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## Original Communications.

### NOTE ON CONVULSIVE SEIZURES.

By W. H. HATTIE, M. D., Assistant Superintendent of the Hospital for Insane, Halifax, N. S.

(Read before Canadian Medical Association at St. John, 1894)

I do not think that I can be very far astray in asserting that of all diseases which have been studied by men of medicine, none has given less evident recompense, in the way of applicability to therapy, than that particular manifestation of disordered nervous action known as epilepsy. Despite the faithful attention given by many able investigators to the questions of the etiology and pathology of this dreadful disease, we are yet left in a position which compels us to admit that our knowledge of it is so limited and so crude that such treatment as we adopt is largely empirical, and not suggested by a rational understanding of the condition which we

desire to relieve. It is no doubt presumptive in me to offer any suggestions upon this subject, but my observations of several epileptic patients in the wards of the Nova Scotia Hospital for Insane has impressed upon me the belief that not all has yet been done in the study of the disease, and I am before you to ask your attention to an hypothesis which is perhaps only a modification of other hypotheses, but which is one that affords a basis for investigation. One principal reason for bringing it to your notice is the hope of being able to interest some of those here—more competent and better equipped than myself for the necessary laboratory work—to engage in developing the theory. It is my intention merely to make this paper a preliminary to a more ambitious communication which I hope ere long to make public.

Convulsions are supposed by Hughlings Jackson, and I think by all other authorities of note, to be due to a sudden violent discharge of nervous energy from the cells of one or other