

NOTE ON THE BRAZILIAN FIRE-ANT, *SOLENOPSIS*  
*SÆVISSIMA* F. SMITH.

BY WILLIAM MORTON WHEELER.

While discussing the various North American forms of *Solenopsis geminata* Fabr. in a recent paper<sup>1</sup> I stated that the ant described many years ago as *Myrmica sævissima* by Frederick Smith from specimens taken by Bates at Pará, is, in all probability, identical with the one later called *Solenopsis pylades* by Forel. My reasons for making this statement were these: "In the first place, Smith's description is unusually good and applies perfectly to the typical yellow *pylades*. In the second place, his specimens were received from Bates, who gives an interesting account of the habits of this 'fire-ant' in Brazil. Moreover, Mr. W. M. Mann, who collected extensively in the region where Bates collected his specimens and made his observations, tells me that it is there the only common and widely distributed *Solenopsis*, and the numerous specimens collected by Mr. Mann prove to be the typical *pylades* Forel." Forel, however, will not assent to this opinion.<sup>2</sup> He says that Smith mentions a worker major and a worker minor in his description, whereas it was precisely the feeble polymorphism of the worker that led to the separation of *pylades* from *geminata*. Surely Forel, who has had to spend so many precious hours in the interpretation of Smith's inadequate and faulty specific descriptions, ought not to regard his statements concerning major and minor workers as meaning anything more than a perceptible difference in size. My critic, however, completely ignores the second and third points of my contention, which to me seemed to be the more important.

In order to settle the matter, I sent several specimens of the typical yellow *pylades* Forel, taken by Dr. Mann at Pará, to my friend, Mr. Horace Dornisthorpe, with the request that he compare them with the types of Smith's *sævissima* in the British Museum. He writes me under date of July 3 as follows: "I compared

<sup>1</sup>Some Additions to the North American Ant-Fauna. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 34, 1915, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup>Fourmis du Congo et d'autres provenances récoltées par MM. Hermann Kohl, Luja, Mayne, etc. Rev. Suisse Zool., 24, 1916, p. 459.