

## Miscellanea

### Myriapod Trivia

Over the years with an interest in the more formal study of myriapods, especially centipedes, I have also accumulated a few items of what we might call "trivia" - prints, pictures etc. The two items here come into that category and I know there are many more like them around and they are offered as light relief for Bulletin readers. I know little about The Penny Magazine but it clearly represents a cheap, presumably weekly, publication dedicated to that great Victorian aim of "self improvement". This issue comprises eight pages with items as varied as "Essays on the lives of Remarkable Painters No.XXXI: Andrea del Sarto", "The English and Irish Ordnance Surveys" and "The Harem of Ibrahim Pasha". I have abridged the item on Centipedes and Millipedes from the original three pages. "The Rabbit and the Centipede" comes from a children's book of 1907. I am not sure that it sheds any particular new light on myriapod locomotory mechanisms.

Tony Barber

### Curiosities of British Natural History: Centipedes and Millipedes

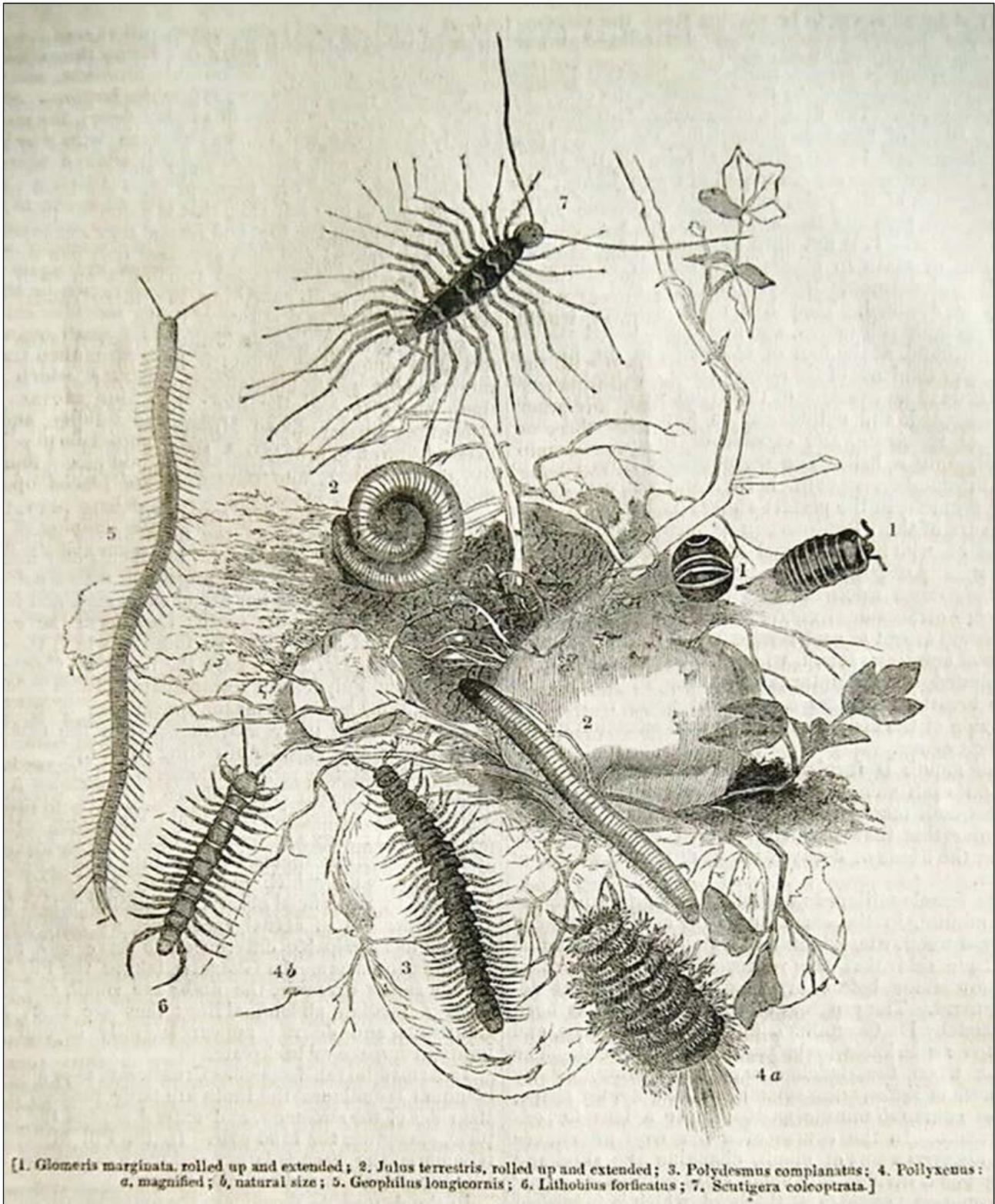
The group at the head of the present article presents us with an association of creeping things, from which many turn with indifference, but which are nevertheless far from being destitute of interest. It must be confessed indeed that they are neither striking in their appearance nor obtrusive in their habits; they are creatures of darkness and conceal themselves from observation. It is during the gloom and silence of the night –

“When the dew is on the grass,  
And the wisp on the morass”

that they come forth from their lurking places and wander abroad in search of food; but with the dawn of day they seek the obscurity of their retreats. These creatures constitute a group termed by naturalists Myriapoda, the first order of insects according to M. Latreille, but really forming a distinct section or class, of the subkingdom articulate, and displaying affinities to the crustacea, scorpions, and insects, yet distinguished by characters of their own. They are composed of a series of distinct segments, and to every segment is appropriated one pair of limbs; sometimes indeed two pairs.

The head is furnished with jaws, antennae which are regarded as feelers, and eyes either simple or compound. Respiration is effected through spiracles, as in insects, whence air-tubes ramify over the internal viscera. Like insects they undergo a metamorphosis, or rather several changes before acquiring their perfect form; and the sexes are distinct.

Their movements are winding and serpentine; some are slow, gliding gently along; others on the contrary are active and rapid in the extreme. They feed on decayed vegetable and animal substances, on fruits, roots, &c, and many on living prey.....



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1. *Glomeris marginata*, rolled up and extended; 2. *Julus terrestris* [*Tachypodoiulus niger*] rolled up and extended; 3. *Polydesmus complanatus* [*Polydesmus angustus*]; 4. *Pollyxenus* [*Polyxenus lagurus*] a. magnified; b. natural size; 5. *Geophilus longicornis* [*Geophilus flavus*]; 6. *Lithobius forficatus*; 7. *Scutigera coleoptrata*

# The Rabbit & the Centipede

BY G. D. LYNCH

The Rabbit and the Centipede<sup>1</sup> went out to have a walk,  
The day was very hot and so beneath a cabbage-stalk  
They rested for a little while and had a pleasant talk.

"I wonder," said the Rabbit<sup>2</sup>, "if it is not indiscreet,  
Why you dont sometimes give a rest to some of your poor feet!  
Instead of making all of them walk up and down the street."



Your policy appears to me, devoid of common sense<sup>3</sup>  
Because it puts you every day to such a great expense,  
The wear and tear of boots and shoes alone must be immense

Now if instead of all your feet you walked upon a score,<sup>4</sup>  
With practise and good management you ought not to use more,  
The saving would be very great, of that I feel quite sure."



The Centipede replied, "There is much truth in what you say;<sup>5</sup>  
But you have two eyes and two ears which you use every day  
If one would do why use the two, come tell me that, I pray?"

Now I have many servants who are working under me,  
And dont intend that any one of them should idle be."  
The Rabbit had to own it was a question of degree.