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INTRODUCTION.

THE present volume of the Coleoptera section of the Central-American fauna deals with the two allied Tribes Pectinicornia and Lamellicornia, well-defined groups which include many of the largest and most striking forms of the order. The genera representing the two tribes were placed by Linnæus and other early systematists, apparently under a vague, but not less true, sense of their superior organization, at the head of the whole Coleopterous series, a position from which they have since been deposed in favour of the less specialized Cicindelidæ and allied groups of the Adephaga. The higher specialization of the Lamellicornia is clearly shown in the tendency they display to consolidation of parts of their external structure, especially the mouth-organs, the ligula with the mentum, and the labrum with the clypeus or epistome, and still more clearly in the concentration and reduction in number of the ganglia of the nervous system.

The two tribes were considered as forming one only by the eminent specialists Erichson and Burmeister, and were separated by Lacordaire in his classical 'Genera des Coléoptères,' in 1856, chiefly on the ground of the immobility of the antennal lamellæ, the same being movable like the leaves of a book in the more highly organized Lamellicornia. This constant difference is, however, supplemented by many other important and significant characters, which, though constant within subordinate groups of each respectively, do not apply to the whole tribe and are therefore of minor systematic value, though indicating sufficiently distinct tribal types of form and lines of development.

With regard to the contents and relations of the Central-American fauna of Pectinicornia and Lamellicornia, the two tribes present such different aspects that they must be considered separately.

In Pectinicornia our fauna is exceedingly poor in the chief family of the tribe, viz. the Lucanidæ, but, on the other hand, exceedingly rich in the other and more aberrant