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REFLEX NEUROSIS.

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A reflex neurosis may be described as a disturbance of function by some cause acting at a distance through the medium of reflex mechanisms. It may also be said that the mechanisms in question are seldom, if ever, in a normal condition during the existence of the neurosis. In order to consider intelligently the general conditions which give rise to reflex neurosis, it will be necessary to review to some extent what is known of normal reflex action. The structures concerned in a reflex action are, an afferent nerve, a nerve centre (consisting of nerve cells and fibres), and an efferent nerve. The relation of these parts to each other is now better understood than it used to be. It has been found, by means of the improved staining methods discovered by Golgi and others, that the nervous system is made up of nerve units held in position by neuroglia and connective tissue.

Each nerve unit consists of a nerve cell and its branches. The branches of the nerve cells are contiguous but never unite with each other. The intermingling of the branches of different nerve cells has been called a synapsis. An impulse passing along a nerve fibre is transferred to another nerve fibre by means of the synapsis and is thereby frequently changed in character.

One branch of each nerve cell differs from the others. This is what was formerly known as the axis-cylinder process, but now called the neuraxen or axen. This process or branch conveys impulses from the nerve cell while the stouter branches or denelutes convey impulses to the cell. This being the case it is less difficult to understand how it is that an impulse passing along a centripetal fibre may depart from its normal course and influence some distant part in a most unexpected manner. For instance, an afferent nerve fibre comes into relation in the spinal cord by synapsis with a considerable number of other fibres with one or more of which it should have a normal functional communication, but owing to the centre being in an abnormal condition the impulse is switched off, and when it arrives at the cerebral centre it gives false information, in fact much the same as when telephone wires are crossed, and not only are the impulses carried by the wrong fibres,