AN

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION,

ON

Asiatic Cholera

as it occurred in Wilson Co. Tenn.
in 1848-49

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BY

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Asiatic Cholera as it occurred in Mississippi

the physicians of the Mississippi valley

knew but little of this disease until perhaps about the year 1835 the name denotes that it originated or proceeded from Asia and carried with it wherever it went universal terror and consterna
tion. the writer of this article has endeavored to give himself of a general or outline of the symptoms and treatment of the cholera in the year above named from two eminent men in our profession both of which justly deserve the appl
cation of staff officers in the medical profession to wit: Dott H. White of Lebanon Tenn and Dott S. F. Hill and Dott of Hartsville Tenn to use a military phrase the two gentlemen alluded to above were field officers in the foremost ranks
these recollection is that the disease appeared early in the summer of 1833 perhaps in June not as an epidemic but as having decidedly preferences in localities and subjects, that portion of Lebanon East of North Street suffered greatly with the disease whilst other portions remote from this suffered comparatively but little. The cause was easily attributed to an old tan yard that had gone or fallen into disuse the old vats were left full of frozen bark and turnings of hides and other decaying animal matter large heaps of old bark and such like rendered that part of town very offensive on account of peculiarly disagreeable smell and was thought by Dr. White to be the cause of so much suffering in that particular locality.
They agree that the symptoms were generally of an uniform character, characterized with universal spasmodick contractions of the muscles of the arms and lower extremities; a constant disposition to vomit with copious rice water or serous discharges from the bowels complaining of no pain except that produced from the muscular contractions, the treatment consisted chiefly of colonel opium and french brandy internally with convulsions to the extremities. The colonel was given in large doses and was repeated in some cases until it would amount to three or five hundred grs in 24 hours. Joy and happiness was restored to the community by its disappearance early in autumn, but in
the year 1849 the Medical periodicals and especially those of New Orleans published the fact that Cholera had again made its appearance upon our borders to Dr. Castwright of New Orleans the profession was much indebted for many valuable articles written upon and describing minutely the symptoms of Cholera upon its second visit to our country. The doctor describes two symptoms in the second visit of Cholera differing materially from the symptoms in the first visit to wit an entire absence of muscular contraction in a number of cases in the last appearance also that frequently the disease on second appearance was accompanied with billious vomiting and diarrhea in the month of June the news papers publi
shed accounts of sporadic cases in the city of Nashville, on the first Monday in July 1849 was the meeting of the Chancery Court at Lebanon Wilson County. Up to this date the sound of cholera was not heard in our county. The writer of this article was in attendance upon the court. Early on the morning above mentioned Dr. J. H. Gordon was called to see Mrs. Gilford and Mrs. Joyce, two ladies from Nashville on a visit to Lebanon. Both reported to have cholera morbus. The Dr. accordingly obeyed the summons and commenced treating of the cases in the ordinary with alteratives and astringents, but had not more than prescribed for the cases above before he received another summons to see the
husband of Mrs Tilford who had gone to the country to visit his father and on his return to Lebanon was taken so violently bad as to be unable to proceed any farther and fell by the way side. I met the Doctor as he was starting to see this last named case he requested that I should go to the boarding house and watch the two ladies untill he should return stating that one of them to wit Mrs Lyzer was pretty bad case of diarrhoea and Mrs Tilford the same nature though he thought she was better. I went immediately to Mrs Tilford's room found she was complaining with sick stomach bilious vomiting and bilious diarrhoea deep
and heavy breathing, pulse 107 and very easily compressed extremities, cold and surface cool, with copious sweating sent a messenger forthwith for Dr. L. W. White while examining Mrs. Joycee case, found her complaining of great pain in the muscles of the arms and lower extremities caused by the spasmodic contractions of the muscles, during this interval and much to my gratification a servant reported Dr. White to be in his room after examining South cases the Dr. remarked that at first he thought he had recognised an old acquaintance but on seeing the bilious condition of the bowels he did not know so well about it
but were it not for that peculiarity of the bowels he should have no hesitancy in saying that it was Asiatick Cholera. Then refer to Dr. Castwright's recent publications upon which he had no doubt of the true nature of it being Cholera, we began the treatment of both cases nearly the same 1 gr. of the new sulphate morphia subdose to be repeated every hour and oftenes if the vomiting and diarrhoea should continue with synapisms to the extremities. This treatment succeeded admirable well in the case of Joyce but seemed to have no visible effect whatever in the case of Mrs. Tilford the blue pill was discontinued and colombo ½ gr. morphia ¼ gr. acetate of lead ¼ gr. to be given at intervals of half
an hour enema composed of Tyuiro
10 grs acetate of lead 10 grs dissolved in
 tepid water and given immediately
 after each operation from the
 bowels, and mustard plasters to
 cover the entire abdominal regions
 in spite of our efforts the diarrhoea con-
tinued the sweats increased pulse
difficult to find at the wrist and
at the eighth hour from the attack
without any apparent suffering.
the case expired, Mrs Joyce was at
this time better and entirely recovered
in due time. the news of cholera
produced so much excitement in town
that the Judge adjourned Court, on my
way home I called to see Mr. Tifford
the patient of Dr. Gordon imported
his case that he left with me found
his country patient in collapsed
condition and he died in a
short time after, on reaching
home some 8 miles distant from
Lebanon. I learned that a neighbor
of mine had called for me a few
minutes before I arrived to see 2
of his children that he thought
had flux by reference to a note book
kept at that time. I visited the above two
cases on Monday night July 6, 1848 upon exa-
mination found them both labouring
under pretty severe diarrhœa. The oldest
daughter Caroline of about 14 years had
sick stomach efforts to vomit when any
thing was offered in the name of medicine
a dark coloured stining discharge from
the bowels resembling very much coffee grounds some tenderness of the bowels on pressure pulse 78 inclined to be rather shortend tongue in the center was coated with a dark yellow fur edges quite red, upon enquiry I learned that this case had diarrhea for two days previous to this time. treatment gave this case 2 grs blue mass with 01 grs bowers powders to be repeated at intervals of one and half hours to be continued 8 hours until the symptoms should materially change 1/3 03 of laudanum in a gill of starch water to be used as an enema to be mixed occasionally through the night or so long as the discharges seem painfull.

