Through Seas Of Destiny

The Franciscan Search for Australia

Franciscan Missionaries to the Pacific from the 13th to the 18th Centuries.

By Rev Celsus Kelly, O.F.M.
Australian Catholic Truth Society No.1152 (1956)

The original basis of this pamphlet was an address given by the writer to the members of the Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society in 1950. It has been revised and enlarged for the purpose of this pamphlet.

THE FRANCISCAN SEARCH FOR AUSTRALIA.

Introduction.

For most Australians, (with the exception of our aboriginal citizens,) it is generally true to say that the history of our country begins with the discovery of the East Coast (in 1770) by Captain James Cook, and its colonization with the arrival of the First Fleet at Botany Bay (in 1788) under Captain Arthur Phillip.

If we consider the facts, however, we shall find that these events are to be regarded not so much as belonging to the beginning of our nation's history as bringing to a close a remarkable period, called the period of discovery. Not the least remarkable contribution made by European nations and individuals to this period of discovery is the sustained missionary effort of the Friars of Saint Francis.

The traditional missionary apostolate of the Franciscan Order was set forth in a "Memorial" presented to King Philip III of Spain by Doctor Juan Luis Arias about the year 1614. This Memorial, which deals with "the exploration, colonization and conversion of the Southern Land," tells us that the Franciscan Order desires to be engaged in the mighty enterprise of discovering and bringing into our Holy Faith and Catholic religion the innumerable inhabitants of the Southern Land. Pedro Fernandes De Quiros interpreted history correctly when on disembarking from his ship at the Island of Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides or Vanuatu Group (in 1606), he "went, down on his knees, and putting his hand on the ground, kissed it, and said: 'O Land! sought for so long, intended to be found by many, and so desired by me!' "

As ambassadors, missionaries or chaplains the friars engaged in this great quest. They gave their attention from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries to the lands of the Pacific, especially China, and from the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, they crossed the seas of destiny in search of these Southern Lands, known successively as the Terra Incognita and Terra Australis.

Nor was the First Fleet the first attempt at colonization in the South Pacific: that honour, it would seem, belongs to the Second Mendaña Expedition (1595), almost two centuries previously. (Its captain was Álvaro de Mendaña y Neira.)

In this pamphlet study, I do not propose to discuss in detail the various expeditions that form so many links in the chain of discoveries that eventually led to the finding and colonization of Australia. I aim rather to give an overall view of the Franciscan quest of Pacific Lands and the Terra Australis, century by century, which, however, will make it necessary to mention the more important European expeditions that came to the Pacific in search of the Southern Land. At the same time, it will enable us to understand the important role of religion, and the part the missionary friars played, in the history of geographical discovery and to perceive at a glance the extent of their journeys and the far-reaching influence, which they exercised. The story provides one of the most colourful chapters of daring missionary enterprise, both by land and by sea, in the annals of discovery.

Thirteenth Century – The Golden Age of the Franciscan Order.

BACKGROUND: The Mediterranean basin, from the third to the eleventh centuries, was the centre of commercial and religious unity of the Byzantine Empire: cities of importance were: Constantinople, the political capital; Rome, the centre of Christendom; and Alexandria, the seat of ancient learning. With expansion of Islam (7-12th century) this Mediterranean unity was shattered; Islam was incontestably the master of the Mediterranean, having conquered three-fourths of the Mediterranean littoral including all Northern Africa (640-698), Spain (711), Palestine (637-638) and Syria (634-636). Thus, in the 13th century, Christian Europe, from Barcelona to Constantinople, was held as in a vice grip by Islam, that is, the Moslems or Saracens. Wherever the power of Islam was consolidated, it stood in the way of Christian missionary expansion.

Then came the Mongolian hordes across Russia and Poland until they reached the heart of Europe. By 1242, the Tartars (or Mongols) were watering their horses at the Danube and stood at the gates of the Adriatic. In 1258, they captured Baghdad.

A fateful day for the Christian cause was 18th May, 1291, when Saint Jean-d'Acre, the last stronghold of the Crusaders in Palestine, fell to Melekel Asceraf (Al-Ashraf Khalil), the Moslem Sultan of Egypt.

During this century very little was known in Europe of Pacific Lands (Cathay, Java or the Spice Islands), and nothing at all about the Terra Incognita.

The story of the Franciscan quest of the Pacific Lands and then of the Terra Australis involves considerations that have their roots in the very foundations of the Order. It is a story, which sets in motion the whole ideal of Franciscan missionary activity. It began with Saint Francis of Assisi himself (1182-1226), who, in his endeavour to live the evangelical life of Christ and the Apostles, set out with several companions to convert the Saracens of Egypt (1219): at the same time a second missionary band went to Morocco, where they received martyrdom at the hands of the Moslems in 1220, while a third group of missionaries, after reaching Tunis (1219), was unceremoniously forced to re-embark for Italy.

