IX. A Continuation of the History of Tipula Tritici, in a Letter to Thomas Marsham, Esq. Tr. L. S. by the Rev. William Kirby, F. L. S.

Read February 5, 1799.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Barham, December 1798.

AFTER all the pains we took last year to investigate the history of the Wheat Insect, we were obliged to leave it in some measure incomplete. This arose from our beginning our observations too late in the season, after the parent fly had disappeared. Determined to watch its progress this year from the first appearance of the ear, my success, in most respects, has been answerable to my expectations. I have not indeed yet been able to ascertain the male of our Tipula; but to make some amends for this disappointment, I have had an opportunity of observing all the motions of the semale, and besides have discovered two new species of Ichneumon, which, in conjunction with that known before, and described in the last volume of the Linnean Society's Transactions (a), under the name of Ichneumon Tipulæ, seem to be intrusted with the important office of restraining within due limits the numbers of that very destructive little animal.

Without further preface, I shall now proceed to connect and put into form the different memoranda which I have by me on this subject, having adhered faithfully to the Linnean maxim, Nulla dies sine

linea, and always taking my pencil and memorandum-book with me when I went into the fields to make my observations.

Previous to the feason when the ear begins to emerge from the folium vaginans (b), I have, as opportunities of examining fir plantations occurred, been upon the watch for De Geer's Tipula Pini (c); but not being so successful as to meet with that insect, I cannot ascertain how nearly it may be related to its congener of the wheat. I was careful also, at the same time, to inspect the plants that were in blossom in the borders of the wheat sields, in hopes of finding (copulá connexos) the two sexes of Tipula Tritici, but with no better success.

It is to be observed that I had usually chosen the forenoon for making my inquiries. It chanced that on the third of June last I had occasion to pass through a field planted with wheat, in the evening, and, to my great surprise and satisfaction, my attention was immediately arrested by an innumerable host of our Tipulæ slying about in all directions; and from that day to the latter end of the same month these insects were always to be met with in the wheat fields. They were seldom to be seen much before seven o'clock; at eight the field appeared to swarm with them, at which hour they were all busily engaged in laying their eggs; and about nine they generally disappeared: they were indeed so extremely numerous, that is each of them were to lay its eggs in a different floret, and those eggs were permitted to produce larvæ, I think, upon a moderate calculation, more than half of the grain would be destroyed. I have no-

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⁽h) I was strongly tempted to introduce two or three new words into this Paper, viz. evaginate and evagination, to express without a periphrasis the emerging of the ear from the folium vaginans, and oviposition for the laying of eggs, from the Latin phrase ova ponere; but lest this liberty should wear the appearance of affectation, I refrained from it.

⁽c) Linn. Trans. vol. iv. p. 228.

ticed twelve at one time depositing their eggs in the same ear. It is remarkable that amongst the myriads that I have seen of the female, I should not have observed one which I could take for the male: indeed, towards the latter end of the month, (24th,) I took two or three specimens, which, except that they had black bodies and were smaller, appeared exactly similar to our Tipula; but as neither their antennæ are hairy, nor their wings spotted, as was the case with the specimen you received from Mr. Markwick, they can icarcely be the male. Indeed the appearance of the male, instead of being later than that of the female, ought to be as early or earlier, in order that they may be in readiness to perform the work of impregnation previous to the feafon in which the females lay their eggs, which begins, at least it did this year, with the month of June. Hence I suppose that each sex is disclosed from the pupa in the genial month of May, when, to use the poetical language of Scopoli upon another occasion, "nuptias instituunt, de loco in locum continuò volitantes, zephyro plaudente choreis (d)."

Although these insects are so numerous in the evening, yet in the morning not a single one is to be seen upon the wing: they do not however then quit the sield which is the scene of their employment; for, upon shaking the stalks of the wheat, or otherwise disturbing them, they will sly about near the ground in great numbers. I found their station of repose to be upon the lower part of the culm, with their heads upwards.

