

II. LEPROSY-LIKE DISEASE IN THE LUNGS OF A MEXICAN PARROT

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Among the reports of peculiar mycobacterial conditions in the literature and now forgotten or at least seldom mentioned, is a brief publication by the late Professor W. B. Wherry of the University of Cincinnati (four photomicrographs). The following are the essential points in Dr. Wherry's description:

A parrot, called by dealers "Mexican Red Head," died a month after inoculation with scarlet fever blood. On autopsy, the organs appeared normal except that the lungs contained many scattered grayish tubercle-like nodules about 0.5 to 1 mm. in diameter. Smears stained by the Ziehl-Neelsen method showed numerous acid-fast bacilli which resembled the tubercle or leprosy bacillus. Many of these, however, were short or even coccoid. These tubercles were largely peribronchial and were composed of epithelioid cells with vesicular nuclei. Some cells had two nuclei. In sections stained with hematoxylin and erythrosin the new growths appeared to be purely epithelial or epithelioid proliferations without any changes in the surrounding tissues and without leukocytic infiltration; nor did they show any connective tissue stroma or capsule. The surrounding tissues were greatly congested and in places there was extensive hemorrhage.

In sections stained with carbol-fuchsin, decolorized with two per cent hydrochloric acid in ninety-five per cent alcohol, and then stained with Unna's polychrome methylene blue, the epithelioid cells were seen to be filled with acid-fast bacilli lying at all angles. "Now the picture was very much like that of human or rat leprosy."

Before the tissue was cut it was thought that the lesions were those of avian tuberculosis. Cultures on rabbit-blood agar and glycerol potato were kept under aerobic, partial tension and anaerobic conditions at 37°C. and 24°C. for six months. There was no growth.

We have not seen any additional reports of this condition in Mexican parrots or other birds. Has anyone searched for it?

—J. A. DOULL