

a Family of the Hymenoptera Heterogyna.

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its metropolis. Our present knowledge of the range of the genus *Labidus* is of much more limited extent: it has hitherto been found only in the intertropical portion of the New World. As confusion attends the nomenclature of the species hitherto recorded, and wherein evidently several have been included, it will perhaps repay the trouble of investigation to subject them to a critical examination, for thus only will it be possible to extricate them from the disorder into which they have fallen. This has, I have no doubt, arisen from their great rarity, as probably not more than a single specimen, or perhaps specimens of a single species, have been at the time in the possession of either of the several describers, who have all attributed it to that originally published, never more than doubtfully surmising the possible existence of any but that one species; and so fully pre-occupied must they have been with this idea, otherwise the disparity of the descriptions would have evinced at once that they belonged to different insects.

The situation which these genera occupy in the system, and their right to form a separate family, has been latterly subjected to discussion by very competent individuals—le Comte de St. Fargeau in France, and Mr. Haliday in our own country, who both seem disposed to unite them permanently with the social Heterogyna or Ants, and these views they have supported by many arguments. It is however only latterly that they have been separated from the Mutillidæ, and by these same gentlemen, although less definitely and distinctly by St. Fargeau, who calls them Genera provisionally approximated to the Heterogyna*. But Mr. Haliday has first raised them to a family equivalent to the whole of the social Ants, and which with them constitute his tribe Heterogyna†, and he at the

* It is by this author in the same work, 'Hist. Nat. des Insect.' Hymen. (and in which he is followed by Mr. Haliday), that the term Heterogyna was restricted exclusively to the Social Ants. Latreille comprised within it the Mutillidæ also, and it thus consequently embraced all the aculeate Hymenoptera with apterous females. If the distribution thus introduced is to hold, and they are to be subdivided, and each division to be considered equivalent to the other tribes, the name *Heterogyna* ought to remain with what we now understand by the Mutillidæ, as it is only these that have anomalous females, this sex in the tribe of Ants, as far as they are yet known, being all winged like their males; the term therefore in application to them is very inappropriate, unless in reference to other sexual discrepancies, and then it could be as legitimately applied to many other Hymenoptera. I shall have occasion shortly to go more particularly into this subject, and shall then discuss the propriety of the present contents and distribution of the whole of Latreille's Heterogyna and the neighbouring groups.

† Dr. Leach had previously formed them into a family by the name *Dorylidæ*, which he incorporated with the tribe Mutillarides, and he made them equivalent to the whole of the remainder of the Mutillidæ.