

AN

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

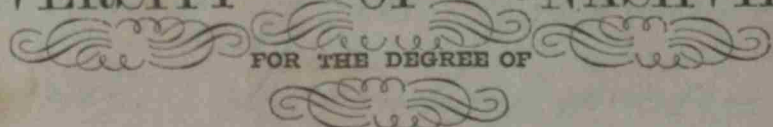
Dysentery

SUBMITTED TO THE

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FOR THE DEGREE OF

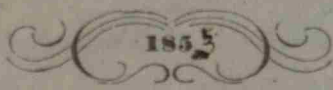
DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

BY

T. M. G. Boyd.

OF

Tennessee.



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Dysentery

There is perhaps no disease more common, or that engages more frequently the attention of the practitioner in this valley than Dysentery. I can safely rank it in the great list of diseases, on account of its frequency and fatality. Dysentery makes its appearance among us at all seasons of the year, and at all times, though it is much more prevalent in summer and autumn than in winter and in hot than in temperate climates. And it very frequently makes its appearance as an epidemic and in some instances when of that character it prevails

over a considerable extent of our coun-
 try, but more commonly it is con-
 fined within small and very
 narrow limits. It is especially
 apt to prevail in miasmatic dis-
 tricts and generally preceding, or
 accompanying intermittent, or remit-
 tent fevers. At other times it
 cannot be traced to any local
 cause whatever. This malady
 presents itself to us in a variety
 of forms differing in a regular gra-
 dation of severity, from a very
 slight affection, where there
 is not much irritation, in the colon
 and rectum, presenting in a few
 days one of the most serious and
 aggravated forms of disease to which

the human system is liable involving the mucous surface of the whole intestinal canal.

This great difference is probably owing to the cause of the disease or to the greater susceptibility of the patient, and it may also depend upon whether the disease be simple, or complicated if simple it may run its course in three, or four days, without fever, wherein if protracted beyond that period, there will be more, or less fever. Dysentery may be either acute, or chronic as the latter is not an original disease but the result of the former, I will first speak of

the former? Symptoms. The symptoms that indicate an acute attack of dysentery are such as griping pains in the abdomen straining at stool and tenesmus, with discharges from the bowels which follow each other almost without intermission which gives but slight relief to the patient, the pains are generally severe especially when the discharges from the bowels are accompanied with a burning sensation in the region of the anus, and as the disease advances this becomes more aggravated and with frequent inclination to go to stool without the

ability to evacuate any thing more than a little bloody mucus.

The symptoms of tenesmus increase as the disease advances and at length it becomes one of the most certain symptoms of the disease, the abdominal pains become more severe and appear to concentrate themselves mostly about the rectum.

At the beginning of the malady the discharges are more or less peculiar, after a few evacuations they become mucous tinged with blood, finally they are entirely blood, or nearly so, with these as the disease advances, in some cases there is, a little vitiated bile

and shreds of false membrane
intermingled and ^{some} ~~all~~ lumps of hardened
feces, though this is not always
present. The discharges from
the bowels are very frequent,
at the commencement they may
not amount to more than half
a dozen in twenty four hours.

but as the disease advances they
may amount to forty or fifty.

In the advanced stage of the disease
the stools become very offensive,
they acquire a peculiar odour, and
differing very much from
the natural feces. As the disease
proceeds the abdomen becomes ten-
der and tympanitic, and gener-
ally the precise seat of the infl

inflammation is indicated by the pain
 experienced upon pressure, in some
 instances the inflammation exists
 only in the colon and rectum. But
 very frequently where the disease
 continues to run on for sometime
 the whole of the large intestines
 are involved, and at other times
 the small ones, though where
 the whole of the intestines are
 implicated which is sometimes
 the case, the colon and rectum
 in such instances present
 a greater degree of inflammation
 than any other part of the intes-
 tines. There is always fever
 except in very slight cases the
 skin warm and dry the urine

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scanty, the pulse accelerated generally full and forcible.

The secretions of bile diminished in cases where the rectum is very much inflamed and, the bile very acrid, and as it descends the patient experiences an indistinguishable painful feeling of hollowing, as if sinking in the abdomen attended with a cold damp skin a feeble and almost threadlike pulse, as soon as the bile is discharged then the patient soon recovers, those symptoms abate until an other discharge.

In the greater majority of patients the disease takes a favourable turn between the sixth and tenth day

Cases where the disease terminates favourably, the discharges become less frequent and more plentiful, the skin becomes moist the discharges from the bowels more copious and less offensive. Tenning and tenesmus abate and at length becomes nothing more than a common diarrhoea which soon subsides. But should it terminate unfavourably, the symptoms are a cool skin alivid or purplish appearance under the eyes and about the lips, with much tenning and tenesmus incessant discharges, tense and tumid abdomen with great tenderness on pressure.

The disease generally gives away by the tenth day, and if it should not it becomes aggravated, Tor-
mory and tympanous increased.

