

## The Sacred Beetle and Others

permanent appendage? The evolution of the nymph is swift; the insect is perfect in a few weeks. Could it not be that, though this brief space suffices to promote the maturity of the horns on the forehead, the thoracic horn requires a longer time to ripen? Let us prolong the nymphal period artificially and give the germ time to develop. It seems to me that a decrease of temperature, moderated and maintained for some weeks, for months if necessary, should be capable of bringing about this result, by delaying the progress of the evolution. Then, with a gentle slowness, favourable to delicate formations, the promised organ will crystallize, so to speak, and become the spear promised by appearances.

The experiment attracted me. I was unable to undertake it for lack of the means whereby to produce a cold, even temperature over a long time. What should I have obtained if my penury had not made me abandon the enterprise? A retarding of the progress of the metamorphosis, but nothing more, apparently. The horn on the corselet would have persisted in its sterility and, sooner or later, would have disappeared.

I have reasons for my conviction. The abode of the *Onthophagus* engaged on his