

A RAT STORY.

My home is supposed to be rat-proof, writes Gen. Neil Dow in the *Congregationalist*, and was so when quite new; but at one time, more than twenty years ago, we had a large colony of the rodents, greatly to our annoyance, and it was with us a matter of daily wonder where they found a weak spot in our defences against them. One evening a young lady from a friend's family, living in a large, fine house nearly a mile away, was with us, and the talk turned on rats, as we heard our galloping in the ceiling and scampering up and down the walls. The young lady said that none had ever been in their house, and she did not think that there was any point at which they could enter. My eldest daughter, a great wit, said: "I've heard that, if politely invited to do so in writing, rats will leave any house, and go to any other to which they may be directed, and I will tell you that at your house they will find some spacious quarters and an excellent commissariat." At the moment, before us all, she wrote a most grandiose letter to the large family of rats that had so long favored us with their presence, and pointed out to them that No. 65 Pearl St. was a large, fine house, which had never been favored with the residence of any of their family, and where they would find ample quarters and a fat larder. When finished she read the missive to the company, and we had a great laugh over it. As an old superstition, she then put it away and carried it into the attic, where it would probably be found by those to whom it was directed. A few days after the young lady was at our house again, and burst into a laugh, exclaiming: "Our house is overrun with rats!" That recalled to us the fact that we had heard none in our walls. My daughter went to the attic, and the letter was gone. While we were talking and laughing over the curious affair, a friend came in and, hearing the talk, said that two evenings before, in the bright moonlight, he saw several rats running down Congress street, which was the straight road to Pearl street. We have never been troubled with them since, but I have not heard how it has been with the house to which our beneficiaries were directed.

THE AFRICAN DIAMOND COMPANY.

The soil, when brought to the summit, is carted away and strewn on the ground, where it is left for a fortnight or three weeks to pulverize in the sun. At the expiration of this time gangs of Kafirs, superintended by a white overseer, break the large, dry lumps into powder, and this in turn is carted away to be placed in the washing-machine. It is during the process of first breaking that some of the largest diamonds are discovered, and the overseer has to keep a sharp look-out on the workers in consequence. In spite of the terrible penalty incurred by any one detected in the act of secreting a good find, thefts are very rife, and many a diamond finds its way into Kafir possession in spite of the sharpest vigilance. During the process of washing, the gravelly substance, which is full of garnets as well as the diamonds, sinks to the bottom of the machine, while the earthen substance disappears in another channel. When it has been thoroughly washed through two or three times, this gravel is collected and strewn on tables, where searchers, with steel instruments, somewhat resembling very broad knives, carefully turn it over in minute search. Then it is that the precious jewel is discovered in all manner of sizes and shapes, when it is placed in a small tray, on which another overseer keeps his watchful eye. I was given several little heaps of gravel to dissect, and in half an hour I succeeded in discovering about twenty or thirty diamonds of a very fair size, and some so perfectly shaped that they had every appearance of having just left the cutter's hands.—*In the Land of Misfortune—Lady Florence Dixie.*

VERTIGO.

This name is from a Latin word that means to turn, and marks the dizzy feeling that characterizes the disease. Vertigo is frequently thought to be a very dangerous symptom, especially if the person falls who is suffering from it. It is true, it may be a dangerous symptom. It may be caused by a serious affection of the brain, and prove the precursor of a fatal paralysis. It is this fact which excites alarm in particular cases. Vertigo, however, is far from being necessarily an alarming symptom, and this should be generally known. Where there is one case in which it is a grave indication of serious disturbance, there are many in which it indicates only a slight and temporary derangement of some of the organs of the body.

A violent attack of coughing may bring it on in a weak person. Tobacco may cause it by its action on the nerve centres. The staggering of the tipsy man is due to it. It comes to some persons when they are in elevated positions. The imagination alone can give rise to it.

Some very nervous people suffer greatly, being unable to raise their heads from their pillows for days at a time without extreme dizziness, and yet they neither have nor are threatened with any organic disease or any ailment that may shorten their life.

Vertigo may be caused by loss of blood, and it is often felt by persons whose blood is thin and watery. Strong and healthy people suffer from it sometimes because they use improper diet, either too much in quantity or too bad in quality; or they eat when they are exhausted by work or worry. It may also be caused by a disturbed condition of the digestive organs generally.

It is plain what the treatment should be in the less grave cases—attention to diet, and such medicines or tonics as a judicious physician would prescribe for each individual case.—*Youth's Companion.*

HUMAN MAGNETISM.

