

**Our Ships at Sea.**  
How many of us have ships at sea,  
Freighted with wishes, and hopes, and tears  
Tossing about on the waves, while we  
Linger and wait on the shore for years,  
Gazing afar through the distance dim  
And sighing, will ever our ships come in?  
We sent them away with laughter and song,  
The decks were white, and the sails were new,  
The fragrant breeze bore them along,  
The sea was calm and the skies were blue,  
And we thought as we watched them sail  
Away  
Of the joy they would bring us some future  
day.  
Long have we watched beside the shore  
To catch the gleam of a coming sail,  
But we only hear the breakers' roar  
Or the sweeping night wind's dismal wail,  
Till our cheeks grow pale, and our eyes grow  
dim,  
And we sadly sigh, will they ever come in?  
Oh! poor sad heart, with its burden of cares,  
Its aims defeated, its worthless life  
That has garnered only the thorns and the  
tares,  
That is seared and torn in the pitiful strife  
Afar on the heavenly golden shore  
Thy ships are anchored for ever more.

### An Idea in Decorative Art.

"It's perfectly useless; the thing is my bete noire—don't laugh, Elsie, I'm not joking. If there is any such thing as the contrivance of inanimate objects, then of all inanimate objects that hideous black mantelpiece is the most contrary."  
Pretty Mrs. Van Schenck threw herself back in her chair, gazing with mingled wrath and disgust at the object of her animadversion, a high wooden mantelpiece, painted black, and diversified with various dull yellow streaks and spots, fondly supposed by housekeepers thirty years ago to be a most faithful imitation of marble. Fastened across a portion of the front, and from thence trailing to the floor, hung a strip of mummy cloth richly embroidered with a garland of poppies, but looking sadly out of keeping, depending from the high narrow shelf it was intended to adorn.  
"Now just look there, Elsie! Ove and again I have tried to cover, drape alter that detestable mantelpiece, and each attempt has proved a more wretched failure than the last one. I've blistered my fingers knotting macramé lace, hammered my thumbs till they were black and blue trying all sorts of devices suggested by all sorts of people. I really did think I should succeed this time, and perhaps if the border had been twice as deep it might have looked passably; but that narrow strip half way between floor and ceiling is perfectly ridiculous. Grace Alston gave me the pattern. It was lovely on her modern mantelpiece. How stupid in me not to think of making it wider! I believe the thing is bewitched."  
Here she paused to take breath, and meeting her sister's merry eyes, burst into a ringing laugh.  
"It does seem absurd to rail so, but the whole room is spoiled, and it would be so pretty but for that frightful old mantelpiece."  
"I am sure it is lovely as it is. Nothing can spoil the beautiful oak floor and wainscot," replied Elsie Horton, glancing across the spacious apartment of oblong shape, lighted by four large windows, two on the southern side, overlooking the sparkling waters of Long Island Sound, and two facing the west, where a dense pine wood at no great distance from the house—a huge old mansion dating from colonial days—shut in the view and gave an impression of great seclusion.  
The first glimpse of the room revealed the fact that the pretty hostess worshipped at the shrine of decorative art, though good taste fortunately excluded the horrors of scrap vases, bedaubed drain-pipes, and spatterwork tides. Nay, at this moment, brightly illumined by the flood of sunlight pouring through the southern windows, the apartment might have given an artist a suggestion for a most charming interior. The floor and richly carved wainscot were of polished oak, almost black with age; handsome Persian rugs lay scattered here and there; soft muslin draperies shaded the windows; bits of rare old china made spots of bright color on bracket and table; an easel supported a fine oil painting; Kensington art work appeared in screens and chair coverings; and a quaint spindle-legged table, nearly a century old, stood in one corner.  
Elsie's subjects, too, for any artist's brush were the occupants of the room. Mrs. Van Schenck, dark-eyed, dark-haired, and slightly dusky with exertion and wrath, formed exactly the right contrast to her sister Elsie's blonde beauty, as the latter leaned carelessly back in a large easy-chair, her white draperies, relieved by knots of blue ribbons, sweeping over the dark, polished oak floor, and her violet eyes sparkling with amusement at her companion's vivacious tirade.  
"I like to listen to you, Kate," she said at last. "It seems like the dear old times before you were married to hear you set off on one of those Don Quixote tilts against windmills. Now, in the name of common-sense, let me ask why, instead of blistering your fingers and hammering your thumbs down, you didn't have the mantelpiece taken down, and another one put in its place? You could have had something carved just to match this beautiful old wainscot."  
"My dear, that highly sensible suggestion strongly reminds me of Marie Antoinette's equally pertinent query: 'Why, if the poor people can't get bread, don't they eat cake?' You forget that we're not rich enough to gratify all our whims, and an oak mantelpiece carved to match the wainscot would cost a pretty penny. I assure you, if only the original one had been left! Harry remembers it perfectly, and says people would rave over it now. Great clusters of fruit and flowers on the panels, connected by drooping wreaths—exquisitely done, too. And they split it up, and burned it for kindling-wood, the Goths and Vandals, when this 'new and elegant' monstrosity took its place."  
"But couldn't you have the lovely Dutch tiled mantelpiece in the dining-room moved here at very little expense?"  
"Ah, my dear, don't pride yourself on striking out a brilliant idea. Did

