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TODAY'S WEATHER.—Showers; cooler, with fresh southerly winds.

PORTLAND, SATURDAY, MARCH 16.

It is impossible to doubt that railroad construction of some important character is planned for the north bank of the Columbia River between Vancouver and Kalama.

Of course, it will not stop with that. If it is a Northern Pacific project, it will extend to the mouth of the river.

It is a matter that will naturally be done to the best advantage and not to strive to overcome conditions established by Nature.

The desire for a railroad down the Columbia River has long been shared both by the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific, and it is possible the Harriman moves with the O. R. & N. have strengthened that desire and put it in the shape of declaration.

On the other hand, there might be a danger that Portland would overlook an opportunity to make this combination its servicable friend by offering it facilities here for handling traffic.

The State of Delaware has wisely chosen to turn from a nonentity like Kenney and a worse than nonentity like Addicks to the comparatively able and respectable representation afforded in the Senate by two vacant seats.

As eloquent reminders of the days of Bayard and Gray, these unseated desks will reflect more credit upon Delaware than she could have derived from a successful issue of Mr. Hanna's efforts in behalf of Addicks. There are indications that Nebraska will also choose for itself the pleasure of dignified and uncorrupted seats, instead of gabgabs like Allen and railroad corruptionists like Thompson.

Unfortunately it has been ruled that Allen, appointed instead of Hayward who died, will continue to hold an unseated desk.

The Nebraska situation calls attention to an aspect of Senatorial reform not usually in evidence, and that is the abuse possible under the appointing power. Two successive Republican Legislatures have been elected in Nebraska, and yet through Hayward's death a Populist Governor has been able to keep a free-silver and anti-expansion man in the Senate.

When we get popular election of Senators we ought to do away with appointments by Governors. In the case of death or resignation, and the place filled. Meanwhile, Delaware's descent to the pocket-borough status, with one Senator for every 50,000 people compared with New York's one for every 3,000,000, should not escape the solicitude of those who fancy the only state fit to be wiped off the map is Nevada, which returns its veterans to the Senate with decorous steadfastness that would do credit to New England.

To say to Count Cassini, as Secretary Hay is reported to have done, that we should like to know the Russian Government's inmost thoughts on the subject of Manchuria, borders upon "shirtsleeve" diplomacy, and is a request that the polished ambassador might justifiably decline with considerably less gracefulness than he is certain to have employed.

Russian diplomacy is now for 50 years it has been of the first rank. The financial undertakings alone of M. de Witte have not been surpassed for magnitude and finesse in modern times. It is for us to bear in mind, moreover, that however she may have fooled Great Britain or played France and Germany one against the other, or pushed her borders upon India to the south and Asia to the East, she has been our steadfast friend at times of great need.

Russian reform is a question in Dr. Holmes' poem "Who was our friend when the world was our foe?" In the War of 1812 Alexander I was the only crowned head in Europe who had a kindly feeling for the United States, and pressed upon Great Britain the ad-

visability of making peace even when he knew the advice was unwelcome.

In "A Century of American Diplomacy," John W. Foster tells briefly where Russia stood at the most critical moment in the life of the Republic.

For two years the danger of European intervention loomed as a constant menace. Of all these nations the only staunch friend of the Union cause was Russia, all the others were unfriendly, or indifferent to the result.

It was Russia that gave us the first note early in 1861 of the efforts of the French Emperor to effect a coalition against us of the three great powers.

Not only defined the coalition, but again in 1862, when the formal proposition for European intervention was proposed, it also was declined.

In darkest days of the struggle her fleet appeared in American ports as an earnest of her friendship.

The release of Alaska to us by Russia, however true or false the tradition that we paid her then for her services in the Civil War, was undoubtedly a friendly act, partly significant of her entire willingness to get out of this continent and give us freer hand.

Russia's desire relative to the integrity of China has been so often explained that no one need misconceive it. She does not want China divided, because eventually she hopes for the whole of it.

Such absorption of Manchuria would justify and lead to similar acquisitions by other European powers, she will forego in her own interests.

For protecting her railroad, police powers must be on a large scale, and she can hardly be expected to leave her extensive interests in Manchuria at the mercy of Japanese invasion.

As to our own tariff quarrel with her, we must not expect friendship to go to the length of self-sacrifice.

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These blood feuds have involved a great many people through marriage that had no knowledge of or sympathy with the original crime that caused a general gathering of the rival clans on both sides.

Some of the leaders have been conspicuous, not for acquired intelligence, but for a good deal of vanity and some superficial virtues. Of these and some pitiless, ferocious, cowardly murderers, who spared neither old men, women nor children in their vendetta, have prided themselves upon their ability to lead in prayer, upon their sobriety, peculiar integrity and truthfulness.

So powerful were these hostile families in some instances the Sheriff and other county officials were sure to belong to one faction or the other, and in that event, of course, the lawful machinery of arrest was subordinated in the interest of the Sheriff's faction.

