OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHY ARE FLIES DANGEROUS TO HEALTH? DESCRIBE HOW TO PREVENT THEIR MULTIPLICATION, AND HOW BEST TO EXTERMINATE THEM.

We have pleasure in awarding the Prize this week to Miss Ména M. G. Bielby, Cranford, Middlesex.

PRIZE PAPER.

In no subject has education been more rapid than in the public regard of flies. In our own childhood the children who killed flies were reproved and called cruel.

About the beginning of the present century scientists began to investigate flies. They discovered that the fly is the "most dangerous wild animal of any continent." Unlike some other natural pests, it serves no purpose whatever, and its total extermination could only prove an unmixed blessing.

Flies breed in filth and live in filth, and they are the chief conveyers of infectious diseases, especially typhoid. Soiled garments and any deposit of sewage or filth form favourite breeding-places.

From the time of the Egyptian plagues, when the plague of "divers sorts of flies" was followed by the death of the children, to the epidemic in London of three years ago, involving thousands of little ones, and with many fatal cases, the fly has always proved especially deadly to the child.

The greatest plague of flies within memory occurred in Cairo in 1909, contaminating milk, food, and fruit. In two months 3,000 children under the age of five died of enteritis.

A hot summer, with its increase of flies, is inevitably accompanied by epidemics of infantile diarrhœa, which is nothing less than poisoning caused by the corruption of milk and food by flies. A fly has a capacity for carrying six million bacteria at once from putrefying matter to the teat of the baby's bottle, the dirty "comforter," and the food exposed on the table and in kitchen or larder. It distributes bacteria over articles of the most intimate personal use—cushions, toilet articles, and pocket-handkerchief.

A normal fly can in a normal summer be responsible for 95,312,500,000,000,000 descendants. Therefore to prevent multiplication never regard a solitary fly as too insignificant to demand the effort of its annihilation. The saying "Prevention is better than a cure" applies to nothing more truly than it does to flies. The disregarded fly of late March, which might have been slain by a moment's exertion, has developed by August into a swarm which it appears hopeless to attack. Where flies are numerous the best way to catch them is by hanging up the fly-catchers, which are strips of paper, or wire, covered by some sticky substance. These must be renewed frequently.

A solution of formaldehyde in a saucer will attract and kill many where no other fluid is accessible to them. Flies dislike a draught, and will avoid a room having a current of cool air blowing through it. An electric fan will ensure complete immunity from them. They have a marked preference for white, gold, and green, and avoid scarlet. On a low ceiling they may be caught in hundreds by simply holding a wineglass of petrol under the insect, the fumes causing it to drop into the glass.

Where not too numerous, the simplest way is to disable each fly at sight by a light blow with a folded teacloth, picking it up with spring forceps before it regains its wind. There is an element of sport in this practice, and eye and hand soon become quick and skilful at it.

To rub eucalyptus on the outside of the window panes and paint over the sills and ledges with Izal solution will prevent the entrance of flies. All ledges where dust may lodge should be washed frequently with Izal, as the eggs are laid in dark and dusty corners. All corners adjoining sinks and water closets should be cleaned in the same way. Refuse and garbage should be burnt. Screening and disinfectants should be used in stables.

To protect patients from flies, oil of lavender or geranium, pots of mignonette, and gentle fanning may be employed, all of which drive them away.

Personal experience has proved that by determined effort and perseverance flies may be exterminated in one's dwelling, even though those surrounding declare the battle hopeless because of adjacent bakers, butchers, and refuse heaps, and submit to the daily presence of hundreds. That bakehouses and butchers' shops should be regarded as inevitable breeding-grounds for flies supplies food for disturbing thought.

Above all, we should realise that where there is perfect cleanliness there are no flies.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Gladys Tatham, Miss J. G. Gilchrist, Miss Alice Musto, Miss Marion E. Weale, Miss Dora Vine, Miss Madeline Smith, Miss S. A. Cross, and Miss E. E. Please.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK

Name three different channels of elimination by the body, and the functions of the organs connected with each

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