

**CONFERENCE ON PELLAGRA, HELD
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE STATE
BOARD OF HEALTH OF SOUTH
CAROLINA. AT THE STATE HOSPITAL
FOR THE INSANE. OCTOBER 29TH, 1908**

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SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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CONFERENCE ON

Pellagra

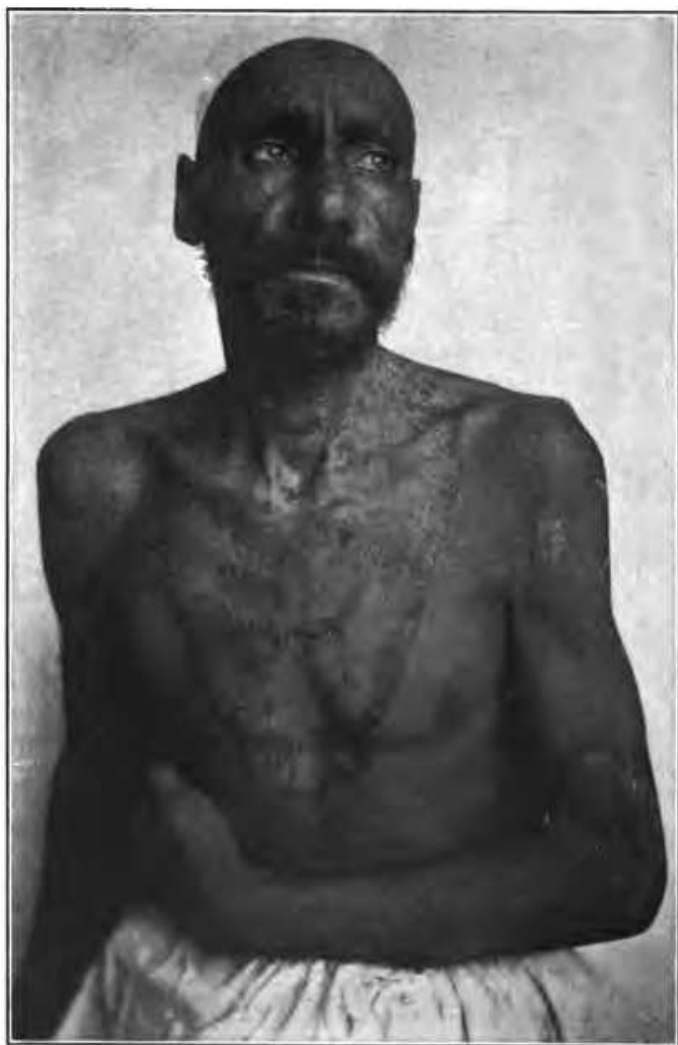
Held Under the Auspices of the

State Board of Health
of South Carolina

At the

State Hospital for the Insane
October 29th, 1908

Columbia, S. C.
THE STATE CO., PRINTERS
1909



CASE OF PELLAGRA, CAIRO, EGYPT. COURTESY OF DR. F. M. SAND-
WITH, LONDON.

Conference on Pellagra.

INTRODUCTION.

In the report of 1907 of this board a preliminary report was included, made by the medical officers of the State Hospital for the Insane, upon the suspected presence of pellagra in South Carolina.

Subsequent experience at the State Hospital, and among a number of the members of the medical profession throughout the State, gradually confirmed the tentative views expressed in the preliminary report. Several calls were received by this office for consultation in cases of suspected pellagra. Upon inquiry, I learned that other cases had been seen in consultation by other physicians; notably Drs. Babcock and Watson, who had made a special study of the disease as it is observed in Italy, and identified the Italian form of pellagra with that existing in our State.

By the early fall sufficient data were at hand to justify the board in contemplating a thorough investigation of the pellagra problem.

At the regular quarterly meeting of the executive committee of the State Board of Health, on October 15th, by request Dr. Babcock was present, and informed the committee that a sufficient number of cases were then in the State Hospital to furnish material for an interesting clinic on pellagra. It was left to Dr. Babcock and the secretary to arrange for the meeting, should they find it feasible in the limited time. After due deliberation it was decided to take advantage of the clinical material at the State Hospital as a basis for a conference, to which invitations were extended to physicians in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia and other Southern States. Additional reasons for holding such a meeting were found in the fact that two important medical meetings were to be held in Columbia during Fair Week. The committee, therefore, arranged a definite program, and the conference was called for October 29th, 1908.

CONFERENCE ON PELLAGRA.

Thursday, October 29, 1908.

The conference was called to order at 3:30 p. m., in the amusement hall of the State Hospital for the Insane, by Dr. Robt. Wilson, Jr., Chairman of the South Carolina State Board of Health. After

the invocation by the Rev. S. M. Smith, D. D., addresses of welcome were delivered by Governor Ansel on behalf of the State, and by Dr. W. W. Ray on behalf of the Board of Regents of the State Hospital for the Insane. Senator Tillman being introduced by the chairman, described the visit he had made with Dr. Babcock to study pellagra at the Provincial Asylum at Mombello, near Milan, Italy.

