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BRITISH ENTOMOLOGY;

BEING

ILLUSTRATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

OF

THE GENERA OF INSECTS

FOUND IN

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND:

CONTAINING

COLOURED FIGURES FROM NATURE

OF THE MOST RARE AND BEAUTIFUL SPECIES,

AND IN MANY INSTANCES

OF THE PLANTS UPON WHICH THEY ARE FOUND.

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PELTASTES DENTATUS.

ORDER Hymenoptera. FAM. Ichneumonidæ *Lat., Leach.*

Type of the Genus Ichneumon necatorius Fab.

PELTASTES *Ill.*—Metopius *Panz., Lat.*—Ichneumon *Forst., Fab., Marsh., Panz., Jur.*

Antennæ inserted above the middle of the face, in 2 cavities between the eyes, long, robust, straight, setaceous and attenuated towards the base, composed of 60 joints and upwards (fig. 1* a).

Labrum triangular rounded and ciliated in front (2).

Mandibles strong, slightly arcuated, acute, bifid near the apex (3, 3).

Maxillæ terminated by 2 lobes nearly of equal size, the internal one almost naked, the external very pilose and dilated (4 a). *Palpi* very long and hairy, 5-jointed, basal and 3rd joints nearly of equal size, 2nd very large, subovate, 4th the smallest, 5th long and slender (4 b).

Mentum oblong (5 a). *Palpi* short, hairy, composed of 4 nearly equal joints (b). *Lip* large, membranous, striated, sides recurved (c).

Head rather small, transverse; face scutiform sometimes acuminated between the antennæ (1*). Eyes oblong. Ocelli 3 in a depressed triangle. Thorax short globose. Scutellum quadrate, the sides reflexed and produced at the angles. Abdomen almost sessile, the basal joint being scarcely narrowed at its attachment, long, somewhat ovate and depressed, concave beneath; composed of 8 joints in the male (7 the underside of apex); and 7 in the female (6 the underside). Ovipositor nearly concealed. Wings shorter than the body; superior with one long marginal and 3 submarginal cells, the middle one small rhomboidal. Legs; 4 first short and small, posterior longer and robust. Tibiæ spurred, the posterior pair with 2 spines at the apex. Tarsi 5-jointed. Claws strong. Pulvilli large (8†, tarsus, &c. of a hind leg).

Larvæ parasitic feeding upon the caterpillars of various *Bombycidæ*.

Obs. the *Trophi* and fig. 6 are drawn from the type, and the other parts are taken from *P. dentatus*.

DENTATUS *Fab. Ent. Syst.* 2. 180. 192.—*Micratorius, Fab. Syst., Piez.* 62. 41.—*Pini Curtis Brit. Ent. ed. 1. fol.* 4.

Black, deeply and thickly punctured: antennæ ochraceous beneath: nasus yellow. Thorax with 8 yellow spots before the insertion of the wings, and 2 at the base of the scutellum, which is margined with yellow behind. Abdomen with 4 yellow spots on the 1st and 2nd segments, the remainder margined with yellow. Wings obscure ferruginous, stigma and nervures brighter. Legs yellow, 1st pair the palest: the posterior thighs striped black inside.

In the Author's and other Cabinets.

PELTASTES receives its generic name from the face forming an escutcheon or shield: like the rest of the family these insects are parasitic in the larva state, the females depositing their eggs in the

caterpillars of Lepidoptera; they begin to feed as soon as they are hatched upon the muscles of their victim, until the whole internal substance is consumed, excepting the alimentary canal. In this diseased state the caterpillar changes to a chrysalis, frequently assuming the natural form, although the colour is sometimes altered; but instead of a moth or butterfly, one or more Ichneumonidæ are produced.

This tribe of insects, however, is eminently useful, employed as it appears to be, to destroy and keep within bounds those hosts of caterpillars which otherwise might frequently deprive vegetation of its beauty and utility: to convince the reader of this, it will be only necessary to refer him to the "History of the Brown-tail Moth, by W. Curtis."

The following are the species and varieties of this genus:

1. *P. necatorius* *Fab. Ent. Syst.* 2. 144. 45.—*Vespoidea* *Panz. fasc.* 47. *pl.* 19.
Black, thickly punctured. Antennæ orange beneath. Clypeus, 2 spots on the shoulders and margin of scutellum yellow, base of abdomen, a spot on each side the apex of the first joint and the margins of the remainder of the same colour. Legs yellow, thighs partially black. Wings yellowish fuscous.

August.—Southwold, Suffolk, and Plaistow marshes near London: it has been bred from the pupa of *Stauropus Fagi*. This may prove to be the other sex of the following species.

2. *P. dentatus* *Fab.*—*Micratorius* *Fab.*—*Pini nob.*— α *Chrysopus. Trans. Linn. Soc. v. 3. tab. 2. f. 5.*— β *Polyzonias Forst. Cent. of Ins. n. 85.*

This is the largest species, and has been taken in June by Mr. Bentley and Mr. Dale, near Ringwood, Hampshire, flying amongst pine-trees, in the sunshine; and by the latter gentleman also on the heathy side of a mountain near Ambleside, Westmoreland; and var. α was bred from the pupa of *Lasioampa Trifolii*. This species, like the rest of the genus (indeed of the family I might say), is extremely variable; some having orange antennæ not black above as in var. α , others with the clypeus, palpi, and all the thighs black, and yellow bands to all the segments of the abdomen; and in var. β the thighs are ferruginous. Although there is no doubt but this last is a variety only of *P. dentatus*, as it seems to be a very uncommon example, I have not adopted Forster's name, which otherwise has the right of priority.

3. *P. dissectorius* *Panz. Faun. Germ. fasc.* 98. *n.* 14.
Black thickly punctured. Abdomen chalybeous, margins of 4 first joints yellow; legs piceous, thighs partially black. Wings with a fuscous spot beyond the stigma.

I took a specimen the end of September, 1822, in the North of Devon, and have since received another, which is a very strong variety, being black, with a yellow spot only on each side of the 3 first segments of the body and a yellow margin to the 4th, and the fuscous spot on the wings is very faint.

A small portion of *Pinus Abies* (the Spruce Fir) accompanies the insect.