It is very entertaining to observe the method to which these infects have recourse in order to deposit their eggs in a situation where the larvæ may soon arrive at their food: when engaged in this employment they are not soon disturbed; which circumstance affords the observer an excellent opportunity of examination. As I hinted

before, a number may be feen at the fame time upon one ear: they place themselves in such a position that their anus stands nearly at right angles with the margin of the glume of that floret which they mean to pierce. But how are they to introduce their eggs within the floret, for they deposit them between the exterior and interior valvules of the corolla? To look at them when they are not engaged in this employment, their anus appears to be furnished with no instrument adapted to so nice an operation; but upon preffure it exerts (e) a long retractile tube or vagina (f), which untheaths an aculeus (g) (if I may so term it) as fine as a hair and very long. This aculeus it introduces into the floret, and there deposits its eggs, which it usually places upon the interior valvule of the corolla, just above the stigmata. After she has done laying her eggs, the infect withdraws her aculeus with great caution and deliberation: yet it sometimes happens that she is unable to effect this; in which case she is detained a prisoner until some enemy devour her. In this fituation I have found them more than once in my morning walks. I was very defirous of feeing the eggs pass through the vagina, but my first attempts were unsuccessful: at length I was gratified with this pleasing spectacle. I gathered an ear upon which fome of our Tipulæ were bufy, and held it so as to let a sun beam fall upon one of them, examining its operations under the three glaffes of a pocket microscope: I could then very distinctly perceive the eggs (b) passing one after another, like minute air bubbles, through the vagina, the aculeus being wholly inferted into the floret. I examined this process for full ten minutes, before the patient little animal disengaged itself; and at last it was through my violence that she discontinued her employment and slew away.

(e) For this fense of the word exert, see Johnson's Dick. Nos. iv. v.

On the feventh of June, upon opening a floret, I discovered a small patch of eggs; they were oblong (i), transparent, and of a pale buff colour. I afterwards found several of these little patches, containing from a fingle egg only, to more than twenty. On the seventeenth I found, for the first time, a larva newly hatched: it adhered to the lower end of one of the anthers (k), and was perfectly transparent and colourless; from which circumstance I conjecture, that it had taken no food. I afterwards detected two more in a fimilar fituation, one of which had become fraw-coloured from the contrary cause. In another floret, upon the same day, I found many with their heads immerfed in the woolly fummit of the germen: fome were in the interior valvule of the corolla; others appeared to be bufy upon the plumose stigmata, upon which I did not observe that any pollen had been discharged from the anthers. Upon the twentyfedond I observed that the larvæ, were usually in the situation represented in the accurate drawing engraved in the third volume of the Linnean Society's Transactions (1). All circumstances considered, it feems to me most probable, that these animals do not feed upon the pollen before it is discharged from the anthers (m); yet one would think that in this case sufficient must escape them to fertilize the germen. How they prevent this I can but conjecture: as their heads are often immerfed in the stigmata, and in the down observable upon the top of the germen, it is possible they may occasion an obstruction in those fine ducts through which the fertilizing principle passes down into the grain; or they may consume that spermatic moisture upon the stigma, without the aid of which the pollen cannot perform its office. On the twenty-ninth the parent Tipulæ had all disappeared, and foon after this period my investigations were stopped by illness;

⁽i) Tab. iv. fig. 2. d. (k) Fig. 2. e. (1) Tab. xxii. fig. to.

⁽m) Except perhaps when they are newly hatched.

but as I had brought them down so far as to connect them with those made last year (n), this interruption was of less consequence.

Before I take leave of this part of my subject, and give some account of the Ichneumons mentioned above, I must observe that the female of Tipula Tritici approaches very near to the female of one described by Geoffroy (0), which Fourcroy and Villars after him have called Tipula immaculata. His definition of that infect, "atra alis niveis," and his description in French, answer exactly to a minute black Tipula, which I find common upon the wheat, remarkable for its beautiful plumofe antennæ (p). The female, he observes, is very different from the male, and it is necessary to have seen them copulating, not to make of it another species. It is short, thick, yellow, with black eyes (q). He speaks of his insect as common in gardens, a fituation in which I have never found Tipula Tritici. This description certainly approaches very near to our female, yet the colour of that is deep orange, and not yellow: besides, he makes no mention of the beautiful prismatic hues which adorn the wings. The black male, mentioned above, disappears at the same time with our female of the wheat, but it agrees in no respect with the specimen you received from .Mr. Markwick: befides, I found another black one. which appeared to me to be its female.

I shall now proceed to give you some further account of the infects which prey upon Tipula Tritici. I have reason to believe, as 1

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⁽n) Linn. Trans. iv. p. 230. (o) Hist. ab. des Ins. ii. p. 567. n. 26.

