

THE MEXICAN HORRORS

DEPLORABLE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

Judging from what I have seen in the New Zealand papers since I returned from Europe and America only a few months ago, I feel that the people of New Zealand have not the slightest conception of what is happening in America, or of how, particularly, those happenings are a matter of the greatest concern to the Catholic Church. Apart from the Church, however, those happenings may yet have world-wide significance, and probably, but for the European war, would have attracted world-wide attention. Be that as it may, the information I gained during my final weeks in America at the end of last year (chiefly Salt Lake City, Kansas City, and San Francisco), is to me of such importance and interest that I feel it cannot fail to be of interest to the people of the Dominion, more especially as there is such a dearth of cabled information on the subject.

That was the manner in which the Very Rev. Dean Regnault, S.M., commenced some interesting remarks to a *Post* reporter on the subject of the Mexican turmoil. For a considerable period before leaving the States he was in direct communication with religious refugees from Mexico, and what he has to say makes interesting, though not always pleasant, reading.

In the first place, those clergy with whom he conversed considered that the initial policy of President Woodrow Wilson of the United States was to drive the Mexican President Huerta and his Government out of power, but that was not such an easy task as he anticipated. As he did not succeed,

He Made an Alliance with Villa.

who through his aid was raised to power, and what Villa has done with his power, what a record of murder and rapine he has put up during the last few months, has not yet been told in this Dominion. What he had to narrate was gathered from priests who had been driven out of Mexico along with many others of the Jesuit and Marist Orders. None of the Sacred Heart Order, and others. Porfirio Diaz was President of Mexico for about thirty years, and in 1910 he presided at the festival in celebration of the Independence of Mexico, which was attended by representatives of the leading nations of the world. Then Francisco Madero, a wealthy landed proprietor in Northern Mexico, raised the blood-red banner of revolution, and after six months scored a decisive victory against Diaz's army, which existed chiefly on paper.

Diaz, though not a Catholic (in fact, he was at one time a persecutor of the Church), was what is known as a Liberal—he had no particular beliefs or prejudices, and after his marriage had gone so far as to allow religious congregations to settle in Mexico. (At that time, it should be noted, the members of religious Orders were not allowed to teach, and when more than two were found living together they were suppressed.)

In 1911 Diaz was forced by public opinion to give in his resignation, but before doing so he appointed as Minister for Foreign Affairs Francis de la Barra, who became the constitutional President for the time being. The 'interim' President fixed the time for the elections, and Madero was elected President, taking office in November, 1911. Of Madero it is said that he is an idealist and an Utopian, and that, though lacking in judgment, his ideas were fairly broad. His election was largely due to the servile Indians and those of low descent, and it was also complained that he surrounded himself with creatures who were not able to inspire

The Majority of the People

with confidence. Then Felix Diaz, a nephew of the original Porfirio Diaz, undertook a counter revolution against Madero, who, being deserted by Huerta, resigned his presidency in February, 1912. Before leaving office, however, he appointed a Minister for Foreign Affairs, one Pedro Lascurain, who became interim President, and after a brief period of office handed over the presidential reins to Huerta. Madero was murdered, and to this day no one knows whether

it was Felix Diaz or Huerta who was responsible. All that can be said from Huerta's point of view is that it cannot be proved that he was directly connected with the affair. However, Huerta was supposed to have caused the death of Madero, and the United States refused to acknowledge his Government.

Then it was that Carranza, the Governor of a province in the north, came to light. He also refused to bow the knee to Huerta, and engineered a revolution against him. With the help of the United States (it is alleged), which supplied him with arms and money, he succeeded, after two years' warfare, in having himself proclaimed President of the Mexican Republic—and at once he commenced the most terrible persecution of the Church and its clergy—chiefly on the ground that the clergy were the followers of Huerta. Death, imprisonment, and expulsion of the religious were his chief methods, but there were other and more disgraceful and more horrible methods by which he proclaimed his warfare against the Church. They are frankly set out in literature which Dean Regnault has in his possession:

They Are Too Vile For Repetition.

On July 21, 1914, the Governor of the State of Guadalajara ordered that all priests be sent to prison, under the pretext that they had been plotting against the State. This was done, and for days in gaol they were treated like the worst of criminals. Altogether they numbered 180. After days of shameful treatment they were expelled from the State at very short notice, eventually reaching San Francisco, after undergoing very great hardships. A strange feature of the position that had arisen was, Dean Regnault was informed, that the truth about the state of affairs in Mexico was not known in America for quite a long time. It was left to ex-President Roosevelt to make the discovery. He sent two emissaries, both men of high standing in the Church, to Cuba, whither most of the Mexican refugees had gone. Information was given under oath, and on the strength of that evidence Mr. Roosevelt wrote a letter to the press of America, which was published broadcast under his signature on December 6, 1914. A copy of it is in Dean Regnault's possession. It fills an entire page of a newspaper, and is best illustrated by a few of the headings, which are boldly displayed. Here are some of them:

'Mr. Roosevelt on "Our Responsibility in Mexico."'

'Ex-President Recites List of Almost Unbelievable Charges Against Soldiers of Carranza and Villa.'

'What the Prioress of the Barefooted Carmelite Nuns of the Convent of Queretaro has Made Affidavit To.'

'Acts of Carranza's and Villa's Soldiers that Mr. Roosevelt Declares the United States is Partially (and Guiltily) Responsible For.'

'These include: The violating of scores of nuns. The murder of priests and others in cold blood. Wholesale robbing and expelling of priests and nuns. The sacking of schools, institutions of learning, and libraries, and the destruction of astronomical and other valuable machinery. The profanation of churches and sacred vessels in a thousand ways, including orgies of the soldiers and their women before and around the altars, and throwing the sacred Hosts into the feed of the soldiers' horses.'

It is dreadful reading, and is borne out by pamphlets and other matter in the Dean's possession. They have been circulated broadcast through the States, but so far they have not reached New Zealand. 'I consider it my duty to the Catholic community of the Dominion,' said Dean Regnault, 'to let our people know that, underneath the silence of the cablegrams, there are evil happenings in Mexico; some of them I heard from an old pupil of mine in France (he is now Father Olier, whom I met in San Francisco). I have given you only a faint idea of the horrors that reign in that distracted country. No more can be said—in print.'

Lampware is going to be very dear buying. Hadn't you better make a selection from Smith and Laing's stock, Invercargill, before they go up in price?