

Catholic World

SOUTH SEA PRELATE DIES IN HARNESS.

After an episcopate of 39 years, spent in Eastern Oceania, Mgr. Verdier, the grand old man of the South Sea Missions and Vicar-Apostolic of Tahiti, has died in harness at the age of 87 years.

This venerable prelate, who succeeded the late Mgr. Jaussen as second Vicar-Apostolic of Tahiti, entered the French Congregation of the Piepus Fathers, and made his religious profession some 50 years ago. In 1883 he was consecrated to the episcopate as titular Bishop of Megara at Quito, in Ecuador, and immediately afterwards proceeded to take over the administration of the vastest missionary diocese in the whole world. Under his jurisdiction were seven archipelagos, as well as a number of islands separated from each other by vast distances.

In 1908, feeling advancing years creeping upon him, Mgr. Verdier placed the active government of this huge diocese in the hands of Mgr. Hermel, whom he had himself consecrated to the episcopate in 1905 in his cathedral at Papeete. The late Monsignor was a native of Lozere, in France.



PRAGUE CATHOLICS MEET IN CONGRESS.

Under present conditions the fortunes of the so-called Czecho-Slovak National Church, the religious body formed by the schismatics excommunicated by Rome, seem to be fluctuating. Sometimes they are hopeful—at others they are the reverse.

A little time ago the schismatics held a congress in Prague which was on the whole a rowdy affair, but which managed to get a good notice from the anti-clerical papers. As a set-off to this, the Catholics of Prague have just held a large congress in the very same hall where the schismatics met not so very long ago.

The Catholics managed to get a good body of speakers, and altogether their congress was very successful. On the platform were some of the Catholic politicians, and speeches were delivered by the editor of the *Cech*, which is the most influential of the Catholic daily papers of the capital.

In point of numbers this counter-demonstration was an unqualified success. For although the hall is a fair-sized one, it was absolutely inadequate to accommodate all those who sought admission. So an overflow meeting was held in one of the public places for those unable to secure admission to the hall, and it is estimated that at least 10,000 persons attended the overflow meeting.



CATHOLIC ACTIVITY IN GERMANY.

Many religious orders of men and women excluded from Germany under the imperial regime are returning, and some of them are recovering monasteries and convents which were taken from their predecessors centuries ago (says the *Missionary*, Washington, U.S.A.).

The Jesuits are preparing to build a stately college and a large church in Frankfurt, and in Hesse an ancient monastery has been restored to its original owners, after having been expropriated by the government following the Act of Secularisation in 1804. The Cistercians have regained the castle of Banz (near Bamberg), and the Premonstratensians Speinshart (near Bayreuth-Weiden).

The old barracks at Ingoldstadt, where once stood the Jesuit College, founded by St. Peter Canisius, for humanistic studies, will revert to its former use. It was here that the Counter Reformation is said to have had its beginning. The famous General Tillay died there, and Father Christopher Scheiner was living there when he discovered the solar spots.

The Carmelites and the Redemptorists are to open houses in Munich, where before the war only the Benedictines, Capuchins, and Franciscans had monasteries. The Jesuits have acquired their old St. Michael's Church in Munich. This was built for them by Wilhelm V.

The larger freedom accorded to religious orders under the Republic, has lessened the regret of Catholics for the passing of the old Prussian system which, even in Bavaria, prevented their establishment and growth.

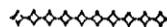
NATIONAL PILGRIMAGES TO LOURDES.

A number of national pilgrimages to the Shrine of Lourdes are announced for this year by the Directors of Pilgrimages at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, an official body that acts under the direction of the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes.

The first national pilgrimage, known as *du Printemps*, sets out from Belgium some time during the present month (says a *Catholic News Service* note, under date April 5). A group pilgrimage of Italians, organised by the national committee *Pro Palestina e Lourdes*, also sets out during the month on a date not yet decided on.

Three pilgrimages set out from England during the year. The first starts at the beginning of June, and the second and third in July and September. About the middle of June there is a national pilgrimage from Holland, and in September one from the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

The great national pilgrimage of France, the fiftieth of its kind, starts out in August, ending on the 23rd of the month, and during the same month a second Italian national pilgrimage of two trains is to visit the Shrine at Lourdes. Last of all, there is the Czecho-Slovak national pilgrimage, which promises to be a very imposing affair, though the date of departure from Prague is not yet decided upon.



THE TRUTH ABOUT CARDINAL SKERBENSKY.

A strange story has been circulated in the Press of Europe, according to which Cardinal Skerbenky, until recently Archbishop of Olmutz, had mysteriously disappeared.

Last year the Cardinal resigned his Archbishopric, and the Pope appointed a Slovak, Mgr. Stojan, as Archbishop of Olmutz in his place. Since then Cardinal Skerbenky has been living in retirement, but a few days ago he was reported to have left Prague for Switzerland and then to have disappeared.

As a matter of fact, for some time before his resignation the Cardinal had been unwell; he had suffered from an accident and found it impossible to get about his diocese. The Cardinal is now resting, and the fact that he wished to keep his present whereabouts private has given rise to all kinds of sensational reports about his disappearance. For the same reason of ill-health, Cardinal Skerbenky was not present at the recent Conclave.

Commenting on this story, the *Catholic Herald of India* says:—

Suppose you want to induce a big daily to publish the photo of a Cardinal. If you tell the staff that he is a pious and holy man, a good Christian, in fact, hard-working and charitable, you will be told that it is of no general interest, and that the public does not care for pious Cardinals. If you tell them that the Cardinal, being ill, has suddenly disappeared to get rid of his visitors and secure a rest, the offer will be similarly declined; modern readers are not interested. But if you tell them that for 20 papers stating the Cardinal to be ill, there are 10 stating he is a Don Juan and has run away with a bag of money, in goes the photo without any further discussion. A good Christian is of no general interest, but a pig is. That is what the public appreciates.

And that is how Cardinal Skerbenky had the honor of having his photo published all over the world as "The Don Juan Cardinal."

What a compliment to a Christian public!

The *Osservatore Romano* for March 19 publishes the following contradiction:—

"The Apostolic Nuncio of Czecho-Slovakia, having been informed of the calumnious statements published in the Italian Press on the subject of his Eminence Cardinal Skerbenky, has sent the following telegram to the Cardinal Secretary of State: 'The Holy See knows the motives of Cardinal Skerbenky's renunciation of the Archiepiscopal See of Olmutz and of his inability to attend the Conclave. At the time of his resignation, he was staying with his brother at the Helloschonprinsen mansion near Aussig, which he never left until recently when he went to an orthopedic institute in Germany.' The statements in the Press are absolutely and totally false, and must be attributed to personal enmity. The Cardinal's life has always been far above suspicion, and all venerate him as a very pious Bishop."

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