Then followed the address by Surgeon C. H. Lavinder, of the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service. Dr. Lavinder explained that his presence was due in part to an invitation from the committee, but also because of the interest his Service was taking in pellagra. His address was informal and reviewed the opinions he had expressed in his recent monograph*, published by the government.

A clinic was then given on the several patients of the State Hospital, and cases presented by Dr. Neuffer, of Abbeville, Dr. Frontis, of Ridge Spring, Dr. Lancaster, of Columbia, and Dr. Bailey, of Clinton. The following program was then carried out:

DISCUSSION ON CAUSATION OF PELLAGRA.

- (1) "Theories of Its Etiology"—N. M. Moore, M. D., of Augusta.
- (2) "Some Problems in the Study of Its Etiology"—Edward J. Wood.
- (3) "The Maize Theory of the Italians"—J. J. Watson, M. D., of Columbia.
- (4) "The Roumanian Theory"—J. L. Thompson, M. D., State Hospital, Columbia.
- (5) "The Trypanosome Theory"—J. H. Taylor, M. D., Columbia.
- (6) "A Theory as to the Cause of the Recent Appearance in this Country of Pellagra"—John McCampbell, M. D., Superintendent State Hospital for Insane, Morganton, N. C.
- (7) "Personal Experience with Some Cases of Mental and Nervous Diseases Showing the Pellagra Syndrome"—I. M. Taylor, M. D., Superintendent Broadoaks Sanitarium, Morganton, N. C.
- (8) "Pellagra in Chester County"—H. E. McConnell, M. D., Chester, S. C.

*Pellagra. A Précis. By Passed Assistant Surgeon C. H. Lavinder, Treasury Department, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service of the United States. Prepared by direction of the Surgeon-General. Washington Government Printing Office. 1908.

- (9) "Report of Three Cases of Pellagra in One Family"—Dr. D. B. Frontis, Ridge Spring, S. C.
- (10) "Four Cases of Pellagra"—G. A. Neuffer, M. D., Abbeville, S. C.
- (11) "A Case of Pellagra"—Dr. R. A. Lancaster, of Columbia.
- (12) "The Supposed Relationship of Damaged Grain to Epizootic Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis of Horses"—M. Ray Powers, D. V. S. Clemson College.
- (13) "The Pathology of Pellagra"—H. H. Griffin, M. D., State Hospital, Columbia.
- (14) "Eye Symptoms of Pellagra"—E. M. Whaley, M. D., of Columbia.
- (15) "The Diagnosis and Treatment of Pellagra and Pellagrous Insanity"—J. W. Babcock, M. D., Superintendent State Hospital, Columbia.

As these papers are given in the order in which they were read, comment is unnecessary. At the conclusion of the papers, remarks were made by Dr. I. W. Faison, of Charlotte, N. C., and Dr. J. P. Monroe, of Davidson, N. C. During the meeting a motion regarding the publication of the transaction was made and carried, and another motion that a committee of nine be appointed by the chairman, including himself, to consider the organization of a society for the study of tropical diseases.

The following physicians were present during the whole or a portion of the conference:

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Allan, Sarah C., Charleston, S. C. | Faison, I. W., Charlotte, N. C. |
| Babcock, J. W., Columbia, S. C. | Frontis, D. B., Ridge Spring, S. C. |
| Baker, Mary R., Columbia, S. C. | S. C. |
| Baker, S. C., Sumter, S. C. | Furman, Davis, Greenville, S. C. |
| Brailsford, H. M., Mullins, S. C. | Gibbes, Robt. H., Columbia, S. C. |
| Burdell, W. J., Lugoff, S. C. | Gregg, B. G., Florence, S. C. |
| Burman-Wildman, Matilda, Columbia, S. C. | Gregory, G. W., Jefferson, S. C. |
| Cheyne, Walter, Sumter, S. C. | Griffin, H. H., Columbia, S. C. |
| Coleman, D. A., Blackstock, S. C. | Guignard, Jane Bruce, Columbia, S. C. |
| Connor, P. M., North, S. C. | Hall, H. T., Aiken, S. C. |
| Dawson, J. L., Charleston, S. C. | Hamilton, J. H., Union, S. C. |
| DuRant, J. B., Lake City, S. C. | Harmon, S. E., Columbia, S. C. |
| Dwight, F. M., Wedgefield, S. C. | Hay, W. S., Allendale, S. C. |
| Epting, R. B., Greenwood, S. C. | Irwin, J. R., Charlotte, N. C. |

