PLOCHIONOCERUS.

Palpi breves, labiales articulo ultimo parum incassato. Prothorax elongatus, linea marginali superiore subitus divergente ante medium prolongato.

This genus is established for Sterculia formicaria and its allies. Besides a marked difference in facies arising from the different colour and sculpture and the more linear form, they differ constantly by the shorter trophi and less dilated rather differently shaped terminal joint of the labial palpi, and also by the superior marginal line of the thorax; this latter in true Sterculia is peculiar; on the basal half it limits the superior pagina from the side, but about the middle becomes suddenly obsolete and very abruptly deflexed, while a false margin of a more or less distinct character is continued forwards from the point where the true marginal line is directed downwards. In Plochionocerus, on the contrary, the true marginal line is diverted downwards without disappearing, and is continued forwards to the prosternum, and there is no false marginal line on the anterior part of the thorax.

Plochionocerus, like Sterculia and Arodes, is no doubt peculiar to Tropical America, and comprises, in addition to the species here mentioned, S. funebris, S. fimetaria, S. clavicornis, and S. minor, Sharp.

Mr. Champion informs me these insects are found running on the roads and paths, and look like large ants.

1. Plochionocerus brachypterus. (Tab. XII. fig. 15.)

Elongatus, nigro-subaeus, griseo-pubescent, opacus, densissime punctatus; palpis, antennis tarsisque piecis; elytris quam thorax brevioribus, omnium densissime punctatis; thorace linea media lata usula levigata; abdomen subitudo, minus dense punctato.

Long. 17 millim.

Hab. MEXICO, Cordova (Sallé), Misantla (Höge); GUATEMALA, Cerro Zunil 4000 to 5000 feet, Las Mercedes 3000 feet, Zapote (Champion); HONDURAS (Sallé); PANAMA, Bugaba (Champion).

Although closely allied to P. formicarius, this species is readily distinguishable by the short elytra; it is also less black in colour, and somewhat smaller in size. It is apparently a rare insect, for although it has been procured in several localities, only nine examples have been obtained. They do not exhibit much variation, except that the two individuals from Bugaba are somewhat larger and darker in colour.

The specimen figured was found at Cerro Zunil.

2. Plochionocerus formicarius.


Hab. COSTA RICA, Cache (Rogers).—SOUTH AMERICA 1 2 3, Colombia 1, Cayenne 1, &c.