

**Medical Matters.****LANCING THE GUMS.**

A READER asks for information as to the cases in which this little operation is needed. It often gives great relief, both to the local discomfort, and also to the general ailment from which infants suffer; and, if it is sometimes done when there is no occasion for it—if it does no good, at any rate it can do no harm, and it is an almost painless procedure. There are four different conditions in which it is usually performed:—1. When a tooth is very near the surface, and by cutting through the thin gum, the child may be spared some needless suffering. 2. When the gums are very red, hot and swollen; only in this case the gum is scratched or cut to bleed it, not with the idea of letting out the imprisoned tooth. 3. When the child has for some week or two been feverish and suffering; while, though the gum is tense and swollen, the tooth does not seem to advance. 4. As an experiment when, during the progress of teething, a child is suddenly seized with convulsions for which there is no obvious cause. The irritation of the teeth may have to do with this occurrence; and the chance of relieving it by so simple a means is not to be thrown away. If the process of teething is going on quite naturally, no interference, medical or other, is either necessary or proper.

**TWINS.**

An interesting and valuable paper has recently been published, dealing with the causation of twins. Amongst the various family histories quoted by the writer are those of a woman who was one of a family of seventeen, including no twins; one of her sisters had had triplets and another twins; she herself had had twenty-two children in eighteen confinements, viz., four times twins and fourteen single births. The association of twin bearing and prolificacy may be regarded as clearly proved. For example, the daughters of a woman who has borne twins are usually highly prolific, and conversely the mothers of twins are usually the daughters of specially prolific women. It is a well-established physiological fact that plural pregnancies result from the simultaneous rupture of several ovisacs, and that this is a

consequence of the existence of a relatively or absolutely large number of ova in the ovaries. Amongst the instances quoted are the case of a woman who had seven children in three years—twice twins, and once triplets—and that of a mother who had borne thirty-two children.

**GLASS-BLOWERS' MOUTHS.**

THE effect of certain occupations in producing certain diseases has long been known to physicians, and in some instances has forced itself upon popular notice. Mechanics, in fact, sooner or later, necessarily recognize that their trade exposes them to characteristic dangers, either local or constitutional. The poisoning of painters and others by lead is, for example, well known. Affections of the skin and nails are usually common among workmen in certain trades. An interesting paper recently published in a French journal deals with the peculiar effects produced upon the mouth by the work of glass-blowers. Men who have worked at this trade for a number of years have a languid air and are prematurely aged. Their most striking characteristic, however, is the peculiar aspect of the lower part of their face. By this conformation they may be recognised anywhere as glass-blowers. The mark consists in a sort of prolapse of the lower part of the cheek, which appears too large for the buccal cavity. The skin in this situation is a little wrinkled, and traversed by irregular grooves running from above downward. It is of a dull hue, but the hair is nowise altered. The epidermis is not thickened and preserves its normal elasticity. The derma is softened. The lips are soft and hang a little, the lower appearing a little more developed. If the man laughs, a series of concentric folds are seen upon the cheeks. When the man is at work his cheeks are distended and the wrinkles are effaced. Most glass-blowers can with difficulty separate their jaws. The teeth are often altered. Dental decay and neuralgia seem to be particularly frequent in these workmen. This result is due to the sudden changes of temperature, the use of cold drinks, neglect of the teeth and also to the act of blowing. The cavity of the mouth is enlarged and the mucous membrane lining the cheeks is thrown up into vertical and circular folds, giving it an appearance which has been likened to that of a tobacco-pouch. It is rough to the touch, but is neither ulcerated nor indurated.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)