larva is somewhat contractile, elliptical, twice as long as wide, obtusely rounded at each extremity, abdomen a little wider, the dorsal segments corneous, shining, brown, densely fringed with spinose bristles and fine hairs; beneath with soft membranous integuments, and finely sparsely hairy.

Head small, less than half the width of the prothoracic segment, reddish-brown, rather thickly clothed with short coarse hairs, prostrate in front, sparser on the vertex, and more erect behind, and with a few spinose bristles. Epistoma very short and transverse, the separation from the

front rather deeply impressed, labrum short and transverse; mandibles short, blunt, piceous; antennæ minute, a basal very short joint scarcely as long as wide supporting a second of the same thickness, twice as long as wide; in the final moult, apparently of one or two very short joints bearing a terminal short tuft or pencil of fine closely-placed hairs. Behind and a little outside the antennæ are three ocelli in a triangle. (Fig. 10.)

The pronotum is longer than any of the following segments, the anterior outline somewhat semicircular, without any anterior angles,

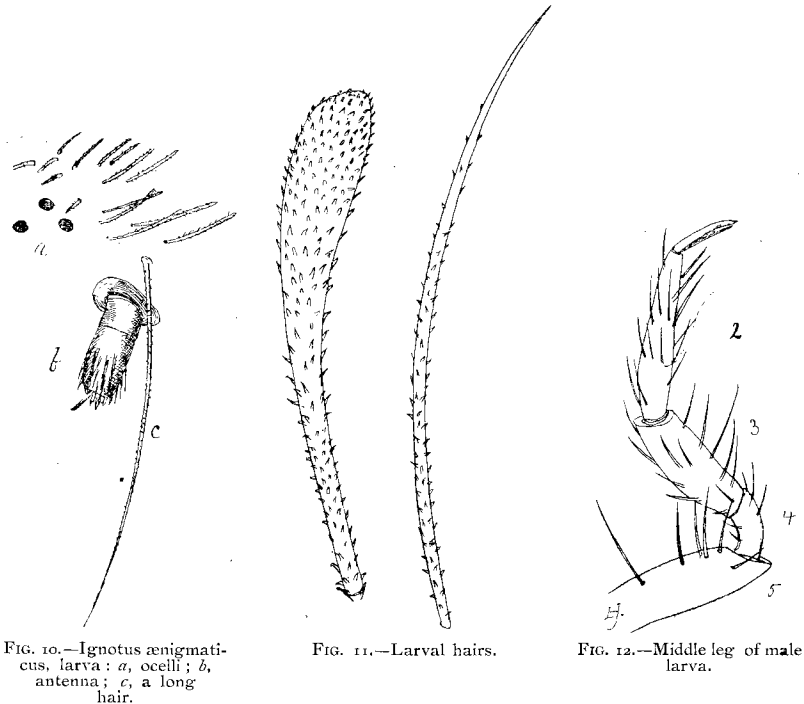


FIG. 10.—*Ignotus enigmaticus*, larva: *a*, ocelli; *b*, antenna; *c*, a long hair.

FIG. 11.—Larval hairs.

FIG. 12.—Middle leg of male larva.

meeting the broadly arcuate basal margin in an indefinite obtusely rounded angle. The following thoracic and abdominal segments subequal, short and strongly transverse, the ninth shorter and narrower. The vestiture is composed of hairs and bristles of three kinds; the hairs are simple, long and fine, the bristles are taper-pointed or clavate, and sometimes abruptly acuminate, and throughout thickly hispid with minute black points or spines. (Figs. 10, 11.)

The median dorsal surface of the segments, from side to side, is sparsely, finely pubescent with simple hairs, the anterior margin and a posterior interval glabrous. The anterior margin of the pronotum extending forward, and the posterior margins of the eighth and ninth dorsals of the abdomen extending backward, are densely fringed with tapering bristles; the posterior margins of the thoracic and abdominal dorsals, except the last two, are similarly fringed with subdepressed clavate bristles of equal length, of which seventy to eighty have been counted on a segment; behind and mostly hidden under the clavate bristles is a series of fine simple hairs bordering the hind margins of the segments. The anterior fringe of the pronotum affords protection to the junction of the head, while the fringes of clavate bristles and subordinate hairs effectively defend the membranous connection of the segments from dust or minor enemies. At the narrowed lateral extremities of the second and third thoracic and the first to second abdominal dorsal plates are spreading tufts of tapering bristles.

The spiracles are exceedingly minute and difficult of observation, the thoracic pair, as usual, before and outside the middle coxæ, the abdominal at the sides, below and slightly anterior to the lateral extremities of the dorsal plates.

Coxæ, femora and tibiæ subequal in length, the coxæ narrowing from base, the femora a little thicker outwardly, the tibiæ slender and tapering to apex and terminated with a slender claw, which, as well as the trochanter, is about one-third as long as the other joints of the leg.

The pupation of the female only has been observed. This takes place within the larval skin just as in *Anthrenus*. A middorsal rupture of the skin frees the imago, leaving the delicate pellicle of the pupal envelope within the larval moult.

Both sexes of *Ignotus* are apterous, and the female is without elytra. The male has long slender antennæ and legs, which are very much shorter and weaker in the female. The surface is sparsely obsolete punctate. In the male the first two dorsal segments of the abdomen are paler and membranous, the following semicorneous or coriaceous and piceous; ventral sutures straight, first ventral membranous and more or less concealed at the middle, visible and of firmer texture at the sides; second

segment with a lobe-like pubescent tumidity at middle of hind margin; sixth segment slightly sinuate behind, seventh subtruncate or broadly rounded. In the female the first three dorsals are shorter, scarcely longer than the mesonotum, the fourth to eighth longer and subequal, the ventrals subequal, the first two more membranous, the eighth narrower and rounded behind.

Much attention has been given to the relations of *Ignotus* with other Coleoptera, and it is hoped later to offer some of the considerations bearing on the subject. The structure and habits of the larva make it almost impossible to resist the conviction that it is Dermestide, but the loose-jointed imago with its long slender legs and antennæ in the male seem very far from the compact Dermestide type, the only immediately obvious character suggesting affinity consisting in the presence of an ocellus. This is so rare among Coleoptera as to be very suggestive.

Ignotus ænigmaticus, n. sp.

Male.—Elongate, a little wider behind, testaceous, the head, prothorax, metasternum and sometimes the tips of the elytra somewhat darker; abdomen more or less piceous; thinly clothed with pale prostrate hairs, somewhat condensed on the basal two joints of the antennæ, whole surface coriaceous and feebly shining. Head narrowed arcuately behind, and slightly constricted at its insertion with the prothorax, the latter wider than long, much narrowed anteriorly, sides arcuate to base, where they are minutely inflexed, with blunt right angles, the anterior ones rounded, truncate before and behind; sides of the pronotum narrowly inflexed, with a faintly indicated demarcation between them and the flanks; upper surface feebly convex, more or less impressed each side, base indistinctly margined. Elytra shorter than abdomen by one or two segments separately rounded at tips and somewhat dehiscent. Length, 2–3 mm.

Female.—Wingless, larviform. Elongate, narrowed towards each extremity, testaceous, thinly dotted with paler hairs, which are a little longer and more bristling along the middle of the sides; surface somewhat coriaceous, feebly shining. The prothorax more transverse than in the male, and more evenly convex, with no trace of basal margin. Abdomen with subequal segments, the last one broadly rounded behind dorsally and ventrally. Length, 2.7 mm.