"Sir, you should wear an open-faced watch, if you desire to be accurate in your time," said a watch-maker on Chestnut street, Philadelphia, to the stout man; "you are too magnetic."

"Why, what has the case got to do with it?" was the interrogative reply.

"Everything. Your watch has a hunting-case, necessitating steel springs for opening and shutting. By constant association with your body those springs become magnetized, and they generate their condition to other necessarily steel portions of the watch works, and thus render their movements imperfect."

"Then, if I were not so fat my watch would not lose two minutes, more or less, a day," said the puzzled stout man.

"Exactly," returned the watch-maker. "I have worn your watch for over a week and it has neither gained nor lost a dozen seconds; but then I am, from a corporeal point of view, your antithesis, I am exceptionally thin and slender."

"The stout man mused. "Accordingly," said he, "open-faced tickers for fat men, closed cases for thin, eh?"

"Not at all," replied the other. "Thin men have at times more magnetism in their systems than fat men. Everybody is more or less magnetic; you happen to be particularly so; I happen to be quite the reverse; hence my remarks and advice. For the rest, open-faced watches are always more accurate than hunters. They are more airtight for one thing. As for the steel springs in hunting-cases, mechanical science has not yet discovered anything else to replace them; the public like double cases, and there the matter remains for the present. There are, however, many ill-contrived portions in watches, and while the demand continues for watches of a certain price it is impossible, from a commercial point of view, to think of improvements. Long-used methods and ingenious machines have been specially provided to fashion and cut out every one of the minute parts which go to compose the existing instrument. Every watch consists of over 200 pieces employing over 200 persons, distributed among 40 trades, to say nothing of the tool-makers for the artisans. If the construction of the watch were materially altered all the trades would have to be re-learned, new tools and wheel-cutting engines would have to be devised, and the majority of working watchmakers become useless. The consequence would be that the watch would become enormously enhanced in value, and its possession a token of wealth. You see in our complicated state of society even machines in the process of time come to surround themselves with a circle of 'vested interests' which embarrass attempts at improvements."

"You are interesting me," remarked the stout customer as he placed his watch in his pocket. "You have been many years, I suppose, in the business. Of course there must have been some improvements in your time?"

"Of course. Watches during the last ten years have grown much in thickness. Old-fashioned watches are thin and flat. I have had a watch in my charge as flat as a trade dollar. It is impossible to properly adjust the works for heat, cold, and position under such circumstances. I should have to give you a long explanation of the packing of mechanism to explain to you why."

"Well, has the increased thickness raised the value?"

"No. On the contrary watches are now worth 25 percent less than what they were ten years ago. That fact, you will say, bears against my previous remarks. I am referring to the cheaper grade of watches worn by the majority of people. There are watches which bring \$1,500 and watches which can be purchased for \$18 a dozen. If you are willing to pay for costly work almost anything can be accomplished."

OVER-WORK AMONG WOMEN.

In about nine cases out of every ten, the woman who is in poor health attributes her sufferings to over-work. Many times this is a valid excuse, but frequently it is not the real cause of the ill-health. Lookers-on cannot always understand the situation, and the comparisons made between one woman's work and another's are often incorrectly drawn. Molly, sometimes suffers from over-work, but she avers that no part of the work to be done for her household is really beyond her strength. She says that as regular house maid she does all of the so-called housework and the plain sewing which she now does, and maintain her health. But to do these things well would leave no time for the "nothings," and every mother whose heart is in that work knows that it takes a good deal of time. I believe, and here is one more chance to bear witness to this truth, that the mother-work should have the first chance. A woman whose ideals are low can sometimes carry on all of these departments successfully (in her own opinion), and in that case her health is not likely to suffer from too much work. It is the worry, the sense of incompleteness or of falling short in what is required of one, more than all the fatigue of her work, that wears Molly out.

It is well to know how to do everything in the best way possible, but when a woman finds that she cannot do everything that it seems to be her duty to do in the best manner possible, she had better stop and consider what are the most essential things to be done, and study the easiest way of getting along without positive neglect. Wholesome food the family must have, but most of the fancy cooking is done in vain as respects health and strength. This same fancy cooking (which includes cake and pie—these being quite unnecessary articles of diet, doing more harm than good in most cases) is one of the chief causes of ill-health among women. Nearly all of these invalids are more or less dyspeptic. I have watched this a good deal among my neighbors in different places. Few of them give the right name to their disease, and I think the doctors are sometimes careful not to tell them the whole truth, but those who make any permanent improvement under medical treatment usually make some change in their habits of diet. One woman told me, during an hour's visit, these two facts, which did not seem to have any connection in her own mind: 1. "I used to be a great sufferer from sick headache, but I seldom have it in late years." 2. "No, I rarely eat a crumb of cake now, no matter how much I make; I haven't cared for it for a few years back, though I once was very fond of nice cake."

