

## DOW IS THE OPED SEASOD FOR THE SDEEZE

By ROBERT C. BENCHLEY, H. F. V.

When, in August, All the Pollen of the Golden-Rod Is Blowing, Your Anti-Bodies Snatch It and They Make a Lovely Showing. They Break It Up in Tiny Bits for Your Accommodation, and Give You Dread Hay Fever (See the Centre Illustration).

THIS is not one of those funny newspaper hay fever stories, written by an immune reporter, beginning with three "kerchoos" and ending up with a facetious reference to the Bethlehem Hay Fever Conference.

Neither is it a scientific treatise on the subject. I tried to make it scientific, but got so balled up in my spelling and facts in general that I had to change the tone of the whole thing.

It will, therefore, have to stand for what it is: A heart interest story, told with all the simplicity and fierce earnestness of a man who has gone through the fire, and who speaks in a voice so sympathetic and low that only those who have also suffered can hear. It is a message to the four million hay fever sufferers in this country from a Brother-in-the-Bond.

Lights, please!

### REEKING OF MENTHOL, THE VICTIM ARISES TO MAKE A FULL CONFESSION.

For twelve years, from the middle of each August until the last of each September, I have been the most amusing thing in my neighborhood. People have come from miles around, so it seemed to me, to watch me sneeze and to suggest remedies. At first I was sanguine and full of youthful enthusiasm, and tried everything that was advised. I would go about reeking of menthol, utilizing various inhalation devices and cream tubes with the dexterous rapidity of the player of traps in an orchestra. Once I tried a new and expensive powder which apparently relied upon the utter demolition of the nasal tissues for its curative effect, for I was practically blown through the window of the room in which I gave myself the first treatment. One year I avoided cantaloupes as I would the plague; the next year I gorged on cantaloupes and shunned fritters. One year I went to the mountains; the next I went to the seashore. But on the fifteenth of every August, menthol inhalers to the contrary, I sneezed. On the sixteenth I sneezed twice, and cried when facing the sun. And on the seventeenth my home life went to smash and I fell into a decline. So I know whereof I speak. I dislike



"AKKA" — "CHOW!!"

(Especially Suggested for The Tribune Magazine by Brown Bros.)

to make this such a personal narrative, but it is the only way that I can get the confidence of the other hay-feverites. We have been so pamphleted and advised by outsiders that, as a class, we have become quite diffident and timid. Personally, I leave the table when any one starts to unveil a cure for hay fever. I can't trust myself with such people.

It was with an intolerant volley of curses, then, that I greeted the suggestion that I take a run up to the Lederle Antitoxin Laboratories at Pearl River to see what they were doing toward the solution of the hay fever problem.

### GOLDEN-ROD AND RAGWEED UNITE IN A GRAND ALLIED OFFENSIVE.

"Send some one who knows nothing about it," I said. "If you want a funny story about hay fever, send some one whose brow isn't lined with furrows from its blight." And I turned away to hide my emotion.

But a big newspaper is no respecter of personal sorrows, and so I went with Dr. Moos in an automobile way back in the country of Rockland County to

what might be called (and, in fact, are going to be called right now) the "first line trenches" of the Hay Fever Battle.

On the top of a hill stood the Laboratories, and in all directions fields of golden-rod, ragweed, and other pollen-bearing plagues spread out their infamous wares in brazen display. I could scarcely contain myself. The sight of a great wrong always affects me deeply, and I thought for a moment that I was going to break down under the injustice of it all.

Once inside the cool corridors of the Laboratory, however, I became myself again, and was ready to listen to the process by which the emancipation of four million Americans is planned. It could do no harm to listen, I thought. There was no need of personally antagonizing the officials.

"You see, it is this way," said one of my guides. "Under the usual experimental conditions of subcutaneous, intravenous, or intraperitoneal injection, the absence of anaphylactic symptoms may be due to the free, circulating Anti-bodies which unite with the antigen and protect the cellular Anti-bodies."

"I see," I murmured. "The anaphylactic nature of the reaction," he continued, "if we accept it and the pollen protein as that to which individuals with the disease are sensitized"

"I recognized the word 'pollen' just then," I interrupted. "Pollen has something to do with hay fever, hasn't it?"

The official saw that he had a retarded intelligence to deal with and began again.

"Now draw up your chair closer," he said, in the tone of one who is about to tell a little child the story of the Three Bears, "and listen very, very closely, and I will tell you all about the bad Hay Fever Germs and the Good Pollen Vaccine Germs."

So I snuggled up to the table and sat looking at him with my large round eyes full of wonder, while he explained to me in words which would be set in fourteen-point type just why I have hay fever while he doesn't, and why I shouldn't have it any more.

"In you," he said, "there is an army

of ugly little things called Anti-bodies, which float about in your system. I have none. When, in August, the pollen from the ragweed and the golden-rod is blown from the weed into your nose the Anti-bodies snatch at it and break it up into lots of little pieces, or toxic products, some of which poison you and make you sneeze. In my nose, where there are no Anti-bodies, the pollen is not broken up into toxic products and has no effect.

