of medical practitioners may differ a little accordingly as their work lies in town or country, is consultant or general, or is private or connected with appointments. But none of them are differentiated by the accident of residence, other things being the same, within the boundaries of a particular administrative political area. It follows, therefore, that every practitioner in the Union is interested, more or less, in the question of the personnel of every Medical Council. Each Council contributes something to the common stock of the controlling factors of medical practice, and every action taken by any one Council influences, more or less, every other Council. In other words, there is a sort of reciprocity between them, a reciprocity the tendency of which is being more and more recognized the closer we draw to the wished-for goal of a Medical Council for the whole of the Union. Whenever that unified Medical Council comes into being, nothing is more certain than the fact that its stock-in-trade, for a considerable time at least, will be mainly made up of the precedents set by the four existing bodies. Consequently, the personnel of these existing bodies is a matter of far more than local importance.

We make the above remarks with a view of exhorting men registered in the Cape, but resident elsewhere, to recognize that they have a duty in the direction of exercising the vote to which they are entitled.

Now a few brief words as to the lines upon which such vote should be exercised. A little clear thinking is necessary in this connection. We ought to recognize that a Medical Councillor should be elected because he is held to be a good man for that particular position, not because he is a good man in other directions. A man may be an admirable physician or surgeon, but that will not help him one bit in doing the particular work of the Medical Councils. He may be keenly interested in, and enthusiastic over, the redress of the scandalous grievances of District Surgeons and other public Medical Officers, but he will never have one shadow of an opportunity on the Medical Council for giving play to this interest or this enthusiasm, simply because no Medical Council has the slightest locus standi in connection with them. Some people think that a Medical Council is a sort of medical trade union charged with all and every sort of duties in the way of medical matters. Of course, it is nothing of the kind, and the moment it attempts to dictate to Government or any other body on matters outside its statutory functions, it is pulled up with a very round turn.

What your Medical Councillor should possess is first a spirit of absolute justice and impartiality, and added to these should be a wide knowledge of what one might call medical politics, best gained at Medical Society and Medical Congress meetings, and in addition as large an endowment as possible of what one might call "the legal mind," the faculty of looking at things in an impersonal way, and of carefully paying loyal attention to precedents. And, if obtainable, the wider knowledge he has of practitioners outside his own immediate neighbourhood, the better and the more useful he will be. The very best equipment for a representative of any kind is a wide acquaintance with the sentiments of the people whom he represents.

One more word in conclusion. We are now approaching, too rapidly, the parting of the ways on a very momentous question. That question is whether medicine is to remain a profession, guided by the ethical rules of a profession, or whether it shall be merely a skilled trade, responsible to nothing higher than what is called "commercial morality," a morality which, generally speaking, means just keeping clear of actual dishonesty. A few years ago, there were no two ways, at least outside the minds of a few of the rank and file of the profession. Nowadays, commercialism is mounting up higher in our ranks, and we say, and say it advisedly, that there is a real danger of a commercially-minded element obtaining a definite footing actually inside the governing bodies of the profession. Such an element is even now in evidence where least expected. There may be little danger, for the present, of its becoming a majority in any one Council, although even that may come later, but we may remind all voters that the moral influence of a Medical Council deliverance on even the best lines of honourable tradition is very grievously discounted if it goes forth with the known accompaniment of having been fiercely contested by even a small minority. For this reason, let us urge every man who holds by the old professional ways to satisfy himself up to the hilt beforehand that the men he votes for hold staunchly by them likewise. We write deliberately, and with the gravest feeling of there being a stern necessity for us so to write.

South African Buismiddels.

By W. F. WICHT, CAPT., S.A.M.C.

The word "huismiddels" is simply Dutch for "home remedies." These home remedies have been in use amongst South African people for generations past, more especially so amongst the Dutch-speaking section of the community.

It is really marvellous to see the degree of popularity these "huismiddels" still enjoy. In the early days, when it was often impossible to procure medical aid, their use can well be understood; nowadays, however, when medical assistance—barring in very exceptional cases—can always be obtained, their continued popularity strikes one as being rather remarkable. That

they are still greatly used is beyond doubt. Being a South African by birth, I have naturally come in contact with them a great deal, both before and after taking up medicine. The only explanation I can give for their continued use is:-

(1) That at least some of them must be good.