not I suggest that to Harry long ago? No, indeed, he won't have this hideous thing removed, because it was his uncle's dying wish that it should be kept here. I can't blame him either, dear fellow. Old Mr. Van Schenck, with all his eccentricities, was very kind to him, and in his will left him his whole fortune, but the wretches who murdered him took everything—stocks, bonds, and all—it was one of his peculiarities to keep his property in a portable form—and the will was doubtless among them. The law gave Harry the house."  
"Tell me all about it, Kate," interrupted Elsie. "You know I only had the bare facts while I was abroad, none of the particulars, and the three days I spent at home before coming down to you."  
"We're filled with descriptions of travel, displaying your fiery, etc. Yes, I know. There isn't really very much to tell; but, to begin at the beginning, I'll inform you how my betel came to be the name of my life. It seems that thirty years ago old Mr. Van Schenck—a rich bachelor of fifty—fell desperately in love with a beautiful girl, whose father he had befriended. She engaged herself to him, and he began to remodel the house to suit her taste—fancy the taste that would destroy a lovely carved oak mantelpiece to make way for that monster!—when an old lover appeared on the scene; and she, probably fearing that her father would force her to keep her promise, ran away with him. It was a terrible blow to Mr. Van Schenck, an excessively proud man. He stopped the repairs just where they were, dismissed all his servants except one old woman, and, in spite of the entreaties of all his friends and relatives, persisted in living alone up to the day of his murder. This was the room he always occupied. The bed stood in that corner, facing the mantelpiece. The murderers entered by one of the western windows, and had doubtless been hiding in the wood, watching their opportunity. His eccentricities were well-known in the neighborhood, and he was reputed to be immensely rich. Only a week before Harry had been here, represented the danger, and begged him to have at least a trusty manservant on the place. He obstinately refused, and the next news we had was a summons to his death-bed. My husband reached here a few minutes before dusk, and found his uncle still alive, but unable to speak—the principal wound was a deep gash in the throat. The old man seemed terribly anxious to tell him something, and made a motion of writing on the coverlet, but his strength was failing, the room growing dark, and Harry could not understand. At last, struggling to a sitting position in bed, he pointed to the mantelpiece, gasped 'Kept, kept,' then the blood gushed from the wound in his throat, and he sank back on the pillows—dead."  
"Horrible!" cried Elsie.  
"Poor old man!" how he must have loved the girl, to think even on his death-bed, of preserving the one thing she had given him time to prepare in his home for her sake! Doesn't it lend the ugly old mantelpiece a touch of romance? No wonder Harry won't allow it to be removed! I should feel as if it were sacrilege."  
"I don't want it removed either," replied Kate, slowly. "But—with sudden animation—"how I should like to cover it up, every inch of it!"  
Elsie looked at her inquiringly.  
"I'm half ashamed to tell you," continued Kate, lowering her voice, "but I believe I shall actually grow afraid of that thing unless I can find some silly enough to say so now, sitting here in this broad daylight; but it's quite another matter when the dusk comes stealing in, casting shadows in every corner, and the wind howls and shrieks around the old house. A week ago I sat yonder at one of the windows, watching for Harry, who was a little later than usual. It had been a gray, raw, chilly day, like a forerunner of November, with one of those dreary, moaning winds sighing through the trees that always do make me dismal, and I was troubled, too, about Harry's business. I can trust you, Elsie, I know of old, so I will tell you the whole story. He is on the brink of ruin. Hard times have sorely crippled the old firm into which he was admitted when he married me, and Mr. Van Schenck was to have carried them through to the first of January. Harry has always reproached himself for his carelessness in discussing the arrangements while walking with his uncle in the wood behind the house. He thinks the murderers may have overheard them, and killed the old man to obtain the money, for he was to have delivered it to him the day after the murder, and not a trace of that or any other property could be found. With this amount the firm would have been safe; now, it is very uncertain whether they can hold out. That's the reason, Elsie dear, why we are obliged to stay here this winter instead of going to New York. We must either live on the place or sit it—since the murder nobody will rent it—and the old mansion has been in the family ever since Long Island was settled, so of course Harry won't part with it until the last cent is gone."  
"But to return to the reason why I am more than ever anxious to alter the old mantelpiece—don't laugh at me Elsie! Just a week ago I sat here thinking of Harry's troubled face when he left me in the morning, wondering why he was so late, and listening to the wind moaning drearily outside, when suddenly I fancied I heard a loud, piercing shriek; the windows rattled violently, the whole house seemed to shake, and I heard, yes, I really did hear, the ringing, clinking sound of coins. The noise appeared to come from the mantelpiece. I glanced toward it, and oh! Elsie, every one of those horrible streaks and spots, instead of being a dull yellow, was the brightest crimson; they looked like fresh blood streaming from wounds."  
"I would never have believed I could have been so frightened; if my hair didn't stand on end, it was only because my net held it too tight, and for one moment I fully expected to see the old man's ghost on the heart-stone, ready to protect the solitary memento of his love—for in my annoyance at my last failure to remodel it I had been heartily wishing it away. I sprang from my seat and flew out of the room. There in the hall stood Harry, who had been carried on in the train to the next station, and returned home by another way. Luckily it was too dark for him to see my white, scared face, and he instantly exclaimed: 'Come quick, Kate, there is such a strange effect from the sunset light.' We went down to the hall, and he threw the door wide open. I saw nothing but the same low gray

