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REV. A. A. CHERRIER,
Editor-in-Chief.

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Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 1901

CURRENT COMMENT

Though very little known, it is a fact that the most elaborate system of farm telephones in the world has been in operation for several years in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. The Canadian Telephone Company was first started by four villages, two of which were French Canadian. The third annual report, issued May 31, 1899, shows a connection of twelve switch-boards, 329 subscribers 371 miles of wire, 230 miles of poles, assets of \$16,894.64 with liabilities of about \$6,000. Subscribers to the C. T. Co. pay \$10. a year for rent for an instrument with a large free territory. For instance Bishop's Crossing subscribers get Scottstown, Bury, Cookshire, Sawyerville, East Angus, Marleton, and Weedon free, but have to pay a small toll to the other centrals. Farmers many miles apart are thus put in direct communication with each other. Could not something similar be established along the Red River? It would relieve the monotony of country life and help to expedite business.

The telegraph announced last week the death in England of Professor David Edward Hughes, inventor of the printing telegraph and the microphone; but the despatch was silent about one very important fact: Professor Hughes was a Catholic priest. Born in London in 1831, he early emigrated with his parents to the United States. In 1850 he was teacher of music at the Catholic college of Bardstown, Kentucky. Later on he became professor of natural philosophy in the same college. His first great invention was that of the Hughes printing telegraph, which in 1857 he vainly tried to introduce in England. In France he was more successful, and there to this day messages are generally printed directly from the receiver for the addressee. His instrument was also adopted by the Italian, Russian, German, Austrian, Turkish and other European governments. About twenty years ago Father Hughes invented the microphone, by which the tramp of a fly walking may be distinctly heard. In 1881 he represented Great

Britain as one of the commissioners at the Paris electrical exhibition.

We commend to our literary readers the poem, "The Song of the Sons," written for the Free Press by A. Evelyn Gamme and first published in that paper last Saturday morning. This war ballad fairly sings itself. The writer has caught the Kipling trick of finding a tune before you write. But there is here a gentle nobleness of tone and a freedom from harshness which one often misses in Kipling. Such touches as "with living men we write our countersign," "Stranger brothers, strange no more," and "the mighty men from home," will not soon be forgotten. Moreover, each stanza is thoroughly true to nature and characteristic of the country that sings.

The Tablet, which is known to be Cardinal Vaughan's organ in its issue of Jan. 6, declared Mr. St. George Mivart a heretic and therefore no longer a member of the Catholic Church. The importance of this solemn declaration is fully recognized by non-Catholic papers, such as The Guardian, The Daily News, The Globe, The Daily Telegraph, and The Church Times, from all of which the Tablet of Jan. 13 reproduces long extracts. Dr. Mivart, as the Church Times says "has more than once startled the world with paradox." Of late years especially he has occasionally written things that were decidedly unsound. When a Roman Congregation condemned his article on "The Happiness of Hell" he wrote a fine letter of submission and retraction. But now in the Fortnightly Review he publicly withdraws that retraction and in the Nineteenth Century he broaches several most shocking heresies. In his old age, on the brink of the tomb, vanity and pride seem to have turned his head. But we Catholics, who so often admired his fearless defence of Catholic principles, must not forget his years of loyal service. We should, as the Tablet writes, "pray earnestly that Divine Grace may yet win in him the victory of Christian humility." Not only was he for many years one of our Catholic glories in the field of biology, but even in the domain of mental philosophy he has written books and articles which the most ardent disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas would heartily endorse, and in which he was never tired of branding all other philosophies as irrational.

"A new literary Power" is the title of a masterly article in the University of Ottawa Review by Mr. Maurice Casey on Father Finn's stories. The writer says, and we fully agree with him, that Father Finn's portrayal of the American Catholic boy "has no parallel among Catholics in English literature." And, though the conditions of this spiritually and physically healthy boy life are particularly well verified, as Mr. Casey quotes, in "a Jesuit college which is a real world in itself," it is quite true, as the same writer says, that they are to be found, in a measure, in "nearly every Catholic college in the land." As we like to see so brilliant a critic as Mr. Casey

accurate, we beg to call his attention to the fact that what a distinguished soldier said was that Waterloo was won on the foot-ball fields of English public schools, not of Rugby in particular, which had no reputation at all in Wellington's time and became known only through the influence of its headmaster, Dr. Arnold, long after the battle of Waterloo.

Donahoe's Magazine for January has an interesting article on Brownson's Middle Life, where all the objectionable features of that volume—the great man's inordinate self-esteem and inability to understand Newman—are carefully omitted. The illustrations are really very good and historically well chosen. The lower general level of culture in America accounts for the rudeness and roughness of Brownson's controversy, and also explains how he never could fully understand the English university-trained mind.

SIR W. F. BUTLER

Sir William Francis Butler, K. C. B., author of "The Great Lone Land," a fascinating account of his travels and adventures in Northwestern Canada thirty years ago, is now on the shelf because he is supposed to have spoken too favorably of the Boers' resources several months before the war began. He is still remembered by many old-timers in this country, and his name is a household word among Catholics especially since, many years ago, he became the husband of that great painter and convert, Miss Elizabeth Thompson, who immortalized herself by "The Roll call." She can wield a trenchant pen and has taken up her husband's defence against the "ring" that is persecuting him.