the second daughter Mary aged Eleven years tongue any brown fur in the center tip
and edges very red pulse 120 thready and
hard complains of sick in the bowels
considerable pain in the rectum upon
goes to stool discharges of serous
character with a reddish color as though
it were stained with blood, extrem
ities and the surface warm
treatment not willing to take pills gave
calamel 2 gr Dover's powders 1/2 gr every 2
hours until 6 portions are taken give
 Laudanum and starch enema as
in the other case left the cases at 10
oclock Pm rode home at 3 oclock A m
was summoned back to see the little
case Mary found her condition chan
ged considerably for the worse had
vomited once during my absence
dischages from bowels were more
frequent and copious the red appearance zone complains of no pain when the bowel are moved, pulse not perceptible at the wrist extremities cold deep and laborious breathing applied mustard plasters to the extremities hot flannel cloths to the surface and gave a small portion of brandy toddy inwardly the discharge from the bowels at this time were involuntary patient insensible and at about 6 o'clock 2 hours from the time that I arrived the patient expired Tuesday morning July 7 before I could get off there were 5 new case in this family three of which were negro messengers were coming from almost every direction reporting the disease to be prevailing to an alarming ex
from this time the disease had evidently assumed the character of an epidemic. From this date the battle was so warm and thick that I had no opportunity of keeping notes of any special or particular case. Luckily for me and the community at this time Dr. Grant of Arkansas visited his relatives in the immediate neighborhood. The doctor had considerable experience in the treatment of Cholera, had treated it while connected with the navy and had been accustomed to it in the most our sea board towns. From him I learned all that was ever beneficial or successful with me in the treatment of this disease.
he gave no mercury at all used morphia
and Tanin in the stomach and Tan
in and Laudanum as enema.
he argued that the skin and the
serous lining of the bowels were the
main outlets or wastegates that caused
prostration and death, he also argued
that when a cholera influence was known
to exist that every case of Diarrhoea shou
ld be regarded as cholera and treat
ed accordingly. I found this latter
course of treatment to stay the pro
gress of the disease more than any thing else, in this imm
ediate territory the disease whom
soever it pleased regardless of age
sex color or habit from material
that was gathered shortly after the
disappearance of the disease in 1849 I discover that there were 114 cases and that 63 out of that number proved fatal its stay during this period occupied about seven weeks at the expiration of which time it disappeared and was known in this region until June 1854 at which time it again made its appearance in rather a marked form as though it wished to deal out its devastations upon the credit of acute enteritis and summer fever in a malignant form.