clouds, the same wan gray atmosphere that had depressed my spirits all day long."  
"How strange!" he cried. "Just as I reached the steps the clouds suddenly parted in the west, and a blood-red light illuminated everything; trees, walls, stones, were crimson in the glow. I rushed in to call you and now it flows van shed as instantly as it came. But how pale you look, Kate! Are you ill?" You may imagine that I felt scornfully ashamed of my folly. And yet, scold myself as I may, I never can be at ease in this room when it begins to grow dusk. I always have a horrible fear of seeing those yellow spots and streaks suddenly turn blood-red again. Of course it's absurd; nobody knows that better than I, but I can't help it."  
Elsie sat looking thoughtfully at her sister's big eyes for a few moments, then her blue eyes flashed with delight, and she clapped her little hands like a child, she sprang from her chair exclaiming, "I have it, Kate dear, I have it; just the very idea. We'll change the old mantelpiece completely without using anything but a little paint, and, moreover, not anger the old man's ghost by even driving a nail into the beloved souvenir of his youth."  
"Paint!" asked Kate, doubtfully. "I'm used to being helped out of difficulties by your bright ideas, Elsie, dear, but I don't see how paint—"  
"Don't you?" interrupted her sister, quickly. "Of course not, else it would be your idea, not mine. Listen quietly, then, to my superior wisdom—drawing up her pretty figure with an air of mock dignity she spoke—"and I'll elucidate. You remember the pair of Sorrento brackets I brought home, and which you admired so much yesterday?"  
"Yes; but what have they to do with my bugbear?"  
"Didn't you say the inlaid-work looked like painting?"  
"Yes."  
"Well, then, here is my idea, my brand-new, bright idea, ever so much easier to carry out than my wise sister's blistering of fingers and hammering of thumbs. You see the long narrow panel over the hearth?"  
"Yes."  
"And the two oblong panels, one on each side, and the little square panels above them?"  
"Well, what in the world have they to do with Sorrento brackets?"  
"Wait a minute. You see, too, how very deeply sunken they are in the woodwork, much deeper than I should think necessary, but just the thing for my idea. I'll get very thin pieces of wood to fit over them exactly, paint lovely garlands of poppies, corn-flowers and wheat on the long panels, charming little bouquets on the square ones, then you can have the rest of the wood oiled, and I assure you your 'bugbear' will be far from the least pretty thing in your drawing-room. Where's your yard-measure, Kate?"  
"Where's your yard-measure, Kate?"  
"I'll take the dimensions of the various panels."  
"The system of modern hubbub had begun thirty years ago, Kate. This mantelpiece isn't half so substantial as the work put into the old mansion a century before. Why, the central panel is really shaky; the wood has warped, I suppose; perhaps it rattled a little the other evening, and your lively imagination made you fancy you heard the chink of money."  
"Perhaps so. I'm ready to admit anything in sheer gratitude for being delivered from the sight of those horrible streaks and splashes. You're a jewel of a sister, Elsie, and Harry—dear old fellow!—will be as delighted as I am. I know he has been on the point of telling me to have it taken away a dozen times; then the recollection of his uncle's last words stopped him. I wouldn't have had it demolished, much as it has tormented me, but your idea will make a complete transformation. Yes, it will be lovely. I can see it in 'my mind's eye' already."  
"And you shall see it in reality in ten days. I shall begin as soon as I get home to-morrow, and work like a Trojan to deliver you from your ghostly visions. Such a funny thing for you to be superstitious, Kate."  
Mrs. Van Schenck to Miss Elsie Horton.  
"Oh, Elsie, my darling, I am the happiest little woman in the world, and all through your idea. Let me try whether I can tell the story intelligibly, for it all happened scarcely two hours ago, and I sit scribbling, while my lord and master, like the king in Mother Goose's rhymes, is 'counting out his money.' I really feel giddy with the sudden plunge from dread of approaching ruin to the possession of wealth beyond our dreams; and just here let me assert that I really did hear the chink of money that ghostly afternoon."  
"Harry brought the box of panels down from the city, and after dinner I pretended I could not wait till to-morrow to try their effect, and begged him to open it. I really only did so to divert his thoughts from his business cares; he looked so white and the old mansion that I had little interest enough even in laying my ghost. He hesitated a moment, then said: 'I have something to tell you, Kate; but it can wait till we have seen Elsie's pretty work.' And added under his breath, but I caught the words: 'Trouble will come to her soon enough, poor child.'"  
"We easily wrenched off the lid, and Harry really seemed to forget his worries a moment while admiring the lovely garlands and bouquets. I'm so glad you chose morning-gories for the little square panels. I never saw anything so perfect as the way you have grouped the buds and blossoms. The mantelpiece had been painted dead black, as you suggested, so we set to work at once, put in the side panels, then the little square panels above them—they fitted exactly—and after gazing at the effect a moment, tried to slip the center panel into its place. It seemed a little tight, and one end sank lower than the other. 'Will it stand a blow, Kate?' asked Harry. 'I must make this side down a little more to crowd it even.' I wrapped the hammer carefully in flannel, and gave it to him, saying: 'First try pushing; it will never do to bruise the paint.' He did so, and suddenly shouted: 'Stand back, Kate, the whole mantelpiece is giving way. Before the words had left his lips the end of the panel vanished, mine, which I had been holding to steady, swung straight out into the room, and such a clinking and rattling echoed in my ears, as a perfect Danaë's shower of gold pieces came rolling down the hearth-rug, glittering and flashing in the lamplight, while we stood enveloped in a cloud of dust, staring into what looked like a huge black hole. After a few minutes the shower stopped

