THE MEDICAL DIRECTORY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May we be allowed through your columns to appeal to all members of the profession to return to us at once their circulars for the Medical Directory for 1908? The volume will be published about a fortnight earlier than has been customary, although the circulars were sent out a month later. It will thus be seen that the Medical Directory will be more up to date than formerly by six weeks, and in this effort, which will prove an advantage to all concerned, we rely upon the kind help always shown us by the profession.

We are, Sirs, your obedient servants,
THE EDITORS OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTORY.

7, Great Marlborough-street, London, W., Sept. 12th, 1907.

ETHER INHALATION IN PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Your correspondent, in suggesting the use of ether inhalation for the benefit of phthisis, advances one argument as a possible justification for the measure. This argument is the fact that cases of tuberculous peritonitis have been benefited by abdominal section and that perhaps the benefit has really been due to the ether inhaled. Now in face of the fact that clinical experience with regard to the administration of anæsthetics to the subjects of pulmonary tuberculosis is very adverse to the use of that anæsthetic it seems to me that some much stronger support for the practice is needed before we recommend the ether inhalation for the benefit of phthisis. Moreover, Wright has put forward a rational and extremely probable explanation of the benefit accruing in cases of tuberculous peritonitis in which the abdomen has been opened. My own experience, and I believe it tallies with that of most anæsthetists, as it certainly does with that of such physicians as I have met in connexion with cases of operation upon phthisical subjects, is that these cases form one of the classes in which chloroform is *par excellence* the anæsthetic to be chosen in contradistinction from ether. The latter drug is much more likely to increase the activity of an active, or arouse that of a latent, tuberculous focus in the lungs. The use of chloroform inhalation for phthisis in the manner suggested by Dr. R. H. Hodgson has been recommended, but I am not aware of its having been tried or, if so, with what result. Nor can I recall from my own experience cases in which the lung trouble of a patient operated upon for lesion elsewhere has obviously benefited by the chloroform administered. On the contrary, however, I could inform Dr. Hodgson of several instances where pulmonary tuberculosis has been seriously aggravated after operations performed under ether.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Sept. 17th, 1907.

J. BLUMFELD.

THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT, 1906.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The regulations of the Secretary of State as to the duties of medical referees have been issued to them, and the profession will be pleased to hear that it will not be the fault of the medical referees under those regulations if any breach of medical etiquette should occur. On reference being made to a medical referee by a registrar of a county court the referee is instructed to give notice of the time and place of his intended examination to both the workman or his solicitor, and to the employer or his solicitor, and printed forms are supplied for this purpose, on which it is distinctly stated that any statement made or submitted by either party will be considered.

It is quite clear that the Secretary of State could not go farther than this, unless the Treasury was prepared to pay for the attendance of medical men acting in the interests of either employer or employed, which, of course, would be impossible, owing to the immense expense it would entail. Naturally it will be in the interest of both employer and the workman to place before the medical referee the fullest possible statement of the case as it appears to them, and this cannot properly be done except by a medical man. I feel quite sure that medical referees will be pleased to meet any qualified practitioner asked to attend by either employer or

workman, and, in fact, by the wording of the regulation they could not refuse to do so.

The regulations also contain the following paragraph, which I think will meet with the general approval of the profession: "In cases involving special difficulty the medical referee may apply to the Secretary of State for special assistance, which may be granted by the Secretary of State, if he think fit, on such terms as to remuneration or otherwise as he may with the sanction of the Treasury determine." I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

S. Hampstead, N.W. ALBERT BENTHALL, F.R.C.P. Edin.

ACUTE ARTHRITIS COMPLICATING OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Mr. J. H. F. Nunn's contribution on this subject as it appeared in your issue of Sept. 14th, p. 771, is certainly one of great interest, but though arthritis as a complication of ophthalmia neonatorum is very exceptional it is not quite such a rarity as Mr. Nunn's paper would seem to imply. The condition was first described by Mr. R. Clement Lucas in 1885; subsequently Mr. Lucas published an elaborate paper on the subject, together with an analysis of the records of 23 cases as collected from British and European medical literature (*Medico-Chirurgical Transactions*, vol. lxxxii.). An interesting description of the joint affections is also given in Mr. Sydney Stephenson's "Contagious Ophthalmia," and personally I communicated an example of the disease to the Society for the Study of Disease in Children in 1902 and the record of this appeared in your issue of May 31st of that year, p. 1529. The condition is thus a well-established one but it is of such rarity and interest that all concerned must be glad that Mr. Nunn has put his own personal experience on record.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

London, W., Sept. 16th, 1907.

C. O. HAWTHORNE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Cases of arthritis in association with ophthalmia due to gonococci, of which Mr. J. H. F. Nunn has reported a good instance in THE LANCET of Sept. 14th, p. 771, although rare, are, of course, well known to ophthalmic surgeons. For the first observation of the kind we have to thank that acute observer, Mr. R. Clement Lucas.¹ Soon afterwards a case was reported by Dr. Johan Widmark² in a baby who developed ophthalmia on the sixteenth day of life, having presumably contracted the disorder from another child in the same ward. On the sixteenth day of the conjunctival inflammation the baby developed arthritis of one ankle, which subsided in something less than a fortnight under simple treatment. Widmark's communication, which was originally published in the Swedish language, will be found in that author's *Beiträge zur Ophthalmologie*, p. 95, 1891. In the same year that Lucas and Widmark wrote, another observation of the kind was published by Fendick.³ Gonococci have been found in the affected joints by several surgeons, as Deutschmann, Hoeck, Haushalter, Heiman, Paulsen, and Altland. The infection, however, seems to be often a mixed one. While this form of gonococcal arthritis is nowadays well known I believe that arthritis in association with pneumococcal ophthalmia neonatorum, of which I have seen two cases, has not yet been described.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Welbeck-street, W., Sept. 14th, 1907.

SYDNEY STEPHENSON.

ATHLETICS AND FOOD VALUES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The existence of the British Empire depends largely upon the efficiency of the British soldier and the efficiency of the British soldier is greatly affected by the quality of his food and drink. During the course of a recent walking tour among the volcanic mountains and precipices of Lappland, unsurpassed in Norway for grandeur and desolation, I was driven by necessity to certain conclusions about the best diet for marching 12 or 13 hours a day, which may possibly be of practical interest to some of your readers owing to the unusual conditions under which my observations were made.

¹ Brit. Med. Jour., Feb. 28th, 1885.

² Hygiea, August, 1885.

³ Brit. Med. Jour., Oct. 31st, 1885.