In the famous Hatfield-McCoy feud more than thirty persons were murdered on both sides within ten years, and it was impossible to bring any of the assassins to justice.

The courts were threatened, the wheels of justice blocked, and for several years the peace and order of West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky had to ask leave to exist of the principals to the feud, that these family feuds owe their stubborn life to the isolation and environment of the civilization in which they have flourished is clear from the fact that they have never been a feature of the social life of any other states of the old South or Southwest.

If any large body of these mountaineers were ever employed in a mass to some new enterprise and settled as did the Mormons, when in a body they went to Utah, it is possible that in an isolation and environment identical with that from which they came they might have renewed their hereditary habit of "blood" feuds, but the states west of the Mississippi and on the Pacific Coast were settled by a conglomerate population from all sections, and such plants as family feuds like this find no soil.

Factories and mills might take place, but no Corn Law might be waged between families. Nor do these family feuds ever seem to have prevailed in Missouri, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas or Texas to any appreciable extent.

The British troops in Cape Colony have been attacked by a stronger and more subtle power than the Boers possess. The bubonic plague is abroad among them with terrifying effect, and, though combated by medical science at every step, it is rapidly gaining ground.

Sanitation in South African military camps is impossible. Infection is the only resource, and this is being pursued vigorously, notwithstanding which the number of European cases is steadily increasing.

If the Boers, through their wild, free life in the hills, escape this scourge, they will find in its prevalence among Europeans their most powerful ally against the British. Sick soldiers are worse than no soldiers, and an infected military camp has in it the elements of its own destruction.

In the meantime, both sides have only surrendered in paper. Dewar still eludes his pursuers, while Kirtstinger's command working northward has eluded three British columns and captured a large number of registered horses, involving an expense to Great Britain of \$10,000.

The "end of the war," so often proclaimed as in sight, is therefore not discernible, and Edward VII is "lord of the Transvaal" only by proclamation.

The citizens of Baker City are naturally and justly indignant at the disclosure in the child-beating case there, of many of them feeling that the proper punishment for a brute who cruelly whips his son—a lad of 8 years—a with a rawhide, should be given a liberal dose of his own medicine.

The little lad is certainly an object of pity, as his inhuman father is an object of detestation. It may be necessary, in order to protect the child from his inhuman parent, to remove him from parental custody, but in this event the mind of the child should be contributed to the boy's support. Otherwiser the merciless beating of the son may result according to the father's wishes, by relieving him of the boy's maintenance.

The Duke of Manchester, it is said, considers the action of Miss Portia Knight in bringing suit for breach of promise against him wholly unjustified. This is strange. Who, indeed, should know better than the Duke the circumstances of his acquaintance with this fair American? To be sure, his judgment in the case may be warped somewhat by more recent happenings. In this view the prosecution evidently shares, since the matter will be pushed through the English courts to the finish, and the decision there rendered will decide whether or not Papa Zimmerman will have to bring out his wallet in order to square matters between his titled son-in-law and the American girl whom he did not marry.

Meklejohn, the Baker City child-beater, attempted before the court to justify his course and that of his wife, the boy's step-mother, in having cruelly beaten his 8-year-old son, by the statement that he was merely trying to raise the boy as he was himself raised. This plea, if allowed, would discredit the teachings of Solomon, since clearly the application of the "rod to the fool's back" had not in his case been a promoter of wisdom.

A big roar has arisen over the proposal to stamp Sampson's profile on the Santiago medals. But since a medal has two faces, there is no reason why Schley's likeness should not be put on the reverse side, except that the combination would be a mockery of each hero. Such a medal would be a Janus indeed.

It is still thought that the stranded lights near Ilwaco can be saved. We have done a power of thinking on that score for over a year, but not enough to budge the vessel.

If some people had known Mrs. Sitton was to be elected, they would have been just as gracious before as after.

PRUNEGROWERS AS GROCERS.

New York Journal of Commerce.

Not since prunes, in association with plum, have been so much the lips of the lovely creatures in a young ladies' seminary has that estimable fruit been so entertaining as the managers of the California Cured Fruit Association, who made it during the past few months. In fact, those managers at one time seriously proposed to send out the young ladies and prunes, whether with or without the prisms was not stated, to open booths for dispensing prunes, and there is no doubt that the Eastern public would have eaten prunes just as long as the California girls passed them out; but fears that the prune habit so formed would be ephemeral, and would be abandoned as soon as the girls were withdrawn, led the managers to give up this idea.

The last crop of prunes was unusually heavy. Merchants would have pushed the sale at every opportunity, shading the managers to give up this idea.

The managers of the Cured Fruit Association, not being men of business, multiplied the size of the crop by a salacious and a reckless conclusion that they would make much money for their members. Therefore they held the price stiff when every dealer knew that the price had to come down.

There are many things a man may not do besides prunes. The managers have been reading the funny columns in the newspapers instead of the market reports, which may be more informing, and they evidently reached the conclusion that prunes constitute the staple in the dietary of boarders. They kept the price of prunes high, and the price of prunes was not to be lowered.

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