"Now here we go out in the fields and gather the flowers and weeds whose pollen causes hay fever. We collect the pollen from them and make from it an extract, which we inject into your system through your arm. We make fifteen injections, beginning with a very weak extract and working up to a strong one. When the first few drops of this pollen extract get into your system one of the sentries of the Anti-bodies who is on the lookout for just such things calls to the rest of the Anti-bodies and says Oh-h, Skin-nay! Come on over. Run like ever'thing! Here's a nice bunch of pollen to break up. And all of the little Anti-bodies come rushing over and scramble for a piece. But there is so very little pollen in the first injection that what is broken up doesn't make you sneeze, and, besides, it isn't broken up in your nose. Then, every other day, a little more is put in, but so gradually and so quietly that the Anti-bodies never get much of a meal out of it but are just kept busy. And they are kept so busy with the pollen that is being squirted into your arm that when, along about the sixteenth of August, the pollen from the ragweed comes floating along and lights in your nose there are no little Anti-bodies there to meet it. They have all gone to lunch. So the rag-weed pollen gets a bit offended, and after sticking round for a while and, seeing nobody, disappears. And you can well imagine how disappointed the little Anti-bodies are when they come home and find that the ragweed pollen has been here and gone off in a huff."

With a great sigh I slid down from my chair and clasped the doctor by the hand.

"This has meant a lot to me," I said huskily. "I shall probably never be the

same man again. When do we start the treatment?"

"As soon as you have seen the Laboratories," he said, and led me away.

First we went to the pollen house, where the weeds and flowers are brought as soon as they are picked and left on long tables. Nature is then allowed to take its course, and slowly the pollen drops from them on to the clean sheets of paper on which they have been spread.

### THE VICTIM DISPLAYS EXTRAORDINARY SELF-CONTROL IN THE PRESENCE OF POLLEN.

It took no little courage on my part to go through that pollen house, but we war correspondents are an intrepid lot and must face anything in order to get the story. So I sauntered through with a devil-may-care air and even went up to a little pile of pollen and said, with a show of languid interest, "Oh, so this is the pollen I've heard so much about! How interesting!" And all the while I itched to grind the stuff beneath my heel and scream: "There, curse you! For twelve long years you have dogged my footsteps and driven me from pillar

But, as a Poet Once Remarkd, Be Still and Cease Repining. Behind the Clouds of Pollen-Dust a Sun of Hope Is Shining. In Rockland County, Near at Hand, a Certain Laboratory Will Knock Your Anti-Bodies Cold — Go On and Read the Story.

to post, but now—now I've got you where I want you!"

It would have done no good, however, to give way to my passions like that, and I comforted myself with the thought that this very pollen was about to be made into a vaccine which would thwart its whole purpose in life and make it a miserable failure as a ragweed pollen. Time enough for me to gloat over it when it was being squirted into my arm to make me immune against its kin.

### SOMETHING VERY SCIENTIFIC ABOUT POLLEN VACCINE AND "COMPLEMENT FIXATION."

Then to the Laboratories, where the pollen is taken and put through a process which was explained to me very carefully and of which I do not remember one single item. I have a hazy recollection about standardizing its strength by a process called "complement fixation," to the explanation of which I paid close attention, nodding my head every once in a while and muttering "Of course," and "I see," looking very serious the while.

I do remember that I was told that formerly, in the early days of pollen vaccine, it was necessary to test the patient with a vaccine from all of the various weeds in order to find out just which weed was the guilty one in that particular case, but that now, in this new product, they have a combination of all the pollen-bearing weeds, so that the use of this pollen vaccine is effective against all pollens at once.

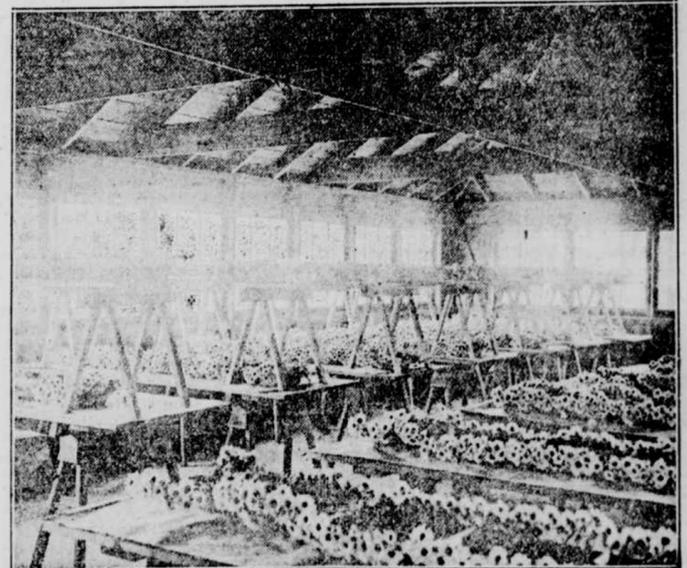
I also learned that in the treatment of hay fever with this pollen vaccine last year favorable results were obtained in 89 per cent of the cases. I could understand them when they talked like that.

I gathered these elementary facts from the conversation, and I saw with my own eyes the essence of pollen to which eight million red, watery eyes are looking with as much of hope as can remain after countless disappointments. There it was, a few drops of fluid in each of fifteen little hermetically sealed bottles, representing fifteen injections and perhaps also a New Vision for some poor Anaphylactic.

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On the Hay Fever Firing Line—Gathering Munitions.



The Pollen House at Pearl River—A Billion Sneezes Concentrated