



Figure 41.—*Paratrechina longicornis* (Latreille), crazy ant, lateral view of worker.

scape. Antennal fossa inserted very close to posterior border of clypeus, lacking the width or less of the fossa of touching the posterior border of the clypeus. Eye large, strongly convex, placed closer to base of mandible than to posterior border of head. Clypeus subcarinate. Maxillary palpus long, 6-segmented. Legs extraordinarily long. Base of gaster with an impression. Base of gaster angulate on each side of impression (viewed from above). Abdominal pedicel composed of a single segment, the petiole. Cloacal orifice terminal, circular, surrounded by a fringe of hairs (fig. 48,co). Sting lacking. Integument soft and flexible. *Specific characters*: Workers 2.2–3 mm. long. Body strikingly slender, with extraordinarily long antennae and legs. Body with long, coarse, well-scattered, suberect to erect, grayish or whitish hairs. Suberect or erect hairs normally absent from scape. Legs with shorter suberect hairs. Head, thorax, petiole, and gaster dark brown to blackish or black, ground surface with peculiar gray to violaceous luster or sheen.

Biology and Economic Importance

The slender-bodied, long-legged worker is capable of moving rapidly, and even jumping, according to some observers. Wroughton states that the ant is endowed with a keen sense of smell, which enables it to locate food quickly. The species is highly adaptable, living in both very dry and rather moist habitats, and nesting in such places as trash, refuse, cavities in plants and trees, rotten wood, and the soil under objects. Colonies are moderate-sized to populous. Because no intensive work has been done on the biology of *longicornis*, many details of its life history are lacking. Workers are almost omnivorous. They feed on both live and dead insects, seeds, honeydew, fruits, plant exudates, and many household foods. They obtain the honeydew by tending plant lice, mealybugs, and scales. Pimentel states that in Puerto Rico, workers killed larvae and adults of *Musca domestica* (Linnaeus), *Callitroga macellaria* (Fabricius), *Sarcophaga* sp., and others. The workers of *longicornis* and those of several other species of ants destroyed 91 percent of the potential fly population. Fox and Garcia-Moll (1961) have observed workers of this ant species attacking larvae of the Oriental rat flea *Xenopsylla cheopis* (Rothschild) under laboratory conditions, and suggest that the ants may be important in reducing the population of this flea under natural conditions.