

Clinically this lack of nerve energy is expressed by explosiveness, want of control, and a tendency to exhaustion. These three characteristic symptoms are manifested in the mental peculiarities of the hysterical subject, as well as in the motor and sensory apparatus.

We all know how, when the emotions of these patients are stimulated, they are unable to control them within appropriate limits. Emotions, in a healthy person, initiate muscular movements of various kinds: expressions of joy or sorrow, as the case may be, controlled, however, within appropriate limits, while the same cause of emotion may, in the hysterical subject, reverberate impetuously and unrestrainedly through the motor centres, mingling the natural expressions of joy and sorrow confusedly together, and producing irregular movements of the limbs or even general convulsions. Emotion in other cases may inhibit nerve action, and produce various forms of sensory and motor paralyses.

An instance of the mental neurones inhibiting the motor neurones, even in the healthy individual, may be cited: Let us suppose that two persons are walking along a street. They hear a cry, and see a child falling from a window in the third storey of a house to the street below. One of them rushes forward to try and catch the child, and save it from being crushed against the sidewalk; the other individual, on the moment of hearing the cry, becomes rooted to the spot, unable to move, or even to cry out. The eminent danger to the child produces an inhibitory power over his actions.

As another instance of inhibition, let us suppose a plank is stretched across a stream, the water being only a few inches in depth. Most of us would have no trouble in walking over; but, suppose the following day, we have to cross the stream, and, due to heavy floods in the interval, there is now a raging torrent five or six feet in depth. The majority of us would have to walk over the plank using great care, while others, through fear, or in other words, inhibition, would not have the power to walk across at all. So one can appreciate how, in the hysterical brain, inhibition is more liable to take place, as it is more susceptible to suggestion. On the other hand, sensory and motor paralyses may be due to exhaustion of the cells of the cerebral cortex, instead of being due to inhibition.

It is a characteristic feature of hysterical patients that they are unable, at times, to resist the impulses of inclination. With this is often associated irritability of temper and undue sensitiveness to annoyance, under which the trifling crosses and vexations of daily life become grave troubles. These patients also usually acquire conditions such as rhythmic and other spasms from association with persons who are subject