

FIRST Class 'B'
PRIZE

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(1)
Class B: A locust, a tsetse fly and a mosquito
meet to boast of the harm each could
do to man.

very good
A+
This shows
imaginative
& originality
+ original work
a good piece of work
In a quiet corner in the City
Museum stood a large glass-
topped case, containing insects
of all sizes and shapes, some
quite harmless in appearance,
some very fearsome. The case
was labelled clearly:- "Insect
Enemies of mankind." This
accounted, no doubt, for the
frightening aspect of some of
its inmates.

Outside, the day was
cold, dark and windy. Not a
very inviting day for visitors
to the Museum! In fact, very
few people were clattering over

the stone floors in search of knowledge — even the usually-crowded animal section was practically bare of humans.

Those who were there were sauntering idly about, or resting on the couches, so that no-one noticed a biggish green-brown insect in the "Enemies of Mankind" case stir slightly. This animal resembled a grass-hopper, though it was of much heavier build, and, at two-and-a-half inches, larger than the common insects of our paddocks. Ranged around him in the case were several other creatures of like form, built on a smaller scale, the smallest being one-quarter of an inch long. These insects were labelled "Locusts" and really were a fearsome array.

The central locust stirred

again; he seemed to be waking up! His restlessness communicated itself to his fellow locusts, and then to all the other numerous denizens of the cage, in their several compartments.

In the compartment next the locust were several insects curiously like our own blow-flies in size and outline, though from an enlarged photograph of the head of the fly it was evident that it was "furnished with potent piercing and sucking implements"; in this respect only did it differ from our blowfly. These insects, too, showed signs of awakening from deep slumber, as their wings quivered unceasingly and their legs shifted position. They were (defined) ^{classed} as tree flies.

The inmates of the next compartment, too, were

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rousing. The name-plate showed they were mosquitoes of several different types. One, the "Anopheles", on investigation of the magnified portion of his head, proved to have an extraordinarily useful case of sawing and injecting apparatus. Another, the "Stegomyia" was of much heavier build, but he, too had evidence of useful weapons.

The largest locust was by this time fully awake. Always a quarrelsome fellow, he, noticing a tsetse fly stirring, remarked quite loudly, "It case for enemies of mankind, and a tsetse fly is in it! Why, even in the ancient Bible days, when Moses and Aaron were on earth, mens' lives were in danger from a plague caused by us, locusts. What right has a

good

mess tsetse fly to share the title imposed on a LOCUST?"

"Not so fast, friend Locust. Even from the very beginnings of time we tsetse flies have proved a nuisance to men and animals," the fly answered. "For a long time we were, and still are, a hindrance to colonisation in Africa, for men were dependent upon animal service in such conditions, and we injected our parasites into their horses, oxen, donkeys, and dogs, and they sickened and died from 'nagana'. Also, we —"

At this a new voice interjected — or new voices, for the tsetse flies and the Anopheles and the Stegomyia mosquitoes spoke together. "Ah, but you are only a nuisance to man through his animals, whereas we, for ages past in the history of the world have wrought

havoc by striking directly at humans. Through the parasites we carry in our bodies we can inject malaria or yellow fever, and thus we have held whole continents back from civilization, and have made tropical countries impossible for white men to live in."

"I had not finished speaking", said the tsetse fly.

"There are many species in our family, and apart from being harmful to animals some are also terrible enemies to humans.

We carry parasites that can give man what they describe

as "that dread malady, sleeping sickness". It is as fatal to white man as 'nagana' is to their animals, 'as terrible in its course, as deadly in its issue.' "

"Well," interrupted the big locust, "I can do better

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(tsetse fly)

Quotation
from same
source as
above.

than any of you. There are tribes of my family in Southern Europe, Africa, Asia and America. Huge swarms of us fly "with the speed of the wind plus our own velocity, far and unweariedly, so that we can strike distant scenes of apparent safety as modern aircraft can strike at formerly inaccessible islands." Once we arrive at our destination all plain, field, and forest vegetation disappears beneath our remorseless advance."

"Maybe that is so," replied the mosquitoes, "but I have heard that you locusts are frightful cannibals and food becomes short. You automatically reduce your numbers when this happens. You cannot possibly be as great a menace as is possible when you indulge in such a

disgusting habit.

"But speaking of trouble caused in ancient times — hundreds of years ago, especially in the tropics, we were breeding unceasingly and spreading death, misery, and disaster among mankind, striking down whole races of men. And the glory of it was that nobody knew we were the cause!"

"Yes", the snophelles went on alone. "Fourteen thousand years ago a book declared that malaria was caused by me, the little snophelles mosquito! But nobody believed that. The 'ague' of Merrie England was really malaria, but it was unconscious ^{by} defeated because men drained our lovely bogs and marshes, may they be molested by mosquitoes as they rot in their

graves! In 1856 Dr. Beaufort declared I was at the root of all the trouble, but everyone scorned him, also. So we went on, busily stinging and biting and killing while men were oblivious of the fact! "

good
argument

"Not all of you mosquitoes are killers, though," the talkative tsetse fly said, "Many of you only inject a mild poison into the blood to inflame and annoy. We are more potent. Many tsetse flies haunt the forests fringing the great rivers of Africa. Our range is widespread, and we abound in belts with definite beginnings and endings, but when men foolishly attempt to open up areas between tsetse country and non-tsetse country, we advance through the cleared ways and cause havoc among the natives — all of us have

this ability — the natives who have not become immune to the powers of sleeping-sickness, die. How I revel to see them suffer! "

✓ "It seems to me you tsetses inhabit only one country. We locusts are everywhere — almost. Argentina suffers extensively from us. We do enormous damage there in certain seasons despite the measures taken against us," the locust went on, "Though the inhabitants of the little isle of Cyprus in one year murdered two hundred millions of us poor animals, they could not stop us from reproducing, however hard they may try. The locust problem is still 'one of the unsolved terrors of the world.' "

good

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✓ "We, too are universal," remarked one of the mosquitoes.

