



Figure 12.—*Crematogaster ashmeadi* May: *a*, Lateral view of worker; *b*, dorsal view of petiole.

forms two more or less distinct hemispheres (fig. 15,*b*). Postpetiole attached to dorsal surface of base of gaster. Gaster subcordate, more convex ventrally than dorsally, and with an acute apex. Sting present but not always exerted. *Specific characters*: Workers 2.6–3.2 mm. long. Head largely shiny except for sculpture on frontal carinae, cheeks, and clypeus. Scape short, its apex scarcely attaining, or barely surpassing, the posterior border of the head. Dorsal surface of thorax so finely sculptured as to appear rather smooth and shiny in most lights. Side of thorax distinctly punctulate; subopaque on meso-metapleuron. Mesonotum slightly impressed anteriorly on each side, subtruncate posteriorly, with a median longitudinal carina on its disc. Epinotal spines normally shorter than distance between base of spines, the spines much thickened basally, subparallel, acute apically. Erect hairs sparse on body, especially thorax. Pubescence on body sparse, closely appressed. Body color highly variable, that of head and thorax ranging from light reddish brown through brown to black.

Biology and Economic Importance

This ant is largely arboreal, nesting in cavities in plants and trees, insect galls, and logs and stumps. Colonies are apparently small to moderate in size. Workers tend honeydew-excreting insects, but also feed on both dead and live insects. The ants frequently nest in the woodwork of houses, in rafters, shingles, and posts. They damage insulating board and hard fiberboard, and remove the rubber insulation from telephone wires, causing short circuits. In houses, the ants seem to be omnivorous, but may show a slight preference for meats and sweets. Experimental tests by Smith and Weiss have shown that this ant can transmit *Azalea* flower spot, *Orulania azaleae* Weiss.

References: Smith, 1924, pp. 79–80; Wheeler, 1932, p. 7; Cole, 1940, p. 46; Smith and Weiss, 1942, p. 42; Van Pelt, 1958, pp. 21–22.