

## Medical Matters.

### SHADOW PHOTOGRAPHS.



THE application of the new method of Photography to medical cases, as well as surgical, is yielding results of increasing usefulness and interest. In the latter, its sphere of application is now fairly well defined. It is necessary, for example, that there should be some marked alteration in the bony structures; or some foreign and solid body present in the muscular tissue, in order that the shadow photograph may be really valuable. For instance, in a case of severe fracture the photograph will show the precise direction of the division in the bone, whether there are more than two fragments, and their exact relation to each other and to the surrounding tissues—points, of course, which are of immense importance in assisting the surgeon to bring the broken ends into apposition, and thus enable the patient to make the most speedy and complete recovery. In the case of bullets, or of such foreign bodies as glass or steel, the process will expose the exact position and surroundings of the metallic mass; and there, perhaps, so far as Surgery itself is concerned, the chief advantages of the new photography to surgeons will be found. In Medicine, however, there is ground for believing that the discovery will have wider results. For example, the shadow photograph shows enlargements of the joint, or of the bones, which are characteristic of certain diseases, and which in many cases cannot be felt—a fact which has been a constant difficulty in their correct diagnosis. The field of usefulness afforded by photography, therefore, in these cases requires no explanation. In shadows recently taken of gouty and rheumatic patients, the enlargement of the cartilages and the outgrowth of the joints have been most plainly disclosed; and in one well-marked case a streaky appearance in the bones was apparent, which was almost certainly due to the deposit of the lime salts in the tissue, which is known to occur in gout. An interesting point has also been proved which it is well to remember. Some who disapprove of Nature's methods of repair have argued that in some forms of gout—those in which, for example, the fingers are greatly

thickened by deposits around the joints—improvement would be effected by measures designed to obtain the absorption of the uric acid. The tell-tale photograph has shown in a typical case of this sort that the bone seemed to be largely affected—a cavity having been formed and filled up with uric acid, thus repairing the injury which the tissue had sustained, although at the same time it caused an outward appearance of deformity. If, in this case, the deposit had been absorbed and removed, the cavity formed by disease would have remained unfilled, and a useful hand would have been rendered useless. As a means of diagnosis, therefore, between extreme cases of rheumatic and gouty deposits and other growths around the joints, the New Photography will find a large and most valuable field of usefulness.

### CÆSAREAN SECTION.

TWO cases have recently been reported, in a German contemporary, which are of considerable importance, as illustrating the advisability of immediate Cæsarean section in patients advanced in pregnancy dying suddenly from accident or disease. In the first case, the patient had suffered from laryngeal obstruction, for which tracheotomy had been done; the tube, by its pressure, ulcerated through into a small artery in the trachea, and one morning she suddenly coughed up a quantity of blood and died in a few minutes—practically being choked by hæmorrhage into the air passages. She was seven months pregnant; the child was living, and therefore the abdomen and the uterus were immediately opened. The child was extracted within a minute or two after its mother's death, and although almost asphyxiated, was easily revived. The second case was that of a woman who died from cellulitis of the neck when nearly nine months pregnant. Cæsarean section was performed within a minute after her death, but in this case the child was found to be dead—this probably being due to the serious and prolonged illness from which its mother had suffered. Both cases, however, furnish illustrations of the now accepted rule, that if the child has arrived at an age at which it could live if delivered, it is incumbent to make an effort to save its life, by performing Cæsarian section if its mother dies suddenly.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)