

## THE FUNCTION OF NERVES.

We cannot here speak of the nervous system generally ; it is too extensive a subject. We wish merely to speak of the nerve cords, which like telegraphic wires, are planted in every part of the body. No district is so unimportant that it is not supplied, no territory so remote that it has not a telegraph station.

The function of nerves generally, it is understood, is to carry messages to and from the central nervous power, or some ganglionic centre. These nerves are variously classified according to their function, as well as to their origin.

The efferent fibres convey a telegraph message to the nerve centre, that a certain part is in danger, or in want. The demand thus made is promptly responded to by another message, through the efferent fibres. Let us illustrate. The stomach wants food, and there is irritation of the nerves supplied to the coats of that organ. At once the mind takes cognizance thereof. Food is taken into the mouth, and instantaneously the saliva flows to mix with the food as it undergoes mastication ; and when it reaches the stomach, gastric juice is supplied. Incidentally the hand or the foot comes in contact with a hot substance ; as quick as the lightning's flash, the limb is withdrawn from the position of danger. Urine has collected in the bladder ; its presence produces the amount of uneasiness necessary to secure evacuation. Now, in each of these cases there is a nervous communication, and a reflex action ; this is all wonderful, beautiful, harmonious. Sometimes this combined action is under the influence of the will ; the actions are voluntary, or they are simply reflex, or involuntary.

The Physiology of Reflex Action of the nerves was a splendid discovery. Its study is of vast importance. To comprehend it fully, demands close, earnest and continued attention. The Dentist as well as the Medical man will be benefitted by the investigation.

We learn that muscular action is due to the effects of the nerves, such nerves being called nerves of motion. There belongs to every part of the body a *sensibility*, more or less great ; the nerves through which this is maintained are denominated nerves of common sensation. We have, in addition, nerves of *common sense*, that is, those nerves by which we smell (olfactory), see (optic), hear (auditory) and taste (gustatory) ; besides there is the sense of *touch* provided by the utaneous nerve, spread out with more or less abundance upon the