

## APPENDIX

Translation of: Gebien, H. 1928. Käfer als Ehebarometer, Ent. Mitt. 17: 14.

## BEETLES AS FIDELITY-INDICATORS

The speaker presented the beetle Martianus dermestoides Chev., a member of the family Tenebrionidae related to Platydemia and Holocephala. The species is widely distributed and abundant in the Indomalayan-Papuan region. Biologically, nothing has been known about it until now. Mr. Jacobson of Fort de Kock, Sumatra, reports the following in a letter:

"The natives of Java and Sumatra culture this beetle. A few pairs are enclosed in a large bottle or jar partly filled with cotton batting. They are fed with hulled glutinous rice supplemented with pieces of bread, and within a short period of time they multiply into thousands. The numerous larvae stay mostly inside the bread and cotton. In order to maintain humidity in the container, fresh rose petals are put in. These are replaced when they wilt. Neither the larvae nor adult beetles chew on the petals. Lastly, a little benzoin is included, a substance often used by the natives for incense. The adults are often seen chewing on pieces of this resin, but I have never seen the larvae do this."

"The natives keep the beetles mainly as a kind of barometer for married couples. They claim that one can tell from the behavior of the beetles whether the husband or wife has remained true. It is a good sign, if the beetles are healthy and multiply. If, on the other hand, they diminish in numbers in one's culture (in which case they are said to give off an odor of iodoform), this is a sure sign that one's spouse has been untrue."

"The beetles are also used for medicinal purposes. The excreta of larvae and adults accumulates at the bottom of the container as a thick layer of fine, light gray pellets. This is supposed to be a good antidote for all kinds of poisons, and it is also used to relieve asthma. In Javanese the beetles are called akar and in Malay (specifically, the Minangkabau dialect of the west coast of Sumatra) penawar idui."