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"A commonplace life," we say and we sigh;  
But why should we sigh as we say?  
The commonplace sun in the commonplace sky  
Makes up the commonplace day.

"The moon and the stars are commonplace things,  
The flower that blooms and the bird that sings,  
But sad were the world and dark our lot,  
If the flower failed and the sun shone not;  
And God, who sees each separate soul,  
Out of commonplace lives makes His beautiful whole."

### Uncle Silas.

He was a glum, unattractive old man; nobody could deny that. He had been a sailor, but not much of a one; for he had never smelled salt water, and most of the time had merely coasted along one of the big lakes. He had never read much of anything, and had nothing to tell out of papers or books; and such observations as he had made in the world, he kept mostly to himself. He knew that he was disagreeable, and a knowledge of that fact made him additionally so.

This being the case, he was naturally shunned, more and more, even by such as were obliged to be near him; and this was the case with the Mowbray family. He was a kind of mortgage on such financial resources as they possessed; for the house in which they lived had been deeded them by the will of a relative, upon condition of their taking care of Uncle Silas during the remainder of his life.

Irritating enough it was to Mrs. Mowbray, who was only a cousin-in-law to the old sailor, and had much rather not have him in the house; but she was a good woman, meant to do her duty, and succeeded fairly well.

One autumn afternoon Uncle Silas was in the front yard with his chair leaned up against the side of the house. His face was a vinegar-cruet, and every angle of his body said, "Keep off." The children did not go anywhere near him; they never did; they had learned better. "He should be petrified into a statue, and labelled 'Loneliness Couchant,'" thought one gay girl, as she passed. "Why are we encumbered with him?" thought Mrs. Mowbray, as she glanced out of the window. "But he has a right here, and we must endure him."

Young man, if you expect to become aged (and you well may, for life is sometimes terribly tenacious), look well after your mind and heart; keep them both as active as possible; otherwise you will be a very lonely individual. Without books, magazines, papers, or congenial companionship, Uncle Silas was passing a dreary old age.

There was a rush and a scream in the little front yard; Gladys, the eldest daughter, came frantically rushing to the house. "Joey has fallen into The Dry Well!" she cried. "He pried up a board to see what was there, and slipped in. Oh, he is dead! My poor little brother! Save him! save him, somebody!" she shouted, with the inconsistency of grief.

Several men were there, in a very few minutes; but none of them dared do anything excepting to let down a candle to see if there were any poisonous gases in the well. It went out before it had gone down very far. "He's probably dead, by this time," they murmured, mournfully, while the mother stood by, wringing her hands and trying not to faint.

There was a falling back among the men. Uncle Silas crowded to the edge of the old well, with a long rope that he had found somewhere. In apparently an instant or two's time, he had tied one end of it to a tree near by, and the other to his body.

"Avast there!" he shouted, "and bear a hand! Let me down quick, and pull me up quicker when I give three hauls at the rope!"

"You will be strangled," exclaimed the foreman of the fire company, stepping between him and the well. "Are you crazy, man? The well is full of damp!"

"Avast, I say!" shouted Uncle Silas, giving the foreman a push that sent him against the tree. "I will get the boy, dead or alive—probably alive. Mind the anchorage!"—pointing to the tree—"and don't let go. Cast the lead!"

He was gone ten mortal hours, the mother thought, though it was really but a few seconds, before there were three tugs at the line, and the little boy came up, alive though unconscious, with the rope tied carefully around him; but no Uncle Silas. He came a few hours later.

The day the old sailor was buried in the family lot, Mrs. Mowbray kissed the stern, weary old face. "We did not know what a treasure we had in him," she sobbed.—(Will Carleton's "Everywhere.")



"TOTTIE'S PLAYFELLOWS."

### Hints for Wash Day.

Try washing red table linen in water in which a little borax has been dissolved.

Add a few drops of ammonia to the blue water to whiten the clothes.

Clothes turned right side out, carefully folded and sprinkled, are half ironed.

Sprinkle salt on a wine stain and pour hot water through until it is gone.

Wet fruit stains with alcohol or pour boiling water through them.

Kerosene in the boiling water whitens clothes safely, especially such as are yellow from lying. Put in a tablespoonful to each gallon of suds.

For very yellow or grimy things, make an emulsion of kerosene, clear lime water and turpentine in equal parts. Shake them together until creamy, then add a cupful to a boilerful of clothes and boil for half an hour.

The same emulsion is good for very dirty things, such as jumpers, overalls, working shirts, children's trousers. Use it in conjunction with strong suds, as hot as the hand can bear, and rub a little directly upon dirty grease spots. Let the clothes stand five minutes before washing out, and be sure to have the second suds and the rinsing water as hot as the first.

If coffee is spilt on linen the stains can be removed by soaking the part in clear, cold water, to which a little borax has been added, for twelve hours.

If the stain is from tea or fruit, do not put the articles in cold water, or the stain will become set. Simply pour boiling water over it until it disappears, which it will do if quite fresh.

### "Tottie's Playfellows."

In the Christmas number of the "Advocate" we gave our readers as one of its pictures "A Christmas Box," it being a hamperful of little pussy cats which had just arrived at their destination. This time we also offer them another four-legged little quartette of arrivals, the baby puppies of Tottie's own Queen Mab.

Tottie has stolen away from her nurse to have a frolic with her new treasures. Her eyes beam with mischief as she first offers and then withdraws an imaginary morsel wherewith to tempt them to the extreme end of the ledge upon which they have inquisitively gathered to look at her. She knows that if she can only get them far enough away from the restraining paw of their mother, they will fall almost plump into her arms, and then won't they have a high old time together? Toby, being the most adventurous of her four-legged majesty's babies, has already landed safely and been caught by his little mistress, from out of the shelter of whose arms he looks complacently at the excited group above him. The artist has caught and given expression to the mixed sensations with which the mother doggie watches mischievous Tottie. There is maternal pride in her restless offspring, there is evident doubt of Tottie's intentions, and also just a suspicion that she may join in the coming game of romps herself.

H. A. B.

Georgia is nothing if not original when it comes to rhymed obituaries. Here is the latest:

"He has climbed the golden hills—  
Heaven was always his intention;  
Fought through the war, died with the chills  
And never got a pension."