

GENERIC NAMES, &c., OF THE BRITISH FORMICIDAE.

By HORACE DONISTHORPE, F.Z.S., F.R.E.S., etc.

(Department of Entomology, British Museum (Nat. Hist.)).

(Concluded from p. 132.)

We now come to the question of *Acanthomyops* and *Lasius* (pp. 124-125). We personally still accept the validity of the Erlangen List, and regret to learn that a proposal that the name *Lasius*, Fabricius, 1805, is to be accepted and *Lasius*, Panzer, 1804, is to be rejected, has already been laid before the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. The whole question is dealt with by Donisthorpe [*Brit. Ants*, 2nd edition, pp. 208-10 (1927)]; the full synonymy of the subgenera, types, etc., being given. Both Forel and Emery did accept the Erlangen list at first; and Chester Bradley, in a paper on certain genera of Hymenoptera, *Trans. Ent. Soc. - Lond.*, 1919, 50-75, under *Lasius*, Jur., stated that Morice and Durrant seemed to be correct in considering *Lasius*, Fabr., 1804 (=1805) a homonym of *Lasius*, Jurine, 1801. Should *Lasius*, F., be finally accepted *Donisthorpea*, Morice and Durrant, 1914 (type *Formica nigra*, Linnaeus, 1758) will (as stated on p. 125) become a synonym; but it is quite inaccurate to give *Acanthomyops*, Mayr, 1862 (type *Formica clavigera*, Roger, 1862, *claviger*, Mayr) as a synonym of *Lasius*, F.

Mayr founded the genus *Acanthomyops* [*Ver. Zool. Bot. Ges. Wien*, 12, 699 (1862)] for the reception of the American species *Formica clavigera*, Roger, and he compared it with *Lasius*, F., describing the differences (in the latter the maxillary palpi are 6-jointed, in the former 3-jointed! the antennae are slightly clubbed, and the species possess an aromatic scent, etc.). *Acanthomyops*, in the limited sense which embraces a number of American species, is now considered to be a subgenus, whether of *Lasius*, F., or *Acanthomyops*, Mayr, does not alter the case—it is certainly not a synonym of *Lasius*. I agree with Wheeler, who pointed out in his 1911 paper that he was firmly convinced that the subgenus is, at least, heuristically a useful and valid category (in the *Formicidae*), and that he could not agree with those entomologists who entirely ignored the subgeneric category, or threw them all, or most subgenera, into the synonymy.

Much as I admire and respect the work of the late Professor Emery, I can not help feeling that in his fine production the *Formicidae* in the *Genera Insectorum* he is entirely wrong in his treatment of *Lasius*. He removes *Formica flava*, F. (1781) from the subgenus *Chthonolasius*, Ruzsky [*Kasani Zap. Veterin. Inst.*, 29, 630, 633 (1912)], for which it was cited as type by Ruzsky (1912), Donisthorpe [*Ent. Rec.*, 28, 275-77 (1916)], and Wheeler [*Psyche*, 23, 171 (1916)], and places it in the subgenus *Lasius*, F., with type *Formica nigra*, L. He cites as type for *Chthonolasius*, Ruzsky *Formica umbrata*, Nylander (1846), which is of course, quite incorrect.

Furthermore *flavus* differs from *niger* in the shape of the maxillary palpi in the ♀ and ♂, the much smaller eyes in the ♂, and its hypogaecic life, as well as in colour.

With *Formica*, Linnaeus (1758) Donisthorpe states (1915) that Lamarck [*Syst. An. sans. Vert.*, 268, No. 124 (1801)] adopts *F. rufa*,

L. as the type of *Formica*, L. This, however, is considered to be invalid under the code.

We quite fail to understand the statement (p. 125) that " Myrmecologists do not appear to have decided what is the next available name for Nylander's *Formica picea* (1846)." Donisthorpe [*Ent. Rec.*, **30**, 9 (1918)] in a paper on Dr Leach's *Ants and Gnats* in 1825 makes the matter quite clear. We will quote the passage in full:—" The most unfortunate point in nomenclature which arises is that concerning the name of *Formica picea*. For over 50 years the species we now know as *F. picea*, Nylander was confused with *F. gagates*, Latr., until 1909, when Emery separated it from that species on the Continent (*Deutsch. Ent. Zeitschr.*, **1909**, 195) and in 1912 I put the matter right for the British species [*Ent. Rec.*, **24**, 306 (1912)]; see also [*Ent. Rec.*, **25**, 67-8 (1913)]; and *Brit. Ants*, 325-34 (1915).

There cannot, however, be two species called "*Formica picea*" and as Leach's name has 21 years' priority, Nylander's name must fall. This being the species described by Farren-White in 1883 as *Formica glabra*, the latter name would have to be used; but, unfortunately, there is another *Formica glabra*, Gmelin, *Linné Syst. Nat.*, ed. 13, I, v, 2804 (1790), which is fatal to the adoption of Farren-White's name. It is also probably not ascertainable what Gmelin's species really is, but at any rate it cannot be what we know as *F. picea*, Nyl., since the scale is described as bidentate. The next name in order of date for this insect is *Formica transkaukasica*, Nasonow, *Imp. Obshch. Lyrrb. Est-Ant-Etn. Mosc.*, **58** (1), 62 [= *Tr. Lab. Zool.-Mus.*, **2** (1), 62 (1889)], and this is what the insect we know as *Formica picea*, Nyl., will have to be called." The italics are now added.