Another, in praising her doctor's success in the treatment of her nerves, after detailing the medicines and the rest and rides prescribed, remarked incidentally that the doctor told her to eat rather lightly of plain, nourishing food, and to give up her tea and coffee if she could. Many years ago I heard a physician of fine education and large experience ridiculing the idea that prevailed among women that their sickness came generally from overwork. "They over-work their jaws," said he, "manhandling confectionery, and eating all sorts of unwholesome food, and they often eat too much anyhow for persons who exercise so little." At the time I thought this criticism too severe, but I have often since seen cases to which it applied.

Another way in which women are over-worked by their own fault—a sin of ignorance frequently—is in the use of foolish

clothing. We are all more or less in bondage here, for woman's dress is radically wrong. It is a weight and a hindrance everywhere. Clothing devised to suit the needs of the human body would be much more easily made and taken care of, and it would give woman freer movement, greater ease and comfort about her work and play, and would be an aid to good health rather than, as now, a drag upon her strength. But a genuine reform cannot be made by any one woman, for it awaits the development of public opinion. But cannot we all lend a hand here, and say on all proper occasions, that woman's dress is absurd, and inconvenient, and unhealthful, and that we wish for something better? Most of us can put less work and care upon our trimmings and none of us need wear a trained skirt, or one that touches the floor. We may all wear loose and warm clothing, and bear the weight upon our shoulders rather than over the hips. Various female weaknesses are supposed to be caused by active labor, by much standing upon the feet, by much climbing of stairs in the pursuit of one's daily industry. They may be aggravated by these causes after they have been once induced, but I have serious doubts whether these weaknesses are often really attributable to the causes above named. Corsets and heavy skirts are the real offenders. It is usually the case that the same work might have been done—the standing and the climbing—had the muscles of the body, both external and internal, been left free and unweighted by the clothing. How many feathers' weight are added to her burden of toil and worry by a woman's long skirts as she goes about her work in doors and out, upstairs and down, around the kitchen fire, or cleaning the floors in an unsuitable dress?

It is not the hardness of the work, or the difficulty of the tasks taken in detail, that tires out the women as a general thing, if we except the family washings, which usually require a good deal of strength. But these tasks crowd upon each other, and become complicated and wearisome when the care of children interferes with them. These are genuine cases of over-work, where the labor is too hard and too steady for the strength of the worker; but care and worry are harder to bear than physical toil, and social burdens do their part to over tax the vital powers.—*American Agriculturist.*

THE TREE PLANTING ACT of the Ontario

Government is generally commended abroad. The *New York Scotsman* says that such a measure is most opportune, and should be supported by the people at large. It estimates that the fund of \$50,000 set apart for the purpose of the Act will not be exhausted until 500,000 trees are planted. No farmer having a row of such trees would look at an offer of a dollar apiece for them. So that, apart from all aesthetic considerations—if we may venture to enjoy a hard-worked and much abused word in its legitimate sense—the practical benefits resulting will be very considerable. "The example set by Ontario," says the *Scotsman*, "is worthy of all praise and should be imitated by other Governments."

HOW TO DEAL WITH DOG BITES.—An ab-

surd superstition prevails that the bites of all dogs should be either cut out and cauterized, and the poor animal destroyed. It is not necessary to adopt either of these serious courses, provided the dog is healthy. In fact, they are simply ridiculous, and are calculated to produce groundless fear in the person bitten. Of course, in severe cases erysipelas may supervene, but, with ordinary care, the wound being cleaned by a disinfecting lotion, no serious consequences will follow. In all cases, however, a doctor should be consulted.—*London Lancet.*

MRS. RYAN, of Philadelphia, has brought up her sons in the correct knowledge of pronouns, and so, upon hearing somebody open the window in the night, and replying to the question, "Who's there?" "It's me, mother," she knew that the intruder was none of her offspring. She gave an alarm, and the ungrammatical burglar was captured.

AMONG THE TREES which grow in Alaska is one called the yellow cedar, which has a fragrance somewhat like that of sandal wood and nearly as marked. It is a grainless wood, of straw color, and the Russians built many ships of it, for which purpose it is admirably adapted.