⁽p) Le mâte de cette petite espèce est allongé comme les précédens, avec le ventre mince et en silet. Sa couleur est partout d'un noir matte. Ses antennes forment de beaux plumets. Ses aîles sont d'un blane laiteux, qui se fait d'autant plus remarquer, que son corps est fort noir.

⁽q) La femelle est très différente, & il faut les avoir vû accouplés ensemble pour n'en pas faire une autre espèce. Elle est courte, grosse, de couleur jaune, avec les yeux noirs. On trouve cette Tipule partout dans les bosquets des jardins.

hinted before, that there are not less than three *Ichneumons* attached to it. If Providence for wife ends has created fo destructive an infect, it has been no less attentive to prevent it from becoming too numerous, by making it the food of so many other infects.

Upon the seventh of June I observed a very minute Ichneumon exceedingly bufy upon the ears of wheat, which at first I took for Ichneumon Tipulæ (r); but upon a closer examination I found it to be a species entirely distinct (s), as will appear when I come to describe it. As foon as I was convinced of this, and observed that it pierced the florets at a time when no larvæ had made their appearance, I conjectured that it must lay its eggs in the eggs of the Tipula. How far this conjecture was well or ill founded must be determined by future observations, as I do not think I have collected facts sufficient to decide the question. This insect is furnished with an aculeus three or four times its own length (t), which is finer than a hair and nearly as flexiles; this is commonly concealed within the abdomen, but when the animal is engaged in laying its eggs it is exerted: one day it gave me a full opportunity of examining this process. It inserts its aculeus, between the valvules of the corolla near the top of the floret; its antennæ are then nearly doubled and motionless, its thorax is elevated, and its head and abdomen depressed: the latter, when it withdraws the aculeus, is moved frequently from fide to fide before it can extricate it. This infect has allowed me to examine its operations under a lens for fix or feven minutes: upon opening the floret into which it had introduced its aculeus, I could find neither egg nor larva of the Tipula; but, upon examining it very closely under three glasses, I discovered, scattered over one of the valvules of the corolla, a number of globular eggs

extremely minute (v), evidently not those of that insect. It is posfible that there were in this floret eggs of the latter, which might be destroyed upon opening it, or escape my observation. At other times I have found eggs of Tipula Tritici, and once some larvæ, in florets upon which I had observed this *Ichneumon* busy. If we reason from analogy, and the general habits of the genus Ichneumon, the eggs of this infect ought to be deposited in some other insect in one of its states; but, in the instance above mentioned, it seems only to have been attentive to featter them in fuch a fituation as might lead them when hatched to their proper food. From the time in which it first makes its appearance, ten days before the hatching of the first larvæ, I am inclined to adopt my original conjecture, that the eggs are its prey; and yet there feems not to be a fufficient disproportion between the fize of the one and the other for this purpose; at least it must take more than one to nourish a larva of the Ichneumon to its proper size. Where we are not in possession of sufficient instances to establish any fact beyond doubt, it would be great prefumption to be too positive; I shall not therefore pretend to decide in which of its states our fly furnishes food to the offspring of this Ichneumon. I think we may with more confidence affirm, that it is attached to Tipula Tritici in one of them. The circumstance of its depositing its eggs within the florets of the wheat, in the very fituation chosen by that insect for the same purpose, and usually where either its eggs or larvæ were concealed, sufficiently establishes this point; unless we may suppose it to prey upon Thrips Physapus. This latter insect, however, to the best of my recollection, I did not find in any of those florets which I examined after feeing this Ichneumon infert its aculeus into them. It is probable that its appearance is later, as there is no mention of it in my memoranda of this year.

On the twenty-fecond of June I observed another Ichneumon (w), not uncommon, piercing the florets of the wheat. This species did not appear to infert its aculeus between the valvules of the corolla, but to pierce the glumes of the calyx; to effect which purpose it is armed with a very short one sub-exerted: of this I found both the fexes; the male was diffinguished from the female by its large eyes, placed very near each other, with reticulations unusually visible. I prefume this to lay its eggs in the larvæ, but have not been able positively to afcertain the fact. Upon the same day that I first observed this species, our Ichneumon Tipulæ made its appearance in great numbers; a strong proof that the larvæ were now generally hatched. Concerning this Ichneumon I have no new remarks to offer, except that it must introduce itself within the floret to come at the larvæ, as appears from its mode of laying its eggs (x): fo that these three enemies of the Tipula have each a different method of attacking it. The first undermines its little fortress, the second makes a breach in the walls, and the third carries it by from (y).

