

have seen in the street, but that he should be aware of the mental confusion preceding it, and of the lethargy or post-epileptic mania following it, warrants the presumption of particular medical knowledge.

Casca's description of Cæsar's epilepsy is as terse as it well can be—The rabblement hooted, and clapped their chopped hands, and threw up their sweaty night-caps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Cæsar refused the crown, that it had almost choked Cæsar; for he swooned, and fell down at it; and for my own part, I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips, and receiving the bad air.

Cassius. But, soft, I pray you; What? did Cæsar swoon?

Casca. He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at mouth and was speechless.

Brutus. 'Tis very like;—he hath the falling sickness.

Act 1, Sc. 2.

The mental confusion which often follows an epileptic fit is indicated by Casca's relating that, "When he came to himself again, he said, 'If he had done or said anything amiss, he desired their worships to think it was his infirmity.'"

The description of Othello's seizure is equally striking—

Iago. My lord is fallen into an epilepsy;

This is his second fit, he had one yesterday.

Cassio. Rub him about the temples.

Iago.

No, forbear;

The lethargy must have his quiet course;

If not, he foams at mouth; and by and by,

breaks out to savage madness. Looke, he stirs.

Othello, iv, 1.

This shows remarkable knowledge of epilepsy, as it refers to the maniacal excitement which sometimes follows the fit, and Othello's staccato speech just before he falls ("It is not words that shake me thus") indicates the mental confusion before the attack.

Suggestion.—The influence of suggestion is strikingly illustrated:—

They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk,

They'll tell the clock to any business that

We say befits the hour.

The Tempest, ii, 1.

and we all know how Hamlet fooled Polonius by suggestion. Even in the pain of surgical suffering, the influence of suggestion can be exercised:—

Marcus. I have some wounds upon me and they smart
To hear themselves remember'd.

Coriolanus, i, 9.

and this remarkable power may be utilised to resist the onset of death:—
Thy conceit is nearer death than thy powers. For my sake, be comfortable; hold death awhile at the arm's end.

As You Like It, ii, 6.

Surgery.—Surgery receives but scanty notice from Shakespeare, and to explain this we have to remember that it was only in the reign of Henry VIII, and in the year 1540, that the barber-surgeons were incorporated by Act of Parliament. Yet the need and value of the surgeon was well recognised—