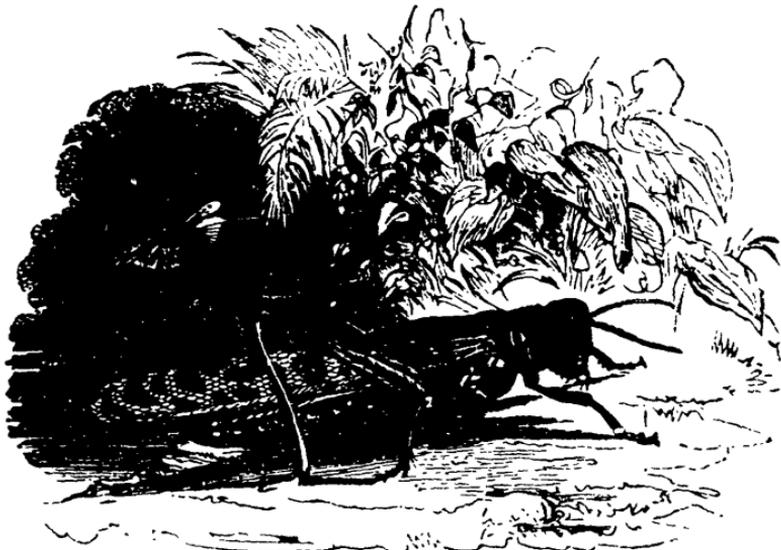


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NATURAL HISTORY.

THE LOCUST.

There are no insects more celebrated for the extensive injury they do to vegetation than the locusts, and they are known and dreaded in all the warmer parts of the old world. The locust is armed with two pair of very strong jaws, the upper terminating in short, and the lower in long teeth, by which it can both lacerate and grind its food; and its stomach is of extraordinary capacity and power. It is not, of course, the power of a few of these insects that is so much to be dreaded; but the immense numbers in which they appear, enable them to devour every green leaf of the field, in the course of their progress. The Arabians, who were well acquainted with the locust, make this insect say to Mahomet, "We are the army of the great God; we produce

ninety-nine eggs; if the hundred were completed, we should consume the whole earth, and all that is in it."

The plague of locusts appears to have been more frequently felt, and that to a greater extent, in Africa than in any other country. The first notice we have of it is in the Scriptures, in the case of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Ancient writers speak of one occasion, when Africa was infested with such myriads of these animals, that, having devoured every green thing, after flying off to sea, they were drowned; and being cast upon shore, they emitted a stench greater than could have been produced by the carcasses of 100,000 men. But Europe has not been exempt from the scourge; in 1478 more than 30,000 persons perished in the Venetian territories, through the famine