

The Sacred Beetle and Others

entomology I find no mention of an Onthophagus carrying a horn upon his corselet. No one would even have suspected the possibility of such an armour, if I had not bruited abroad the strange appearance of the nymph. The influence of climate therefore, has nothing to do with the matter.

As we go more deeply into it, the question becomes more complicated. The horny appendages of the Onthophagus, the Copris, the Minotaur and so many others are the male's prerogative; the female is without them or wears them only on a reduced and very modest scale. We must look upon these products as personal ornaments much more than as implements of labour. The male makes himself fine for the pairing; but, with the exception of the Minotaur, who pins down the dry pellet that needs crushing and holds it in position with his trident, I know none that uses his armour as a tool. Horns and prongs on the forehead, crests and crescents on the corselet are the male coquette's jewels and nothing more. The other sex requires no such baits to attract suitors: its femininity is enough; and finery is neglected.

Now here is something to give us food for thought. The nymph of the Onthophagus