

The Jerusalem conference will be watched with great interest, for should the pope succeed in uniting under his scepter those various churches he will obtain an influence in the vast Turkish empire, which may perhaps hasten the day of its downfall in the East.

RESULT OF AN OVERSIGHT.

What was once known as Russian America and now as Alaska, together with the Aleutian islands, was ceded to the United States by the great white czar on the 20th of June, 1867. It was not a present to us nor was it a swap or any similar transaction, but a straight-out, clean-out purchase, the consideration being \$7,200,000 spot cash, which was handed to his Muscovite majesty or his national treasurer (same thing in effect) in glittering gold coin. The deed was of the warranty pattern whereby title was affirmed and property passed over. There are 514,700 square miles of it altogether and as it is mainly quite productive one way and another and has paid our government fully five percent a year on the investment, it was a very fine speculation for us. But we didn't really know how much or how little we were getting at the time, save and except the soil with its tements, appurtenances and hereditaments thereunto belonging, or in anywise appertaining, together with as many seals as might perennially hibernate near the shores thereof. The islands spoken of resemble somewhat, on the map, a string of link sausages and come very near landlocking the vast body of water known as Bering sea lying between them and the mainland, so that whether our respected Uncle Samuel controls the whole of that sea because of the enclosure aforesaid or merely holds sway over the usual three miles each way as provided by international law, or any other amount less than the whole—is the question.

The News has repeatedly given warning that it is of the utmost importance to leave nothing to implication or understanding in a transaction of consequence; that is, nothing but the words themselves, some of which by reason of different meanings attaching to them and variations because of grammatical structure should be selected with the greatest care, and in some cases supported with other words having a similar meaning. It is better that we have redundancy and iteration than that we omit anything by reason of which something desired and conceded is not expressed. The "short form" of deed provided by the Utah statutes is as good as any for ordinary transactions wherein the amount involved is not considerable, and even in some others such form may do as well as any; but it would not fill the bill or even commence to do such a thing if the deal were for a thousand acres variously improved and irregular in location and value but altogether worth say a million or more. And no lawyer or man of affairs would either draw, offer or take such a deed. But the United States must have accepted one of that nature when it perfected the dicker with Russia—and it was

buying an empire, too, in all respects save population!

Now, we can all see that great men sometimes make mistakes which those who are not so great would not make at all. The work of some of the most profound and thoroughly experienced lawyers can be and oftentimes is diagnosed, dissected and picked to pieces by as humble a person as an editor who may work a whole year or more for what the lawyer gets for the one job which the editor knocks into smithereens! And the measures introduced, supported and carried through by congresses and legislatures (always excepting the Utah law-makers) are quite frequently shown to be had in various degrees running from technically to fatally, by limbs of the law quite young in the profession. So with that Alaska deal. It was engineered by William H. Seward, one of the greatest of our statesmen and purest of our public men, with the approval and endorsement of course of the administration—Andrew Johnson being President at the time, and a good one. But we fancy we could shut our eyes and go to a law office out of several equally good in Salt Lake, where the deed for the transaction would have been more carefully drawn and the possibility of controversy thereafter by reason of the terms employed have been reduced more nearly to a minimum.

Just see the result of it! Or perhaps it would be better to say one of the results, for there have been several, but the arbitration commission in session at Paris is the greatest. It has been going on for several months now, and the hope at first entertained that our middle-aged people at least would know before they died whether Bering sea is ours exclusively or the world's generally, grows fainter apace. Mr. Webster, representing Great Britain, now has the floor and acts as though he intended to keep it, for he took possession several weeks ago and seems to have but fairly started. Next to making blunders in a big agreement, the paying of lawyers \$100 a day and expenses to run a legal job through is about the most injudicious thing of the kind we can think of, for they not only prolong the proceedings unwarrantably as it seems to the uninitiated, but take long recesses and observe holidays with religious exactness, with their pay going on just the same. And all the talk really contains no more in substance and point than we have here stated in about a column. It would have been a great economy in the matter of words if a few more of them had been employed in that deed.

PRESIDENTS' WIVES.

For some reason or other Mrs. Cleveland's movements attract a good deal of attention nowadays. From her first introduction to the public she has always commanded attention and respect, but not as a general thing quite so much as now. Perhaps a few weeks more will tell us why, but in the meantime let us not anticipate. We can for the nonce, in order that we may not become so un-American as to let gossip regarding the President's family cease altogether, devote a little attention to other Presidents' wives and

permit Mrs. Cleveland to enjoy to the fullest her seclusion at Buzzard's Bay.

One of the Presidents—James Buchanan—never married and is therefore of no further interest in this connection. Three of the first Presidents married widows. The wife of John Quincy Adams, who received her education in England, is said to have created a great sensation in the nation's capital. The wife of Martin Van Buren, Hannah Hoes, lived but a short time after her marriage, dying about seventeen years before her husband's election to the Presidency. President Tyler's second wife was an ardent Roman Catholic, and Mrs. Polk was a calm-mannered Presbyterian. Mrs. Fillmore had been a school teacher, and the courtship was carried on under difficulties, as the lover could rarely afford the expense of a journey to visit his fiancée. Mrs. Franklin Pierce was the devout daughter of a clergyman and made the White House a center for charitable and religious enterprises. There are three Presidential widows living—Mrs. Fillmore, Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Garfield. The only living ex-President is Benjamin Harrison and he has been a widower nearly a year.

SCIENCE NEVER STOPS.

This is the century of big undertakings and vast achievements in the realm of practical science and engineering. The trans-Atlantic cable, the trans-continental railway, the Suez canal, surely make glory enough for one age, even though that same age must acknowledge to an unfinished Panama canal and a still imaginary tunnel under the English channel. These are confidently believed to be only deferred, however, not abandoned as impracticable; and to them, as an instance of the restlessness of genius and the daring of accurate engineering, may now be added a third grand project which the close of the century is expected to see well under way. We allude to the proposition to bridge the Bosphorus—a scheme concerning which a conservative English mechanical journal, the *London Iron*, says: "Constantinople is another seaport where the construction of a gigantic bridge has long been projected, with the view of connecting European Turkey with Asia Minor by rail. The latest scheme proposes that the structure should span the Bosphorus a little to the east of the metropolis, approximately midway between the Golden Horn and the western extremity of the Black sea. At this point the strait narrows considerably, but even there the passage-way would require to be some 2860 meters long, or nearly the length of the Forth bridge. In this case the Adriatic railway would branch off to the west of Constantinople, follow the Bosphorus in its easterly course, cross the strait, and continue on its way to Bagdad and the Euphrates valley."

With this vision fulfilled and the Russian trans-Siberian line completed, there would remain but the connecting links across Bering straits to Alaska and from Gibraltar across to Africa to provide this little globe of ours with as complete a girdling of bands of steel as could well be desired.