(2) A feeling of "what was good enough for my father is good enough for myself."

Our knowledge with regard to the chemistry of South African plants is so limited that to separate the grain from the chaff would be an extremely difficult undertaking. However, I sincerely hope that this article may induce someone to take up the subject and help to stimulate research work in this direction, so adding to our present scanty knowledge, which may almost be regarded as nil. As far as my own experience goes, I have come across some "huismiddels," the use of which is undoubtedly beneficial to the patient; others are simply useless; others are not exactly useless, but are rather revolting, and the same results could be procured by much more congenial methods. Still others, again, are positively disgusting, and very often absolutely useless as well. However, I make no attempt at criticiing the various remedies mentioned below; in fact I do not even try to classify them in any way whatsoever, but simply treat them, as far as possible, in alphabetical order, leaving it to the reader to judge for himself as to which are worth considering and which not. I do not wish this article to be judged from a medical point of view, for if regarded from this standpoint, it is absolutely useless. I have simply compiled same because I thought that it might interest at least some of the profession.

1. Aam-beie-bos, also called "Bitterbossie" (Chironia baccifera).-The name simply means "Hæmorrhoid Bush," and itself explains the use to which it is put. It is a bushy herb, with bright red berries, has a bitter taste, and is used in a similar manner to gentian, which it resembles somewhat in its properties, viz., being a stimulant of the gastric functions.

2. Acht-dag-Genees-Bos (Eight-day Healing Bush). -At least three different shrublets are used for brewing a tea with certain aromatic properties; they are Hermannia hyssopifolia, Lobostemon fructosis, and

Psoralea decumbens.

3. Als (Wilde) (Artemisia afra).—A half-shrub resembling the European alsem, A. absinthium (wormwood), and used medicinally for the same purpose. Taken internally in the form of an infusion, it acts as a diaphoretic; it is also applied externally when heated, and is supposed to act as an anodyne, though most probably any beneficial results so obtained are brought about mainly by the heat and not the "wilde als."

4. Appel-der-Liefde (Physalis Peruviana), Cape Gooseberry.-The heated leaves applied to part are

supposed to remove all existing inflammation.

5. Acorn.—The acorn is roasted, powdered, and taken internally for dysentery and diarrhoea. An infusion made from oak bark is used for the same purpose.

6. Ant-Nest.—Infused with boiling water, is given internally for whooping cough. Any good done is probably due to "formic acid," which is supposed to increase the tone of muscles.

7. Alum and White of an Egg.-Well beaten together, is applied to bleeding point for allaying hæmorrhage. Not only is the alum astringent, but it also coagulates the albumen of the egg, of the blood, and of the tissues themselves. In this manner it occludes the lumon of any blood-vessel that may have been severed,

and acts in a very efficient manner.

8. Balderjan (Wilde) (Valeriana Capensis).-The root is used medicinally like that of the European V. Officinatis. It is an irritant when applied externally. Internally it stimulates the alimentary tract, also the bronchial mucosa and kidneys. It further stimulates the circulation, reflexly from the stomach.

9. Buttermilk, also "Curdled Milk."-Is supposed to do good in measles and fever cases, and is given ad.

lib. Probably acts by virtue of contained acid.

10. Brandy.—Is greatly used either by itself, or as a basis for evaporating lotions. Taken internally in large quantities it is supposed to act as a anti-venene. Vinegar is used in a similar manner for the latter purpose.

11. Blistering Bush, or Wild Celery (Peucedanum galbanum).—Used in cases of dropsy. Infusion is taken internally, and acts as a diaphoretic. This plant produces dermatitis and blisters within 40 to 50 hours after coming into contact with the bare skin.

12. Brandblaren (Knowltonia vesicatoria).-The

leaves are employed as a vesicant.

13. Braamwortels.-The roots of Rubus pinnatus are crushed and boiled, and the resultant infusion is taken for diarrhœa. It has some astringent properties, and certainy does seem to do good.

14. Beeswax.—Applied to septic places is supposed to "draw" same. Greatly used in cases of "Furuncle." It undoubtedly has some action in this direction, probably by virtue of the "myricin" and "cerotic acid" it

15. Bluegum (Eucalyptus globulus).—Infusion made from leaves sprayed in vermin and flea infected places quickly clears same. Steam inhaled from the boiling

leaves disinfects the respiratory tract.

