

The Sacred Beetle and Others

we do not know the use always strike us as singular. Having never been intimate with the West-Indian Hercules, I must content myself with suspicions touching the purpose of his fearsome equipment.

Well, one of the subjects in my insect-house would achieve a similar savage finery if he persisted in his attempts. I speak of the Cow Onthophagus (*O. Vacca*). His nymph has on its forehead a big horn, one only, bent backward; on its corselet it possesses a similar horn, jutting forward. The two, approaching their tips, look like some kind of pincers. What does the insect lack in order to acquire, on a smaller scale, the eccentric ornament of the West-Indian Scarab? It lacks perseverance. It matures the appendage of the forehead and allows that of the corselet to perish atrophied. It succeeds no better than the Bull Onthophagus in its attempt to grow a pointed stake upon its back; it loses a glorious opportunity of making itself fine for the wedding and terrible in battle.

The others are no more successful. I bring up six different species. All, in the nymphal state, possess the thoracic horn and the eight-pointed ventral coronet; not one benefits by these advantages, which dis-