Evening Telegraph

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1871.

SAN DOMINGO.

Eacn new phase of the San Domingo question strengthens the indications that it will become an exciting, if not an absorbing, question in American politics. The House of Representatives yesterday passed the resolution authorizing the appointment of three commissioners to proceed to the island to inquire into its condition, resources, etc.; but it is a significant circumstance that the Ambler amendment, declaring that nothing in this resolution was to be so construed as to commit our Government to the proposed annexation, was agreed to by a vote of 106 to 76. This minority of 76 apparently represents the strength of the out-and out advocates of the Presidential policy, while many sterling Republicans, in conjunction with the Democrats, framed the restrictive amendment, and thus placed the House in a non-committal position on the main question. On the resolution authorizing the commission, as amended, the vote was 123 yeas and 63 nays; all the yeas being Republicans and all the nays Democrats, except half-a-dozen Republicans who carried their opposition to the Presidential policy to the extreme length of endeavoring to prevent a formal inquiry into the condition of San Domingo. Additional interest was given to the proceedings by a piquant debate which arose from Butler's attempt to crack an administration whip over the shoulders of his associates, and from his denunciation of Sumner, of whom the irrepressible Butler said that: -"Since he misnamed the Morning Star," Nor man nor flend hath fallen so far,"

Shortly after the passage of the resolution as amended in the House it came up for consideration in the Senate, when Sumner opened his batteries upon it, and, considering the woful weakness of his attacks, we can scarcely wonder that they provoked the laughter of his Senatorial associates. Sumner's last dodge is to excite the fears of the American people by declaring that the annexation of San Domingo involves "a bloody lawsuit:" that a guerrilla warfare will be carried on against us by a rival government in the interior, headed by s fellow who begins his proclamations with "God, country, and liberty," and that even the Haytiens propose to institute a war against our country. If old George Kramer was in the Senate now he might well repeat to this Yankee scarecrow manufacturer his favorite question, whether the American people "were born in the woods to be scared by an owl," but the new Sumner argument sourcely deserves a more serious reply.

WEST POINT AND ANNAPOLIS. Ir is tolerably certain from recent developments that the internal arrangements of the Military Academy at West Point need a more particular investigation than they receive from the annual Board of Visitors, and if the details of the management of the Naval School at Annapolis could also be looked into by some impartial persons, no harm would be done, and a great deal of good to both institutions might ensue. The efficiency of the army and the navy in the future largely depends upon the proper management of these schools, which are heavy burdens upon the tax-payers of the country, and the public have a right to demand that they shall be conducted in such a manner that the best interests of the nation will be subby them. Two occurhave taken place lately which show very plainly that there is something very rotten in the management of West Point. The case of the colored cadet Smith is a proof that there is a lack of that hightoned and honorable spirit that certainly ought to be one of the leading characteristics of such an institution if it is to properly fulfil the ends of its foundation. The appointment of this young man, as we have said more than once, was a great mistake; but now that he is a cadet, he is entitled to decent treatment. He has just the same rights at West Point as the white cadets, neither more nor less; and if the proper gentlemanly spirit prevailed among his companions, he would at least be allowed to prosecute his studies without insult or arrogance. If the young gentlemen with white skins refused to associate with him when off duty on terms of friendly intimacy and equality, their conduct might be censurable, but Smith and his friends would no proper grounds for complaint; but when there appears to be a systematic attempt to drive him away from the school, the friends of right and justice everywhere, whether they approve of his appointment or not, should insist upon his having fair play. Smith is now undergoing his second court-martial, upon charges which are contemptibly unimportant, and it is evident that this is but the culmination of one of many attempts to drive him from the institution. If the officers composing the court before which Smith is being tried should countenance the malice of the other cadets, and expel him from the school, they will disgrace themselves forever in the eyes of all honorable men.

The other West Point affair that is now attracting attention is the disappearance of three of the cadets. It is asserted that these young men were driven from the school at the order of the members of the senior class, their offense being the heinous one of lying. It seems that they contrived to get intoxicated, and made such statements to the officers as led them to suppose that they were in their beds at a time when they were outside of the building upon a frolic. This violation of a very proper code of honor incensed the members of the senior class, who, however, instead of pursuing the proper course and making a report of the matter to the authorities, took the law into their own hands and passed a decree of expul- to that great undertaking his time, influence,

sion. The unwritten law of West Point will not apparently permit one eadet to inform upon another, no matter what his offense may be, but it will subject the offender to the sentence of an irresponsible court, instead of leaving him to be punished in a proper manner according to law. No one can blame the senior cadets for being indignant at the behavior of the three missing young men, but certainly such an institution as West Point cannot be conducted as it should be and good discipline preserved if its pupils are permitted to take the law into their hands in this manner, and all who have been implicated in the affair should be made to understand the duties and responsibilities of their positions better than they apparently