and we began to look about us. On the hearth with the money lay some dusty papers, bonds and stocks, Harry said, and inside the black hole were bags of gold coins, one of which had burst open, more papers, and among them the missing will. Imagine our astonishment, our delight! I can hardly believe it now. It seems like a fairy tale. And, oh! the relief of Harry! He had been trying all dinner time to summon up courage to tell me that the firm was hopelessly involved, and would be declared bankrupt to-morrow; every resource was exhausted. Think of it, Elsie; a few days more and the house would have been sold, the property lost to us forever. What a narrow escape. Blessings on decorative art! I have been laughing and crying by turns for the last hour, and Harry hasn't behaved much more sensibly. We've had a war-dance around my poor old bugbear. Such a simoleon as I was to fancy all sorts of ghostly horrors, and run away when the dear ugly old thing rattled its secret in my ears with every gust of wind that blew! It shall never be taken away and split up for firewood now, that's certain. What nonsense I am writing! Never mind; I've felt little inclination for nonsense during the last few months. I have a right to indulge myself in it now. Poor Mr. Van Schenck! He tried so hard to tell Harry the secret. He had had a safe for silver built in the wall when the mantelpiece was put up, and afterward used it for his valuables. A spring hidden in the center panel opened it. I wonder you did not find it when you were taking the measure and spoke of it being shaky. Do you remember? Harry has finished 'counting out his money,' and authoritatively orders me to bed, saying it is long past midnight, and no proper hour for anybody but ghosts to be abroad; so, unless I mean my letter to be like Tennyson's brook, and 'go on forever,' I am to close it at once. Like a good wife, I obey. I am too happy to be anything but dutiful. Shall I confess that I took a base advantage of the opportunity, and asked my liege lord a short time ago what he thought of my 'bugbear'—as he calls decorative art—now. His answer I need not record; suffice it to say it was perfectly satisfactory. Good-night, my darling. I can't find words to express my gratitude, but if a pair of solitary diamond earrings as bright as your idea—Another warning from Harry; now I really must stop.  
"Your loving sister, KATE."  
—Harper's Bazar.