Amongst the insects of other genera that I particularly noticed upon the wheat this season, the Aphis granaria (2) was common; as was likewise a species of Cimex in all its states, but I could not perceive that it devoured our Tipula. It answers in some respects to C. lateralis of Fabricius (a), but in others it differs much from it: I shall add a description of it to the others at the end of this letter.

⁽w) Tab. iv. fig. to. (x) Linn. Tranf. vol. iii. p. 243. and vol. iv. p. 236.

⁽y) On the fourth of July I saw another Ichneumon inserting its aculeus into a floret of wheat, but it evaded my endeavours to take it. It seemed much too large to have any connection with our Tipula.

⁽z) Linn. Tranf. vol. iv. p. 238, note *.

⁽a) Fabr. Sp. Inf. 2. p. 372. n. 209. Linn. Syft. Nat. ed. Gmel. p. 2190. n. 517.

Several species of the genus *Empis* also frequented the wheat fields, often carrying off our *Tipula* in their diminutive beaks.

I have now given you as complete an account of these insects as the observations of the present year enable me. Something still remains to be done; for instance, to ascertain the male, the hybernacula of the pupa, to collect further sacts relative to the two new Ichneumons, and, from observations taken in successive years, to determine how far our crops of this grain depend upon the increase or decrease of the Tipula and its Ichneumons.

Cui bono? is a query often put to naturalists; and the agriculturist perhaps will ask upon the present occasion, Can you inform us how we may prevent or diminish the ravages of these insects? In reply to this, I would observe, that the first step towards curing a disorder, is to find out its cause. In the present instance this is the business of the naturalist, and this is done. The intelligent farmer has no longer to ask what occasions the mischief; all he has now to do, is to aim at discovering a remedy. By a set of experiments first made upon a fmall fcale, he may possibly find out some method that will prevent this infect from laying its eggs in his wheat: thefe should commence as foon as the ear begins to quit the folium vaginans or hose; and they ought to be continued till the germen is impregnated, or, to use the rural phrase, the wheat is off the blossom. Perhaps fumigations of tobacco or fulphur, if made when the wind was favourable, might render the ear difagreeable to this infect. Much of the injury which this fly does, in years peculiarly favourable to its increase, it is possible, by some such means might be prevented; yet it is not certain that the total annihilation of it would be ultimately beneficial (b). But be it granted that our labours lead the

⁽b) We are very apt to think, that if certain noxious species of animals could be anni-hilated, it would be a great benefit to the human race; an idea that arises only from our Vol. V.

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the way to no discovery of this kind, may it be said that we have been idly busy and unprofitably laborious, when we have succeeded in developing some of the most curious mysteries of nature, and in laying open the history of some of those secondary causes, which, guided by the hand of Providence, produce scarcity or plenty as the one or the other preponderate?

As I made my description of Tipula Tritici last year from a single specimen, and that produced before its time, it will hardly be deemed tautology if I draw out a new one; more especially as an error with respect to the colour of its wings, much calculated to mislead an examiner, has crept into it. In my MS. I find it "alis albidis," but I see it is printed "alis hyalinis," an expression which completely misrepresents their colour. As two new species of Ichneumon are to be described, it may also not be amiss to work over again the description of Ichneumon Tipulæ with a view to them.

TIPULA Tritici.

T. rufo-fulva; oculis nigris; alis lacteo-iricoloribus margine pilosis.

Fæmina (c).

Tota rufo-fulva; thorax intensiùs, pedes autem dilutiùs. Antennæ corpore sublongiores, duodecim-articulatæ articulis pedicellatis

thort-fightedness, and our ignorance of the other parts of the great plan of Providence. We see and feel the mischief occasioned by such creatures, but are not aware of the good ends answered by them, which probably very much exceed it. I have heard of farmers, who, after having taken great pains to destroy the rooks from their farms, upon being successful, have suffered infinitely more in their crops, from the great increase of the larvæ of insects, before kept under by these birds, than they ever did from the rooks themselves. The same might be the case, could we annihilate the Tipula of the wheat; for every link of the great chain of creation is so closely connected on each side with others, and all parts so combine into one whole, that it seems not easy to calculate the consequences that would arise from the entire removal of the most insignificant, if any can be deemed such, from the system.