This pincer movement by these missionary friars for the conversion of the Moslems at the eastern and western ends of the Mediterranean and along the northern littoral of Africa, although unsuccessful, established the missionary tradition of the Order, so that on the morrow of the Saint's death, his friars were to be found on the highways of the world, heralding the Gospel to distant lands. They could not go south; they would go east.

Here and there along the centuries, certain events and outstanding personalities stand out clearly as milestones. The first great figure is, without doubt, Friar Roger Bacon (died 1292), with his writings and maps. This remarkable Oxford friar was a great admirer of Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria (flourished around A.D. 150), whose scientific works on astronomy and geography were of outstanding merit. Our interest in Ptolemy lies in the fact that he delineated in broad outline a great continent, which extended across the southern portion of the world. He had set down the Indian Ocean as a landlocked sea, so that it could be reached neither by rounding Africa nor by sailing west from Europe. To the north, the Indian Ocean was bounded by Asia, which extended eastward and then southward until, at about the 15 degrees South latitude, the land swung to the west along that parallel until it joined the continent of Africa. In its sweep, it included the unknown lands of Australia and New Zealand. All the area below this latitude Ptolemy called Terra Incognita.

But Friar Roger Bacon, diligently studying at Oxford, did not remain a passive admirer of Ptolemy. In at least six geographical works, he set about bringing Ptolemy's observations up to date. More than any others of his day, he understood the importance of making maps according to the exact sciences of mathematics and astronomy. This was in the middle years of the thirteenth century.

It is interesting to note the Franciscan association with Oxford. Mediaeval historians agree that the rise to fame of the University of Oxford is intimately bound up with the Franciscan School. The most outstanding personalities of the University, at least in the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries, were Franciscan friars. In his introduction on Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford, D. E. Sharp writes: "Whatever the academic position of Oxford in the Middle Ages owes to the commercial importance of the city, or to the recall of English scholars from Paris by Henry II in 1167, there can be little doubt that its rapid advance to fame in the 13th century should be traced to the coming of the Franciscans in the autumn of 1224." Prior to the middle of the 15th century, there were 67 Franciscan professors at Oxford and 72 at Cambridge. Incidentally, the friars had also a House of Studies (1225) at the University of Cambridge, which, until the time of the Reformation, chose its regent from among the friars.

And then Roger Bacon heard news that gladdened his scientific spirit. The epoch-making journeys of Friars John of Piano Carpini (1245-1247) and William of Rubruck (1253-1255) across the vast breadth of Asia to Karakoran (Karakorum) in Central Mongolia had just been completed. The latter, who left from the Holy Land, travelled via the Black Sea and the Crimea, and brought back to Europe the revived knowledge that the sea washed the eastern shores of Cathay, as China was then called.

An imperishable glory little less than that ascribed to Columbus and Vasco da Gama belongs to these two "Friar Travellers," for they were the first Europeans to make the land journey across Asia to Mongolia, almost to the shores of the Pacific. Both friars left detailed accounts of their journeys that rank among the best in mediaeval travel literature.

Friar Roger read these journals with the greatest interest and incorporated their discoveries in his geographical works. His evidence was, therefore, from first-hand authorities. The information that Cathay was bounded on the east by an open sea may have been in his mind when he quoted the opinion of Aristotle that the distance by sea from Spain to Asia could not be great; and from Seneca, that with a favourable wind the sea could be negotiated in very few days: an opinion that did much to launch Columbus on the voyage in which he sought Cathay and found America.

As Roger Bacon sat in his cell at Oxford looking at the map he had drawn of Ptolemy's conception of the world, and then noting down the details of the latest discoveries brought to him from friar missionaries, he must have been greatly exercised in mind as to the extent of the Unknown Land of the South which Ptolemy had called "Terra Incognita."

Although he wrote that he had never met anyone who had been to this land or had seen its inhabitants, there is evidence that he speculated upon what kind of people they were and reflected that these men of the South were, after all, children of Adam for whom Christ had died.

To a group of missionary friars gathered round him in the aula (or Hall) of the Franciscan monastery at Oxford, Roger Bacon's advice would have been: "If you are seeking a way to the Unknown Land of the South (pointing to his map), take the all-land route across Asia to Cathay, turn southwards, and at the 15 degrees South parallel you will find the Terra Incognita." But before Roger Bacon died, other friars had made discoveries of far-reaching importance, which were to bring them close to the realization of their quest of Pacific Lands. (Meanwhile, merchant members of the Polo family would be travelling in the East between 1259 and 1295.)