The abdomen swells, and tender
the tongue becomes dry and gashed
The patient becomes more exhan-
sted and restless, the stools more
copious and offensive than
in the first stage of the disease.

The diseases that are combined
with dysentery are bilious ady-
namic intermittent and remittent
fevers, very frequently disorders
of the liver and stomach attend
the disease from the beginning.

Bilious Dysentery. In almost
all cases of dysentery the bilious

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secretions are somewhat diminished
but in the simple form of the
disease this may be considered as
nothing more than a result
of the colitis, in like manner
as the dry skin and scanty urine
but occasionally, disorders of the liver
attends throughout the whole
of the disease which aids in the
production of the intestinal affec-
tion. The complaint under
these circumstances is sometimes
denominated bilious dysentery.
It is characterized by a feeling
of oppression in the epigastric
region, sympathetic pains in the
shoulder, a yellow tinge of the
skin and conjunctiva, urine high

coloured, a higher degree of fever, or entire absence, morbid increase or depraved condition of the biliary secretions. Adynamic Dysentery is another form of the disease which occurs in persons who have been exposed to the action of various depressing causes, as in ships camps prisons. &c under these circumstances along with the symptoms of ordinary dysentery in an aggravated degree are those of malignant typhoid, or septic diseases, such as great thirst irregular and feeble pulse a foul and dry tongue the skin hot and sometimes cool and occasionally marked with pete

etia dark livid spots. The disch
 arges from the bowels more copi
 ous than in the simple disease
 with a brown or blackish appear
 ance, and in some cases hemorrag
 ic discharges from the bowels con
 sisting of altered uncoagulable
 blood, great prostration of streng
 th even from the beginning
 and finally various evidences
 of nervous disorders as anxiety,
 depression of spirit, headache
 low delirium etc. Causes.

Cold is one of the most common
 exciting causes especially when
 combined with moisture.

Persons exposed to the night air
 after having been very much hea

ted during the day are very apt
 to become affected with Dysentery
 by its arresting the perspiration
 and causing congestion of the
 portal circle, and inflammation
 is very apt to be the result
 in the intestinal mucous mem-
 brane. Again substances that
 are directly irritating when taken
 into the intestines are very apt
 to produce it. Those substances
 are such as unripe of fruits im-
 perfect fermented alcoholic
 drinks such as cider beer ~~and~~
~~and~~. It is sometimes produced
 by drastic cathartics worms and
 other accumulations in the intes-
 tines, unwholesome and indiges-

table food of all kinds. Exhalations from putrid animal substances and vegetable miasmata are also among the causes.

Treatment. Some discrepancy of opinion exists among physicians in regard to this. The most

interesting part of the subject the treatment of dysentery some object to bleeding others are in favour of it. Dr Wood

recommends it in cases where there is much pain and tenderness of the bowels with febrile action and a vigorous pulse. In such cases we should bleed freely until there was a decided impression made on the pulse. In

ordinary uncomplicated colitis
 the indications are simple, and
 mild bleeding will answer.
 though when the patient is pleth-
 oric with violent inflammation
 severe pains in the bowels, the
 bleeding should be resorted
 to freely at first. After
 bleeding, mild purgatives should
 be next to free the bowels from
 irritating secretions and accumu-
 lations, secondly to diminish
 congestion in the portal circle,
 in such cases calomel is a good
 remedy, though there other pur-
 gatives of amilder nature that
 will answer, such as rhubarb
 alone and scammony make a pill

and give it according to circumstances. Diaphoretics are recommended by some, when the skin is hot and dry small doses of Tartar emetic and the neutral mixture may be given either alone or combined every hour, or so. Dr Eberly speaks favourably of a mixture, say twenty grains of Asclepias Tuberosa half a grain of Ipecac, and a quarter of a grain of opium, every two or three hours after the general excitement has been brought down by active depletion. When there is great pain, Opium answers a good purpose besides

relieving the pain it greatly facilitates the action of cathartic medicines, especially where there is ^{much} spasm, it is best however, to postpone it until the system is greatly reduced by the lancet. In many cases however, the indications are such as to demand the administration of this remedy from the commencement, on account of pain and discharges from the bowels. It is best to begin at night so as to produce rest, to be used at short intervals in small doses so as to keep up a constant impression.

At an advanced stage of the

disease, alteratives should be used, such as calomel combined with astringents, cups and leeches to the abdomen, warm fomentations, of flannel dipped in warm water and applied to the abdomen. In the adynamic or typhoid form of Dysentery bleeding is not admissible. The bowels should be kept clear of irritating substances. Such medicines as are calculated to support rather than to weaken such as infusions tincture of Rhubarb with the oil of turpentine in small doses, it is often necessary in adynamic dysentery to support the strength

of the patient by stimulating
and nutritious drinks, such
as carb ammonia, wine, whey
brandy. ~~Be~~ The diet should
be simple and unirritating
rice the very best