(c) Tab. iv. fig. 1.

oblongis

oblongis medio constrictis (d), pilosulæ, nigricantes. Oculi nigri suprà conniventes. Alæ corpore longiores, amplæ, apice rotundatæ; margine omni, sed interiori præcipuè, piloso; lacteæ coloribus prismaticis pro situ variè micantes. Abdomen vagina instructum retractili aculeum longissimum silisormem exferente.

Longitudo corporis (vagina exclusa) lin. 1.

Tritici spicas prima æstate vesperi circumvolitat; intra stosculos aculeum ani inserens, ova inibi positura post quatuordecim dies larvæ exclusæ polline antherarum vel nectare stigmatum vescuntur granum exinanientes (e).

ICHNEUMON. Minuti, abdomine ovato feffili.

1. inserens, I. ater; antennis capitatis; abdomine lanceolato nitido (f).

Corpus atrum. Antennæ fractæ capitatæ. Caput et thorax fubobfcuri. Alæ hyalinæ aveniæ corpore longiores; superiores lineolâ nigrâ, a basi versus medium ductâ, puncto rotundo desinenti, notatæ. Abdomen lanceolatum, aterrimum, nitidissimum,
valde acutum, aculeum longissimum slexilem exserens. Pedes
nigrescentes semoribus atris subclavatis.

Longitudo corporis infra lineam.

Præcedenti æqualis et hostis; horis diurnis circa spicas triticeas volans. In cujus slosculis, aculeo inserto, ovis Tipulæ Tritici, uti suspicor, ovula sua committit.

(d) Tab. iv. fig. 3: The fingular form and mode of insertion of the joints of the antennæ are not to be seen, but under a powerful magnifier,

(e) Qu. Does Linnæus's Ichneumon fecalis (Syst. Nat. Gmel. p. 2714. n. 70) belong to the larva of a Tipula?

(f) Fig. 4.

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The antennæ of this very minute infect are exceedingly fingular (g). The first joint is long, rigid, and clavate (b); examined in a certain direction obcordato-bifid at the apex; this division serves as a socket for the next joint to act in (i), which is connected with it by means of a strong membrane or muscle (k), and performs the part of a ball or pivot: the four next joints are perfectly globular (l), and extremely minute: the clava, unless under a very powerful magnifier, appears solid; but, in that case, it is plainly discerned to consist of four articulations very closely set together (m).

2. Tipulæ. I. niger; antennis basi pedibusque rusis; tibiis posticis clavatis apice nigris; abdomine obovato (n).

Corpus nigrum. Antennæ fractæ vibratoriæ, thorace longiores, rufæ articulis quatuor ultimis majoribus nigris. Caput et thorax subobscuri. Alæ aveniæ immaculatæ, corpore longiores. Abdomen obovatum, nitidissimum, subdepressum, subsessible. Pedes rusi s. ruso-testacei, tibiis clavatis, posticis apice nigris.

Longitudo corporis infra lineam.

Tipulæ Tritici larvis contemporaneus, infestus, quibus concredit ovula sua, ovum unicum deponens singulis.

The antennæ of this infect, as well as every other part, are extremely different from those of the last. They consist first of a very long joint rather flexuous (o); from this to the four last joints, under a powerful magnifier, we could discover no articulations (p), and yet from the mode in which this part of the antennæ appears sometimes to be bent, I cannot help suspecting that there are some,

(g) Tab. iv. fig. 6, 7.

(b) Fig. 7. a.

(i) c. (k) b.

(l) d.

(m) Fig. 7. e.

(n) Fig. 8.

(0) Fig. 9. a.

(p) Fig. 9. b. although

although extremely minute? The four last joints are black, very distinct, and much larger than the rest (q).

3. penetrans. I. nigro-zeneus; abdomine atro-zerulescente, compresso; ano truncato, aculeo sub-exserto (r).

Gerpus nigro-æneum, nitidum pantennæ nigræ, clavatæ, thorace breviores, acutæ. Alæ aveniæ, hyalinæ, superiores lineola media marginis crassions nigra demunt in discumioblique incurrente, et puncto rotundo desinents. Abdomen atro-cærulescens, sub-compressum, ano trunçato, acuseo sub-exserto.

