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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

ART. VI.—*Congenital Hydrocephalus, (with remarks)* By WM. HALES
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Hydrocephalus, like accumulations of water in any other part or organ, is a disease of debility, proceeding from a relaxed condition of the secretions of a part; from inactivity of its absorbents, or, as more frequently happens, from both; the *cause* of the disease being rarely manifest.

Accumulations of fluid are met with in various parts within the cranium: “inter integumenta ipsa externa; inter haec et cranium; inter cranium et cerebri membranas; inter membranas ipsas; harumque duplicaturas; inter has et cerebrum; inter cerebri plicas; in cavitatibus ipsis.”* The fluid, once secreted in any part, spreads with little resistance to another. If the disease occur in infancy, (and infants are most generally the subjects of it,) the bones of the cranium, not yet united by their bony sutures, yield to the internal pressure. Somewhat later in childhood, and while the *fontanelles* are yet unclosed, they, by a preternatural fulness,† or bulging outwards, warn us of the mischief going on within the skull.

Hydrocephalus is occasionally congenital, sometimes rendering the head so large, as greatly to impede, and add to the danger of, delivery.

The appearances, which these congenital malformations present, are not uniform. In the majority of cases, the whole head enlarges gradually; but, in not a few, we may observe protrusion of one side only; while in a still smaller number, an egg or pear shaped tumour is visible beneath a *fontanelle* or an attenuated parietal or other cranial bone.

“The mode of origin or pathogenesis of congenital hydrocephalus differs most probably in no essential particular from that of the chronic

*Van Swieten, “*Commentaria*.”

† I speak generally, and not in ignorance of the fact, that in some cases of hydrocephalus, the *fontanelles* are depressed.