

THE HORN-FLY. (*Hematobia serrata*, Rob.-Desv.)

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During the past summer a new pest of the farmer has made its appearance in Canada in the shape of a small blackish fly which appeared suddenly in enormous numbers on cattle, and was first noticed in Canada towards the end of July at Oshawa, Ont., by Mr. Elmer Lick, who sent specimens to me for identification. Almost simultaneously it was recorded all along the boundary line, from Essex County, Ontario, as far east as Boucherville, P.Q., below Montreal. The flies appeared in such enormous numbers, and their attacks upon the cattle were so severe that farmers in the districts invaded at once recognized the losses they might incur by neglecting to take steps to protect their stock. Letters of inquiry came in from all directions asking for remedies and information concerning the habits of the fly. Much alarm was felt by stock-owners, and grossly exaggerated statements received wide circulation as to the injuries which had been inflicted upon cattle of all kinds by the fly. Such complaints as the following, which are

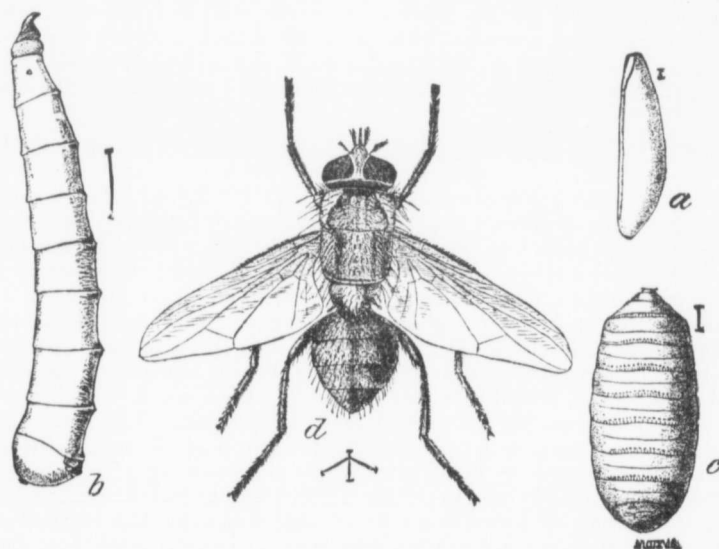


Fig. 30.

The Horn-fly. a, egg; b, maggot; c, puparium; d, adult fly in biting position—all enlarged. (Figure kindly lent by the United States Entomologist.)

actual reports I received, were by no means rare: "All the cattle in this district are being destroyed," "cows through the country are dying by hundreds," "several farmers have lost their cattle entirely," and a great many reports stated with more precision, that "neighbors" had lost from two to twelve (the favorite number being seven). Whenever these reports came in, I endeavoured to find out the name of the "neighbor," so as to trace up the true history of the case; but in no instance could I find a man who had actually lost a single animal from the attack of the flies. It was always "some other neighbour" or "I did not lose any myself, but I was told that someone else had." In fact, although this insect was undoubtedly the cause of much loss of revenue to farmers, as stated above, I have been unable to hear of even one instance where an animal was killed by its attacks. However, these exaggerated accounts of the possible loss served a very useful end, by stirring up negligent farmers to take some steps to protect their animals from the irritating attacks of their troublesome enemies. There was much cor-