That public opinion is beginning to veer towards a fairer appreciation of the great Catholic general's worth is shown by the following extract from the London "Speaker" of Jan. 6:

Among many matters which will before long demand searching inquiry the reasons for the resignation of Sir William Butler are not the least important. At a time when affairs in South Africa were approaching a crisis, the government would naturally seek advice from the extremely able general officer then in command at Cape Town. His would apparently be the opinion which was alone entitled to carry weight in regard to the preparations of the Boers, the military situation which would arise if war broke out, and the many measures to be taken by the authority at home. In regard to all such questions, the views of the high commissioner, even if he happened to possess far greater experience than Sir Alfred Milner, would, it might be thought, have little value. It was the plain duty of the general at the head of Her Majesty's forces in South Africa to give his unbiassed opinion even if that opinion did not coincide with impressions conveyed to the high commissioner from irresponsible sources. Did Sir William Butler perform this public duty? At a critical period he was said to have resigned his post, and he was replaced by another general of far less ability. Almost at the outbreak of war therefore South Africa was deprived of the services of its most experienced officer, who was transferred, by a process of exchange, to duties

largely of a clerical nature at Devonport. From this time, the portion of the press chiefly distinguished for its strong advocacy of war at any price has not ceased to vilify the reputation and to cast aspersions upon the personal honor of Sir William Butler, who at present is deprived of the means of self-defence. Even a cabinet minister could not refrain from joining in the hue and cry, and it will be remembered that such an excellent judge of military affairs as Mr. Chaplin cast public reflections upon the conduct of Sir W. Butler, and commiserated Sir Alfred Milner on having to put up with such a colleague. The source from which this disgraceful crusade proceeded was eminently suspicious, and the indecency of some of the personal attacks sufficed to alienate persons who still appear to regard Sir Alfred Milner as a far-seeing statesman. There have been signs of a reaction in favor of Sir W. Butler, and those who are not disposed to accept Mr. Chaplin's new standard of wisdom and of integrity—self effacement at the shrine of the high commissioner—will have learned with satisfaction that the matter will not be allowed to rest.

After showing that Sir W. F. Butler, by his letter to Mr. Chamberlain on January 11, 1899, in which he showed how untrustworthy were the statements of the South African league, brought upon himself the hostility of that great and unscrupulous organization, the same journal goes on to say that "the government seems to have absolutely ignored the advice of the one general really qualified to give it."

"Sir William Butler realized his responsibility, did his duty and spoke plainly. Asked early in June last whether he thought that the Boers would fight, he replied that they would do so if pressed, and that they were well prepared. Asked further what steps would be necessary to protect British territory, and to carry on the war, he advised that Natal should be abandoned as far as the line of the Tugela river, which should be held by 20,000 men, the railway to the north being destroyed, and Laing's Nek tunnel blown up. While a policy of defence was thus adopted in Natal, the main advance should be made upon Bloemfontein with 80,000 men! All this and more has been duly recorded, and will be brought forward at the proper time. The veriest Tyro in military knowledge or even Mr. Chaplain's "Man in the Street," can now see that Sir W. Butler's advice was absolutely sound, and that he diagnosed the military situation with the most complete accuracy. The neglect to act upon this advice has brought almost unparalleled humiliation upon us and has led directly to an unnecessary sacrifice of many gallant lives. The nation will before long demand to know why the expert opinion of Sir W. Butler was flung aside, and will ask the names of the advisers upon whom the government relied."

We learn from The Tablet of January 13 that the Daily Chronicle says General Sir William Butler was, on the 8th inst., summoned to come to town from Devonport by special train in order that he might join in a consultation at the War Office on the progress of the war. "His estimate of the forces necessary for a war with the Boer Republics," says the Chronicle, "was regarded at the time it was received as being based on a wildly exaggerated idea of their strength. Everyone is regretting now that his appreciation of the military problems

in South Africa was not then given the consideration due to it."

As early as December 27, 1899, the Liverpool Courier had gone so far as to say: "If the two Republics of South Africa have brought into line 80,000 men, we must, if we wish to fight with some chance of success, have at least 320,000." Though this proportion of 4 to 1 is exaggerated, it certainly emphasizes Sir William Butler's opinion.

The Tablet says: "The Daily News and The Daily Telegraph have this week made equally candid acknowledgment to the General who, because he appreciated what others then ignored and denied—the military and moral strength of the enemy—was denounced as 'a maker of Pro-Boer speeches.' Well, in that sense, we are all 'Pro-Boers' now; and existing sentiment may be best expressed at this moment in the words of the Veteran War Correspondent of our days, who represented The Times in the Crimea, and who referred long ago in one of his books to 'the wonderfully able William Butler,' when he said this week, speaking of his detractors, that they ought to be publicly whipped through the streets."

HOPE OF AMERICA.

REV. DR. DE COSTA DECLARES THAT IT IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH—MIGRATION OF THE FRENCH CANADIANS TO NEW ENGLAND.

Montreal Star, Jan. 18.

Mr. Benjamin F. De Costa, D.D., lectured before a large audience in St. Mary's College Hall, Bleury street, last evening, his subject being America.

Mr. Justice Doherty occupied the chair, and welcomed the lecturer as a great man, who was going to speak to them on a great subject.

The lecturer was received with a round of hearty applause as he arose on the conclusion of the chairman's opening remarks. Dr. De Costa was a noted Episcopalian divine in the City of New York quite recently, when he caused a sensation in ecclesiastical circles by joining the Roman Catholic Church. In acknowledging the cheering reception, and thanking the chairman for his kind remarks, the lecturer said the last time he had the honor to stand before an audience in Montreal he stood in the pulpit of an Anglican cathedral. He had not lost his esteem for his Anglican brethren. His conscience told him to go out from them, and he went, but under the influence of the true Catholic spirit his love for them now was not less, but more. He hoped that all would join in fervent prayers for them, and that eventually the scales might fall from their eyes and they would become members of the Roman Catholic Church.

He then proceeded to deliver his lecture, dealing first with

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