Fam. CERCOPIDÆ*.

Ranatřæ, Germar, Mag. Ent. iv. p. 34 (1821) (pars).


The generally recognized characters of this family are as follows:—Front convex, or produced and compressed on either side; ocelli two, situated on the vertex and near its base; pronotum large, hexagonal or trapezoidal, with a notch on its posterior margin; tegmina nearly always coriaceous; scutellum small or medium-sized, triangular; legs remote from the sides of the body, with the coxae, especially the posterior pair, short, and the tibiae cylindrical, the hind pair being furnished with two (rarely one) strong spines on the outer side and a ring of spinules round the apex; the two basal joints of the tarsi denticulate at the apex.

The family may be roughly subdivided as follows:—

Anterior margin of the pronotum straight; eyes as long as broad . . . . . CERCOPINÆ.

Anterior margin of the pronotum rounded and produced between the eyes, which are nearly always more or less transverse† . . . . . . Pyeloæ.

Subfam. CERCOPINÆ.


The limits of this subfamily are very doubtful. The genus Cercopis, as understood by Fabricius, has almost a world-wide range, as pointed out by Distant (Trans. Ent. Soc. Lond. 1878, p. 173). In 1843 Cercopis was subdivided into six genera by Amyot and Serville, who restricted the genus Tomaspis to species from South and Central America. In 1866 Stål sunk three of Amyot and Serville’s genera, Triopchora, Monecaphora, and Sphenorhina, and placed them all under Tomaspis, thus extending the range of the latter genus to the Old as well as the New World. Distant (l. c. p. 178) agrees with Stål in suppressing Triopchora and Monecaphora, but prefers to retain Sphenorhina, on the ground that it seems so well-marked a genus, and one so easily recognized, that it is at least convenient to retain it. The sole distinction, however, of Sphenorhina, as given by Amyot and Serville, is that it has the front laterally compressed, “avec une forte carène en forme de coin plus ou moins aigu et dilaté” (Hémiptères, p. 562); whereas in Monecaphora it is not compressed and has only a feeble carina, and in Triopchora it is furnished with three raised lines or carinae, which, according to Amyot

* The Cercopidæ are placed after the Membracidæ for convenience’ sake, and not from any desire to indicate that this is necessarily their proper position; the classification of the Homoptera is as yet quite unsettled.

† There are one or two (probably more) intermediate forms which appear to render any division of the family more or less unsatisfactory, but, as a rule, the facies of the two groups is unmistakable.