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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page
A Mysterious Dwelling.....	213
Chronology of Events.....	220
Crystal Cave, Montana (illustrated, 212).....	198
Editorial.....	195
Firing of Blasts in Mines.....	338
Klamath River (illustrated, 199).....	335
Lumbering on Puget Sound.....	196
Notes of the Northwest.....	224
Salmon, Oregon (illustrated, 199).....	231
Shoshone Falls (illustrated, 210-211).....	230
Spallumcheen River, B. C. (illustrated, 200).....	231
The Islands of Puget Sound (illustrated, 200).....	231
The Bench Lands of Montana.....	224
The Russians at Bodega and Fort Ross.....	232
Valley of the Laughing Waters, Utah (illustrated, 209).....	223
White Sulphur Springs, Montana (illustrated, 221-222).....	228

ONCE Virginia City was the one great mining city of the United States. The honor was for a time usurped by Leadville, but now beyond question the mantle has fallen upon Butte City, Montana. In that city more men are employed, more money is paid for wages, more capital is invested in mills and reduction works actually in use, and the bullion output is greater than in any other mining camp in the world. The next number of THE WEST SHORE will be devoted to illustrations of this busy city and its industries, including views of the mines, reduction works, machinery in operation, etc., etc. Accompanying these will be given descriptions of the processes employed in mining and reducing ores. Taken as a whole, it will be the most interesting number issued since the magazine was founded.

FROM Alaska to Mexico, and from the Pacific Ocean to beyond the great "Backbone of the Continent," the "Stony Mountains" of a century ago, we are receiving sketches of scenery for illustration in THE WEST SHORE. Our regular and special artists are out in all directions along the lines of the Northern Pacific, the O. R. & N., the Short Line, the Utah & Northern, the Oregon & California and other routes of travel. They are sending us sketches of valley and mountain, rivers, cataracts, towns, cities, mines, mills, and scores of special subjects that have never before been illustrated. These will appear from month to month, accompanied by interesting descriptive articles, such as will make THE WEST SHORE for the next twelve months a most desirable family visitor. It is a gratification to state that in spite of the prevailing hard times our subscription list increases steadily, and we feel that this success is not entirely undeserved, since our efforts to lay something new and

pleasing before our readers have not in the least relaxed, but have been increased to such an extent as to render the expense of publication much greater than formerly. For this reason we look upon the continuance of old subscribers and the addition of so many new ones as an evidence of popular appreciation of our efforts and their successful results.

BEEF shipment in refrigerator cars does not offer gilded inducements to the small operator, according to the statements of the Marquis de Mores. Such small lots as two car-loads cannot be made to pay, and the shipper must have a cooler in which to store meat until sold. "Sheep are nearly impossible to refrigerate, do not give good loading in the cars, and are a drag in the Chicago market." He says that the expense incurred in handling dressed beef renders it necessary to handle from 100 to 150 per day in order to make the business profitable. His idea is that shippers in Eastern Oregon and Washington cannot engage in the handling of dressed beef with profit, but that if from fifteen to thirty thousand head can be shipped to him at Medora during the months of February, March and April, he could dress and ship them from his own establishment. Our ranges supply better beef at that season of the year than he can obtain nearer home, and, from his standpoint at least, such an arrangement would be a desirable one. The loss in weight and quality of live stock by the long haul from Yakima or Wallula to Chicago would thus be avoided, and this saving might more than compensate for the lower price per hundred at Medora.

COMMISSIONER SPARKS, in his anxiety to find under existing laws some remedy for the acknowledged fraudulent practices by pre-emption claimants, has ordered that the issue of all patents shall be suspended until each individual case can be investigated. His object is a good one, but this seems a harsh method of attaining it, as well as one of doubtful legality. It is questionable whether he has the power to withhold patents upon the presentation of proofs required by law, unless upon complaint and charges in the way specified by law. This indefinite suspension of the date for securing complete title seriously interferes with the honest pre-emptor's chances of selling his claim should circumstances render it necessary to do so, as well as defrauds the county in which the land is situated of the taxes, which can only be levied after patent is issued. The best remedy for pre-emption frauds is the abolishment of the law altogether, and such modification of the homestead laws as will render their provisions less burdensome and applicable to a greater number of people. Our public land is going fast, and no person should be permitted to acquire more than 160 acres from the Government. Even at that rate it will all be gone in a few years.