

Russia in 1877 was at the point of invading Austria instead of the sultan's dominions, and the distrust thus created must operate in favor of the Turke. Austria is not exactly a strong power, but she still has a voice in the affairs of Europe, and that will naturally be used in the interest of the maintenance of status quo. This is undoubtedly one of the causes that tends to delay the final settlement of the Turkish question in the only way it can be settled permanently and satisfactorily.

LEGAL MUDDLES.

Recent occurrences here have given the Supreme Court of the State quite a trying task in the way of straightening out legal muddles in which the public have more or less direct interest; and there are several other similar events on the tapis. It is to be hoped that the chief tribunal in the State will be able to exercise such wisdom and discretion as to insure public confidence in the righteousness and legal soundness of its decisions, no matter whether or not they are in accord with the view popularly taken before the judicial hearing is concluded.

Of the legal muddles that the Supreme Court has had to deal with, one of the most prominent is the eight-hour law. So far as the statute itself is concerned, it is an almost meaningless jumble of words; rarely does a legislature allow such a crudity in composition to get through. Probably if the law had been fully tested, even the Supreme Court would not have been able to define all that it did or did not mean. But one thing was well understood, viz.: that it intended to limit certain employments to eight hours a day for labor, whatever else was meant. On this intention the point was made that it was a violation of the right of contract, and the Supreme Court held that the objection was not good—that the State had a right to protect its citizens from the oppression of excessive hours of labor. The Supreme Court of the United States is now being asked to pass on the judgment of the State court, whose members feel that they will be upheld by final judicial decree as well as by public sentiment.

Another case was the county school tax in cities. It was pretty well known that in framing the constitutional provision relative to maintaining city schools there was no thought of depriving any county schools of the maintenance they had been receiving; the convention was so constituted as to prefer leaving that to the Legislature. But when a test was brought before the State Supreme Court that body decided that the rule must be made to operate both ways; that cities of the first and second classes must maintain schools independent of the counties in which they are situated, and that those counties also must maintain their schools independently. The result is the doing away of an injustice which it was thought by many that only remotely prospective legislation would cure.

Still another subject is the fire and police commission business in this city. The chief of police here made certain rules in harmony with what he

believed to be the law, and removed a certain officer. The fire and police commission took issue with him, virtually claiming that while it did not act the chief could not, and a court upheld the commission. The Supreme Court, however, set this ruling aside, and established the guide that when the commission failed to do its duty the chief of police was not tied up, but must discharge his public functions. Later, the commission removed a chief and appointed a successor. Now the Supreme Court is asked to declare the act of removal a violation of the law. To do so would be virtually to declare that a conspiracy had been entered into to effect the removal. What the court will decide is the cold legal aspect of the situation remains to be seen, probably at an early date; and in the meantime there is a chief who claims to have been illegally ousted from the active duties of his office and entitled to the salary, and another chief who is doing the work and also claims the emoluments. It will take the Supreme Court to reduce this chaotic state to order.

Finally, and of fully as much importance to the public, is the question of the constitutionality of the Australian ballot law. This is not the law regulating the canvassing of votes, etc., by the canvassing boards, but that relating to the casting of ballots. It involves a question as to whether a technicality or the present public weal is the better to prevail, so far as the ultimate good of the State is concerned. The general sentiment is that the people have expressed their choice for officers, and that the latter should take hold. But the Supreme Court must decide whether or not that choice has been expressed in constitutional form or whether a new election must be held. The task is a delicate one. In the event of a decision one way, the present rule for elections will be continued until legislative change. If the court rules the other way, then Utah loses its presidential vote, its congressional delegation-elect, its legislators-elect, and its county and other officers-elect, at least until such time as the affair can be straightened out, or there will be a very great muddle in the way of disputes early next month.

Surely wisdom, learning, and prudence are needed in a court on which there is such grave responsibility, and may these not fall to the present incumbents of the high judicial position? In the light of past and present events it does look as if Utah is destined to run, in short order, the entire gamut of experiences in self-government in a strange mixture, and only a conservative, well-balanced commonwealth can withstand the pressure without undue irritation and worry. But the people feel an assurance that the right will prevail, and their confidence is not misplaced.

THE RUSSIAN STUNDISTS.

Although the Russian church aided by the state for centuries has followed the policy of suppressing with stern hand all attempts of dissenters to establish themselves in the czar's dominions, there are probably more sects there than in any other country in Europe.

It is estimated that about ten million souls are outside the state church and that the number is steadily increasing.

Among these dissenters the Stundists have been made the subject of study by some theologians of note. They have suffered much persecution for the sake of their religion and have on that account the sympathy of Christian denominations.

The origin of the Stundist movement in Russia is traced to German colonists who were in the habit of devoting an hour (stunde) to Bible-reading. The example was followed by the Russian neighbors, and the effect was noticeable. They became sober, industrious and consequently prosperous. Members of a family of Bible readers were more closely united in the bonds of good feeling and this had a beneficent influence on life outside the home circle. Religious knowledge increased and the abuses of the established church became apparent. The movement spread from village to village. Peasants became evangelists and young men and women developed into Stundist teachers.

Originally it was not their intention to leave the state church. They wanted to take a position similar to that of the first Methodists in the Anglican church, but like these they were driven out and had to effect an organization of their own. They have endeavored to follow the pattern of the first Church of Christ. They have appointed no priests. The conduct of their congregations and the management of their meetings are in the hands of lay elders, who also take charge of baptisms, funerals, marriages and the like. The Stundists do not as a principle reject the sacraments, but only do not in a practical way observe them as this is done in the Christian churches in general. The old-fashioned Stundists—for there also are sections that have developed more modern traits—still retain infant baptism. At the regular Sunday services there is found on the table beside the Bible, also a flask of wine and some bread, which the elders distribute among those present in the spirit of a love-feast. By the side of the elders they have according to apostolic precedent, also their deacons. Both officials are nothing but "brethren." They receive no pay and are chosen only because of their zeal and wisdom. The form of worship is that of the original "Stunde," consisting in Bible-reading and interpretation, singing and prayer, and exhortation. The meetings are generally held in the homes of the elders, as there are no special Stundist houses of worship.

A religious movement of this kind is a proof that there among the millions of Russia is a great hunger and thirst for truth, that can be completely satisfied only through His word who, Himself, is the truth.

THE DECISION of the State Supreme court on the validity of the Australian ballot law is being awaited with anxiety by the people. There is no doubt but that the court will declare what the constitutional situation is, but the people are all expectancy to get the information. Therefore it is good news to learn that the decision will be forthcoming not later than Friday of this week.