It was at this time that the saga of Franciscan missionary journeys to the Pacific was made by sea as well as by land. The first of these was the remarkable journey of Friar John of Montecorvino. He left Rome in 1289, took the southern land route through Persia and the all-sea route via India to Cathay. He established a Franciscan mission centre at Cambaluc (Peking) in 1293 or 1294.

Direct contact between the friars and the various countries of Asia bordering on the Pacific came about in this way. By 1242, the great western movement of the Mongol armies, now at the gates of the Adriatic, seemed to have exhausted itself. Then the mighty movement of Tartar conquest rolled back from Europe to bases in Russia; when next it rolled forward, it was to overwhelm not the Christian kingdoms of the West, but the caliphates of Baghdad and Syria. In 1258, Europe was profoundly stirred by the news that Baghdad had been captured by the Tartars.

But the Tartars of this period proved to be friendly towards Christianity. This friendly attitude provided favourable conditions for missionary work by the friars.

The Franciscan Order spread rapidly throughout Persia, establishing friaries at convenient centres along the caravan routes. Persia, it should be remembered, stood at the crossroads of the world: to the north were the transcontinental caravan routes across Asia to Cathay: to the south the sea lanes that linked the Persian Gulf with the great trade centres of India and Cathay and with the fabulous Spice Islands beyond.

The story of Friar John of Montecorvino and his extraordinary journeys and achievements can only be briefly told. This brings us to the next century.

Fourteenth Century – Reverses of the Order.

BACKGROUND:

This was a decisive century for the religious and political life of Europe. Few realize the paralysing effect of the pestilence called the Black Death (1338-1381). It was a catastrophe, sudden and overwhelming, the like of which would be difficult to parallel. It is estimated that half of the population of Italy, France and England was swept away by the disease. It marks a turning point in history.

It was the century, too, of the extension and consolidation of Moslem power, which now became a new threat to Europe. After the fall of Acre (1291), the Saracen-Sultan of Egypt exercised complete mastery in Syria (which at the time comprised Palestine also) and Northern Africa. In the Tartar Empire, the influence of the Saracens was restricted to their colonies at the main caravan centres along the trans-Asiatic route to Cathay. Some of these Moslem colonies were large, and local administration was under their control. Then the Ottoman Turks (who were fanatical Moslems), overran Asia Minor and the Balkans (this was between 1364 and 1669). Their conquests included Gallipoli (1355), Angora (1361), Adrianople (1364) and Persia. They controlled now the Crimean-Caspian area of the main caravan route across Asia to Cathay as well as the land route leading to Ormuz (the port of Persia). The political upheaval in Cathay, by which the friendly Mongol Dynasty was overthrown by the Ming Dynasty (1368), a Chinese Nationalist Movement, enabled the Saracens to climb to power in the Khanates of the Tartar Empire in Middle (that is, Central) and Western Asia. Out of the confusion that followed arose the all-conquering Saracen-Tartar, Timur-i-Leng (Tamerlane), the Lame Timur, who became supreme in these Khanates, even absorbing Persia (1370-1405).

These are some of the factors that intervened to bring about the gradual decline, and ultimately, the cessation of missionary work in the Cathay Franciscan Missions. This was the century, too, of the Great Western Schism (1378-1417).

In 1307, Pope Clement V appointed Friar John of Montecorvino first Archbishop of Cambaluc (Peking) and "patriarch of the entire Orient," giving him jurisdiction over "all the faithful living in the whole empire of the Tartars."

At the same time, the Pope sent seven friar bishops to be his suffragans, but only three arrived at their destination. When news of this reached Clement V in 1311, he sent three more Franciscan bishops, but of these only one reached Cathay. Another band of friar missionaries under Blessed Thomas of Tolentino set out for China via Persia and the sea route round India. They were all martyred for the Faith (1321) at Thana (Salsette) near Bombay, by the Moslems. All are beatified.

Thirty years after Friar John of Montecorvino had made the remarkable journey from Persia to Cathay via India, another Franciscan, Friar [Blessed] Odoric of Pordenone, whose companion of travel was an Irishman, Friar James of Ireland, succeeded in repeating the same voyage. He set out from Venice (1314?) for the East, laboured for about eight years in the Persian Custody of the Order, then proceeded to Cathay (around 1326), where he remained until the death of Friar John of Montecorvino in 1328. Friar Odoric then returned to Europe by the trans-Asiatic caravan route. This great missionary friar to Pacific lands has left an excellent narrative of his journeys, which contributes materially to our knowledge of the East. Among the places visited by Friar Odoric in the Pacific are Sumoltra (he was the first Western traveller to name Sumatra so distinctly), Java (he mentions it by name), and Borneo. He also mentions a fact of great interest – that in this part of the world there are countless islands in which there are sixty-four crowned kings. This no doubt is a reference to the string of islands between Java and New Guinea, and these would include the Moluccas. In this new world of the unexplored East, Friar Odoric saw enough marvels to make him ready to believe even more extraordinary things. Among these, the current story of the Mare Mortuum was perhaps the strangest. It was believed that its swift currents running in the direction of Australia bore those who entered it to their destruction. (Was he here speaking of Torres Strait? During this period, history does not record any voyage through the Torres Strait from west to east; both Torres and Cook centuries later sailed from east to west.)

