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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1869.

RITNERS ADMINISTRATION-THE BUCKSHOT WAR.

Fx-GOVERNOR RITNER was the last of the trio who, a generation ago, were the leading actors in Pennsylvania State politics. His opponent in the exciting Gubernatorial campaign of 1838, ex-Governor David R. Porter, died on the 6th of August, 1867. Thaddens Stevens, after gaining in the national counthe Legislature, which was followed by a cils an influence as commanding as that which he had previously exercised within the factory to the Democracy, and a peaceful boundaries of the Commonwealth, died in 1868. And Ritner, although born before abnegation of power by the anti-Masonic administration. either Porter or Stevens, for a brief period survived them both. The era with which he was actively identified has now passed into history, and its exciting events can be as dis-ALAS! and alack! and how are the mighty passionately discussed as the policy of colonial fallen! The Hon. Elihu B. Washburne, of governors whose very names are forgotten. Illinois, holds the position of Minister Pleni-It marked an important transition period. potentiary and Envoy Extraordinary from the pregnant with striking changes in the whole United States to the Court of Napoleon III, political system of the State. Ritner was the with a salary of \$17,500 in gold. Since Minfirst man to break up a long succession of ister Washburne has been residing abroad, he Democratic Governors. The principles and has crept into the newspapers of his own leaders of that party had gained an ascendcountry but twice. The first appearance was ancy which made opposition on issues legitiduring the summer, when we were called upon mately connected with national politics perto note his arrival at a notorious German refectly hopeless, and the anti-Masonic excitesort, where, in company with Ministers Curtin, ment furnished the first effective agency for Jay, Jones, and other American diplomats, he disintegrating its compact lines. In those was invited to dinner by a prominent banker days the German element was proportionably from Frankfort-on-the Main. Minister Washmuch more powerful than at the present time, burne, it now appears, has torn himself away and one of the most important qualifications from the attractions of Hombourg, and settled of an aspirant for State honors was a knowdown, at last, in Paris. But no sooner has he ledge of the German language and personal done so than he makes the disheartening dispopularity in German districts, Ritner's covery that it is quite impossible for him to birth and associations having given him this support the dignity of his official position on endowment, the acquaintances and position the paltry sum of \$17,500 in gold per annum. he had acquired during an unusually long He therefore makes an appeal for \$15,000 service as a member of the Legislature made in gold for "contingent expenses," and we him the most available nominee that could be suppose that his appeal will receive the attenfound for the new party, and by dint of retion of Congress, even if it does not move the peated effort he at last reached the goal of his hearts of that body to acquiescence. ambition through the aid of the Democratic divisions. Elected as an anti-Mason, it was sors in the French mission, General John A. incumbent upon him or his followers to at-Dix and Hon. John Bigelow, found it postempt to enforce the principles of sible to live and thrive in Paris on \$17,500 in that party. Stevens undertook this gold per annum; but then what are Dix and difficult task only to be baffled by the sturdy Bigelow by the side of Washburne? Dix and and dignified resistance of the leading mem-Bigelow understood the language and were bers of the Masonic Order: and after this familiar with the customs of the people to failure, anti-Masonry ceased to be an aggreswhom they were accredited, while Washburne sive and growing power, although its princiis, or a few months ago was, blissfully ignoples had still many enthusiastic followers. rant of both their language and their customs, The Governorship in those days was endowed as well as utterly without experience in the · with vast patronage, the appointing power diplomatic sphere. If any argument in favor extending to nearly all local offices; and it of increasing his allowance could be brought was during Ritner's term that the new Constiforward, this argument certainly can. The tution, which made most of these positions elective, was framed and adopted. When he entered the office he was armed with patronage analogous to that wielded by the President of the United States, while his successor enjoyed much more restricted powers. The movement which resulted in this change, and the popular ratification of it, were due in a large degree to the disgust of the Democracy with their dissensions, which had been originally fomented by the quarrels of their rival office-hunters, and to the desire to enlarge the sphere of the direct action of the people. but it is doubtful whether the new Constitution would have been ratified at that time if there had not been added to these motives the indignation of Democratic spoil-hunters at the appointment of their political enemies to lucrative county offices all over the State. and in Democratic as well as anti-Masonic districts. Before 1838 the laws regulating elections were very imperfect; a wide door was opened for fraud, and the intense excitement attending gubernatorial contests produced by the concentration of patronage was intensified by the prevalence of the practice of betting on the result to an extent which has never since been approached in this Commonwealth. These evils were reformed immediately after the close of Ritner's term, by the stringent election law of 1839, which corrected many of the abuses that had for years been gradually gaining increased proportions. In the memorable contest of 1838 the deepest passions of the Commonwealth were therefore aroused by a series of issues of momentous importance. The Democracy, defeated in 1835 by their dissensions, were intensely anxious to regain their wonted ascendancy. The Masons were eager to avenge what they deemed unjust oppression. Reformers desired to seeure a fair test for the untried features of the new Constitution, and to purify the elections. Questions connected with the management of the public works, the free school system, and the United States Bank, added intense excitement to the conflict; and as the rival candidates for Governor had been subjected to scurrilous and vituperative personal attacks of every description. no element was wanting to awaken a universal and absorbing interest in the result of the conflict. After the election many charges and counter charges of frand were made. Both sides claimed a triumph, and. notwithstanding the apparent majority for Porter, it was alleged by one of Ritner's leading partisans that he would treat the election as if he had not been defeated. Under these circumstances the final result depended upon the official count of the returns, and this was surrounded with doubt by the contesting claims of rival candidates for the Legislature from Philadelphia. By the admission of the Democratic applicants that party would gain control of the House, and by their rejection the anti-Masons would retain legislative power. Feeling ran so high