### Hearty Old Age and the Cause.

There was a glimpse of gray darting up the steps, a quick, light latch rattling and a slam of the door, and the chief thoroughfare in the city had resumed the quiet, modest air which day in and day out suggests nothing but repose and almost entire inactivity. Yet through that door had just passed a splendid specimen of old age and a magnificent example of pluck and perseverance, while over the door was his name; a name known in every city, village and hamlet around the chain of great lakes; a name the owner of which has been a leader in the great business interests of the northwest, a person who less than five years ago was a millionaire and a worker.  
Then his office was not one room plainly fitted, but a handsome suite of apartments elegantly furnished and furnished; then he had stenographers, accountants, telegraph operators, clerks, messengers and porters; now his books are kept, his errands are done and all details of his work are performed by himself.  
Now he is upwards of sixty years of age, a poor man in dollars and cents, but in good health, good spirits, energy and ambition he is a Cressus. Five years ago scores of superintendents and managers reported almost hourly to him for instructions; then he insured his own property, risked thousands of dollars daily in business enterprises; paid out thousands daily for wages and made profits amounting to thousands. Then he was a genial, energetic millionaire; now he is a sociable, whole-souled, industrious and ambitious man. Then he was—but here he comes, let's follow him.  
With his gray and well-shaped head leaning in advance of a slightly stooping but firmly knit frame, he walks quickly up the street and is just going to turn the corner when, "How are you? Anything new to-day?" and he has stopped to speak to a new acquaintance. The answer is given, the old gentleman smiles, turns lightly on his heel as he says, "Good day," and passes on, having made a firm and old friend of the new acquaintance. To gain a few seconds' time he loses his dignity and runs several steps to get ahead of a street car. Just then he spies a customer three or four rods away and actually shouts, "Hello!" This from an old man and one who was once a millionaire results in a business transaction which brings in something like \$1.50 to the one who shouted.  
So he goes through rain, wind and sunshine, always on the quiver, always sociable, pleasant and with his eye on the main chance. His loss of wealth—honorably lost—does not seem to weigh on his mind an instant. He does not appear to realize that he is old; he is alike to all, young or old, rich or poor, and, in brief, his condition is 'pithily described by himself as follows:  
"You see, my boy, I have a good stomach and take care of it. Never had the dyspepsia or any other ailment in my life."  
—Detroit Free Press.

