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blowed—string for a nest, and some tickets, and some very nice tickets, too, well—here goes."

The rat is an object lesson—that's what it is—and if I was the Transport Minister, I'd put the rat up as an example of how to behave. He doesn't so easily throw his liberty away. You have to tell one idiot to mind the road, look right and look left and all that rubbish. I say this—if you haven't enough intellect to look as you step off the road, well, there's a place in the mortuary for you. But the rat has nobody to direct him or to give him advice, that's what makes him so audaciously clever.

### Sixty-six Senses

We consider we've five senses, don't we? and possibly six. Well, in my opinion, a rat has 66. And I'm speaking as one who has been connected with rats from the cradle upwards. My ancestors have been rat-catchers in the City of London for more than 200 years. And I believe they were game-keepers in the same district before there were buildings on it. A rat has 66 senses, but we can't determine them. You have to be told that a certain piece of electricity plant is dangerous—it's put up in red letters. A rat knows it's dangerous—you won't find him going near it. In my opinion, it's his whiskers; what do you think Nature put them there for—so that he could twirl them? Another thing, a rat will hide behind his own shadow, he'll get himself in such a position that he camouflages himself, and its only the glint of his eye that discloses him. If a rat's running up a pipe, he'll always get on the side nearest the wall. See the idea? If you strike him, you strike the pipe first. Oh, I could write a volume on the things a rat will and won't do. He knows all about closing time—same as you and me. "Time, gentlemen, please!" He's listening, you know. Then silence, beautiful silence—what he's been waiting for.

And, by the way, rats love beer. Before the last war they were known to get drunk. But not now; beer was beer then! No one has ever seen a rat drunk in this war. But all the same, rats don't drink beer if there's any water going. It's the eatables that get the rat. He's a wonderful master of anything eatable. Even the smell of something goes to his head. Rats did £400 worth of damage in Petticoat Lane the other night. When the manager showed me the coats, I said to him: "Can you imagine why every third coat has been gnawed?" He said, "No, I can't." I said, "If your young lady who counted these coats will tell you honestly she'd been eating a sandwich with meat or fish on it, and the smell of that food on her fingers—three—three—three, was where she'd touched those coats when she'd counted.

### No Paraphernalia

Now, just a word about the method we use—it's secret, but I'll tell you this. There's none of the paraphernalia you might associate with rat-catching. No ferrets, or dogs, or anything like that. We catch enormous quantities of rats with very little material. Quickness, silence and sharp hearing are the things we rely on most. I could handle a rat just as easily as another man would handle a glass of beer. When I come into a building on the trail of a particular rat, I know beforehand I'm going to catch him with the right or left hand. That's because I've worked out the whole job beforehand.

In the City of London it's nearly all big business premises we have to do,

and the work's all done at night. We work singly very often, but sometimes if it's a very big building, we work in pairs. We wear very soft shoes; and you can take it from me a shadow slipping along a corridor or round a showcase wouldn't be quieter than the rat-catcher. As quiet as a grave we are. And here's something very important: if I was to lose my hearing, I'd be useless as a rat-catcher.

### We Listen for Noises

There are all sorts of noises in the building at night, all sorts of creakings and crackings and sighings and rustlings. But to the rat-catcher's ear there's no other noise like the noise made by a rat. It's completely different from the noise made by a mouse—louder, bolder, more devil-may-care. Supposing there's an apple core at the bottom of a waste-paper basket; Mr. Rat will go through the paper till he gets at it with a loud, manly sound. Oh, he's not nervous like a mouse. He's a different character altogether. Sometimes a rat meets his tailor, and then there's a fight. My word, two tails and eight legs—you can just imagine it!

People often ask me "Is it true about rats leaving a sinking ship?" Well, of course it's true. He knows there's something wrong because he's the first bloke to get his feet wet. He's not strutting about the deck in canvas shoes—not

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