16. Buchu (Barosma betulina).-Official preparations of buchu are the "Infusion" and the "Tincture." Internally gives feeling of warmth to stomach, also acts as a mild diuretic and disinfectant of the urinary tract. As a "huismiddel," used greatly as diuretic in the form of "buchu brandy. Buchu vinegar, as well as the brandy, also extensively used in cases of sprains for the reduction of swelling.

17. Cancerbush (Sutherlandia fructescens).-A half shrub, two to four feet in height, with scarlet flowers. It is supposed to cure cancer. Clinical experiments have proved this belief to be entirely without founda-

18. Cardamon (Wilde) (Fagara Capensis).-The fruit is very aromatic and acts as a carminative and stomachic.

19. Camphor.—Ground to a fine powder and used as

a snuff, is sometimes utilized for curing "cold in the head." The antiseptic properties of the camphor certainly seems to do a deal of good in this case. Camphor Brandy, well diluted, is used as an "eye-wash," the antiseptic properties of the camphor once more being brought into action. Camphor and Jeyes' Fluid is taken internally for pneumonia and chest complaints generally. Both being disinfectants, it is quite possible that good may be done. Moreover, camphor is a cardiac stimulant as well as a stomachic and carminative.

20. Cabbage Leaves.—Heated and applied locally, is supposed to do good in cases of "gall-stones." Any good done is relief of pain due to heat and counterirritant action of the cabbage leaf. In cases of ædema of the legs the heated cabbage leaf is applied to the ealf, where it mechanically reduces the ædema by "drawing" blisters.

21. Cowdung, fresh, with Vinegar.—Is used as a gargle. The vinegar does good, but as for the cowdung—Well, personally, I prefer the sore throat.

22. Cajaput Oil.—Made by distillation from the leaves of Melaleuca leucodendron. Used as cure for ear-ache. Action identical with that of oil of cloves, viz., counter-irritant and eventually local anæsthetic.

23. Davidjes (Antizoma Capensis).—Weak tincture made with brandy is used in dysenteric cases. It is a

purgative.

- 24. Dogfat.—Is taken internally for consumption. Rather disgusting, especially as beef or mutton fat would serve the same purpose, viz., preserving the body fats
- 25. Dagga (Wilde) (Leonotis leonurus).—Properties similar to those of Indian hemp—Cannabis sativa. Patient is made to smoke the dried leaves in cases of partial paralysis. Probably the functions are dulled to certain extent, and so symptoms are somewhat allayed for time being. It is further used as an antivenene. Taken internally, is supposed to reduce corpulence. Klip dagga (L. Leonitis) has similar properties, and is used in same manner.
- 26. Dauw-Worm-Bos (Lobstemon fructicosus).—Is Dutch for ringworm. A decoction made from this plant is greatly used as a cure for above-mentioned disease.
- 27. Dysentery Herb or Naald Bossie.—Two shrubs, Monsonia ovata and Monsonia biflora. Both supposed to be most beneficial in dysenteric cases. Pau-Pau used for the same purpose, and certainly does excellently. The latter contains a digestive substance similar to pepsine. Botanical name, Carica papaya.

28. Earthworms.—Baked in olive oil, are rubbed on jaw to remove stiffness. Also rubbed on hernia to reduce same. The massage may do good, but for the rest, purely superstitious, useless, and disgusting.

29. Flier (Chilianthus oleaceus).—The scrapings off the root act as a powerful purgative. Wine boiled with the roots, taken in cases of anasarca. A rather interesting belief is attached to this remedy. It acts by virtue of being an irritant. The result is that if too big a dose is taken vomiting is induced. The general

belief is that when this happens the root has been scraped up instead of down, therefore the medicine acts upwards instead of downwards.

30. Finkel (Carum Capense).—Similar to fennel, Faniculum officinale. Originally from Southern Europe as a garden esculent. Used in a similar manner to "wilde als," vi., when heated and applied externally supposed to act as an anodyne. It is not used internally, however.

