

David and Marian Fairchild. The King Grasshopper, from Book of Monsters

As this young king grasshopper stands looking so inquiringly at one with his varicolored eyes, each of which is composed of hundreds of facets, I cannot help thinking that he represents a creature quite as fascinating and actually more dangerous than the East African monsters of our school geographies. (1)

Perhaps it is perfectly natural, but it does not seem right, that so little emphasis should be laid in our histories upon the terrible struggles of man with his insect enemies. The time will come when we shall recognize this warfare, when we shall realize how much of human happiness lies buried on the battlefields of our struggle against the insect hordes. (2)

The members of one species of this great family can sail for a thousand miles before the wind, and they go in such numbers that they make a cloud 2,000 square miles in extent. (3)

They multiply in such numbers as to baffle all calculation, and every living green thing for thousands of square miles disappears down their throats, leaving the country they infest desolate. The great famine of Egypt, mentioned in the book of Exodus, the grasshopper years of Kansas, which ruined thousands of families on our plains, and more recent devastations in Argentina and South Africa are examples of the tremendous effects which the migratory locusts have had upon the happiness of mankind. (4)

The famines which have followed in their wake have cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings and ruined the lives of millions of others. We have become so accustomed to the idea that the farmer must expect to lose his crop every few years from the devastations of these beasts, that we have not yet realized that it would be profitable to spend vast sums of money in learning how to fight them. (5)

In the evolution of the race, this change will come about, and I feel that no honor is too great to bestow upon the American entomologists who have led the world in its fight with these enemies of the human race. Some day these quiet, resourceful, far-sighted men of knowledge will take their places beside the organizers of industry and the warriors of mankind in the hero worship of our boys and girls. (6)

Define Each Word

horde: _____

baffle: _____

desolate: _____

wake: _____

entomologist: _____

Write the Correct Word from the Vocabulary

1. To the casual observer, the desert appears to be _____, but it is actually teeming with life.
2. A _____ of angry demonstrators comprised the Occupy Wall Street movement.
3. Anna Carolina's childhood fascination with insects led her to pursue a career as an _____.
4. Speedboats often produce large _____ near the docks, upsetting boaters who are relaxing on the decks of their sailboats.
5. The cause of necrosis on mango seedlings in Broward County has _____ horticulturalists for years.

Comprehension and Discussion: Answer Each Question in Complete Sentences

1. What examples of the effects of migratory locusts does David Fairchild provide?

2. Why does Fairchild praise entomologists and their work so lavishly?