### Destructive Influences.

Doubtless countless myriads of living creatures come into existence of which by far the greater part must be destroyed. One aphid may be the parent of 5,904,900 individuals in five generations, and when these are swallowed up by lady-birds and other enemies in mass, it is no minute individual variation that can avert their fate. The unchecked produce of one pair of herrings would stock the Atlantic in a few years, until there was no room to move; and when these are engulfed by shoals, as a mouthful for the *Balaenoptera*, they can make as little struggle for their existence as the grass can make that the ox licks up, or the vegetation of a district that is devastated by locusts. It is the unwhimpering law of nature that one race must die that another may live; and this, in its turn, subserving in the same end, and so, constantly, until the cycle be complete. Without this law, against which there is no appeal, nature would be a chaotic impossibility. The destructive influences are so predominant that the carnage is indiscriminate and without struggle.—Contem. porary Review.

### TIMELY TOPICS.

Forty per cent. of the Chinese of San Francisco have been back and forth between the United States and China four or five times in five years, and rarely any one stays longer than eight years continuously in this country. Many Chinese merchants return regularly to spend the Chinese New Year at home.  
Bartholdi, the French sculptor, says there is no doubt that the great statue of Liberty enlightening the world will be ready for its place in New York harbor in 1883, the year in which New York's great world's fair is to be held. This statue, when erected, will be the largest in America. It was presented to the United States by the French people, and Bartholdi is hard at work at it in France.  
The New York Bulletin makes a compilation of crop reports which shows—so far as can be shown at this time—that the wheat production of 1880 will fully equal that of 1879. Iowa and Kansas will fall off, but their deficiency will be fully made up by gains in Illinois, Ohio, Minnesota and Pennsylvania. If present promises shall be verified, that will be the fourth successive great grain crop in the United States—a continuance of prosperity almost if not quite without precedent.  
Buckley is a Texas horse thief and murderer, for whom the law officers searched long and fruitlessly. A man called on the governor, introduced himself as a friend of the outlaw, and said that he was prepared to buy his pardon by giving information against other criminals. The governor was inclined to make such a bargain, and sent him to the attorney-general, who recognized him as none other than Buckley himself. The rascal drew a long knife out of his bootleg, but was overpowered and locked up.  
The New York State fish commissioners are advocating the culture of carp. The experiments at the government ponds in Washington have been very successful, fish that were put in there three years ago having grown much larger than in Europe under the same circumstances. They are an easy fish to raise. Any kind of a pond, no matter how restricted, can be used. Providing that the water is not too cold, carp thrive, no matter how impure it is. No natural water has been found too warm for them. They thrive on plants growing in the water, on boiled grain or even offal. A pond may be dug in arable land and used for three or four years as a carp pond, after which the land may be again cultivated.  
