

infinitely less. The city man really belongs in a class of his own. It is he who is so liable to tuberculosis, and from whose class come most of the recruits to the large army of the tuberculous.

"The average city worker sits eight or more hours, usually more, in one position and, though the work is exhausting, he probably moves no more than one set of muscles. These he works even beyond the point of fatigue, to the point of exhaustion and paralysis. This is work, the "drudgery which forms one of the attributes of civilization—it is superhuman toil which allows of no repair." The overworked muscles are unable to repair themselves, and, consequently, waste away, as do the rest of the muscles, the idle ones, because the lack of motion or contractions stagnate the circulation of the blood in them and they die of "starvation." The cramped position these workers assume for so many hours puts "wrinkles," so to speak, into their bodies. The lungs are compressed and expansion in many parts is prevented. It is safe to say that such workers hardly take one deep breath during the entire day, with the result that the lungs do not once fill up to their entire capacity. The parts of the lungs which do not properly expand become inelastic, lose their vitality and become, like all devitalized tissue, fine media for the development of the tubercle bacillus."

A Plea for Rats.

We are told in a recent *English review*, that the ordinary rat is a blessing in disguise, and that if the species were killed we should have once more the old black rat, which is alone the carrier of the "plague" flea.

The history of the "plague" seems to be as follows: The black rat alone carries the fleas which are the "host" of bubonic plague bacilli. These fleas do not like the brown rat. The brown rat does not like the black rat and kills him off whenever possible. Thus, England used to be infested with the black rat and was decimated time and again by the bubonic plague. The brown rat came along, killed off the black rat, and there has been no plague since except in sporadic cases. The black rat now comes to civilization mostly on

ships. If he could be killed off all the ships or kept off entirely bubonic plague would never travel around the world.

We accept this statement for what it is worth, but it seems sound. Every animal has enemies which keep down the growth of population. If the brown rat is really the enemy of the bubonic plague he has more merit than we had suspected. We award him whatever merit is due him, but, nevertheless, we have no use for rats which, as Josh Billings said, "originally came from Norway, and I wish they had originally stayed thar."

The Invalid Habit.

The invalid habit, says the *American Practitioner*, is characteristic of thousands of semi-invalids, who are wasting their precious days 'resting'; these people would find happiness and gain health in the bargain if they would get off their sofas and do a share of the world's work.

In some cases, especially in women, invalidism has originated after a genuine illness. Overcoddling in convalescence, encouragement to 'take care of themselves' and to avoid any kind of overexertion lead to invalid ways, which gradually lapse into the invalid habit. Such people breakfast in bed, lie down again for two hours after luncheon, return to bed before dressing for dinner. Their condition becomes more and more helpless as time goes on; but if the work cure is applied to them vigorously and drastically they very soon become normal beings again.

The difficulty is to get people to understand that their minor dyspepsia, sleeplessness, and nervous ailments are the inevitable outcome of their mode of life, and they would find appetite and cure dyspepsia and insomnia if they would take to work. The new cure for blues, nerves, and general ill-health is cheap, within the reach of every one, and efficacious. It consists simply of work—physical work, mental work, all kinds of work, so long as the patient can be kept fully occupied and allowed no time to think about health. Many are ill simply because they imagine they are ill. The work cure allows no such introspection.