

This cosmopolitan genus, as at present restricted, may be said to have its headquarters in the United States, to judge from the numerous forms added during recent years; and a considerable number are also found in Mexico, one only of these latter (*S. incurrens*) being known as yet to extend southward through Central America. In Tropical South America and the Antilles, *Sphenophorus* seems to be replaced to a certain extent by *Merothricus*, Chevr. (type, *S. rusticus*, Gyll.), the species of which have a rather longer, subconical antennal club. Three of the Mexican forms here referred to the present genus (*S. aterrimus*, *S. mundus*, and *S. octocostatus*) have a broad spongy-pubescent third tarsal joint, but they are so obviously related to *S. æqualis*, Gyll., that they must be placed near that insect. Most of them are very variable, as regards the sculpture and incrustation of the surface, there being opaque and shining forms of some of the species, and in consequence they are often difficult to define; good characters, however, are often to be found in the males.

Prof. F. H. Chittenden has very kindly presented us with named examples of fifty N.-American species (including many of his own co-types), for comparison with the Mexican forms, the types of nearly all of which I have seen; but even with this abundance of named material I am unable to arrive at a positive conclusion as regards the true limits of such species as *S. reticulaticollis*, *S. sulcifrons*, and others. Horn's Section B of his Group V. (including insects with the anterior tibiæ toothed or angulate at the middle) is not represented in our region, and his Group II. has already been dealt with under *Cactophagus* and *Rhodobaenus*.

Many of these insects are destructive to the roots of maize, both in the larval and adult stages (*S. zææ*, *S. maidis*, &c.), or attack *Pontederia cordata** (*S. pontederiæ*), *Cyperus esculentus** (*S. destructor*), grasses, like *Distichlidis spicata* (*S. distichlidis*), &c.

The subjoined Table will assist in the identification of the forms enumerated in the following pages:—

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| a. Third joint of each tarsus large, broad, and spongy-pubescent (except along a very narrow median line) beneath, in both sexes; rostrum subcylindrical. | |
| a ¹ . Upper surface bare and opaque, the prothorax at most feebly punctate, the elytral interstices flat. | |
| a ² . Elytral striæ obsoletely punctate | <i>aterrimus</i> , sp. n. |
| b ² . Elytral striæ conspicuously punctate | <i>mundus</i> , sp. n. |
| b ¹ . Upper surface uneven, the punctures and depressions filled with a dense incrustation; prothorax very coarsely unequally punctate and with a smooth, broad median ridge; elytra each with four broad costæ, the suture also raised and bare | |
| | <i>octocostatus</i> , sp. n. |

* A plant found throughout our region (cf. Biol. Centr.-Amer., Botany, iii. pp. 383, 446).