

THE LATE FATHER DENZA.—Francesco Denza, whose name had been well known among meteorologists and astronomers

for at least 25 years, died at Rome on December 14, 1894, from apoplexy. He was the director of the Vatican Observatory up to the time of his death, having been appointed to that post by Leo XIII. on the reconstruction of the observatory. He was born in Naples on June 7, 1834, and entered the Barnabite Order in 1850. His first studies were directed almost entirely to theology and philosophy, and to the end of his life he continued to take great interest in these subjects, more especially as regards those points at which they border on science proper. While still a student he became remarkable for his mathematical powers, and in 1857 he took his doctor's degree at the University of Turin in mathematics and physics. About this time he became acquainted with Secchi, and was at first his devoted pupil, to become later his no less devoted friend. He remained at the College, "Carlo Alberto," at Moncalieri, as professor of mathematics and physics until 1886. Here he first took up serious and systematic meteorological work, and in 1866 began to publish a monthly record of observations made at that place, which is still published at the present day. In his class teaching he was exceedingly strict and firm, but he could unbend with his students outside their studies, and was one of the most popular professors of the College. During this period Denza published a very large number of papers, principally on meteorological subjects, such as the aurora and magnetic declination, but also on eclipses and shooting stars. Through his efforts a very complete system of meteorological observations was organized over the whole of Italy. In 1878 and 1879 he was President of the International Meteorological Congresses held at Paris and Rome respectively. In 1886 he had his first attack of apoplexy, which left him with greatly impaired health. There was a scientific exhibition in 1888 at Rome, to commemorate the jubilee of Leo XIII., and at the close of this exhibition Denza suggested to the Pope that the collection of instruments should be made use of to reconstitute the Vatican Observatory, which had fallen almost entirely into disuse. Leo XIII. fell in with this idea enthusiastically, and in July 1889 Denza had nearly all his instruments installed, and was able to attend the International Photographic Congress at Paris as representative of the Vatican Observatory, and to claim a place for the new institution among the 18 great observatories to whom the work of the chart was allotted. In 1890 he was formally appointed Director, and for the last four years of his life he worked there as assiduously as his health would permit. He was suddenly taken ill at an audience of the Pope on December 13, and succumbed on the next day without any return of consciousness.