

Prof. L. O. Howard, chief of the Bureau of Entomology, has been studying the habits and life history of flies and has discovered that each female fly lays 120 eggs at a time and that she usually lays four of these generous batches of eggs before she considers her motherly duties ended.

Professor Howard began studying flies in the early part of June, and he found that the eggs which the fly laid on June 1st had hatched out into flies within ten days, and that each of the 120 young flies were ready to start right in laying eggs at the same rate that their mother had laid them. There is, thus, abundance of time for the development of 12 or 13 generations during the summer, before the flies begin to hibernate.

Starting with the first batch of 120 eggs laid by the original fly on June 1st, we arrive at the following astounding table of consequences by the last of September, when the breeding season ends:

June 1, one fly lays 120 eggs; June 10, 120 flies lay 14,000 eggs; June 20, 14,400 flies lay 1,728,000 eggs; June 30, 1,728,000 flies lay 217,360,000 eggs; July 10, 217,360,000 flies lay 26,083,200,000 eggs; July 20, 26,083,200,000 flies lay 3,029,984,000,000 eggs; July 30, 3,029,984,000,000 flies lay 363,598,080,000 eggs; Aug. 9, 363,598,000,000 flies lay 44,631,769,600,000 eggs; Aug. 19, 44,631,769,600,000,000 flies lay 5,355,812,253,000,000,000 eggs; Aug. 29, 5,355,812,353,000,000,000 flies lay 642,697,482,240,000,000,000 eggs; Sept. 8, 642,697,482,240..... flies lay 76,123,697,868,000,000,000 eggs; Sept. 18, 76,123,697,868,800,000,000,000 flies lay 9,134,843,744,256,000,000,000,00. eggs; Sept. 28, 9,134,843,744,256,000,000,000,000 flies lay 1,096,181,249,310,720,000,000,000,000 eggs.

But the total just stated is the resulting progeny of the mother fly and her first batch of 120 eggs. Professor Howard tells us that each fly usually lays four such batches of eggs. So by multiplying the above figure by four we find the following:

4,384,724,977,242,880,000,000,000.

One mother fly might, therefore, in one summer produce twelve generations of children, grandchildren, etc., until her descendants numbered four octillions, three hundred and eighty-four septillions, seven hundred and twenty-four sextillions, nine hundred and seventy-seven quintillions, two hundred and forty-two quadrillions, eight hundred and eighty trillions.

The human mind cannot grasp the full magnitude of these figures—four octillions of little flies! But a little computation begins to reveal what a stupendous mass it would be.

Suppose we say that an average house fly measures a quarter of an