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RAT-PROOF HOMES.

At Slight Expense, Rodents May be Excluded, Say
Biologists of U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Washington, D. C. In constructing dwelling houses the additional cost of making the foundations rat-proof is slight compared with the advantages, says a recent Farmers' Bulletin of the United States Department of Agriculture, "House Rats and Mice." The cellar walls, says the bulletin, should have concrete footings, and the walls themselves should be laid in cement mortar. The cellar floor should be of medium rather than lean concrete. Even old cellars may be made rat-proof at comparatively small expense. Rat holes may be permanently closed with a mixture of cement, sand, and broken glass, or sharp bits of crockery or stone.

On a foundation like the one described above, the walls of a wooden dwelling also may be made rat-proof. The space between the sheathing and lath, to the height of about a foot, should be filled with concrete. Rats can not then gain access to the walls, and can enter the dwelling only through doors or windows. Screening all basement and cellar windows with wire netting is a most necessary precaution.

In both city and country, wooden floors of sidewalks, areas, and porches are commonly laid upon timbers resting on the ground. Under such floors rats have a safe retreat from nearly all enemies. The conditions can be remedied in towns by municipal action requiring that these floors be replaced by others made of cement. Areas or walks made of brick are often undermined by rats and may become as objectionable as those of wood. Wooden floors of porches should always be well above the ground.