

that these various causes bring about the same numbing effect upon the brain; and that the drowsiness or stupor which is produced represents only the beginning, or is in fact only a kind of storm signal, of more serious troubles. For example, the drowsiness caused by a small dose of Opium or that produced by the pressure of a small effusion of blood on the brain, will pass away as soon as the cause loses its ill-effects; that is to say, as soon as the effusion of blood is absorbed, or as soon as the Opium has been thrown off. But it follows from this fact that if the amount of poison be greater, or if the pressure be more intense, the stupor might be expected to be more marked; and this is what occurs in actual practice. For the condition of drowsiness may, under certain circumstances, pass on to a state of complete insensibility to which the name of Coma is given.

In general terms, then, it may be said that when Coma passes into Stupor the patient will probably recover. In other words, that, when the deep unconsciousness occurring after an injury to the head, or after a narcotic poison has been taken, becomes a mere drowsiness from which the patient can be easily roused, there is every hope for his complete recovery. And the converse is equally true that, when Stupor deepens into Coma, the case becomes more grave; or, in other words, that, when drowsiness deepens into profound unconsciousness, the probability is that the disease, or the pressure, causing the symptoms is increasing and that therefore the probability of the patient's recovery is diminished.

Coma, then, is a more dangerous symptom when it follows stupor. It is characterised by profound insensibility; it being almost impossible to arouse the patient. The pulse as a rule is slower than natural, hard and jerking, although as the end draws near it tends to become quicker and weaker. The breathing is usually deep and "snoring," in consequence of the profound unconsciousness; and the mouth falling open, the tongue becomes dry, brown, and coated; the lips and teeth for the same reason become dried and coated with flakes of dried epithelium, a condition which is always typical of dangerous weakness. When Coma precedes death, the unconsciousness becomes more and more profound, and, in the majority of cases, the patient remains insensible, until death occurs by gradual enfeeblement of the action of the lungs and heart. *(To be continued.)*

## Medical Matters.

### THE X RAYS.



A SURGEON in the United States Army has recently published a case which presents certain novel features. It appears that an officer under his charge had been accidentally shot in the back, and in order to locate the position of the bullet the X Rays were employed, apparently without success. On September the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, in eight sittings, the rays were used for a total exposure of nearly twelve hours; but on the first day the skin began to show signs of inflammation. Over the part of the abdomen where the rays had been focussed, the epidermis was completely destroyed, leaving a sore, the size of half the size of the palm, where the true skin was exposed, excessively sensitive and discharging freely. From this central spot, a red blush extended in every direction for some distance, and in a few days the epidermis peeled off this area, leaving a raw surface measuring eight by fifteen inches. At the same time the beard fell out, the skin of the chin being reddened, but not destroyed; and there has been no growth of the hair on the chin since. The most recent explanation of these phenomena is that inflammation of the skin is caused, partly by the heat of the rays when the light is held too close to the skin, and for too long a time, and partly by some chemical combination, probably of ozone and nitrous acid, which is formed from the surrounding air and deposited on the skin in consequence of the action of the rays. One practical result of the facts in question is the suggestion which is now being made that the X rays should be employed to remove the little patches of hair which occasionally occur on the face of women, and to which most people object so strongly. For it is a well-known fact that the methods usually employed, with perhaps the sole exception of electrolysis, fail to permanently cure this disfigurement.

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