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A NEW TROPICAL WEEVIL FROM FLORIDA AND CUBA.

BY H. S. BARBER.

A three week's vacation (in February and March, 1919) was spent by Mr. E. A. Schwarz and the writer, collecting in the southern part of Florida, most of the time at Paradise Key, which the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs is seeking to preserve as the "Royal Palm State Park."* One day's collecting on Big Pine Key (about 30 miles from Key West), and another day at Marathon on Vacas Key (18 miles further east) added several forms not found by us at Paradise Key, and brought the number of species of beetles we had brought together in this short expedition to well above 500. Among them are several forms previously known only for Cuba, and the probability that a considerable percentage of the species inhabiting the Southern Everglades have been described from the West Indies, greatly complicates the task of identifying the unfamiliar forms. In fact the most interesting part of the beetle fauna of the Everglade Keys and the Outer Keys is identical with that of the West Indies. The species here described is an example of this difficulty. Belonging to a genus quite numerous in species throughout the American tropics, though not previously known to occur naturally within our boundaries, and supposedly breeding in certain epiphytal plants of the treetops in the jungle-like "hammocks," the probable wide range of the species immediately confronts us and in spite

* Since the construction of the automobile road towards Cape Sable has made the region easily accessible, Paradise Key has very justly attracted much attention and we were greatly assisted in our field-work by having previously read the several botanical papers by Dr. J. K. Small (Journ. N. Y. Bot. Garden, 1916, 1917, and 1918), narrating his experiences here and throughout the region; and partly familiarizing us in advance with the flora we were to encounter. See also the preface to Small's "Ferns of Royal Palm Hammock;"—Snyder's description of the locality in these Proceedings (Vol. 19, p. 143, pl. 15 and 16); and Safford's "Natural History of Paradise Key —" (Smithsonian Report, 1917, pp. 377-434, 64 plates).

of a search through the available literature dealing with South American forms, the possibility must remain that it may have been missed among the old species listed under *Sphenophorus*. Among its congeners in the National Collection the present species is remarkable for its small size, brilliant color, and absence of any external sexual character usual in the genus. It is with much pleasure that this beautiful species is named in honor of its first finder on our mainland, Mr. C. A. Mosier, the warden of the Royal Palm State Park, whose great interest in the study and preservation of the tropical natural history of his region has revealed so many forms hitherto unknown within our geographical limits and whose many personal kindnesses helped greatly in our comfort and collecting ability during our work on Paradise Key.

Metamasius mosieri, new species. (Plate 8.)

Small: alutaceous except head, rostrum, antennae, legs, metasternum and median half of underside of abdomen which are shining; black, except most of pronotum, metathorax and basal half of elytra which are bright red. Length 6.5-9.0 mm.; width 3.0-3.6 mm. Habitat Florida and Cuba.

Rostrum about three-fifths as long as pronotum in ♀, slightly more than half in ♂, moderately curved, feebly compressed, impunctate in apical third, becoming sparsely punctate towards base; base feebly dilated above antennal sockets which are almost contiguous to the margin of the eye; gular peduncle narrow, compressed, and strongly dentiform anteriorly. Prothorax nine-tenths as wide as long, impunctate or very minutely and sparsely punctate on disc, a few scattered punctures before base and in the subapical constriction; strongly but sparsely punctate below; the bright sanguineous color of the pronotum extends down the sides half way to the coxae, but leaves the apical margin narrowly bordered with black, and a broader bilobed black border at base. Scutellum narrow, flat, impunctate, black. Elytra finely striate with fine, deep, widely distant, stria punctures; intervals flat and impunctate except for a median series of very fine, close set, almost obsolete punctures; basal half sanguineous, each elytron with a small round, antemedian black spot between third and sixth stria, which is obscurely connected to the black apical area on two specimens, these two also displaying a small faint posthumeral macula. Pygidium deeply, moderately densely punctate, apex broadly rounded in ♂, much narrowed in ♀. Metasternum sanguineous except small infuscate areas near middle of hind coxae; metepisternum rufous at middle the anterior and posterior ends black. Metanotum and dorsal portions of abdomen under the wing covers yellow. An internal segment protruding under the raised pygidium in three females is testaceous, sulcate (almost cleft) medially at apex, laterally coarsely punctured and with fine, sparse hairs.

Type and paratypes No. 22768, U. S. National Museum.

Described from five specimens:—A male collected at Cayamas,

Santa Clara Province, Cuba, May 8, 1904, by E. A. Schwarz, and four females collected on Paradise Key, Florida (Type locality) November 10, 1917 (C. A. Mosier) February 19, 1919 (H. S. Barber) December 10, 1919 (C. Ikey Mosier) and January 8, 1920 (Graham Fairchild).

One of the specimens was beaten from a fern growth near the crown of a cabbage palmetto, and another was found high in an oak tree. The multitude of Orchids, Bromeliads, and other epiphytic plants on the branches of the hammock trees offers a difficult problem in the determination of the breeding habits of this beautiful little species, and all our attempts were futile with the possible exception that the old dead basal core of one of the large Bromeliads (probably *Tillandsia utriculata*) was found displaying such exit hole and larval gallery as should be expected for this species, but no fragments of larval skin could be found. The quarantine against the related pests of sugar cane, banana, pineapple, and palms, certain of which (*Metamasius sericeus*, *Cosmopolites sordidus*) have been intercepted (although *C. sordidus* had already become established at Miami, Fla.), makes this apparently indigenous species of special interest and it remains to be seen whether or not it will, with the utilization of the Everglades, adopt an economic host plant.

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