

## Medical Matters.



### OXYGEN GAS.

THE therapeutical advantages of Oxygen are becoming more widely recognised. For years past, the gas has been used as a most valuable restorative in cases of lung disease, in which a deficiency of lung tissue owing to inflammation or other causes has made the abstraction of the oxygen from the air more difficult than usual. It was only a common sense suggestion, therefore, that by giving oxygen in the concentrated state the patient would be benefited, and in practice it has been found that many lives have been saved by the use of this remedy. Still it is only within the last two years that the therapeutical value of oxygen has been further developed, and it is now known that by keeping wounds and ulcers which are in a torpid or unhealthy condition exposed to a stream of oxygen gas, a rapid improvement can be effected, followed by the development of more healthy tissue, and the speedy closure of the open surface. It is stated that this extension of the employment of oxygen was prompted by the observation that the Zulus take their wounded to high ground in which the air is of remarkable clearness, and that, here, wounds heal rapidly without any attention or dressing, the reason almost certainly being that they are thereby largely supplied with oxygen. At any rate, cases of obstinate ulcers which have been treated by this method have rapidly healed. There is now no difficulty in obtaining this valuable agent, and all Nurses should be acquainted with the methods of its administration.

### THE NEW PHOTOGRAPHY.

MANY improvements, both in the method of obtaining shadow photographs and in the practical advantages of the system, are being made; and a further extension has recently been promised by the well-known American scientist, Mr. Edison. It is stated that he has discovered that a crystalline form of tungstate of calcium enables an observer to utilise Röntgen's rays so as to see through eight inches of solid timber; and with the naked eye to see the bones of the arm and hand through the surrounding flesh. It is difficult, at the present day, to be surprised at

any advance which Science makes—especially when that advance comes to us across the Atlantic. But it will certainly open up a wide field for future research, and upset a considerable number of old-fashioned ideas, if it is proved to be possible thus to see through the proverbial brick wall, to say nothing of making the human body transparent to any casual observer.

### SERPENTS' POISON.

FOR some years past, a considerable amount of success has been obtained in the treatment of snake bites by various preparations obtained from the venom of these animals. Last week, experiments were described which showed conclusively that animals can be protected against snake bites by the administration of small and frequently-repeated doses of such venom. It is supposed that this explains the impunity with which snake charmers handle cobras and other poisonous snakes in India—because most of these men claim that they have been, previously, frequently bitten by venomous reptiles. The matter is, of course, one of immense importance for those resident in India and other countries in which poisonous serpents abound, and the discovery and method in question may mean the saving of some thousands of human lives every year.

### A FŒTUS STABBED.

A remarkable case has recently been published, in an Italian contemporary, of a woman who, when six months pregnant, was stabbed twice in the abdomen. Both wounds penetrated the abdominal cavity, and as there were signs of internal hæmorrhage, the abdomen was immediately opened. The uterus was found to have been perforated in two places by the knife, and the wounds were closed by sutures, the hæmorrhage being thus checked and the immediate danger removed. The patient progressed very well until the third day, when severe pains came on, and, on the next day, an abortion took place, from which she completely recovered. The fœtus was dead, and on being examined, it was found that one stab had penetrated into the left side of its chest, and that another had wounded the small intestine in two places, purulent peritonitis having thus been set up. The case, we believe, is unique, and the fact that peritonitis from the intestinal wound had been caused in a six months' fœtus, is a clinical fact of the greatest interest.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)