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EDITOR:

A. H. WRIGHT, B.A., M.D. Tor., M.R.C.S. England.

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HAY FEVER.*

BY DR. A. B. WELFORD, WOODSTOCK.

Gentlemen: It devolves upon me, owing to the illness of Dr. Hodge, of London, to prepare a paper on "Hay Fever." I have done so, not so much with the expectation of giving you anything new on the subject, as it is one with which I have had no practical experience whatever, but more in the anticipation that in the discussion which will follow something new, interesting, and valuable may be added to the subject, more particularly in the line of treatment. Under these circumstances, gentlemen, I trust you will not be too severe in your judgment of the originality of my meagre paper.

Bostock, an Englishman, appears to have been the first physician who recognized hay fever as a particular affection, as early as 1819, although it was described as a disease producing sneezing, headache, itching of the nose, and followed by spasmodic asthma, after the inhalation of the odor of roses and sweet-smelling plants, by Botallus as early as the sixteenth century. The disease seems much more prevalent now than it was thirty or forty years ago. Its victims are principally among the better-educated people, more particularly those of a nervous temperament. This fact may be used as an argument by those who do not believe in the higher edu-

cation of the masses; and also as an excuse for the colleges to prevent overcrowding in the professions. The disease was comparatively little known in any country excepting England up to as late a date as 1862, at which time it was written about by Phœbus, a German physician, although Drake, an American, had published notes of a case of the autumnal variety in 1854; but in no country has it attracted more attention or more valuable literature been added to the subject, especially of the autumnal form, than in the United States.

The causes may be divided into (1) predisposing, (2) exciting.

(1) *Predisposing causes.* Hereditary tendency is undoubtedly one, as the statistics of every year more strongly testify, as a number of authentic cases are on record where two or three generations of the same family have been attacked with the disease. Males seem to be more liable than females; this may possibly be accounted for by the greater opportunity of exposure to its causes by the former. It does seem strange that with so many thousands being exposed to it such a small percentage should be attacked, showing undoubtedly that there is an individual peculiarity in some persons rendering them susceptible to its influence. Negroes and the natives of India are proof against it. The time of life when one is more susceptible to it is in youth or middle age; rarely is it contracted after forty. Geddings, in his article on hay fever, in 1885, says that other affections of the respiratory tract do not seem to predis-

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