

AN  
**INAUGURAL DISSERTATION,**

ON

*Asiatic Cholera  
 as it Occured in Wilson Co Tenn  
 in 1843-44*

SUBMITTED TO THE

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY

OF THE

**University of Nashville,**

FOR THE DEGREE OF

**DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.**

BY

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'48

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Asiatic Cholera as it occurred in Lebanon Tenn

The physicians of the Mississippi valley knew but little of this disease until perhaps about the year 1833 the name denoted that it originated or proceeded from Asia and carried with it wherever it went universal horror and consternation. The writer of this article has availed himself of a general or <sup>the</sup> outline of the symptoms and treatment of Cholera in <sup>the</sup> year above named from two eminent sages in our professional bowels of which justly deserve the appellation of staff officers in the Medical profession to wit Doct L. W. White of Lebanon Tenn and Doct Archibald Debow of Hartsville Tenn to use a military phrase the two gentlemen alluded to above were field fighters 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 ground bark and trimmings 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 peculiar 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, characterised with universal spasmodic 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 calomel opium and french brandy internally with sinapisms to the extremities, the calomel was given in large doses and was repeated in some cases untill 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 Doct 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 ~~of~~ 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 bilious 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 Chan-  
cery 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 men-  
tioned Doct F. H. Gordon was called to  
see Mrs Tilford and a Mrs Joyce two ladies  
from Nashville on a visit to Lebanon  
both reported to have Cholera morbus  
the Dr. accordingly obeyed the summon-  
ons and commenced treating of the  
cases in the ordinary <sup>way</sup> with alteratives  
and astringents, he had not more than  
prescribed for the cases above before he re-  
ceived 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 Doct as he was starting to see this last named case he requested that I should go to the boarding house and watch the two lady's untill he should return stating that one of them to wit Mrs Loyce 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 her complaining with sick stomach bilious vomiting and bilious diarrhoea deep

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and heavy breathing pulse 105 and  
very easily compressed extremities cold  
and surface cool with copious sweating  
Sent a messenger forthwith for Dr L. W.  
White while I examined Mrs Joyce  
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  
Mrs Room after examining bowth  
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 hesitan-  
cy in saying that it was Asiatick Cholera

I then refered him to Dr Castwrights  
recent publications upon which he  
had no doubt of the true nature of  
it being cholera, we began the treatment  
of bowth cafes nearly the same ʒss of blue  
mass ʒss sulphate morphia ~~separated~~ to be rep-  
eated every hour and oftener if the vomit-  
ing and diarrhoea should continue  
with synapsimus to the extremities

this treatment succeeded admirable well in  
the case of <sup>Mr</sup> Loyce but seemed to have no vi-  
sible effect whatever in the case of Mrs  
Tilford the blue pill was discontinued  
and calomel ʒss morphia ʒss acetate of  
Lead ʒss to be given at intervals of half

an hour enema composed of Tannin  
10 grs acetate of Lead 10 grs dissolved in  
equal 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 Loyce 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. Tilford  
the patient of Doct Gordon I reported

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his cases 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. 1849 upon exa-  
mination found them both labouring  
under pretty severe diarrhoea the oldest  
daughter Caroline not about 14 years had  
sick stomach efforts to vomit when any  
thing was offered in the name of medicine  
a dark coloured string<sup>15</sup> discharges from

the bowels resembling very much of  
fe grounds some tenderness of the  
bowels on pressure pulse 98 inclined  
to be rather chorded tongue in the center  
was coated with a dark yellow fur edges quite  
red, upon enquiry I learned that this  
case had diarrhoea for two days previous  
to this time, treatment gave this case  
2 grs Blue Mass with ʒi gr Dover's powder to  
be repeated at intervals of one and half <sup>hours</sup>  
to be continued 8 hours unless the sympto  
ms should materially change ʒ<sup>r</sup> ʒ of  
laudanum in a gill of starch water  
to be used as an enema to be used occ  
asionaly through the night or so long  
as the discharges seem painfull  
the second daughter Mary aged Eleven  
years tongue dry 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  
going to stool discharges of serous  
character with a redish color as though  
it were stained with blood, extrem  
ities and the surface warm  
treatment not willing to take pills gave  
calomel 2 grs Dover's powder 1/2 grs every 2  
hours until 6 portions are taken give  
laudanum and starch enema as  
in the other case left the cases at 10  
o'clock P.M. rode home at 3 o'clock 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  
discharges from bowels were more

frequent and copious the red appearance gone complains of no pain when the bowels 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 discharges 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 cases in this family three of which were negroes messengers were coming from almost every direction reporting the disease to be prevailing to an alarming ex-

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tent, 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 cases, luckily for me and the community at this time Doct 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 Tannin in the stomach and Tan  
in and Laudanum as enemata.  
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 know<sup>n</sup>  
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, <sup>attacked</sup> 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 <sup>no more</sup> 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 summ  
 er fever in a malignant form.

I saw the first case in consul  
 tation with my friend Dr. Smith  
 the young man aged about 19 years  
 was nephew of the Doctor and was  
 attacked two days previous to the

to the time of my seeing him the premonitory symptoms were those of ordinary fever with sick stomach and severe diarrhoea the Doct 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 <sup>eyes</sup> half closed pulse 130 surface 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

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head copiously patient died evident  
ly in 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  $\frac{1}{2}$  gr of  
morphia the bowels were promptly  
arrested the head very soon showed  
indications of disease gave him ne  
arly the same treatment as the case  
above on the third day his bowels  
began to discharge a blueish colour  
red serous fluid and without any  
improvement whatever he died  
the fifth day from the attack

about this period the demand for physi-  
 cians 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 eas-  
 ily managed with morphia and  
 Iodine unless the brain become in-  
 volved, cases that proved fatal could  
 be frequently brought to a rallying  
 point I cant close these remarks  
 without mentioning the case of an  
 estimable <sup>lady</sup> in which I had my old  
 and highly esteemed friend Doct  
 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 disch-  
arges from the bowels were frequent  
and very copious rather of a natural  
appearance gave  $\frac{1}{2}$  gr Morphia and  
recommended her to be very still the  
first dose checked the bowels and  
in two hours she was quite che-  
erful with no unpleasant sym-  
ptom 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 Spts Lavender 10 drops  
and started a messenger to Hartsville  
for Doct Debow when he arrived the  
case was again better and quite pleasant  
by the Doct's solicitation we comm-  
enced giving of Calomel 2 grs Dovers  
powders  $\frac{1}{4}$  gr to be given at intervals  
of 2 hours untill she takes 6 portions  
we were compelled to suspend the calo-  
mel powders during the time in order  
to check the serous discharges from  
the bowels which was universally  
accomplished with an opiate

this case continued for fourteen  
days and to our mortification  
exposed what appeared to be most  
remarkable in this case <sup>was</sup> that the  
urgent symptoms were so easily

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controlled an 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 countys 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 fevers  
the surface of the country is gen  
erally level with a large creek running  
through the current of which is of a sl  
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

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local causes if there be any I am 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 numb-  
er 17 died Respectfully

John S. Gaunders