

SIR,—I have received a similar notice of reduction of fees from the New York Life Assurance Society, and as the medical report is unusually long I have declined to accept the new terms, and have notified to the medical men in this town my decision.

It is worthy of note that a second letter to me from the Company, urging a favourable reply, was signed by Dr. A. Ogier Ward (their medical referee).—I am, etc.,
Liskeard, Oct. 15th. WILLIAM HAMMOND.

OUR correspondent "G." writes with reference to Mr. D. C. Haldeman's letter in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of last week, page 1139, that he had fallen into an error in speaking of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York. The circular to which he refers was issued by the New York Life Insurance Company. He expresses great regret that he should have made this mistake.

MEDICAL OFFICERS OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS.

SIR,—I consider that the suggestion of "Despairing" in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of October 6th, "that a committee of medical men and parish councillors be formed to decide any grievances against a medical officer," is objectionable, and, in the case of medical officers of remote districts, would prove impracticable.

Dr. Taylor (*ibid.*) clearly points out some of the objectionable features which characterise many parish councils in the remote highlands and islands, and I can fully confirm his remarks from letters I received from many medical officers of remote parishes when I was engaged in organising the "holiday memorial" which was recently presented to the Local Government Board of Scotland.

I trust that Dr. W. L. Muir, the Secretary to the Scottish Poor-law Medical Officers' Association, will, through the medium of the JOURNAL, publicly and fully explain what the Association is doing at present as regards the Fixity of Tenure Bill; and also—what, too, is almost of as pressing importance to the medical officers of the remote highlands and islands—what the Association is prepared to promise to do as regards annual free holiday, free official residences, adequate salaries, superannuation, etc., all of which are urgent matters, affecting more especially the medical officers of the more remote parishes of the highlands and islands.

We cannot wait much longer for the passing into law of a Bill to amend the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894. We must do something now—at once. Since the average fee of a *locum tenens* has of late risen considerably, the holiday question has become all the more urgent. I have recently heard of the case of a medical officer of a remote parish, who, having contracted serious illness in the performance of his professional duties, was compelled—through no fault of his own—to borrow money to pay his *locum tenens*!

Now, this is surely a disgraceful state of matters. Not only should the parish council be required by law (as in Ireland) to grant a free annual holiday, but in cases of illness, such as the above, a free *locum tenens* should be immediately supplied at the parish expense, or, alternatively, the parish council should—at the public expense—insure the medical officer against sickness and accident.

Hitherto the resistance of medical officers to the petty tyranny of certain parish councils has been of a passive nature only. Should our proposed direct appeal to Parliament be without a favourable result, a more active propaganda must be initiated in order to draw public attention to our undeniable grievances, and it will be a pity if a union of medical officers of the highlands and islands should be forced to resort to the expedient of systematically and vigorously "boycotting" medical vacancies in the remote highlands and islands; and to counter-advertising in the newspapers to warn intending candidates against the methods.—I am, etc.,

J. F. D. MACARA, M.B., C.M.

Durness, Sutherlandshire, Oct. 11th.

THE LICENTIATES OF THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES OF LONDON.

SIR,—I venture to submit the following considerations to those who are interested in the alteration of the letters L.S.A., which are inadequate because they imply nothing about medi-

cine, surgery, or midwifery; and misleading because they suggest the chemist and druggist rather than the physician and surgeon.

1. A Licentiate, as all Europe knows, is a graduate in a University Faculty, higher than a Bachelor and lower than a Doctor. The licentiate is a degree.

2. The Society of Apothecaries, having the right to confer the degrees of Licentiate in Medicine, Surgery, and Midwifery, is a University Faculty, amongst other things.

3. As other University Faculties confer the degrees of M.B., Ch.B. (and B.A.O. if they like), so the University Faculty of Apothecaries' Hall should have its degrees since 1886 represented by the corresponding letters, M.L., Ch.L. (and, if it likes, L.A.O.).

These degrees are already given to the graduates of Apothecaries' Hall, of the London Royal College of Physicians, and of several other places; so that all that is necessary is a resolution passed by the several societies, and forwarded to the General Medical Council, with a view to the correction of next year's Register, as regards affixed letters.—I am, etc.,

CHARLES GASKELL HIGGINSON, M.R.C.S., etc.
Birmingham Infirmary, Oct. 13th.

SIR,—I quite agree with the efforts being made by the Association of Licentiates of the Society of Apothecaries to elevate their status, and certainly think that the L.S.A. by itself does not convey to the ordinary lay mind that it is a qualification in medicine, surgery, and midwifery.

The most serviceable qualification in my opinion would be L.M.S., L.M., L.S.A.Lond. (Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery, Licentiate in Midwifery, and Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries). Here the honourable and ancient title of L.S.A. is retained, which is as it should be, considering the Society of Apothecaries of London has done more to safeguard the interests of the profession than any other body.—I am, etc.,

G. HENRY BRAND, M.D.Brux., L.R.C.P.,
Northampton, Oct. 15th. L.M.Irel., L.S.A.Lond.

SIR,—The fact that the Society of Apothecaries of London is the only licensing body in the United Kingdom which grants a single title to a double qualification is a very real grievance, more particularly when its Licentiates are competing for a public appointment. L.S.A. is a totally misleading and inadequate title, having no direct connection with medicine or surgery; but I have reason to believe the Society intends dividing the examination into two diplomas as the London colleges do, designated by the letters Lic. Med. Soc. Apoth. and Lic. Surg. Soc. Apoth. Lond. This is certainly a step in the right direction, and will fairly, although not entirely, meet the wants of its diplomates.—I am, etc.,

October 13th. L.M.S.A., L.S.S.A.Lond.

ABDOMINAL OPERATIONS: THE CASE OF DR. IMLACH.

SIR,—I read with much interest your editorial note in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of September 29th on the recent movement in Liverpool with regard to the Imlach case, and also the letters on the same subject that have since appeared. I have no desire, nor do I think it would answer any good purpose, to revive the old controversy. Times have changed, even since 1886, and modes of practice then looked at with disfavour are now recognised as legitimate by the great majority of the profession, and have become incorporated into the routine teaching of the ordinary textbooks. Those who are in advance of the medical opinion of their time, and introduce new and startling operations without waiting to be assured of the sanction of their brethren, always have been, and probably always will be, liable to be misjudged. Pioneer work, as Professor John W. Taylor has pointed out, is absolutely necessary for all advance in our art. Yet those who undertake it do so at great personal hazard, not of life and limb, but of what to all true men is dearer than either—reputation, both in and out of their profession. The pioneer work of Dr. Imlach, by which both the profession and the public are now profiting day by day, cost him his reputation and ruined his career. Is it too late to make him some reparation?