I saw the first case in consultation with my friend Dr. Smith the young man aged about 19 years was nephew of the Doctors and was attacked two days previous to the
to the time of my seeing him. The prominent symptoms were those of ordinary fever with sick stomach and severe diarrhoea. The Doctor gave him Tinct Chino and Laudanum in ordinary doses sufficient to arrest the diarrhoea when this was affected. The symptoms became much changed for the worse. The patient lost his reason somewhat comatose lying with his eyes half closed, pulse 130, surrue dry tongue, clean with a polished or glossy appearance, upon consultation we agreed that effusion existed in the ventricles of the brain. restored to cupping at the nape of the neck and temples and cold water poured on the
head copiously. Patient died evidently of a convulsion on the night of the third day from the attack the weather at this time was extremely hot with frequent showers rain.

The next case that I saw was a negro man about 30 years of age with the same symptoms as the case last mentioned gave him 2 grs blue mass 12 gr of morphia the bowels were promptly arrested the head very soon showed indications of disease gave him nearly the same treatment as the case above on the third day his bowels began to discharge a blueish colored serous fluid and without any improvement whatever he died the fifth day from the attack.
about this period the demand for physicians far exceeded the supply: two young men that were reading in my office were pressed into service. The disease if taken in the early stages was comparatively easily managed with morphia and ipecac unless the brain become involved. Cases that proved fatal could be frequently brought to a rallying point. I can't close these remarks without mentioning the case of an estimable lady in which I had my old and highly esteemed friend Doctor A. Debow called to my assistance. The servants of this family had suffered greatly with cholera and seven had died. Mrs B was
taken sick whilst I was down at the negro quarters prescribing for some time and suppose that I was in her room in less than forty minutes from the time she was attacked the discharge from the bowels were frequent and very copious rather of a natural appearance gave 1/2 gr Morphine and recommended her to be very still the first dose checked the bowels and in two hours she was quite cheerful with no unpleasant symptom was summoned back that night at 2 o’clock about 12 hours from the attack found the bowels running off again but not so copiously stomach very sick gave her Tinct. China 40 drops Laudan
30 drops Comp Apts. lavender 10 drops and started a messenger to Hartsville for Dr. Debow when he arrived the case was again better and quite pleasant by the Doctor’s solicitation we commenced giving of Calomel 2 grs. Dover’s Powder 1/4 gr. to be given at intervals of 1 hour until she takes 6 portions. We were compelled to suspend the Calomel powder during the time in order to check the vesicular discharges from the bowels which was universally accomplished with an opiate.

This case continued for fourteen days and to our mortification inspired what appeared to be most remarkable in this case that the urgent symptoms were so easily
controlled so that the case would rally so often and when ever it mov
ed at all it had a downward ten
dency, it is notorious in the 2
adjoining counties that this portion
of Wilson County is more liable to
Cholera than any other part of the
county and the same thing
is true in regard to fever
the surface of the country is gen
erally level with a large creek running
through the current of which is past
ow or sluggish nature. Cumberland
river near to this point forms two
large horse shoe bends with three
large and heavy timbered islands
all subject to overflow in the
winter and spring, as to
local causes if there be any inclined to think that the country here being
nearly entirely surrounded by the
river is as much cause perhaps
as any thing, from an account
furnished me by two young men
that were in my office in 1854.
There were 67 cases out of this num-
ber 17 died. Respectfully

J. M. S. Gauntens