that for a time two organizations were | is by no means an impossible or insurmountkept up, each claiming to be legal. able task. There are, however, those who the midst of these difficulties repudiate all the disclosures of modern geothe Philadelphia Democracy sent to Harrislogy, because of the seeming conflict, and burg large delegations of its fighting men of when Professor Agassiz attempts to repudiate the Holy Scriptures because of this apparent that day, and Ritner, alleging that they sought to overawe the Legislature by force, appealed, antagonism, he simply sinks to their dogmatic but in vain, to the National Government for and bigoted level, and provokes a contest in troops to aid in suppressing this outbreak, which he is morally certain of being worsted. and also called out the militia to aid in the

GENTEAL ADAM BADEAU, we are now told, maintenance of order. As there was an apparent dead-lock in the governmental machihas taken rooms in Washington, where he will devote the winter to the second volume nery, great interest in the contest was maniof his "Life of General Grant." The first fested throughout the Union, and Lewis Cass, who was at that time Minister to France, revolume of this work was received with great favor, and when completed, it promises to be cords a conversation with Louis Philippe in which that monarch, mindful of a valuable contribution to the history of the similar complications in Paris, expressed the late war. But we had understood that General Badeau was appointed by the President belief that Pennsylvania would become the scene of a protracted and bloody partisan or and confirmed by the Senate as Assistant Secretary of Legation at London. Has Generevolutionary conflict. It is difficult even at this day to predict the result, if a few of the ral Badeau thrown up the cares and emolu-Whigs and anti-Masons in the House had not ments of this snug little office, so as to devote changed front, and, by uniting with the Demohis entire time and attention to the pursuits of literature? It is all very well for him to crats, secured a Democratic organization of complete his life of the President, but the count of the gubernatorial vote entirely satisoverburdened tax-payers of the country will scarcely agree with him as to the policy of his drawing pay as Assistant Secretary of Legation at London, while he passes a whole winter at Washington in the pursuit of a private WASHBURNE'S "CONTINGENT EXavocation.

