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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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VOL. III.

DERMAPTERA. DICTYOPTERA.  
ORTHOPTERA. STREPSIPTERA.  
HYMENOPTERA, PART I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

AND SOLD BY

F. ELLIS AND CO., 92 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, BLOOMSBURY;

SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, STATIONERS' COURT; AND

J. B. BAILLIERE, 219 REGENT STREET.

1823—1840.





## SPARASION FRONTALE.

ORDER Hymenoptera. FAM. Proctotrupidæ Nob.—Oxyuri Lat.

*Type of the Genus, Sparasion frontale Lat.*

SPARASION Lat., Lea., Curt.—Ceraphron Jur.

*Antennæ* inserted at the base of the clypeus, longer than the head, geniculated, pubescent, 12-jointed, basal joint the longest, incrassated, slender at the base, the clavola tapering to both ends, 2nd joint not so short as the 4th, 3rd longer, the remainder turbinate, apical joint small and conical (1).

*Labrum* undiscovered.

*Mandibles* long, narrow, bidentate and slightly pilose (3).

*Maxillæ* nearly meeting at the base behind the mentum, lower portion horny, semiovate, emarginate towards the top, and producing a membrane ciliated with bristles, some dilated at the base: lobe membranous, with a small horny and pilose appendage near the apex. *Palpi* long, 5-jointed, basal joint long, slender at the base, 2nd subovate, 3rd the most robust, not so long as the first, dilated and pilose on the inside, 4th and 5th hairy, as long as the basal joint, 5th considerably longer (4).

*Mentum* small, pilose, subturbinate, the anterior angles truncated obliquely, from which rise the *Palpi*, they are not very short but pilose and triarticulate, 1st joint a little longer than the 2nd, 3rd twice as long, subconic. *Labium* concealed behind the mentum (5).

Head broad obtuse and produced transversely in front, appearing pointed in profile (1+). Eyes lateral, not large. Ocelli 3, large, remote and placed in triangle. Trunk a little broader than the head, obovate; prothorax short. Scutellum rounded; postscutellum bilobed. Abdomen attached by a portion of its base, but appearing sessile, elliptical, depressed, 7-jointed, the sides forming a sharp edge projecting over the underside. Oviduct concealed. Wings; superior rather short and broad; no costal nervure, but one running parallel to it halfway, where it forms a stigma and produces a short branch, 2 other longitudinal nervures are indistinct. Legs; posterior the longest. Thighs not much incrassated. Tibiæ rather stout and short in the anterior pair, producing strong bristly spines externally, with a curved spine at the apex on the inside. Tarsi longer than the tibiæ, 5-jointed, basal joint the longest and most robust, especially in the posterior pair, and beautifully pectinated on the inside, penultimate joint the shortest. Claws and Pulvilli small (8).

FRONTALE Lat. Hist. Nat. t. 13. p. 230.—Curtis's Guide, Gen. 580.—

Cornutus Jur. Hym. pl. 13. g. 44.

Black shining, sparingly clothed with ochreous pubescence and hairs. Head and thorax coarsely punctured, having a reticulated appearance. Abdomen marked with fine elevated longitudinal lines on the back. Wings iridescent, tinted with brown, darkest at the costa; stigma and nervure piceous. Thighs and tibiæ ferruginous at their tips, tarsi of the same colour.

*In the Author's Cabinet.*

SPARASION was unknown as a British insect until I had the good fortune to capture a specimen at Black Gang Chine in the Isle of Wight, the 16th of August 1828, but I have never been able to meet with it there since.

The 12-jointed antennæ, and the minute 2nd joint of the maxillary palpi, are sufficient to distinguish Sparasion from Ceraphron, to which it is closely allied on the one hand; but whether it be so nearly related to Bethylus on the other, I am not able at present to determine. The membranous appendage also to the maxillæ, ciliated along its concave margin, I have never observed in any other insect that I have dissected.

I shall here take the opportunity of observing, that with very few exceptions, I shall limit myself to the illustration of those genera of the minute Hymenoptera which have been established by Latreille, so that a very considerable number of those recorded in my "Guide" will not be published in this work; by which means the Student will be put in possession of the leading characters, to enable him to extend his investigations further if he chooses, and this work will not be carried to an inconvenient length. I beg however to acknowledge my obligations to my esteemed friends Mr. Haliday and Mr. F. Walker for their generous and valuable assistance; and I hope they will be induced to give naturalists the benefit of their researches in the two families they have so successfully studied, by publishing the characters of the genera and species of these minute but beautiful tribes, of which Mr. Haliday has made most admirable dissections, and Mr. Walker has formed a collection embracing at least 700 British species.

The minute Hymenoptera are best collected by beating into, and sweeping with, a net made of fine gauze, and Mr. Haliday recommends me to collect them into quills, and afterwards to empty their contents into hot water, by which means their wings are naturally expanded; then by introducing a card under them to take them out of the water, arranging the legs and wings when necessary with a camel's hair pencil, and leaving them upon the card till they are dry, they may afterwards be taken off with a penknife, and gummed upon the points of small pieces of drawing- or card-paper of a long triangular form.

The plant is *Galium verum* (Yellow Lady's Bed-straw).