

Its mates flew right and left, terrified at the steady ting-ting of the bell. By nightfall every rat had left the house—that is, every rat but the one with the bell around its neck, who scrambled about in noisy, but solitary state.

A few weeks later, when I was visiting at the O'Briens', I heard a faint ting-a-ling in the walls, and presently from a cranny in the wainscot a rat came out and began to nibble at some crumbs of cheese upon the floor. The children nodded wisely at each other, and when I exclaimed at this unusual sight, my host, with pardonable pride, told me this true story of how the children drove out the rats.

WHERE VAN LEFT OFF.

Van is four years old, and very proud of the fact that he can dress himself in the morning—all but the buttons "that run up and behind."

Van isn't enough of an acrobat yet to make his small fingers thus do duty between his shoulder blades, so he backs up to papa and gets a bit of help.

One morning Van was in a great hurry to get to some important work he had on hand, the marshalling of an army, or something of the sort, so he hurried to get into his clothes, and, of course, they bothered him, because he was in a hurry and didn't take as much pains as usual. Things would get upside down, "hind side fore," while the way the arms and legs of these same things got mixed was dreadful to contemplate. So I am afraid it was not a very pleasant face that came to papa for the finishing touches.

"There, everything is on now!" shouted Van.

"Why, no, Van," said papa, soberly, "you haven't put everything on yet!"

Van carefully inspected his clothes, from the tips of his small toes up to the broad collar about his neck. He could find nothing wanting.

"You haven't put your smiles on yet," said papa, with the tiny wrinkles beginning to creep about his own eyes. "Put it on, Van, and I'll button it up for you!"

And, if you will believe me, Van began to put it on then and there! After that he almost always remembered that he could not really call himself dressed for the day until he had put a sunny face atop of the white collar and the Scotch plaid necktie.

WISE LUCY.

The writer knows a little girl of twelve or thirteen years, who is a good deal of a philosopher, and who is not lacking in heroic principles. I have this conviction because I was visiting at her father's house one day not long ago, and after dinner chanced to pass through the kitchen where this little girl, whose name was Lucy, was washing the dishes. She was singing so cheerily while she

worked away at the great pile of dishes before her that I said: "You like to wash dishes, don't you, Lucy?"

"No, sir, I don't like to wash them at all. I'd rather do anything else in the world than wash dishes."

"Then how can you sing while you are washing them?"

"Well," was the reply, "I have them to wash whether I like to do it or not, and it seems easier to do it while I'm singing than while I'm pouting."

"That is Lucy's way of making disagreeable duties light," said her mother, when we were out of the kitchen. "Next to dish-washing she dislikes darning stockings more than any other work she has to perform, but she sings as merrily as a lark when she has stockings to darn, and never makes any fuss about it."

"She is a wise little girl," I said; and I thought of some boys and girls I know, who, although older than Lucy, lack her wisdom and her fidelity to duty.

As great and wise a man as Phillips Brooks once said that he believed the common tasks of life were the hardest, and that all great duties were easier to perform than little ones. There is an inspiration about a great duty that is lacking when it comes to the common, menial tasks of life. But the common, uninteresting things must be done, and those who do them well and faithfully and cheerfully manifest a kind of heroism that is approved of God.

Each of us has, it may be, our pet aversion among the things apportioned to us as work in this life, and the manner in which we perform these tasks is often the test of our courage and manliness. It is worth a good deal to be able to do the disagreeable duties of life cheerfully, and so I think that Lucy was a good deal of a philosopher, and that she had learned a lesson that will help to make her a brave, happy, cheerful woman, and one who will have the heroism to perform the commonest duties of life well.

THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES.

There was once a king whose name was Dionysius. He was so unjust and cruel that he won for himself the name of tyrant. He knew that almost everybody hated him, and so he was always in dread lest somebody should take his life.

But he was very rich, and he lived in a fine palace, where there were many beautiful and costly things; and he was waited on by a host of servants, who were always ready to do his bidding. One day, a friend of his, whose name was Damocles, said to him:

"How happy you must be! You have here everything that any man could wish."

"Perhaps you would like to change places with me," said the tyrant.

"No, not that O king!" said Damocles, "but I think that if I

could only have your riches and your pleasures for one day, I should not want any greater happiness."

"Very well," said the tyrant, "you shall have them."

And so, the next day, Damocles was led into the palace, and all the servants were bidden to treat him as their master. He sat down at a table in the banquet hall, and rich foods were placed before him. Nothing was wanting that could give him pleasure. There were costly wines, and beautiful flowers, and rare perfumes, and delightful music. He rested himself among soft cushions, and felt that he was the happiest man in all the world.

Then he chanced to raise his eyes toward the ceiling. What was it that was dangling above him, with its point almost touching his head? It was a sharp sword, and it was hung only by a single horse-hair. What if the hair should break? There was danger every moment that it would do so. The smile faded from the lips of Damocles. His face became ashy pale. His hands trembled. He wanted no more food; he could drink no more wine; he took no more delight in the music. He longed to be out of the palace and away, he cared not where.

"What is the matter?" said the tyrant.

"That sword! that sword!" cried Damocles. He was so badly frightened that he dared not move.

"Yes," said Dionysius, "I know there is a sword above your head, and that it may fall at any minute. But why should that trouble you? I have a sword over my head all the time. I am every moment in dread lest something may cause me to lose my life."

"Let me go," said Damocles. "I now see that I was mistaken, and that the rich and powerful are not so happy as they seem. Let me go back to my old home in the poor little cottage among the mountains."

And so long as he lived, he never again wanted to be rich, or to change places, even for a moment, with the king.

A SAD MISHAP.

"A monkey that was permitted to run free, had frequently seen the men-servants, in the great country kitchen, with its huge fire-place, take down a powder-horn that stood on the chimney-piece, and throw a few grains into the fire to amuse the maids. Pug having seen this, watched his opportunity, and when all was still, he clambered up, got possession of the well-filled powder-horn, perched himself very gingerly on one of the horizontal wheels placed for the support of saucepans, right over the waning ashes of an almost extinct wood fire, screwed off the top of the horn, and turned out its contents into the grate. An explosion followed, which sent him half-way up the chimney.

Before this happened, he was as trim and well-conditioned a mon-

key as you would wish to see, but he came down from the chimney all singed and bare, and in a perfect cloud of soot. He was a dreadful sight, and he knew it. For days he went into hiding, but hunger at last drove him out, and he sneaked into the house, all begrimed, and looking terribly scared.

"He recovered after a good deal of care, but like some other great personages, he never quite got over his sudden elevation and fall. He became a sadder and a wiser monkey, for if, at any time afterwards, he became troublesome, it was only necessary to take down the powder-horn in his presence, and he was off to his hole like a shot, screaming, and clattering his jaws like a pair of castanets."

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