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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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Wasp, by J. Currier. Mar. 1. 1884

SIREX JUVENCUS.

ORDER Hymenoptera. FAM. Siricidæ Nob.—Uroceridæ
Lat., Leach.

Type of the Genus Sirex juvencus Linn.

SIREX *Linn., Fab., Jur., Panz., Klug.*—Urocerus *Geoff., Lat., Leach.*

Antennæ inserted in front of the face, longer than the thorax, nearly filiform, containing from 17 to 23 joints, those of the female composed of the greater number, basal joint the most robust, 2nd globose, 3rd as long as the 1st, the remainder decreasing in length to the last which is often a little longer (fig. 1, basal joints of antenna of the male from which sex all the dissections were taken).

Labrum but partially exerted, tongue-shaped, very rigid towards the apex and pilose on the sides (2).

Mandibles rather small, short, subtrigonal and tridentate at the apex, producing rather soft and long hair externally and internally (3).

Maxillæ uniting at the base of the mentum, not so long as the lip (4*), terminated by a narrow pilose, membranous lobe, twice as long as the *Palpi*, which are very small and arise from a thickened shoulder of the maxillæ; biarticulate? the terminal joint very minute (4).

Mentum small transverse, narrowed at the base (5). *Lip* rather large, coriaceous at the base, the apex forming a membranous lobe, thickly clothed with long pubescence. *Palpi* inserted near the base, very much larger than the maxillary; triarticulate, basal joint small, 2nd rather longer, 3rd large and clavate, producing very long hairs, especially on the internal side (5b).

Head *not large but suborbicular*. Ocelli 3, *between the Eyes which are small and not quite lateral*. Thorax *shield-shaped, anterior angles produced*. Abdomen *long cylindric, perfectly sessile, acuminate, especially in the female*. Ovipositor *exserted*. Wings with 2 marginal and 4 submarginal cells. Legs *rather long, hinder tibiæ and tarsi dilated in the males*. Thighs *short and robust*. Tibiæ with 2 short spurs at the apex, *except in the anterior pair, which have a single spine dilated into a lobe near the apex which is acuminate*. Tarsi *very long, basal joint the longest, 4th minute*. Claws *strong, bent and bidentate*. Pulvilli *distinct in the males (8, a fore leg)*.

Larvæ with 6 pectoral feet, body armed at the apex with a spine. Klug.

JUVENCUS *Linn. F. S. 1575. fem.*—noctilio *Fab. E. S. 2. 130. 22. male.*

Male dark green, punctured, head thorax and base of abdomen very pubescent, 3rd and 8th joints of the latter purplish, the intermediate space orange coloured. Eyes legs and wings ochreous, nervures ferruginous. Thighs and hinder legs bluish black, the penultimate joint of tarsus and base of tibia ochreous.

Female blackish purple, base and apex of abdomen chalybeous. Legs ochreous, tarsi piceous at their tips.

In the Author's and other Cabinets.

THE *Sirices* appear to be most destructive insects to dead trees and timber; which is not surprising when it is stated, that the eggs are deposited in clusters of two or three hundred; and the largest maggots, when full grown, are about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in length. It is remarkable how much insects whose *arvæ* are xylophagous vary in size; for, whilst some specimens of *Sirex juvencus* are as large as those represented in the plate, others (especially females), from the same trees are not more than a quarter the size. There are two species of this fine genus found in Britain, the sexes of which are so dissimilar, that they have been described under four names.

1. *S. Gigas* Linn. fem.—Kirby & Spence, tab. 4. f. 1.—Don. 6. 197.—*S. Mariscà* Linn. male: Panz. 52. 20.—*psyllius* Fab. var. fem.

June, rare. Pine and Lime-trees. Norwich, Wiltshire, Kent, Berkshire, and in and near London.

2. *S. juvencus* Linn.—Curtis Brit. Ent. pl. 253.

July, August, and September. Fir groves, &c.; Norfolk, Suffolk, Hampshire, and Yorkshire.

For a fine series of this insect, including the beautiful specimens figured, I am indebted to my kind friend the Hon. Charles Harris, as well as for the following valuable observations relating to the destruction of fir-trees in the plantations near Heron Court, the seat of the Earl of Malmesbury. "With us," says Mr. Harris, "at the age of twenty the fir-trees sometimes die to a great extent. The summer of 1825 or 1826 was peculiarly destructive to them, from its intense heat and drought; and I am certain that I never saw any trace of a *Sirex* except on *dead* trees. The smell of the turpentine would fully account for this; and if you remember, the only spot where we could detect the *Sirex* in the standing plantation of shorter trees, was on some dead stumps that had evidently been overgrown by the others. The day after your departure I went to visit the fir wood, when I had the good fortune to extract eight males of the *Sirex*; two of these I purposely let go; they proved very strong on the wing, and ascended with a loudish hum to an invisible height." From this it appears that the mischief arises from allowing dead trees to remain standing or lying about; and timber ought to be well examined before it is employed in building; for I understand that considerable numbers of the males have been taken flying about the tower of York Minster, no doubt seeking the females which were issuing from the timbers that supported the roof, and which would be, of course, greatly weakened by the constant and continued operations of the Larvæ, as well as rendered more combustible by the multitude of passages and the quantity of dust which they create.

The plant is *Lapsana communis* (Common Nipplewort).