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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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Tab. by J. Curtis May. 1. 1830

MICROGASTER ALVEARIUS.

ORDER Hymenoptera. FAM. Ichneumonidæ Lat., Leach.

*Type of the Genus, Ichneumon globatus Linn.*MICROGASTER Lat., Ill., Spin., Leach.—Cryptus & Ceropales Fab.,
—Bassus Panz.—Ichneumon Linn., Fab.*Antennæ* inserted between the eyes, above the middle of the face, approximating, filiform, very pubescent, composed of 18 joints or upwards, basal joint the most robust, 2nd subglobose, 3rd and following long, appearing like 2 joints united, terminal joints subglobose, the last conical (fig. 1. the basal and terminal joints).*Labrum* transverse-ovate, pilose, ciliated, base emarginate, anterior margin straight (2).*Mandibles* small, subtrigonal, externally pilose, bifid at the apex which is acute, the lower tooth being blunt (3).*Maxillæ* rather long and meeting below the mentum, terminated by two very distinct lobes, the internal one somewhat transverse or lateral, the external large, elongate-ovate and very pilose.*Palpi* very long and pilose, 5-jointed, 2 first joints the most robust, basal joint rather the shortest, 2nd a little the longest, 3rd rather shorter, 4th and 5th slender, the latter as long as the 3rd; the former shorter (4).*Mentum* subobconic. *Lip* membranous subcylindric, the sides nearly meeting above, pubescent and ciliated. *Palpi* long, inserted at the anterior angles of the mentum, triarticulate pilose, basal joint the shortest and rather the most robust, 3rd a little the longest, subfusiform (5).*Head* orbicular, transverse. *Eyes* not large, lateral. *Ocelli* 3, large and very prominent. *Thorax* globose and rather gibbous. *Abdomen* attached by a small portion of its base, but appearing sessile, short, flat on the back and rugose at the base, compressed beneath in the females, 8-jointed, furnished below the apex with two flat pilose valves and with a sheath below, producing an Oviduct composed of an incurved horny and sharp sheath, containing 2 fine bristles (6). *Wings* pubescent, with a strong costal nervure and large stigma; 3 discoidal cells and a subtriangular areolet (9), sometimes imperfect. *Legs* robust, posterior very long. *Coxæ*, hinder pair very large. *Tibiæ* spurred. *Tarsi* 5-jointed, basal joint the longest. *Claws* and *Pulvilli* small.

ALVEARIUS Fab. E. S. Supp. 232, 232.—bicolor Curt. Guide, G. 554.5.

Brightish ochre, clothed with very short pubescence. *Eyes* and *ocelli* black. *Postscutellum* black and punctured. *Abdomen* black and shining, 1st and 2nd joints rugose and pale at the sides, an orange spot at the base, and one on each side at the middle, the underside is ochreous at the base. *Superior wings* with the costa and stigma fuscous, the nervures paler, the areolet imperfect. *Hinder thighs* and *tibiæ* at the apex, their *tarsi*, and all the *claws* and *pulvilli*, blackish.*Obs.* The *antennæ* are sometimes fuscous, and the 2 orange spots on the body very obscure.*In the Author's Cabinet.*

THIS natural group, which was distributed by Fabricius, has been formed into a genus by Latreille, but has never been described as British. Like the rest of the Ichneumonidæ these small insects deposit their eggs in lepidopterous larvæ, and one of them is particularly useful in destroying the caterpillar of the Cabbage Butterfly (*Pontia Brassicæ*). There must occasionally be myriads of these little Ichneumonidæ, for we frequently see large clusters of beautiful silky cocoons attached to a single caterpillar, and those whose cases form a sort of honey-comb produce vast quantities.

Microgaster is nearly related to Bracon and Bassus. The following British species may be thus divided.

I. Areolet perfect.

1. *M. deprimator* *Fab. Supp. p. 227.—Panz. 79. 11. fem.*—Middle of August, Dover. Bred September out of the larvæ of *Acronycta Salicis*. The larvæ were only half-grown when 2 maggots came out of two of them, and formed cocoons in August; in the following May another hatched.
2. *M. globatus* *Linn. F. S. n. 1645.—Reaum. t. 2. pl. 35. f. 2—5.*—Beginning of September, Isle of Wight.
3. *M. sessilis* *Fab. E. S. p. 194. 4.—Coq. tab. 4. f. 8.*—Middle of July, Dover.
4. *M. annulipes* *Curt. Guide.—dorsalis* *Spin.?*—Beginning of June, Coomb-wood; beginning of August bred by Mr. C. Fox, from white cocoons out of a Bombyx caterpillar.
5. *M. auriculatus* *Fab. Piez. 69. 82?—Spin. Ins. Lig. 2. 147?*

II. Areolet imperfect.

6. *M. alvearius* *Fab.—Curt. B. E. pl. 321.—Reaum. 2. tab. 35. f. 7.*—The only specimens I have ever seen of this beautiful species, were bred from honey-comb cells by my brother. The areolet in some is not so imperfect as in others.
7. *M. glomeratus* *Linn. F. S. n. 1646.—Platygaster ovulorum* *Mag. Nat. Hist. v. 3. p. 51.*—The beginning of July I bred 20 or 30 from little yellow cocoons, that I found sticking to a caterpillar of *Hipparchus papilionarius*, but it is generally found upon the larvæ of *Pontia Brassicæ*; and the reader is referred to Loudon's "Magazine of Natural History" for the history and admirable figures of this insect.
8. *M. vitripennis* *Curt. Guide.*—Like the preceding, the nervures stronger, and the hinder thighs tipped with brown.
9. *M. lacteipennis* *Curt. Guide.*—Black: wings milky white, stigma and costa piceous, anterior tibiæ and tips of their thighs ferruginous. Middle of August, Dover.
10. *M. tibialis* *Curt. Guide.*—Black: legs ochreous, middle and hinder thighs and tarsi piceous: wings subfuscous.
11. *M. lineola* *Curt. Guide.*—Like the preceding, the hinder thighs with a piceous line above and below, and the tips of the tibiæ piceous. Wings transparent. Out of larvæ of *Scæva Pyrastræ*.
12. *M. gracilis* *Curt. Guide.*—Black: legs pale ochreous, middle and hinder thighs, tips of tibiæ and tarsi piceous. Bred in September from cocoons found upon grass, by the Hon. C. Harris.
13. *M. atrator* *Curt. Guide.*—Black: tibiæ and tarsi ochreous, hinder ones brownish.
14. *M. Aphidum* *Linn. Faun. Succ. p. 410. n. 1643.*
15. *M. anomalon* *Curt. Guide.*—Black, body very short and compressed, tips of anterior thighs and tibiæ ochreous.

The plant is *Vicia sativa* (Common Tare).