An investigation into matters and things at the Annapolis school would probably demonstrate that there is quite as much, if not more, necessity for reform than at West Point. Leaving everything else out of the question, it is undeniable that the standard of scholarship is much higher at West Point than it is at Annapolis, and that the army officers as a rule are more highly educated than those of the navy. One reason for this is that at the Annapolis school too much is attempted. For instance, a large portion of the time of the naval cadets is taken up in learning military manœuvres that have only a remote connection with naval warfare. Annapolis makes a vain boast that it can equal West Point in the exercise of the manual of arms and in regimental and battalion drill. Of course it cannot; but while the cadets are endeavoring to become soldiers they forget altogether that their future business will be as sailors, and they graduate from the school only half taught in seamanship and other matters that peculiarly belong to their profession. These things may not be generally known, but they are true nevertheless, and they very greatly impair the efficiency of our navy at the present time, when a large number of very young officers are placed in positions of trust and responsibility. In fact, the affairs of the two academies need a pretty thorough overhauling, which we hope sincerely they may receive at the hands of Congress rather than at those of the War and Navy Departments.

terday, in spite of an unnecessarily bitter opposition, passed the bill for the celebration of the centennial anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia on the 4th of July, 1876. That this action of the House will be endorsed by the Senate there is no doubt, and the whole matter may therefore be considered as definitely settled. The success of the great international exhibition which it is proposed to hold upon this occasion will very largely depend upon the lively interest which the citizens of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania may take in it; and although several years will elapse before the centennial anniversary occurs, our State Legislature and the City Councils of Philadelphia should take action with regard to the matter as soon as possible, with the view of making the exhibition a local as well as national success. It is sometimes charged that Philadelphia is slow and behind the age, and here is a splendid opportunity to prove the falsity of this assertion, and to domonstrate that if not so showy the enterprise of this city is of a more solid character than it is in some other places, and the Philadelphia department in the great exhibition should, as it undoubtedly will, be one of its most attractive features.

THE National House of Representatives yes-

OBITUARY.

The Hon. John Covode. At noon yesterday the Hon. John Covode paid us a flying visit, stopping a few minutes in our office and gossiping on the politics of the State and country with his accustomed energy. He was, to all appearances, in the best of health, his robust physique and hearty face evincing the prospect of a long and firm hold upon life. Mr. Covode, accompanied by his wife, had come to Philadelphia to place his younger children at school, and in the afternoon proceeded as far as Harrisburg on his return west. About one o'clock this morning, according to the special telegrams published elsewhere, symptoms of heart disease were manifested, and at four o'clock he expired.

John Covode was born in Westmoreland county, in this State, on the 17th of March 1808. He had therefore not quite completed his sixty-second year at the time of his sudden and unexpected death. Mr. Covode was of Dutch descent, More than a hundred and thirty years ago, his grandfather, Garrett Covode while still a mere child, was picked up in the streets of Amsterdam by an unscrupulous sea captain, by whom he was brought to Philadelphia, where he was sold into bondage. He remained in this involuntary service until he was twenty-eight years of age, and at the time of his emancipation was unable to read a word. Subsequently he attended General Washington for several years in the capacity of a servant, and died in 1826, at the advanced age of ninetyfour. The mother of John Covode was of Quaker descent, ker ancestors having been among the early settlers of the Commonwealth who came to the banks of the Delaware with William Penn. Two of these maternal ancestors, in conjunction with a third person by the name of Wood, were the authors of a protest against William Penn's decision in favor of human bondage, which is said to have been the first anti-slavery document ever written on the condinent.

John Covode's opportunities for early education were, unhappily, very limited. Brought up on a farm, he learned the trade of a woollen manufacturer, to which occupation he devoted about forty years of his life. But, although his education had been so imperfect, the great energy of character for which he was always remarkable was early displayed, and became, at the outset even of business career, a champion of public enterprises. When the State Canal was building, he was one of the first to give it hearty encouragement, and on its completion to embrace the facilities which it offered. He engaged in the transportation business, and commanded the first section-boat that passed through the canal from Philadelphia to the Ohio Again, when the Penusylvania Railroad was contemplated, he extended

| and means, and was in partnership with the | other topics of national importance, were company in the transportation business until the road was finished through to Pittsburg. He then organized the Westmoreland Coal Company, and commenced shipping gas coal to the Eastern market, acting as President of the company until his duties in Congress compelled his resignation. His management of this company, which extended through several years, was completely successful.

In 1845 John Covode first entered the political arena as a candidate for office, becoming the Whice nominee for the State Senate in a district strongly Democratic At his second nomination he came within so few votes of being elected that the opposing party became alarmed at his growing popularity and changed the district. Kept out of the State Senate by Demoeratic gerrymandering, Covode finally turned his mind upon a Congressional career, and in 1854 became the Whig candidate for the Thirty-fourth Congress in what was then the Nineteenth district of this State, and was elected by a majority of 2757 votes. Two years previous, the same district had been carried by the Democracy by a majority of 2009, this great political revolution being one of the episodes of the Know-Nothing and anti-Nebraska outbreak of 1854. Mr. Covode was re-elected to Congress three times in succession, but in 1862 and 1864 was not a candidate, and on both of these occasions his district was carried by the Democracy. During his service in the Thirty-sixth Congress, from 1859 to 1861, be was made chairman of the special committee of the House of Representatives which was entrusted with the celebrated investigation of charges against the administrasion of President Buchanan in relation to affairs in Kansas. This committee did much to show up and bring to light the enormous frauds and corrupt practices of certain parties at that time associated with the Government.