Finally on page 100, under *Myrmica sabuleti*, Meinert, 1861, is given as a synonym of *scabrinodis*, Nylander, 1846, and on page 101, under *Formica glebaria*, Nylander, 1846, is given as a synonym of *fusca*, Linnaeus, 1758. This is incorrect, as both are recognised as good and distinct varieties. In the former the worker and female possess a much more developed lateral tooth to the scape of the antennae than in *scabrinodis*, and the longitudinal keel on its upper side is very distinct. The male is known by the longer scape, which is as long as the first five joints of the funiculus taken together, as against the first three in *scabrinodis*. In the latter the body is in part red or brown instead of being black, and it is not so cowardly an ant as is *fusca*. Emery indeed (*Deutsch. Ent. Zeitschr.*, **1912**, 672) considered *glebaria* to be a sub-species of *fusca* as the latter will not readily bring up the pupae of the former. The beetles *Dinarda pygmaea*, Wasm., and *Atemeles paradoxus*, Gr., occur with this form, whereas no *Dinarda* occurs with *fusca*, and the *Atemeles* found is *A. emarginatus*, Payk.

APPENDIX.

(a) Dates of the years of the first République Française.

Ann.	22nd Sept.	21st Sept.	Ann.	22nd Sept.	21st Sept.
I.	1792	1793	VIII.	1799	1800
II.	1793	1794	IX.	1800	1801
III.	1794	1795	X.	1801	1802
IV.	1795	1796	XI.	1802	1803
V.	1796	1797	XII.	1803	1804
VI.	1797	1798	XIII.	1804	1805
VII.	1798	1799	XIV.	1805	1806

(I am indebted to Mr A. C. Townsend for the above).

(b) The Months of the Calendar of the first French Republic.

Vendémiaire, the first month	22nd or 23rd Sept. to 21st or 22nd Oct.
Brumaire, the second month	23rd Oct. to 21st Nov.
Frimaire, the third month	21st Nov. to 20th Dec.
Nivôse, the fourth month	21st or 22nd Dec. to 19th or 20th Jan.
Pluviôse, the fifth month	20th Jan. to 18th or 19th Feb.
Ventôse, the sixth month	19th or 20th Feb. to 20th March.
Germinal, the seventh month	21st March to 19th April.
Floreal, the eighth month	20th April to 19th May.
Prairial, the ninth month	20th May to 18th June.
Messidor, the tenth month	19th June to 18th July.
Thermidor, the eleventh month	19th July to 17th August.
Fructidor, the twelfth month	18th Aug. to 16th Sept.

NOTES ON COLLECTING, &c.

LARVAE OF *HADENA CONTIGUA* ON GORSE.—Last year I took a few imagines of *H. contigua* on a heath, so in the autumn I visited the spot in the hope of finding the larvæ, but after searching some stunted oak gave it up without success. This year, on 8th September, I thought I would try my luck with a few birch bushes, but my wife soon forestalled me by finding the larvæ by the light of my lamp on gorse flowers. The bushes were low and compact but none the less prickly and contained enough larvæ to satisfy the most avaricious.—(CAPT.) C. Q. PARSONS, Torquay.

POLYGONIA C-ALBUM IN CORNWALL.—I have seen more of this species than of any other Vanessid this autumn, mostly on Michaelmas Daisies, but one was on ivy with three *Vanessa atalanta*. If any reader has seen it further west in Cornwall than Penzance, I shall be glad to hear, as I am anxious to complete a map of its spread through the county from 1933, in continuation of one by Mr C. W. Bracken illustrating its spread across Devon from 1925.—C. NICHOLSON, Tresillian, Truro, Cornwall, October 29th.

DANAUS PLEXIPPUS.*—Will readers, who know of any specimens of the "Milkweed Butterfly" having been captured, or merely seen, in our islands this year, kindly report same in these pages in order that they may be added to the list of records already published.—C. NICHOLSON, Tresillian, Truro, Cornwall, October 29th. *[*Archippus* in Seitz American volume.—H.J.T.]

SOME CUCULLIA NOTES.—The following will be interesting to compare with Mr Wightman's notes on p. 127, bearing in mind that the Pulborough area is partly on chalk, which is absent from Cornwall and naturally represented, on the N.W. seaboard only, by lime from the Atlantic shell-bed, sometimes to the extent of 60 per cent. of the sand content.

Verbascum thapsus is the most generally distributed mullein, but is not particularly common; *V. nigrum* is very local; *V. virgatum* and *V. blattaria* are both more or less rare; *V. lychnitis* is very rare and has apparently been recorded twice only—once near Truro and once at Falmouth, in neither of which localities is there any chalk—but, curiously enough, its hybrid with *nigrum* has been found at Par, a great locality for alien and casual plants, and the hybrid of *nigrum* with *V. pulverulentum* at Charlestown, near St Austell, on ballast heaps, where *nigrum* is plentiful and *pulverulentum* occurs as a casual.