31. Goats' Dung.—Infused with water and given by mouth (hot) about 2 ozs. at a time. Supposed to be beneficial in measle cases. It acts as a powerful dia-

phoretic and brings out the rash.

32. Gaukum, also known as Hottentot Fig (Mesembrianthemum edule) and Sour Fig (M. Acinaciforme).

—Are crushed, and juice obtained is used as a gargle for relaxed throat. Is astringent, and serves the purpose excellently. It contains malic and citric acid, or a combination of these two and their calcium salts.

33. Horse Dung.—To which is added some brandy, is recommended for colic. The brandy may do good.

The horse dung I prefer not to discuss.

34. Ivy Leaf.—Steeped in vinegar acts splendidly as a corn cure. Not only does the acetic acid of the vinegar affect the corn, but the ivy leaf itself seems to do a great deal in that direction. Also used for removal of cancerous growths.

35. Jackal Liver.-Dried and powdered, is taken

for pulmonary tuberculosis.

- 36. Kalmoes.—Originally applied to Acorus calamus. Root stock used as a carminative. Here in South Africa the name is applied to several other plants (Umbelliferæ), with balsomic rizomes. Used as remedy for diarrhœa.
- 37. Katte Kruie (Ballota Africana).—A weak infusion is made with brandy, and an occasional dose taken for internal piles.
- 38. Karmedik (Cuicus Lanceolatus).—Tincture made with brandy and taken daily is supposed to improve digestion. This tincture is also used as a wash for erysipelas and ringworm.

39. Kisi-Blare (Malva parviflora).—An introduced weed. Infusion made in manner similar to tea and

taken internally as a nerve tonic.

40. Katdoorn (Asparagus stipulaceus).—Infusion made from roots, taken internally is believed to beneficial to consumptives.

41. Kruidje-Roer-Mij-Niet.—Several species of melianthus. The leaves are boiled and the water used as a lotion for wounds.

42. Kruistemint (Mentha Crespa).—Infusion is used for gynæcological complaints generally.

- 43. Kukumakranke (Gythelia spiralis).—The ripe fruit, which is a very aromatic berry, is used medicinally. A weak tincture is made by steeping same in brandy for a time. This is then taken internally as a cure for acute indigestion. Relief is certainly obtained by these means.
- 44. Kamfer Bos, also known as Vaai Bos (Trachonamthus Camphoratis). Used as a cure for toothache. Is very aromatic. Cloves used for same purpose.

- 45. Kapiva (Wilde) (Bulbine asphodeloides).—Used in a similar manner to "copaiba."
- 46. Kina Bossie (Lencodendron concinuum).—Contains a bitter glucoside, and is used in similar manner to quinine.
- 47. Knob-Hout (Fagara Capensis).—Infusion made from the bark of this plant, is drunk, and is believed to act as a preventative to anthrax. Action purely superstitious.
- 48. Langelier (Polygala Myrtifolia).—The leaves employed as a poultice against gout. The heat is most likely the chief agent procuring relief.
- 49. Maag-Pijn-Bossie (Myrica quercifolia).—Leaves are very aromatic. Infusion used as cure for stomachache
- 50. Maarman (Urginea altissima).—The fleshy scales of the bulb are heated and applied to gouty limbs. Any relief obtained probably due to the heat.
- 51. Malfa (Wilde) Pelargonium cucullatum).—Root used as a cure for diarrhœa. The leaves are applied to open sores, hairy side on, and are supposed to "draw" same.
- 52. Melk Gras (Euphorbia helioscopia).—The white latex is used for the removal of warts. I have tried this personally with very satisfactory results. Action probably due to "euphorbon," an irritant resin contained in same. Ordinary fig sap (Ficus carica) acts in a similar manner.
- 53. Noois-Haar (Cassytha ciliolata).—A parasitic leafless climber. A decoction from this is used as a hair restorer. Action probably nil.
- 54. Nastagal (Solanum ingrum).—Nightshade—berries not poisonous here in South Africa. Dried and mixed with honey, supposed to be beneficial to consumptives. Probably the sugar of the honey does any good that may result. Though the nightshade may do good for the night-sweats.
- 55. Oond Bos (Conyza unafolia).—Used for coughs and chest complaints generally. Probably diaphoretic in action.
- 56. Pijp Olic (Nicotine).—Used as an application for snake and insect bites. Also for getting rid of ticks. In first instance probably only acts as antiseptic; and in second case, powerfully affects the tick, causing it to drop off and die.
- 57. Pomegranate Peel.—Is dried and powdered, then mixed with some powdered rice. The whole is infused and taken internally as a cure for dysentery and diarrheea. Should act in an excellent manner. Also used at a vermifuge.
- 58. Paarde Pis (plant) (Clausera inaequalis).— Used medicinally in fever cases. Action diaphoretic. Supposed to have a beneficial effect in rheumatic cases. Practical experience has proved this belief entirely without foundation.
- 59. Peterselie (Wilde) (Peucedanum tenuifolium).
 —Is not taken internally, otherwise used for same purpose as wild celery (blistering bush) described above.
- 60. Ramnas (Raphanus raphanistrum).—Taken internally for gravel. It is either eaten or the juice is drunk.