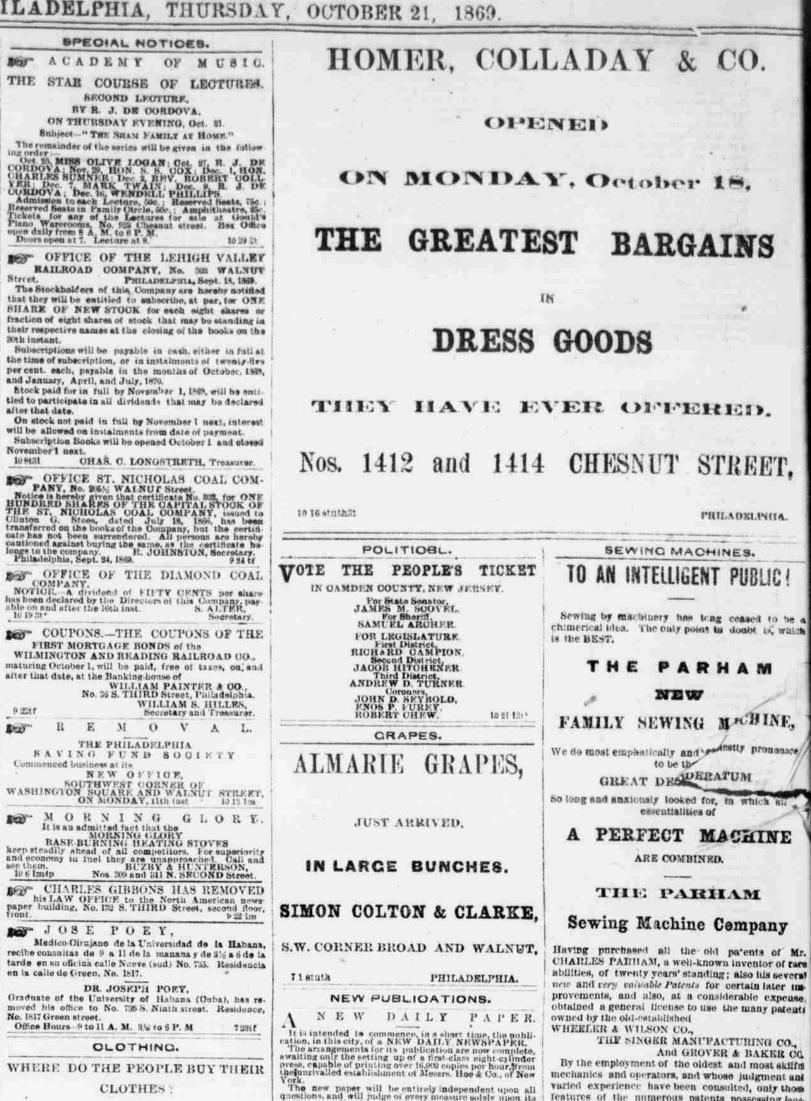
> COME TO GETEF-The Blair family, as was to have been expected. Frank Blair, Sr., the father of the brood, has been so reduced by the waywardness of his sons that he has been forced into the rather unintellectual employment of huckstering potatoes. Neglecting to take out an internal revenue license, he was placed under arrest, and only released when the Commissioner decided that he was not amenable to the tax because he did not set up a permanent market stall, or make the hawking of potatoes a permanent business. We consider it a sign of a healthy reaction when we find one of the Blairs going into this sort of business. It is to be hoped that both young Frank and Montgomery will follow the latest example of their venerable progenitor.

CENT PER CENT. -- General Hartrauft's majority last October fell a little short of one and a half per cent, of the total vote; while Judge Williams' majority at the recent election was slightly in excess of that proportion, showing that the Republican party has just held its own, as far as the vote for Judge of the Supreme Court is concerned. Governor Geary's majority. however, is less than eight. tenths of one per cent, of the total vote, showing, per contra, that on the gubernatorial vote the Republican party has lost ground-slightly. Two and two, when put together, usually make four.

OBITUARY.

Right Hon. John Edward Walsh, 1.J., D.

A cable telegram announces the decease of this eminent English jurist, at the age of dfig-three years. He was a native of Ireland, and was born in the month of November, 1516. Having received a preliminary education at Trinity College, Dublin, he entered upon the study of the law, and was called to the Bar in the year 1839. He achieved a marked success in his profession, being made Queen's Counsel in 1857, and Attorney-General for Ireland in 1864 In October of the latter year he was appointed Master of the Rolls, a position which he still held at the time of his death. Several important works were written by him-"Justice of the Peace for Ireland," published in 1844; "Reports in Chancery, Irish," published from 1845 to 1849; and "Ireland Sixty Years Ago," published in 1847.



dullest sort of a Congressional intellect will not fail to perceive that an inexperienced diplomat who speaks only his native tongue will prove more expensive than one who has had some little experience abroad, and is the master of one or two foreign dialects.

Minister Washburne's immediate predeces-

PENSES.

When Minister Washburne was a member of the House of Representatives, he achieved an enviable reputation for the vigilance with which he guarded the public treasury. During the last years of his service in Congress he was known indiscriminately as "the Father of the House" and "the Watch-dog of the Treasury." and the latter soubriquet was quite as much deserved as the former. Indeed, when we consider the zeal which he displayed in his efforts to introduce economy into every branch of the public service, we can only regret that he permitted the delusive splendors of diplomacy to overshadow the more substantial honors of his position as a law-maker: and when we consider his acknowledged unfitness for a foreign mission, our regret is transformed into downright sorrow. The fact that Lord Lyons, the British Minister at the Court of Versailles, receives a salary of \$50,000 in gold, together with house rent, is no argument in favor of voting Mr. Washburne a contingent allowance of \$15,000. If Mr. Washburne had devoted his whole career to diplomacy, and could lay claim to a tithe of the diplomatic experience and tact of Lord Lyons, the argument would avail him in his present pecuniary embarrassment. But not until our diplomatic service is raised to the elevated standard of Great Britain can there be any reason in demanding that our representatives abroad should be paid on the same liberal scale.