"We attack the rich regions of the world - those of greatest value to mankind - striking down not only the native people who inhabit these regions, but also the carriers of civilisation - the pioneer, planter, trader, missionary and soldier alike - all fall prey to us."

"And," continued the Stegomymia, "yellow fever followed Columbus to America in 1493, and we caused it to be so bad there that the King of Spain had to throw open his goals for volunteers. Again, yellow fever raged in the West Indies; in a few months sixty-nine in every hundred of the white troops in Demerara were exterminated, like the pests they are - or were."

"Not a bad manner of decreasing the surplus population eh, friend Stegomymia?" suggested

11.

the locusts' spokesman. "We had a fine time in Johannesburg once. Our countless multitudes made the white mountains brown, the sky as black as night; we broke down telegraph and telephone wires with our weight; we stopped railway service by making the lines impassable; we caused trams to run backwards downhill - it was through the poor crushed bodies of my comrades that they ran, but this rendered the metals too slippery for the brakes to act, so disaster came for the humans, even if it meant loss of locusts' lives. But it was done for a noble cause, and there are plenty of us left to carry on the good work."

The insect, it seemed, had something to say: "Men do not seem to realise, do they

friend locust? — that their
quest for building railways has
often, and will still, cause
them disaster. In Africa,
railways made long corridors
through the forest land. We, of
course, make use of these
corridors, and so the sleeping
sickness, of which men are so
afraid, is carried by a medium
created by themselves. There
were times when unprepared
Africans have died by the
hundred thousand from a
sudden attack of sleeping
sickness — serve them right,
they caused it!"

"That is exactly
what we said — serve them
right! — when men tried to
build the Panama Canal,"
exclaimed the Anopheles and
L. tegomyia in unison. "Thousands
of Europeans attempting to
construct the canal perished under

the French company's control — all because we were there, flying 'through every door and window to suck the blood of any human being and poison the life-blood of all Panama, as our ancestors had poisoned it for ages, with yellow fever and malaria.' Then the Americans took over. They had a hard struggle, stamping out the diseases caused by our parasites, but by draining, screening, oiling and 'quinining' at last they accomplished it — how we wish we could get hold of that Dr. Gorgas, who built the silly canal, we would eat him alive. Think of the harm we could have continued to do without him!"

"I would eat Dr. Reed alive — it was he who proved in America yellow fever had its home in a mosquito," added the

Stegomyia mosquito alone.

"Major Ross is my arch enemy," said the *Anopheles*. "We were having a lovely time in Ismailia, in Egypt, a while ago. 'I was said that everyone had malaria, and oh! the suffering! But in two or three years Major Ross stopped our breeding and changed Ismailia into a health resort. Bah! I would revel in draining his blood! "

"I know how you feel," answered the locust. "I felt just as humiliated in 1924 when Johannesburg, — where we had been a nuisance for years — sent locusts to Holland to feed cattle and poultry, and to provide oil for their cursed airplane engines! But no matter how they may try to use us for their good, we will always be somewhere else creating

havoc. They cannot exterminate us, not ----- we - e - ell! the these flies have all gone to sleep!

This was true; they, having no immediate interest in the conversation, had indeed folded their wings, tucked up their legs, and faded into deep repose.

Stifling yawns, the mosquitoes replied hastily, "Oh, no, and they cannot exterminate us, either. In Brazil, we caused thirty-five thousand deaths in one year, and ships rotted in the harbour because their crews had died from yellow fever, and nobody could be found to replace them. Somebody said that if men could beat the mosquito by cleanliness and common prudence the tropics would become health resorts, where formerly the white man was doomed. Never will

they accomplish this - not in
our opinion, at any rate."

"Nor in my opinion
will they. Think of it :- a swarm
of locusts in Algeria - the
landscape is blotted out a
widespread plague in South
Africa, 1924 - a day of prayer
and humiliation held as a result.
..... a swarm scourges land
around Pretoria in modern
times. An earlier plague in
Johannesburg - said to cover two
thousand square miles of land....
..... we continually devour crops,
and ruin waning timber supplies
..... so it goes on for ever. Never
can they conquer us, however
much they try, with plane,
scientist or farmer. Why, I
remember once oh, so
friends mosquitoes have returned
to slumber, also. Ho-hum, I
suppose I should do likewise."
To saying, the locust

folded his antennae and composed himself for sleep. Quietness fell once more on the huge stone-paved room. The few human visitors had left long ago. The ghostly grey evening light filtering through the skylight became paler, casting deep shadows on the mottled floor. Loon the case in the obscure corner was surrounded by a deep impenetrable gloom. Only the white letters "Insect & enemies of mankind" glowed faintly throughout the dark hours of the night.

END.

References from :-

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Vol 3; Group 6, Chapter 16.

" 4 : " 2 , " 22

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" 8 : " 4 , " 47

" 9 : " 4 , " 50 ,

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(from answer to a Puzzle Photograph)