- 61. Salt.—Finely powdered, stops hæmorrhage when applied to bleeding point.
- 62. Stink Kruid (Matricaria globifera).—An infusion made from this plant is given for convulsions.
- 63. Salie (Wilde).—Various species of "Salvia," e.g., S. Africana, S. Aruca, and S. Paniculata. An infusion is made in similar manner to tea and taken internally for colds. It acts as a diaphoretic.
- 64. Spanish Fly (Cantharise).—Applied to abdomen in cases of convulsions. Action vesicant and counter irritant. Mustard leaf is used for same purpose.
- 65. Squill (Wilde) (Scilla lanceafolia).—Bulb used medicinally. Action expectorant diuretic and gastro-intestinal irritant.
- 66. Stuipe Bossie (Nymania Capensis).—Supposed to be a remedy against convulsions.
- 67. Tong Blaar.—Several species of Rumex. The seeds are used as an anti-dysenteric remedy.
- 68. Turpentine.—When applied to bleeding point readily allays hæmorrhage.
- 69. Tobacco Leaf.—Used as dressing for cuts, etc. The leaf is thoroughly moistened before application. Acts as an antiseptic by virtue of the nicotine it contains, and is excellent for above-mentioned purpose.
- 70. Tering Bos. (Thesium spee?).—Infusion made from the leaves supposed to do good in tubercular cases. Action nil.
- 71. Tondel Blaar (Hermas gigantea).—Leaves used as dressing for wounds. Acts in purely mechanical manner, similar to oiled silk, by preventing evaporation and so keeping wound moist and stimulating granulation. Pig Lily (arum) leaves used for same purpose.
- 72. Turks Vijg (Prickly Pear) (Opuntia Decumana).—Poultice made from pulp of thick fleshy leaves. Heat most likely doing any good that may result.
- 73. Veter Bossie (Crassula lycopodiodides.).—Used for same purpose as pau-pau and naaldbossie, viz., as cure for dysentery.
- 74. Vinegar (Strong).—With as much salt dissolved in it as possible, is painted on to warts. In time the warts will be eaten away.
- 75. Veld-Schoen Blaren (Hæinanthus cocineus).— Used for keeping wound dressings moist. Action purely mechanical.
- 76. Varnish.—Painted on chest and back of patient suffering from pneumonia is a common practice. Any beneficial result is entirely due to contained turpentine acting as a counter irritant.
- 77. Wilde Wingerd (Tops) (Cliffortia odoranta).— Is a tea. Infusion believed to do good in cases of internal piles.
- 78. Weeg-Blaar (Plantago lanceolata).—Small pieces of root introduced into external ear is supposed to cure ear-ache.
- 79. Wormkruid (Tanacetum multiforum).—Supposed to be a vermifuge.
- 80. Ziekte Troost, also known as Plaatdoorn (Arctopus Echinatus). The root contains an aromatic balsam. Greatly used in gonorrheal cases.

81. Zinkeng Bossie (Pelargonium ramossimum).— Infusion taken for neuralgia and allied complaints.

Above is by no means an exhaustive list of these "huismiddels." There are countless others, many of which I feel positive will stand any test as regards their utility. Before concluding, however, I will mention a few more which I have not classified.

For anæmia, donkey or tortoise blood is given.

Lemon juice and salt used to cure ringworm. Ink used for same purpose.