AGASSIZ VS. MOSES.

PROFESSOR AGASSIZ has thrown himself into needless antagonism with the deep-rooted religious sentiment of the country. At the very beginning of his opening lecture at Harvard University the other day, he is reported to have said:-"I do not wish any one to come to my lectures who believes the Book of Genesis, as given in the Bible." By making use of these arrogant words Professor Agassiz has gone far towards undermining the great reputation which he has attained in the field of scientific research. He simply shows that his intellect has been narrowed, instead of broadened, by the labors of his life. The Book of Genesis is not a treatise on fossil fishes, neither does it pretend to set forth any dogmatic theory which is in antagonism with Agassiz's favorite glacial hypothesis-facts which the great Harvard savan appears altogether too narrow-minded to appreciate. The world has produced scores of men whose scientific knowledge has been almost as deep and broad as is that of Professor Agassiz, while their faith in the Word of God has not been shaken. The reconciliation of the Mosaic account of the creation with that which has been written upon the rocks by the finger of the Creator

ON FIRE.

reek says:-

The California Woods in Finnes-Great Tracts of Land Devastated. The Oakland (Cal.) Transcript of last Saturday

Week says:--For the past three days a destructive contagration has been raging in the foothills, about five miles from Oakland. The fire originated Wednesday fore-noon, at the works of the Contra Costa Water Com-pany, from a bonfire of brush kindled by some of the workmen. Wednesday afternoon and night the fire spread slowly, and Thursday it continued its course down the canon occupied by the water com-pany, and in the evening reached the Telegraph pany, and in the evening reached the Telegraph road. Shortly after sundown the house of the Rev. Mr. White took fire and was very quickly consumed, the furniture and personal property being entirely destroyed, and Mrs. White, whose husband is absent, barely escaped serious injury. The house and contents and surrounding property de-stroyed are estimated at \$1000. In the same vicinity the house study of 4 D Color may house of the surrounding the hay stock of A. D. Colby was burned, and D. A. Pryal's hay stack of 120 bales of hay, worth about 17 yai's hay sheet of the only of the spread in every di-\$150, was also destroyed. The fire spread in every di-rection, and yesterday had travelled as far as the Staples ranch, and in the evening the fire could be seen in the hill in the rear of the University grounds. having crossed deep canons and wide roads. In its progress immense quantities of standing hay, tim-ber, and grass were consumed, and fences to an extent thus far unknown have been consumed. The fire appeared to be raging with full force last night, progressing in a northwesterly direction, and finally disappearing from sight as it crossed the highest ridge of hills and descended into the valleys below, and directly to the north. The line of the fire was steadily advancing westward, and doubtless a large amount of property was destroyed. The damage that had been sustained to property in this county, up to nine o'clock last night, could not have from the destruction of growing frees and the pend for subsistance can hardly be estimated. Of course the residents of the section in which the free prevailed did everything in their power to check its prevailed did the verything in their power to check its progress, and all known expedients for fighting fire were promptly resorted to, but all were unavailing. Last evening the steam fire engine was taken to the Last evening the sector in the unique was taken of the vicinity of the University grounds and the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Asylums. The fire had reached a point within dify feet of the out-buildings of the Asylum, but the persons pres-ent managed to beat it out with bushes and old sacks. The residence of Mr. Bitchelder, of Berkeley, manifold denser. Near by was a spring in was in imminent danger. Near by was a spring in which there was about eight inches of water, and the engine was stationed by it, with steam up, ready for engine was stationed by it, with steam up, ready for an emergency. There was only water enough to supply it for a few moments and the greatest pra-dence was therefore necessary. Fortunately, by their individual efforts, the flames were arrested in their progress. The firemen united with the people of the neighborhood in beating down the flames while they kept their apparatus so that as the last resort they could full back on what little water they could obtain. A little after nine o'clock, the course of the fire was turned, and it was, at a later hour, making its way over toward Martinez. Large oak trees burned readily before blast, and the surface of the hills is completely bare, and the ravines are completely burned out, no chapparel being left.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

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