

NOTE ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE CIGARETTE BEETLE IN COLUMBUS.*

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The injuries of this insect have been reported from different points in the United States during the last eight or ten years but so far as I am aware no definite record of its appearance in this city has been published. It may be of interest, therefore, to note its occurrence and the conditions under which it has proven troublesome. It was first brought to my attention by one of the furniture firms of the city who reported the damage of certain plush upholstered furniture and desired information as to the insect and especially in reference to the probability of its having gained entrance into the articles while in their possession. An examination of the furniture showed the plush covering penetrated at points and the insect occurring in considerable numbers in the cotton immediately beneath the plush and in many cases, fragments of the plush covering mingled with the cotton. Underneath the cotton in the filling, no specimens were observed. This evidence seems to show quite conclusively that the insect had entered after the covering had been put in place and was not due to the presence of beetles or their eggs or larvæ in the material used for filling. It seems that the furniture had been sent to this firm for recovering; kept in their shops but a few days, and returned to the owner, and that the injury of the insect had not been discovered until some eighteen months after being in the shops; and that in the meantime the house had been closed and unused for a period of some six weeks. The conclusion seems evident that the attack originated in an infestation occurring, very likely, during the time that the house remained unused, the beetles gaining access by means of cigarette packages or some infested article of furniture, and the fact that the articles were unused permitted the insect to become fairly well established. It may be remarked that this insect is likely to become prevalent in many of the cities of the State, and that prompt attention to its destruction, wherever it is noticed, is very important. Where

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occurring in upholstery the most convenient treatment is to apply benzine and gasoline, but of course due precaution against the possibility of any flame coming in contact with the fumes must be taken. The firm in question are to be commended for their attitude in the matter, as they were anxious to make good any injury that could be traced to their own factories or to negligence on their part. The fact that no furniture in their establishment has shown injury from this insect, along with the fact that the furniture was in their possession for so short a time, makes the conclusion very certain that the infection was not due to their rooms or factory being infested. The insect as recognized in the larval stage is a small, coiled grub, nearly white in color, the head marked with brown patches, especially on the lower portions. The adult is a minute hairy beetle, about one-eighth inch in length.

Specimens in the department collection have been received from Prof. J. C. Hambleton, who found them at West Jefferson. Mr. Dury reports them in Cincinnati, and a recent Bulletin from the division of Entomology, Department of Agriculture, reports them as destructive in cigarette packages and other tobacco products in Cincinnati.

The fact that this insect occurs in a great variety of materials renders it of great importance. Its first destructive appearance being noted in packages of cigarettes gave it its name; but it has been observed in a great many different articles, such as starchy foods, cotton goods, silk, plush, upholstery, etc.