Immersing the finger in hot salt water does good

in cases of whitlow.

Counter irritation is sometimes produced by brush-

ing with a hard bristled brush.

Cobwebs often placed to bleeding point to allay hæmorrhage. It certainly does so, but is rather dangerous, as clean cobwebs are things unknown.

Fresh hot cow-dung, to which some vinegar is added is commonly used as an application for sprains.

For gastritis the partly digested food is taken from

goat's stomach and given to patient.

A rather ingenious, if useless, remedy for tapeworm is as follows:—The patient has no evening meal. This starves the worm. The next morning he places a bit of bread, or takes some milk in his mouth, taking care, however, not to swallow any of it. This entices the worm upwards. The patient now takes a drink of brandy to intoxicate the worm. Once this is accomplished he takes a good dose of jalap to get rid of the drunken worm.

In conclusion I would just like to pass a few remarks relating to above. That some of the remedies mentioned are good is beyond doubt. However, I will not criticise any of them, leaving that to the reader, as stated before. A few points though that rather impressed me during the compilation of this paper are:—

- The number of remedies relying on heat to produce the desired result.
- 2. The frequency with which the name of the plant describes the use to which it is put.
- The prevalence of alcohol as the active principle in a large number of "huismiddels."

Vacant District Surgeoncies.

The following are advertised: Fraserburg, Namaqualand, Warrenton, Kakamas, Petrusville, Phillipstown, De Lagersdrift, Weenen, Frankfort, Groot Spelonken, and Calitzdorp. The last-named is the only new one. The appointment is temporary until the close of the war, and the salary is £75 per annum, with the usual allowances.

Dr. G. Graham has been appointed Nominee Member of the Orange Free State Medical and Pharmacy Council for the remainder of the term of office of Dr. G. S. Clark.

The Cape Medical Council Glection.

It has been suggested to us that it might be well to give a few personal particulars about the candidates in the above election, for the information of brethren elsewhere than in Capetown, who may know very little or nothing about them.

Through the lamented death of Dr. L. A. W. Beck, since the voting papers were prepared, the list is reduced to five for four vacancies. These five are: Drs. A. Jasper Anderson, W. Darley-Hartley, Matthew Hewat, A. Marius Wilson, and D. J. Wood. All, with the exception of Dr. M. Hewat, who now resides near Stellenbosch, are Capetown residents.

Dr. A. Jasper Anderson is a Bart.'s and Oxford man, M.A. and M.B. of Oxford, D.P.H. (Cantab.), and M.R.C.S. He has been Medical Officer of Health for Capetown since 1901, after having previously filled several important Public Health posts in England. He has been a continuous hard worker in the British Medical Association, has served as President of the C.G.H. (Western) Branch, has been a member of the S.A. Committee since its formation, was its Secretary for a time, and is now its President.

Dr. Darley-Hartley is a Guy's man, M.D. of Durham, M.R.C.P. (Lond.), M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P. Has been editor of the Medical Record since its formation. Was formerly in general practice and later in medical consulting practice. He is at present the senior representative Member of the Council, having sat continuously for fifteen years. He is a Member of the B.M.A., and has served on the Council of the C.G.H. (Western) Branch and on several of its Committees.

Dr. Mathew Hewat was, until recently, a general practitioner at Mowbray, but retired from practice a few months ago, and is now farming near Stellenbosch. He has been a Member of Council for three years. He was formerly a member of the B.M.A., and has served the office of President of the local Branch. He is M.B., C.M. (Edin.).

Dr. A. Marius Wilson is a general practitioner in Capetown, and one of the Physicians to the New Somerset Hospital, and has been for many years Railway Surgeon for Capetown. He has been a Member of Council for three years. He is M.D. (Durham), M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Dr. D. J. Wood is the well-known Capetown ophthalmologist. He holds the M.B., C.M. (Edin.), is a member of the B.M.A., and has served as Secretary and President of the local Branch. He has been Ophthalmic Surgeon to the New Somerset Hospital for many years. He was a member of the Medical Council from August, 1902, until the end of 1915, when, through an oversight, he was not nominated for re-election.

Major Gurney, S.A.M.C., is now Commandant of the S.A.M.C. Training Depôt at Roberts' Heights.