subsidence of symptoms in one case (white man)* which has continued to present time, and has been interrupted only once for a short period when a return to general diet, including daily ration of cornbread, was accompanied by slight erythema and slight gastro-intestinal symptoms.

Of the thirteen more recent cases, eleven of which were among women, there has been complete subsidence of symptoms in two, one of which has returned home and two more still under treatment show a great improvement at the present time with prospects reasonably good for recovery. All the cases that have succumbed have given undisputed evidence of serious complicating conditions such as senile debility, tuberculosis and syphilis; and this applies with equal force to the new cases seen among the men both of whom have died.

An analysis of these figures gives a ratio of recovery of about one in every four or five cases—which is not excessive when consideration is given to the complications and general character of the patients received. The one case (woman) which made the most rapid and satisfactory recovery (so that she was returned home) was a young patient from the middle walks of life untainted by acquired or inherited disease.

We would feel it incumbent upon the medical fraternity to seek to allay as far as possible that unnecessary and widespread alarm which has developed so rapidly in the past

year among the people of the South, irrespective of class or condition, regarding this disease. While its dangers and consequences are not to be lightly considered or underestimated, yet the prosperity and peace of mind of our entire people demand that we should look at the matter from a more subdued and conservative viewpoint. We cannot believe that Pellagra is destined to overrun our beloved Southland as it has encompassed the portions of Southern Europe for the past century or more; and the very fact of its early recognition among us presages a vigorous warfare against its encroachments, and with the aid of a conservative public press and an enlightened and scientific medical body, profiting by the vast experience and brilliant researches of our European confreres, may quickly accomplish the steps necessary for its complete effacement and extermination. To this end it would seem to the essayists that governmental aid and intervention should be sought, and the doctors, as guardians of the public health, while allaying the fears of the populace and teaching personal hygiene at home, should, as a great fraternity of no mean political importance, urge upon our representatives in Congress the great necessity of introducing and supporting such measures as will insure a fuller execution of our pure food and drugs law and secure the inclusion of our corn products among those foodstuffs receiving careful governmental inspection and supervision.

A PLEA FOR LEGISLATION HAVING FOR ITS OBJECT THE PREVENTION OF OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.*

By H. H. MARTIN, M.D.,
Savannah, Ga.

In order that I may not take up too much of your valuable time, I have caused to be distributed, for the past two days, reprints of a paper read before this Association at the Macon meeting last year. This paper contains practically all that I have to say on this sub-

ject, and I beg those of you who have not read it to do so at once. The essential arguments in that paper are substantially as follows:

Ophthalmia Neonatorum is responsible for one-half to one-third of all blindness in the world to-day. It is absolutely preventable. A

*Read before the Georgia State Medical Association, April, 1910.

single case of Ophthalmia Neonatorum in any educated community to-day is an everlasting disgrace to the medical men of that community.

Other states are adopting more or less drastic laws for the prevention of this disease. The one I offer for your endorsement is not drastic, but will prove effective in that it forces midwives and some others to use a prophylactic which is harmless and only requires of physicians in private practice, that they state on the birth certificate whether or not prophylactics were used, leaving the use of the prophylactic entirely in the discretion of the physician. There is no authentic case on record in which the so-called "Silver Catarrh" ever occasioned serious damage to the eye.

In other states such legislation has become an established fact, and I again ask that you instruct the legislative committee of this body to secure the enactment of such legislation in this state.

I have here a sample of the outfit furnished midwives and physicians by the State Board of Health of New York, together with the instructive literature on this subject, which it is unnecessary to read here, as it will be passed around for your inspection.

In closing, permit me to quote from pamphlet No. 6, issued by the New York Association for the Blind.

Needless Blindness of Babies—Average of new admissions in ten schools for the blind in 1907 showed that 28.19 per cent. were victims of Ophthalmia of the new-born.

"In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the Ophthalmia of infants is preventable and may be prevented by a few simple precautions." A little extra care—a single preventive drop in each eye when the baby is born.

Unwearied and continued effort in spreading knowledge concerning the need of these simple measures.

The Economy of Preventing It—Two minutes of time may save seventy years of darkness.

Helen Kellar, when writing on the "Prevention of Blindness," said: "Try to realize what blindness means to those whose joyous activity is stricken to inactivity."

"It is to live long, long days, and life is made up of days. It is to live immured, baffled, impotent, all God's world shut out. It is to sit helpless, defrauded, while your spirit strains and tugs at its fetters, and your shoulders ache for the burden they are denied, the rightful burden of labor."

"Once I believed that blindness, deafness, tuberculosis, and other causes of suffering were necessary, unpreventable. I believed that we must accept blind eyes, deaf ears, diseased lungs, as we accept the havoc of tornadoes and deluges, and that we must bear them with as much fortitude as we could gather from religion and philosophy. But gradually my reading extended, and I found that those evils are to be laid not at the door of Providence, but at the door of mankind."

There are in the United States, at a conservative estimate, 6,000 persons blind as a result of Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

"Pity the blind! Yes, pity those
Whom day and night enclose
In equal dark; to whom the sun's keen flame
And pitchy night-time are the same.

But pity most the blind
Who cannot see
That to be kind
Is life's felicity."

227 Bull Street.