

farmers, shopkeepers, etc., who know nothing about qualifications of candidates, and often care little about the poor; but it is the last straw if we are going to let them arrange our private fees. Will they give a guarantee that there will be no bad debts?

The election of doctors in Ireland for public appointments certainly requires to be altered. It is ridiculous to say that a man is appointed because he is a friend of "so-and-so," is a native of the county, is a good fellow, quite disregarding his qualifications, age, experience, etc. Canvassing is allowable, and rigidly carried out, for nearly all appointments. This should certainly be prohibited, as it is generally in England. There are places at present in Ireland where a chief tuberculosis medical officer will some day be appointed. The salary is hardly yet fixed, the appointment has not been advertised, and yet doctors have long since canvassed all those who have a vote, and doubtless most votes are already promised. So after the advertisement appears, if a doctor with special practical experience in the treatment of tuberculosis applies, will he be appointed—will he have a chance? I think not.—I am, etc.,

November 11th.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.

ASSISTANT MEDICAL OFFICERS IN ASYLUMS.

SIR,—A great and increasing difficulty is being found in obtaining candidates for the above positions, and at the present time, when so much attention is being devoted to the reasonable emoluments and just aspirations of the profession, a word or two on the conditions of the service may not be out of place.

The initial salary is good in most instances, averaging for a beginner £150 to £200 a year, with full board and lodging. Candidates are, however, beginning to find out that beyond this there is little else. In a service without any system of promotion except luck and what is known as "ability to pull the strings" able men find themselves in receipt of £250 to £300 a year after twelve, fifteen, and more years' service, living in two rooms, or perhaps sharing a sitting-room with a younger colleague, and bound hand and foot night and day to the institution, with little or no hope of advancement, and doing little more than marking time. It might seem reasonable to say they should leave and try something else, but the fact is many of them feel that, burdened as they have been for many years by routine duties that have no relation to medicine, they are ill adapted to return again to a pursuit requiring great initiative and much knowledge that in their case is rusty or forgotten. For one reason or another surgical work of any importance in most asylums is delegated to an outsider, and medical treatment in many cases carried out with a somewhat jealous eye on what is known as the "general maintenance rate." Leave generally consists of about two afternoons and perhaps evenings a week, unless some unusual circumstance stands in the way. All the rest of the time the assistant medical officer is at the disposal of the authorities. He is unable to establish a home, and his situation and the nature of his immediate surroundings precludes much social intercourse. He is under many restraints and has many distasteful duties. The latter must necessarily exist, but many of the former could, in the opinion of many of us, be usefully relaxed. Where the night work usually resolves itself into the mere giving of a hypnotic, or a short routine visit to the wards, it is not surely necessary to keep six or eight men on duty. A proportion of them could do their day's work and finish, say, at 6 or 7 p.m. and leave, with the superintendent's approval, their junior colleagues to fulfil any simple task that may fall to them after this. It would enable the senior men that wished to do so to marry, and to all it would give a much-needed sense of some relief from onerous and harassing conditions of life. As a result a much greater selection of candidates would present themselves for any vacancy that occurred, and much better work than is sometimes done now could be reasonably expected. Most subordinate members of the lay staff have these and other privileges, and why they should be totally denied to the entire medical staff below the superintendent is a mystery, and very injurious to the service.—I am, etc.,

November 17th.

ASSISTANT MEDICAL OFFICER.

A PARASITIC MOULD OF THE HOUSE-FLY.

SIR,—The importance of the house-fly as a factor in the spread of disease is becoming daily more important.

One of the many methods that have been proposed for their destruction is the use of a parasitic mould, *Empusa muscae*, to the ravages of which house-flies succumb in large numbers in the autumn. This mould has hitherto resisted all attempts at cultivation, and recently a question was asked in Parliament about it.

It may therefore be of interest to your readers to know that the artificial cultivation of what appears to be this pathogenic fungus may be carried out, direct from the fly, in liquid horse serum three months old, from which it can be subcultured on to blood agar. The cultures in each case were incubated at 37° C.

A blood agar tube covered with the mould thus grown was sent by me to Mr. M. Massee, of the Royal Gardens, Kew, who is an expert in this class of organism. He kindly examined the growth and expressed the opinion that it was an *Empusa muscae*, the morphological characters of which had been modified by growth on artificial media.—I am, etc.,

H. DE RIEMER MORGAN.

The Lister Institute, Elstree, Herts, Nov. 27th.

STREET NOISES.

SIR,—You were good enough last September to grant me space in your columns to invite the support of the profession in approaching the authorities with a view to mitigating street noises. I have now to thank you very much for that favour, and to express my gratitude to those medical men who were kind enough to communicate with me. You and they will, no doubt, be pleased to learn that the authorities, following my representation, have issued an order prescribing the use of silencers for motor cycles after March 31st next, and have informed me that borough or county councils are empowered under Section 23, Municipal Corporation Act, 1882; Section 16, Local Government Act, 1888; and Section 5, London Government Act, 1899, to make by-laws dealing with the other noises complained of.—I am, etc.,

CHAS. MONK,

Lieut.-Col. I.M.S. (retired).

Burlton Lodge, Station Road, Barnes, S.W.,
Nov. 25th, 1912.

DOCTORS AND THE MANUFACTURE OF DRUNKARDS.

SIR,—As the executive of the National British Women's Temperance Association, we desire in rejoinder to your leaderette of August 3rd, entitled "Doctors and the Manufacture of Drunkards," to offer you our assurance that the appeal issued by our association to the medical profession on this subject was not intended by us to raise or perpetuate a charge against the profession, but, on the contrary, to assist in dissipating any justification still remaining for such charge.

Being already, but too fully, aware of the unreliability of evidence given by inebriates, to which you direct our attention, we desire to state that we issued our appeal to the profession, not upon the statements of these unfortunates alone, but also upon the past personal experience of many of our own members in regard to the prescription of alcohol in sickness or debility. It is, therefore, with the greatest satisfaction that we welcome the assurance of your JOURNAL that the medical profession is at this time as fully alive to the importance of temperance on the well-being of the people as are the members of our own temperance association, and we desire to thank you for the help and encouragement thus given us in the work for the community which we are now endeavouring to press forward with all the means, however inadequate, in our power, and which will be materially assisted by your endorsement of our views.—On behalf of the executive, I am, etc.,

47, Victoria Street, Westminster,
S.W., Oct. 23rd.

AGNES E. SLACK,
Acting Vice-President.

NEW DRUGS.

SIR,—Professor Dixon's statement before the Parliamentary Committee on Patent Medicines, to the effect that no useful drug had been introduced except by a man