On the outbreak of the Rebellion, Mr. Covode, still a member of Congress, became one of the first to urge bold and decisive measures in its suppression. He had become thoroughly allied with the Republican party from its organization, and to the day of his death remained a staunch adherent of that political organization. He sent three sons into the army, the youngest of whom was only fifteen years old. They joined the 4th Pennsylvania Cavalry, one of the most efficient regiments in the service. The eldest, George Covode, became Colonel of the regiment, and was killed while gallantly leading his men at St. Mary's Church, near Richmond. The youngest suffered the miseries and torments of Andersonville for a year and a half, from the effects of which he will never recover. The second son returned at the expiration of his term of enlistment.

During the last term of the first period of his service in Congress, Mr. Covode was an active member of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, and after the close of the struggle be was sent South by President Johnson to aid be Government in working out its reconstruction policy. His views, however, failing to harmonize with those of Mr. Johnson, he declined any further connection with his policy and administration.

In 1866 Mr. Covode, at the earnest solicitation of leading members of the party, again became candidate for Congress, and again the district in which he resided, now numbered the Twenty-first, and consisting of Fayette, Indiana, and Westmoreland counties, was wrested from the Democracy. Mr. Covode was elected by 354 majority. In 1868 again he was a candidate, Hon. Henry D. Foster being his opponent. The vote was very close, both candidates claiming a small majority. The Governor refused to give the certificate of election to either, on account of informalities in the returns, but the House, at the opening of the Forty-first Congress, awarded the seat to Covode, without prejudice to the claims of the contestant. The result of the contest was the throwing out of a large number of Democratic votes on the ground of fraud, and on February 9, 1870, Mr. Covode was awarded the seat, by a vote of 118 to 45, after a bitter opposition from the Democratic side of the House. In 1869, Mr. Covode became chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, and in that capacity had the general management of the Gubernatorial campaign of that year, as well as of the con-

gressional campaign of 1870. Last year, however,

he declined a renomination for Congress, and

the district was again carried by the Democracy. The adage tells us that "Some men are born to greatness, some achieve it, and some have greatness thrust upon them," and of these three classes, John Covode belonged to the second. for he owed his prominence to his own exertions. Descended from a peculiar and unusual combination of nationalities-the High Dutch with the English Quaker-his character was a strange compound of both, for he united the vim, vigor, determination, and dash of the former with the unwavering devotion to humanitarian principles that distinguishes the latter, and thus he became a prominent leader, despite his deficient education, in the great new party that has dominated for the last ten years. The district he represented in Congress is not only often Democratic, but as it is neither Quaker, Dutch, nor German, and as its staple element is a hardy and keen race of Scotch-Irishmen, by the time a descendant of High Dutch and Quaker apcestors gained sufficient influence in such a district to be nominated and elected to Congress, he had fathomed much more deeply than most men the depths of American politics and the diverse influences by which voters are controlled and governed. Soon after his appearance in Congress Covode's mature and sharpened shrewdness enabled him to win one of the greatest triumphs ever won there. Despite his inferiority as an orator or as a chairman of an ordinary Congressional committee, he was just the man to head such an investigation as that with which his name will be forever identified in Congressional history. He had at once the nerve and the sagacity to spy out and to expose the weak spots in the Buchanan administration, and to lay bare the bargains, corruptions, quarrels, and compromises, connected with the Kansas-Lecompton controversy. This story had a telling effect in the campaign of 1860, and among the varied influences that secured the election of Abraham Lincoln it was one of the most important. If Covode's political career had terminated with this famous investigation, he would still have done much more than average Congressmen of a higher intellectual grade. Subsequent triumphs were in store for him, however, He repeatedly carried the Westmoreland district when it would have been impossible for any other Republican to secure a majority of its votes; and at Washington he was honored by various highly responsible positions, like that of a membership on the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, as well as a roving commission to examine the condition of the Southern

States with reference to reconstruction. Covode's

views on all such subjects, as well as on many

always well worthy of attention. His remarks might not be couched in the best English, and his views might not always be broad and comprehensive, but he was full of points; he knew what was going on; he abounded in the best of all sense, common sense; and if he did not stuff his brain overmuch with the contents of the Congressional library, "men were his books, which he read currently." One of his latest triumphs was the election of Geary as Governor of Pennsylvania. Covode was chosen as chairman of the Republican State Central Committee in 1869, in what was acknowledged to be a desperate contest, and Geary's success is largely, if not wholly, due to Covode's skilful management. A less ardent politician in the same position would have totally destroyed Geary's chance of election, and it is not too much to say that if Asa Packer had had a Covode instead of a Mutchier at his back, and John W. Geary had had a Mutchler instead of a Covode to raise his waning popularity, Asa Packer would to-day be Governor of this Commonwealth. It has been generally conceded that Mr. Covode's chances for the Gubernatorial nomination at the end of Geary's term were very good, and constantly

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