- Jervey, J. W., Greenville, S. C.
 Lancaster, R. A., Columbia, S. C.
 Lancaster, S. T. D., Spartan-
 burg, S. C.
 Lavinder, C. H., United States
 Marine Hospital Service.
 Lester, W. M., Columbia, S. C.
 Lindsay, Samuel, Winnsboro,
 S. C.
 McCampbell, Jno., Morganton,
 N. C.
 McConnell, H. E., Chester, S. C.
 Miller, J. R., Rock Hill, S. C.
 Monroe, J. P., Davidson, N. C.
 Moore, Fillmore, Aiken, S. C.
 Moore, N. M., Augusta, Ga.
 Mower, F. D., Newberry, S. C.
 Nardin, W. H., Anderson, S. C.
 Neil, G. P., Greenwood, S. C.
 Neuffer, G. A., Abbeville, S. C.
 Parker, M. L., Wedgefield, S. C.
 Parrott, W. T., Kinston, N. C.
 Pelham, W. E. Jr., Newberry,
 S. C.
 Pixley, C. S., Winnsboro, S. C.
 Pope, T. H., Newberry, S. C.
 Pryor, S. W., Chester, S. C.
 Ray, W. W., Congaree, S. C.
 Redfern, A. M., Clemson Col-
 lege.
 Rice, H. W., Columbia, S. C.
 Roberts, G. F., Lexington, S. C.
 Ross, J. K., Charlotte, N. C.
 Shecut, L. C., Orangeburg, S. C.
 Shipley, Anna C., Columbia, S. C.
 Sosnowski, J. C., Charleston,
 S. C.
 Taylor, I. M., Morganton, N. C.
 Taylor, J. H., Columbia, S. C.
 Taylor, J. T., Adams Run, S. C.
 Thompson, J. L., Columbia, S. C.
 Wannamaker, J. F., Vance, S. C.
 Wannamaker, T. E., Cheraw,
 S. C.
 Watson, J. J., Columbia, S. C.
 Weston, Wm., Columbia, S. C.
 Whaley, E. M., Columbia, S. C.
 Williams, C. F., Columbia, S. C.
 Wilson, G. deFoix, Spartanburg,
 S. C.
 Wilson, Robt., Charleston, S. C.
 Wyche, C. T., Prosperity, S. C.
 Wyman, H. H., Aiken, S. C.
 Young, Robt. S., Concord, N. C.

ETIOLOGY OF PELLAGRA.*

By NOEL M. MOORE, M. D., Augusta, Ga.

My experience in observing cases of pellagra has been so limited that I do not feel at liberty to discuss its prevalence in this country further than to say that I am convinced by the reports published during the past year from various Southern States that we have quite a serious problem to contend with. So much so that a consideration of its prevention at this time is of great importance.

Although empirical prophylactic measures have been successfully employed in the past against certain diseases, still a positive knowl-

*Printed in Journal of South Carolina Med. Association, November, 1908.

edge of the etiology of any disease renders these preventive measures much more certain and effectual. Considering the etiology of pellagra, we find that many different theories have been advanced. Toxic substances found in damaged maize, various fungi, and other organisms have been suggested as the causal agent, but farther investigations as to the actual etiological factor are certainly warranted. As Dr. Babcock has suggested, the association with Indian corn is too constant to be ignored; and yet, certain resemblances between pellagra and some of the protozoal diseases suggest, according to Sambon, the possibility of damaged maize bearing a somewhat similar relation to pellagra that stagnant water does to malaria. As to a causal relation existing between damaged maize and pellagra, Dr. C. H. Lavinder has said: "Students of pellagra seem generally to be in accord, but it must not be overlooked that this relation is by no means definitely understood."

Of the various moulds suggested as the cause of pellagra, the common blue mould or *penicilium crustaceum* is the one most often considered as responsible for the disease. This fungus grows, under favorable conditions, on cheese, fruit, bread, and various grains, so it is difficult to understand why it should produce pellagra when grown on corn and not when grown on other foods.

Various toxic substances supposed to be formed in damaged maize by a fungoid growth have been assigned as the cause. Dr. R. H. Bellamy quotes Lombroso as claiming that a fatty oil found in damaged maize is the toxic principle. He is quoted as having produced symptoms, analogous to those of pellagra in man and other animals, by feeding them upon an extract obtained from damaged maize. It would be very interesting to know whether only some of the symptoms of pellagra were produced or whether the typical disease, with exacerbations recurring each spring, resulted. Of course, this statement coming from such an authority must have great weight; and yet there are certain facts difficult to reconcile with this theory. For instance, it is generally agreed that usually in the chronic cases improvement in the symptoms occurs during the fall and winter months, only to be followed by a relapse during the following spring. Why, then, if the cause is simply a toxæmia from a fatty oil, should it tend to this periodic reproduction? The other grain intoxications, although giving rise to severe nervous and gastro-intestinal symptoms, do not show this tendency.

The fact that pellagrous patients admitted to hospitals tend to have a recurrence of the trouble during the following spring, even though