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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

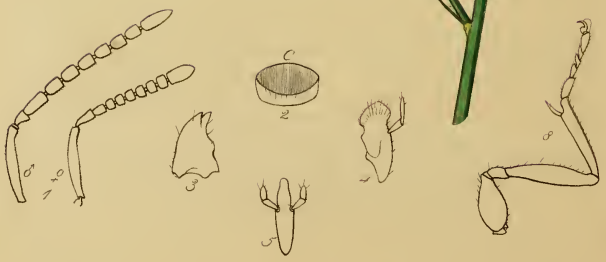
F. ELLIS AND CO., 92 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, BLOOMSBURY;

SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, STATIONERS' COURT; AND

J. B. BAILLIERE, 219 REGENT STREET.

1823—1840.





Drawn by J. C. Currier, May 1854

SPALANGIA NIGRA.

ORDER Hymenoptera.

FAM. Spalangidæ.

*Type of the Genus, Spalangia nigra Lat.*SPALANGIA *Lat., Spin., Nees ab Es., Hal., Curt.*

Antennæ inserted at the extremity of the head, on each side of the clypeus, geniculated, pubescent and 10-jointed, longer than the head and thorax, filiform in the male (1 ♂), basal joint very long, 2nd short somewhat funnel-shaped, 3rd much longer, 6 following turbinate, 10th as long as the 3rd and conical; shorter and a little clavate in the female (1 ♀), 2nd joint longer than the 3rd which is subovate, 6 following somewhat cup-shaped, increasing in diameter, 10th the stoutest ovate-conic.

Labrum undiscovered: clypeus forming a distinct oval mass (C), slightly hairy before, with a large membranous lobe beneath (2).

Mandibles subtrigonal, curved and bifid at the apex (3).

Maxillæ terminating in a large hairy lobe. *Palpi* shortish and biarticulate, basal joint subclavate, 2nd longer and slenderer, with a few bristles (4).

Mentum long and narrow, subelliptic. *Palpi* attached to the anterior angles, short, biarticulate, basal joint subclavate, 2nd shorter, ovate-conic, with a few bristles. *Lip* long and narrow, the apex rounded (5).

Head drooping, ovate, slightly elongated, with a large oval fovea in front; attached by a short neck: eyes lateral and oval, villose: ocelli large, 3 arranged in a curve. Thorax very long, broadest at the base: collar long narrow and lunate: scutell semiorbicular, with a transverse line of strong punctures at the base: petiole short and stout, longest in the male, cylindrical and striated. Abdomen oval, not longer than the thorax, 3rd segment the longest, apex acute, acuminated in the female. Wings pubescent superior spatulate, the costal nervure touching the margin before the middle, and continued beyond it, terminating in a fork formed by a short ray: inferior wings narrow, lanceolate. Legs moderate, slender, hinder a little the longest, their coxæ pear-shaped, sometimes with a short curved spine on the inside of the apex: thighs and tibiæ slender, the latter with a long notched spine at the apex of the 1st pair, the others with very slender spurs at the apex: tarsi slender and 5-jointed, basal joint the longest, incrassated in the anterior, 3 following short, especially the 3rd and 4th, 5th short and stout: claws curved, acute, the base a little dilated: pulvilli rather long.

NIGRA *Latr.—Curt. Guide, Gen. 589, 3.*

In the Author's and other Cabinets.

SPALANGIA is an interesting group, distinguished from all the other pentamerous Chalcididæ by its biarticulate palpi. The allied genus *Cerocephala* being apterous is readily distinguished from the typical Spalangidæ, and the very minute and imperfect labial palpi of *Pirene* form the essential character of that curious genus. Mr. Haliday observes that this group has a slight resemblance in habit to *Megaspilus* (*Ceraphron*, pl. 249). It having appeared to me that this insect would connect the *Oxyuri* or *Proctotrupidæ* with the *Cynipidæ* or *Chalcididæ*, I placed it between those two extensive groups in my Guide; but the difficulties attending a natural arrangement of such unlimited families have led to a variety of opinions concerning their affinities. It seems to me that there are 4 species of *Spalangia*, and I very much regret not having received the nondescripts in time to figure one of them.

1. *hirta* Hal. *Ent. Mag.* 1. 334. 1.

“Head and thorax almost entirely punctate-reticulate, densely villose. Length of body, 14; of wings, 2.”

Taken in England.

2. *nigra* Lat.—*Curt. Brit. Ent. pl.* 740 ♀.

Shining black; the head with a large smooth shining fovea in front, the rest punctured, as well as the thorax, which is slightly pubescent and sometimes greenish, disc and scutellum perfectly smooth; abdomen faintly violaceous: wings iridescent, scarcely tinged with brown, nervures brown; base of tarsi bright ochreous. Length from 1 to 1½ line.

Found in pastures and marshes amongst the grass, also on the foliage of trees not uncommonly, from the middle of April to August, in every part of the country, and even in the gardens of London.

Bouché says the larvæ inhabit the pupæ of the common house-fly, *Musca domestica*, eating the intestines.

3. *nigripes* Curt. MSS.

Black, head and thorax slightly tinted with green, abdomen a little violaceous; basal joint ochreous only in the anterior tarsi: length 1½ line.

A female has been taken by Mr. Shuckard.

4. *nigroænea* Curt. *Guide*, n. 4.

Black, bronzed and greenish, hinder portion of the abdomen chalybeous: antennæ stoutish: wings yellowish brown, base and tips of tibiæ and tarsi bright ochreous, the latter with the apex blackish: length 1½ line.

A male in Mr. Shuckard's collection, and I have seen another elsewhere.

Asparagus officinalis, Common Asparagus, was transmitted to me by Dr. Bromfield, who gathered specimens last July on the sandy shore at Norton in the Isle of Wight.