

AN

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

Intermittent Fever.

SUBMITTED TO THE

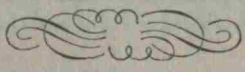
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF NASHVILLE,



FOR THE DEGREE OF



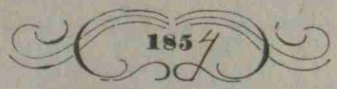
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Intermittent fever

Intermittent fever is a modification of miasmatic fever, and is characterized by febrile paroxysm recurring periodically; it has an intermission between each paroxysm or total absence of febrile excitement between each paroxysm. There are three varieties of this fever; the primary; inflammatory, and the congestive form of intermittents. I will only describe the primary form, as it is of common occurrence in this country.

The chief types are the quotidian, tertian, and the quartan; each type is named from the length of its intervals.

In the quotidian the paroxysm recurs once within the period of twenty four hours; In the tertian form the paroxysm recurs once within the interval of forty eight hours; In the quartan form the paroxysm recurs once within the interval of seventy two hours. These forms of fever are liable to many diversities; they sometimes assumes a double, and sometimes a triple form; having two paroxysms if double, and three triples, during the interval of each particular type, recurring at no regular hour. The symptoms are made up of three distinct stages;

The cold; the hot; and the sweating stages. The cold stage is attended with a chilliness; perversion of sensibility; followed by general rigors; with great febrile excitement; flushing chills running over the whole body as if icicles or streams of cold water were trickling down the trunk.

The surface is pale and contracted; the blood is driven inward by the intensity of the cold, and by the contraction of the superficial muscles, and blood vessels.

Respiration is irregular and often hurried, with a sense of fullness or congestion of the viscera of the thorax, and abdomen; nausea, and vomiting of food

mucus, and other bilious ex-
 cretions. The femur is irregular
 sometimes hard, and strong,
 again it may be small, fre-
 quent, and feeble; The secretions
 are all diminished except the
 urine, it is said to be pale,
 limpid, & copious. The nervous sys-
 tem is more or less disordered
 independent of the rigors: there
 are pains of a neuralgic charac-
 ter in the head, back, loins, and
 extremities. Duration of this
 stage varies greatly, it may not
 exceed a few minutes, or it may
 last three, four, or five hours.
 After the subsidence of the cold,
 the hot stage makes its appearance
 The heat returns partial, and

irregular with some degree
 of comfort; and at length be-
 comes general and much above
 the standard of health. The pulse
 is accelerated, and strong in
 plethoric patients; and in anemic
 it is small, frequent, and feeble.
 Respiration is more regular
 than in the cold stage; the
 skin is hot, and dry; Tongue furred;
 thirst considerable, no appetite;
 and occasionally nausea, & vomiting;
 convulsions are not uncommon
 in children, at the commence-
 ment of the hot stage.

Duration of this stage varies
 from two to eighteen hours.

The sweating stage comes on with
 some degree of comfort to the

patient; moisture makes its
 appearance first on the fore-
 head, face, and neck; soon ex-
 tending universal over the
 whole body, and becomes very
 copious; the heat abates; thirst
 ceases; the kidneys throw off their
 impurities; and the patient is
 gradually restored to health. At
 this time the intermission is
 complete; the patient is able to
 attend to his daily avocations.

This fever does not stop here
 it will return at the regular
 period of recurrence; if not
 made to abate. Sometimes the
 paroxysms will fluctuate, a few
 minutes earlier or later most
 generally the fluctuation is

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forward; in a few fluctuating
paroxysms of the quartan form,
it may assume tertian; and
the tertian may take on the
quotidian form; a retardation
of these types; it may pass into
a remittent form of fever.

Intermittent fever is fre-
quently preceded, by premonito-
ry symptoms, such as lassitude,
impaired sensibility; general weak-
ness; stretching; yawning; and
often soreness of the joints, and
extremities; accompanying this soreness
slight pains along the spine;
and frequently in the head, with
giddiness. The patient makes his
complaints; but cannot assign
any reason, nor refer to any

particular parts, why he has such feelings. These premonitory symptoms are not always present at the commencement of this fever; they are sometimes absent. The patient may labor under these symptoms for several days or a week, before the regular fever is established.

The anatomical changes that takes place during the progress of this disease, have not been ascertained satisfactorily; cases that have proved fatal, have been of the inflammatory and purricious variety, or complicated with some other affection.

By post mortem examinations we have been able to ascertain

That the liver, spleen, and the
 lining membranes of the brain,
 lungs, stomach, and intestines,
 have under gone more or less
 changes. The spleen is said to be
 enlarged, altered in texture, and
 sometimes broken down, and
 softer, so as to resemble coagulable
 blood envelope in a membrane.

The ^{liver} is enlarged, & congested, with
 or without change of texture.

The lining membranes of the
 brain, lungs, stomach, and in-
 testines are said to be in a
 state of inflammation.

Causes are two, the exciting
 and predisposing causes; the
 exciting cause is miasmata
 tw; predisposing cause is debility

Fever that is caused by this atmospheric poison will prevail epidemically in certain malarious districts. It is asserted by some writers, that heat, moisture, and decomposition of vegetable matter are essential to the production of this atmospheric poison. Others again contend that heat and moisture only are necessary; and I concur in the opinion of the latter.

Prognosis is generally favorable; unless of a pernicious, or inflammatory variety, or being complicated with some organic disease, in which death will inevitably be the result.

Treatment of this fever

There has been great deal
 said, and written upon this
 subject by various authors.
 According to my limited ex-
 perience, I have found it to
 be quite simple, and effec-
 tual; such as we have in this
 country would generally under
 favorable circumstances. Termi-
 nate in spontaneous recovery;
 provided the patient is not sub-
 jected to this atmospheric poi-
 son; protected from colds and
 wet; and with proper nourish-
 ment.

Being in possession of a
 specific for intermittent
 fever; we never await a spon-
 taneous cure. we would be

inexcusable, knowing its ten-
dency to obstinacy, after a long
standing to establish some
organic disease.

We would employ this specif-
ic, at the outset in such
doses as to produce the de-
sired effect; commencing
with quinine immediately
after the subsidence of the
pyrexia with six grains at
a dose; repeated as often as
required, to obtain a bene-
ficial effect. If the quinine
should affect the head, we
may modify its effects, by
combining it with opium
or some of its preparations.
or aqua ammoniac.

If the fever recurs again at its regular intervals; we may evacuate the bowels, with calomel combined with some active purgative to insure its action, at night; followed by quinine the next morning six six grains doses given every hour or two until the patient has taken twenty five or thirty grains. This treatment should be continued until the cure is effected. This fever has a tendency to return every seven or nine days; to prevent this recurrence, take three scruples of quinine, and divide it into ten powders, give one of them on every eighth night and one the next morning and

repeated if necessary in one hour; by this means we may effect a perfect cure. There are other remedies; that has proved effectual in the cure of this disease, but not so effectual as quinine; arsenic, opium, belladonna are much exalted for the cure of intermittent. This subject might be further pursued; for fear it may be taken for fulsome eulogy, I will desist