

missions are generally followed by fits of increased severity, and sometimes are the precursors to a fatal termination of the disease. I have seen this happen more than once. A good example occurred a short time since. A young man, twenty-five years of age, was admitted to the Asylum more than a year ago. At the date of his admission he was suffering from an attack of epileptic mania, and proved troublesome in the extreme. He imagined poison was placed in his food; would scream terribly, and had fits daily. As with the most of such persons, his temper was subject to dangerous fluctuations, and a strict watch was kept over him. In the early part of this year his fits ceased, and he became quiet, affable and perfectly rational, and, knowing his unfortunate condition, was willing to do anything that promised relief. Owing to his improved state he was allowed considerable latitude, but was never permitted to go about the grounds unless accompanied by a reliable patient. In eight months he had but two light fits. On the evening of the 24th of October, 1879, while in the orchard, he ate a large green apple, and after coming into the building took a hearty supper. Nothing unusual was noted in his appearance, and at 8.30 p.m. he went to bed in excellent spirits. At two o'clock next morning I was called up to see this epileptic, who was reported to be in a violent fit. When seen, he was found to be in a severe paroxysm, the spasms following each other with frightful rapidity. The lips and face were covered with white froth, which was escaping from the mouth. In a minute or so the spasms began to diminish in intensity, until the contractions of the muscles were hardly perceptible; then a gradual increase took place, until the convulsions were as violent as when first noticed. This was repeated some fifty times, when death took place. The *post-mortem* appearances will be referred to further on in the paper.

Another variety of epilepsy is that in which the seizures take place at regular intervals. Such cases are not common, and occur oftener in women than in men. When women are thus afflicted, some authors state that the attacks will be found to occur at the time of menstruation. I do not mean to assert

that the convulsions recur at all times, with mathematical precision, upon a certain day, but think that the name "periodical" is applicable, as the attacks vary so little in the dates of their recurrence. Occasionally there may be a longer time of exemption than usual, but the old regularity is generally returned to. We have one marked case of periodicity in the Asylum at present. The patient is a male—forty years of age; is rather refined, and has seen better days. Five years ago had his first epileptic fit; and, although a married man, the cause is stated to have been masturbation—a habit, by the way, which is common to the mass of epileptics. He will have four or five fits in two days, and then the stage of excitement comes on—imagines he is sailing in a vessel; is perfectly happy and contented, takes no care of his person; has no idea of keeping bed-clothes on the bed; and says he never felt better in his life, in answer to all enquiries. This condition of excitement persists for four or five days, when he returns to his customary quiet state. His reason is gradually becoming undermined, and he is more childish than he was a year ago. His fits recur every fourth week with almost unvarying regularity. In nearly two years this interval between fits has been lengthened twice—once to five, and upon another occasion to seven weeks. In each instance the attack following was of far more than ordinary severity. The last noticeable feature in this case is the occurrence of muscular tremors, of which the patient does not seem to be conscious. We have had several women afflicted with periodical attacks. One woman, at present an inmate, a few years ago had fits regularly once a month; but of late bursts of maniacal excitement have supplanted the old trouble. Such is not rare, and our President will likely remember many instances of this substitution of mania in the place of convulsive attacks. As one might anticipate, erotic tendencies are marked during the excited stage.

Another class of epileptics is that in which the seizures occur for the first time in persons who have been insane for years. As a rule the fits recur at very long intervals. There are four patients of this class in the Asylum