A correspondent of the Leavenworth Times calls attention to the similarity between the stand storm in Kansas and one in the island of Sicily, in the Mediterranean, two days afterward, and believes both were of meteoric origin. The Kansas dust was composed of brown and black impalpable matter, and so abundant that on the next day traces of the deposits could be seen on the surface of the ground, and on a north porch sufficient to receive the imprints of a cat's foot. The writer says: The near coincidence of dates between the phenomenon in Sicily and here, with an apparent similarity in the physical properties of the dust, might suggest a common origin.  
The act incorporating the New York world's fair of 1883, in celebration of the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States, provides for the subscription of \$12,000,000, which is \$2,000,000 more than the centennial exposition estimate was based upon; the commissioners of that celebration limiting their financial operations to \$10,000,000. This extra \$2,000,000 does not by any means represent the increased magnitude of the proposed exposition over the last one held in the United States, for it is confidently expected that the receipts alone, owing to the metropolitan location of the exposition and its ready means of access to all parts of the world, will be immensely greater than at the Philadelphia exposition. Besides this, the commissioners having in charge the projected fair believe there will be no difficulty in raising the amount mentioned in the act, or even more.  
Women are doing a good work in foreign fields under the direction of the Woman's Union Missionary society, whose nineteenth anniversary was celebrated recently at the Broadway tabernacle in New York. In Calcutta and Rajpore 1,162 women and girls are under the instruction of one lady and her assistants. An orphanage has been established at Calcutta, where more than 500 children receive care. Twenty-five pupils are now boarding at the mission in Peking, and there are also a large number of day scholars. Moreover, village schools are being opened in China. In Cyprus a school has been opened for Greek girls, and about sixty are in attendance. In Allahabad, India, where there are about 450 pupils under instruction, the earnestness of the women in their mission work has been rewarded by a gift of \$4,000 from the government.  
Railroad Statistics.  
There are some 85,000 miles of railroad in the United States operated by some 600 different companies. There are over 300,000 stations. On these lines are 1,000 locomotives, 13,000 passenger cars, 5,000 baggage, mail and express cars, and some 500,000 freight cars. No reliable statistics show the number of men employed on this 85,000 miles of road, but it is estimated that there are about 40,000 engineers and firemen, 30,000 passenger train conductors and brakemen, about the same number of baggage, mail and express men, and at least 50,000 men on freight trains. Add station agents and clerks, train dispatchers, telegraph operators, yardmen, roadmasters, truckmen, watchmen, flagmen, freight laborers, machinists, car-builders and repairers, employees in round-houses and shops, and last, but not least, presidents, general managers, superintendents, the auditor's department, treasurer's department, etc., and we have almost 1,000,000 men employed in the railroad business of the United States. Add to this the number of men employed in the manufacture of railroad supplies, in car and locomotive works, in rolling mills, in cutting ties, etc., and, perhaps, we could bring the number of men who derive their living from railroads in our country alone to nearly 2,000,000.  
Decoration day occurs to women 313 times a year. We omit wash day.—Marathon Independent.