Longitudo corporis infradineam.

Triticum frequentat simul cum præcedenti, glumas aculeo brevi penetrans ovula positurus. Maris oculi majores, pallidiores, approximati.

The clava of the antenna of this little infect confifts of four joints fet close together (1); the last is the largest, and acute. We could not with certainty determine whether its footstalk was jointed or not.

I owe the drawings of the antennæ of the three last insects to the accurate eye and pencil of the Rev. Peter Lathbury, of Woodbridge, F. L. S. a most ingenious and intelligent naturalist. These Ichneumons (t) may be placed after Ichneumon secalis of Linnæus, and Tipula Tritici after Tipula Pini of De Geer.

(q) Tab. iv. fig. 9. c. (r) Fig. 10. (s) Fig. 11. 2.

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⁽t) The remarkable variations in the form of the antennæ in these three species, undoubtedly of one genus, sufficiently prove that Geoffroy was wrong in separating his genus Eulophus, &c. from Ichneumon merely on account of that circumstance. Hist. ab., der Ins. ii. p. 312. pl. xv. fig. 3.

I shall now, as I promised above, proceed to describe the Gimen which I found so common upon the wheat in all its states.

CIMEX. Oblongio antennis setaceis longitudine corporis.

Tritici. C. angustus, niger; thoracis lateribus, coleoptrorum limbo, femoribusque pallidis.

Corpus valde angustum, nigrum. Rostrum thoracis longitudine, pallidum. Antennæ obscure rusæ articulo primo majore pubescenti, nigro. Caput, fronte acuta, postice pallidum, lineâ intermedia longitudinali exaratum. Oculi prominuli. Thorax antice angustior, lateribus lineolisque tribus intermediis posticis, pallidis. Scutellum nigrum lineâ intermedia elevatiuscula. Elytra nigricanția margine exteriori late pallida, pallore paululum virenti. Alæ hyalinæ iricolores. Pedes lividi, tibiis tarsisque posticis nigris.

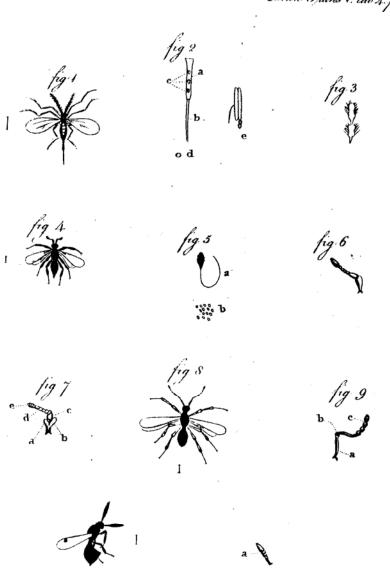
Longitudo corporis lin. 4.

Habitant in Tritici culmis et spicis, Larva, Pupa, Imago.

So much for this year's observations upon Tipula Tritici:

Believe me, &c. &c.

Linn Frans V. tab 4. p. H.



EXPLANATION OF TAB. IV.

- Fig. 1. Tipula Tritici magnified, with its Vagina and Aculeus.
 - 2. (a) The Vagina. (b) The Aculeus. (c) The Eggs passing through the Vagina. (d) A patch of Eggs. (e) A Larva newly hatched, and adhering to the lower end of one of the Anthers.
 - 3. A portion of one of the Antennæ greatly magnified to shew the form of its joints.
 - 4. Ichneumon inferens magnified.
 - 5. Abdomen of dittori (a) Meuleus exerted, long and flexile.
 - 6. The Antenna of ditto.
 - 7. A different view of the Antenna.
 - (a) The first joint, long, rigid and clavate, obcordatobifid at the apex:
 - (b) The membrane that connects the second soint with it.
 - (c) The fecond joint, which acts the part of a ball or pivot.
 - (d) The four following joints, globular and extremely minute.
 - (e) The Clava of Cour joints fet closely together.
 - 8. Ichneumon Tipulæ magnified.
 - 9. The Antenna of ditto.
 - (a) The first joint, very long.
 - (b) The space from the first to the four last joints, not visibly articulate, but I suspect it to be so.
 - (c) The four last joints, black, and larger than the rest.
 - 10. Ichneumon penetrans magnified.
 - II. The Antenna of ditto.
 - (a) The Clava of four joints fet close together, the last the largest and acute.

X. Ob-