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ART. LIV. *Some Remarks on the Nomenclature of the Gryllina of MacLeay, &c. with the Characters of a new genus in that tribe. By the Rev. WILLIAM KIRBY, M.A. F.R. & L.S.*

THE Nomenclature of any Science, though not certainly of the first importance, ought not however to be neglected; for that adage of Linné is most true—*Nomina si nescis perit et cognitio rerum*.—While things are without names they are comparatively unknown; but as soon as a name is imposed, it imparts as it were a life and being to an object that it had not before. Yet, important as its Nomenclature to any Science confessedly is, how little, in general, has it been attended to! With the exception of Chemistry, in which a systematic plan has been adopted with admirable effect, almost every other science is at sea in this respect, at the mercy of the winds and waves; and the imposition of names, which ought to be regulated by fixed and acknowledged laws, is left to the fancy or crude conceptions of every individual. If we look only at Anatomy, a science so important to be made easy of comprehension, how perplexed and perplexing is its technical language, and how little of concinnity and harmony does it exhibit! All this has arisen from its having been constructed at different times by different persons, who had no common plan or system before them, to serve as a guide.

Linné, in his *Philosophia Botanica*, has given many excellent rules for the formation of the names of *genera*, but he constructed



no regular system of Nomenclature. He taught us, indeed, how to name properly the smaller branches and sprays of the tree of nature; but the larger branches were left to chance, and the caprice of scientific men. In Entomology, however, by giving a *uniform termination* to the names of his orders, he led the way to a more perfect system of Nomenclature, which his successors unfortunately neglected to improve. Latreille, indeed, to whose acumen and learning the science of Entomology is under such infinite obligations, in his efforts to trace out the Natural System of Insects, found it convenient to subdivide each order into various smaller sections, to most of which he has given appropriate names; but as he followed no general rule in the construction and application of these names, they serve rather to confuse than to inform the student, and to perplex rather than assist the memory; whereas, had the names of his *primary* subdivisions possessed the same termination, those of his *secondary* another, and so on till you arrived at the genera, the whole would have been a beautiful and harmonious system of Nomenclature, and a great help to the memory; and the nature of every section would have been comprehended in an instant.

I suggested some time ago a plan of this kind, and the adoption of patronymic names of the same termination (*Linn. Trans.* xi. 88, note)—a plan which Mr. W. S. MacLeay, in his learned *Horæ Entomologicæ* has adopted and improved upon, by distinguishing the primary sections of several of his Orders by terminating the name of each in *ina*. If this principle could be applied to all the Divisions till you arrive at genera, it would give a vast clearness to the science—other names might terminate in *ita*—another set derived from parts of the economy of insects in *phila*; and a third, from their food, in *phaga*, or in *myza* perhaps, if they belonged to the *suctorious* tribes.

It is not my intention to pursue this idea further, but I have been led into it by observing what havoc and confusion have been made in the Linnean genus *Gryllus*, (*Gryllina*, MacL.) by scientific men taking their own fancy as their guide, without regard either to justice or propriety.

Linné divided this great tribe into five subgenera; namely—



*Acrida*, *Bulla*, *Acheta*, *Tettigonia*, and *Locusta*. Of these all, except the second (*Bulla*), represented *natural* sections of the tribe. When Fabricius undertook the new modelling of this tribe according to his own system, he discarded three of Linné's names, turning *Acrida* into *Truxalis*, which seems a mistake for *Troxalis* (τρωξάλις); *Bulla* into *Acrydium*, from Geoffroy, restricting the name very properly to those minute *Grylli* whose prothorax terminates behind in a long process that covers the abdomen; retaining *Acheta* for the Crickets; very properly rejecting *Tettigonia*, a Greek diminutive, signifying a small *Tettix* or *Cicada*, but in its room, unhappily following Geoffroy in giving the name of *Locusta* to those Grasshoppers whose females are distinguished by an ensiform ovipositor, and taking it away from the true Locusts, to which he gave the name of *Gryllus*, properly belonging to the Cricket.

Under *Bulla*, Linné had included not only those Cape insects resembling a bladder (*Pneumora*, Thunb.), which the name suited, but some of his own *Locustæ*, and the *Acrydia* of Fabricius. Latreille has not been so happy as to succeed in his endeavours to amend Fabricius's nomenclature. With great propriety, however, he restored to the Cricket its ancient Latin name *Gryllus*, and separated from it *Gryllotalpa* and *Tridactylus*; but led astray by the Gallic passion to uphold names imposed by a French author, *per fas atque nefas*, he has retained Geoffroy's name of *Acridium*; thus absurdly expressing, by a diminutive signifying a *little* Locust, that far-famed and wide-ravaging plague, the terror of half the regions of the earth, the *great* Locust. As Geoffroy included the *Acridium* of Fabricius in his genus, it would with much more propriety have been restricted to that minute animal: *Tettix*, by which M. Latreille has distinguished it, appears to be a corruption of the Greek *Tettix*, or the *Cicada*, and therefore is equally improper with *Tettigonia* for one of the *Gryllina*. I think, on these accounts, that Dr. Leach has done a great service to the science by restoring the name of *Locusta* to the real locust of the ancients; but that of *Conocephalus*, by which, after Thunberg, he would designate the *Locusta* of Geoffroy and Fabricius, seems less proper. It is very well when applied to those



with a *conical* head, but those with an *obtuse* one should not be so called. In fact, this tribe includes several genera or subgenera. Our most common species, with an *obtuse* head and *straight* ovipositor (*Locusta viridissima*, F.), with its affinities, I would call *Acrida*, and leave *Conocephalus* for those with a *conical* head. Those whose *elytra*, or rather *tegmina*, so beautifully imitate the leaves of plants, distinguished by a *recurved* ovipositor, I would call *Pterophylla*. I possess an undescribed genus, which connects the tribe in question with the *Locustidæ* (*Gryllus*, F.), of which I will here give a description.

#### GENUS. SCAPHURA.

*Antennæ*, basi filiformes, apice setaceæ.

*Ovipositor*, brevis, cymbiformis, punctis elevatis acutis scaber.

VIGORSII. *Sc. atra*, abdomine cærulescente, femoribus posticis, fasciâ mediâ albidâ, elytris apice pallescentibus.

Long. Corp. Lin. 14.

*Habitat* in Brasiliâ. D. Hancock.\*

Before I conclude I wish to say a word on the Nomenclature of the tribe of insects to which Fabricius has transferred Linné's name of *Tettigonia*, before discussed. This tribe was by the Greek writers called *Tettix*, and by the Latins *Cicada*. M. Latreille has exchanged, and perhaps not improperly, Fabricius's name, which means strictly a diminutive *Tettix*, for the latter. As there appear to me at least *three* types of this tribe, these three names may be retained. Those, the lateral margin of whose prothorax is *rounded*, to which section *C. Orni*, probably Virgil's *Cicada*, belongs, might retain the name *Cicada*; those the sides of whose prothorax are *dilated* and *angular*, as *Tettigonia limbata*, might be denominated *Tettix*; and those small ones, the sides of whose prothorax are *deflexed* and have no margin, as *T. sanguinolenta*, might very properly inherit the much bandied name of *Tettigonia*.

Barham, Nov. 30, 1824.

\* Mr. Kirby has kindly promised to communicate a more detailed description of *Scaphura Vigorsii* hereafter.—ED.



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