### Strange Avocations.

Said a witness under cross-examination: "I am an early-caller. I call different tradesmen at early hours, from one until half-past five o'clock in the morning, and that is how I get my living. I get up between twelve and one o'clock; I go to bed at six o'clock and sleep until the afternoon. I call the bakers between one and two o'clock—the bakers are the earliest of all." What sort of a living he made is not recorded. Five dollars a week, we should say, would be the outside figure, and to earn that he would need a couple of scores of customers. The early-caller's fee is well earned, since but for his intervention his clients would often lose a day's pay, if not be thrown out of work altogether, by failing to keep time. Not so deserving of encouragement are the "tip-pennies," carrying on their vocation in those quarters of London where pawnbrokers and poor people abound. They are feminine intermediaries between the pawnbroker and folks anxious to raise a loan upon their belongings, who, rather than transact such business for themselves, are willing to pay two-pence for every parcel conveyed to everybody's "uncle" or "aunt" named from his clutches. These go-betweens, it is averred, also receive a quarterly commission from the tradesmen they favor with their patronage; and so, one way and another, contrive to make a comfortable living out of their neighbors' necessities.  
There are men in Paris, birds of a feather with the chiffonier, who go from hospital to hospital collecting the linseed plasters that have served the turn of doctor and patient; afterward pressing the oil from the linseed and disposing of the linen, after bleaching it, to the paper maker. Others make a couple of francs a day by collecting old corks, which being cleaned and pared, fetch it is said, half a franc per hundred.  
A lady resident of the Faubourg St. Germain is credited with earning a good income by hatching black and brown ants for pleasant preservers. One Parisian gets his living by bringing maggots out of the four meats he buys of the chiffoniers and fattening them up in tin boxes. Another breeds maggots for the special behoof of night-gales; and a third boasts of selling between 30,000,000 and 40,000,000 of worms every season for piscatorial purposes. He owns a great pit at Montmartre, wherein he keeps his store. Every day his scouts bring him fresh stock, for which he pays them from five to ten pence per pound, according to quality; reselling them to anglers at just double those rates, and clearing thereby something over £500 a year.  
This curious avocation is not unknown in England. Some twelve years ago, we are told, Mr. Wells, a fishing-tackle maker of Nottingham, in order to insure a constant supply of bait for the anglers, started a farm for the rearing of lobworms, cockspurs, ring-tailed brandlings and other worms in demand among the disciples of Walton, who abound in the old lace town. To keep his farm stocked, men and boys go out at night collecting worms in the meadows and pastures, a moist warm night yielding from 2,000 to 6,000 worms. As soon as they are brought in they are placed in properly-selected moss, field-moss for choice, to secure until they become little more than skin—freshly-caught worms being too tender for anglers to handle; while "when a worm is properly educated, he is as tough as a piece of India-rubber, and behaves as a worm should do when put upon the hook." When his condition is attained, the worms are packed in moss and put up in light canvas bags for the market. This worm-merchant does not entirely depend upon the industry of his collectors, but breeds large quantities himself in his own garden—the component parts of his breeding-heap being a secret he not ungenerally keeps to himself.—Chambers' Journal.

### An Earth Rock Avalanche.

A San Francisco correspondent of the Baltimore Sun writes: The sand-storms through the great Colorado deserts are as obstructive to the Southern Pacific railway as the snow is to the Central Pacific road on the Nevada summits. Instead of snow sheds the Southern Pacific railroad company is putting up sand fences for many miles, which will greatly lessen the evil. Never in the history of the Central Pacific road has travel been interrupted for a week before last winter. Snow sheds have been destroyed and tracks buried beneath landslides of great extent. The company has given proof of being prepared for the emergency. Snow plows and work brigades swarmed on 200 miles of track. They seemed to a ring out of the ground. But near Alta, on the California slope of the Nevada, an earth and rock avalanche occurred of such magnitude that the army of shovelmen stood aghast at the mouth's job before them. But a hydraulic gold gravel sluicer smiled at it. "In forty-eight hours, without a pick, shovel, or a barrow or a man to wield them, I will say to you mountain mass be gone, and it will vanish and leave no sign!" And it was so. It was about an hour's work to make a flume of boards and tap a mountain stream 150 feet overhead and lead it to the spot. Then borrowing some hydraulic hose and three-inch nozzles from gravel miners close by, he had quickly several streams, under 150 feet pressure, playing with nitro-glycerine power on the mass. Down came rocks, boulders, trees, stones and earth; 100 tons at a roll tumbled down the steep declivity, and good as his word, there remained in forty-eight hours not a hillock to bear record of the wonderful achievement. Quick almost as thought the track was replaced; the cars and engines appeared; glad passengers, released from bondage, made the welkin echo with joyous cheers, and the next train wonders where was the obstruction!

### Parallel of Sexes.

Man is strong—woman is beautiful.  
Man has science—woman has taste.  
Man shines abroad—woman at home.  
Man prevents misery—woman relieves it.  
Man has a rugged heart—woman a soft one.  
Man has judgment—woman has sensibility.  
Man is great in action—woman in suffering.  
Man is a being of justice—woman an angel of mercy.  
A guide and hunter known as Colorado Bill at Fort Steele, is astonishing the far West by his wonderful pistol shooting. A short time ago he broke ninety-two out of 100 glass balls with a 45-caliber Colt's revolver. He challenges the world to shoot with him at any distance from ten to 300 yards.