



# *The Rat Retired from the World*

La Fontaine  
French

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*Easy*  
*1 min read*

The sage Levantines have a tale  
About a rat that weary grew  
Of all the cares which life assail,  
And to a Holland cheese withdrew.  
His solitude was there profound,  
Extending through his world so round.  
Our hermit lived on that within;  
And soon his industry had been  
With claws and teeth so good,  
That in his novel hermitage,  
He had in store, for wants of age,  
Both house and livelihood.  
One day this personage devout,  
Whose kindness none might doubt,  
Was ask'd, by certain delegates  
That came from Rat-United-States,

For some small aid, for they  
To foreign parts were on their way,  
For succour in the great cat-war.  
Ratopolis beleaguer'd sore,  
Their whole republic drain'd and poor,  
No morsel in their scrips they bore.  
Slight boon they craved, of succour sure  
In days at utmost three or four.  
"My friends," the hermit said,  
"To worldly things I'm dead.  
How can a poor recluse  
To such a mission be of use?  
What can he do but pray  
That God will aid it on its way?  
And so, my friends, it is my prayer  
That God will have you in his care."  
His well-fed saintship said no more,  
But in their faces shut the door.  
What think you, reader, is the service  
For which I use this stingy rat?  
To paint a monk? No, but a dervish  
A monk, I think, however fat,  
Must be more bountiful than that.

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