The news of the death of Friar John of Montecorvino (1328) did not reach Avignon till 1333. Pope John XXII immediately nominated a successor, one Nicholas, and sent him to Cambaluc with twenty-six friars. There is no indication that they ever reached their destination.

Then followed one of the most impressive missionary expeditions of the Middle Ages. Fifty missionary friars, led by Friar John of Florence or Marignolli, left Avignon (1338), reached Constantinople (1339), sailed across the Black Sea to Caffa, had a prolonged stay at Armalec (Almaliq) in Central Asia (where they were grief-stricken to discover that the year previously, that is, 1339, the Bishop and six friars were martyred), and finally in June, 1342, reached Cambaluc. Friar John of Marignolli returned to Europe via the sea route, visiting Sumatra (1347), Ceylon, India and Persia; he reached Avignon in 1353.

A request was made by Pope Innocent VI to the General Chapter of the Order at Assisi (June, 1354) that another missionary band of friars be sent to China. Unfortunately, it was a time when nothing of a practical nature could be done. The author of the Chronica XXIV Generalium (written around 1370) ascribes the failure to the lack of interest on the part of those who ought to have promoted the mission. This is perhaps an over-simplification of the real issues involved.

But the question is: why could nothing be done? Many causes intervened to bring about an adverse situation.

There was, first of all, the Black Death, which came to Europe in 1338 and continued with varying virulence until about 1381. This disastrous epidemic wiped out entire communities of friars and swept away two-thirds of the Franciscans in Europe. Perhaps a still greater calamity was that which the Order suffered in consequence of the great Western Schism and the unbelievable confusion, which prevailed throughout Christendom.

These were some of the problems occupying the attention of the Order at home. On the other hand, the missions had their own problems too. These were mainly the perils of travelling.

From the middle of the thirteenth to the middle of the fourteenth century, the main stream of the expansive energies of the Franciscan Order towards Pacific Lands was eastward. The friars could join the mercantile fleets of Genoa and Venice at Italian ports and disembark at Levantine ports or those of the Black Sea. They could then take either the northern overland route across Asia to Cathay or the southern route through Persia and by the sea lane around India to Cathay ports.

Many friars, however, failed to reach Cathay. They perished on the way. This was due not to the Tartars, who were in the main friendly, but to the relentless opposition and persecution of the Saracens or Moslems, who had colonies at the main caravan centres, and even at the court of the Great Khan.

Friar Stephen, for instance, was put to death (1334) by the Saracens at Sarai; the Franciscan bishop and six friars were martyred, as already mentioned, at Armalec in the Middle Empire (Central Asia) in 1339; and while passing through Turkestan on his way to Cathay in 1362, a Friar James, who had been consecrated Bishop of Zayton (Zaiton), was also martyred.

This was bad enough; but the situation was to get worse.

The overthrow of the Mongol dynasty in 1368 had serious consequences. The Mongols, who had been friendly to the friars, were ousted from control not only of Cathay but also of the Khanates in Central and Western Asia. With the gradual breaking up of the Khanates there ensued a period of

anarchy. During this time, the Saracens gained complete control over the main overland route to Cathay. The greatly dreaded Saracen-Tartar, Tamerlane, then appeared. He destroyed the cities of Tana (Azov), Bolghar (1391), Ukek (1395), Astrakhan (1395), Sarai (1396) and Armalec, in each of which were Franciscan friaries. These were advanced posts on the caravan routes to the Far East. The ravages of Timur seriously, if not fatally, interrupted communications along this route. The friar missionary could venture his life in these areas only at his own peril.

Obviously, such adverse conditions prevented the friars from sending reinforcements to their confreres in the Far East. The last effort to send missionaries to China was in 1370, when Friar William du Prat (Guillaume du Pré) was appointed Bishop of Cambaluc and some sixty friars volunteered to accompany him. But it does not seem that these ever reached their destination.

Because of these insurmountable difficulties, the friar missionaries and their missions on the Pacific coast of Cathay had to be abandoned to their fate. In 1390, three Franciscan friaries were mentioned in the statistics of the Order as being in Cathay. And then silence falls over the mission. At the end of the nineteenth century the grave of a Franciscan bishop (he was still alive in 1387) was discovered at Lintsingchow in Shantung; in the sepulchre was found a little bronze box containing an episcopal ring and a pectoral cross bearing the Franciscan coat of arms.

Thus, we see that by the middle of the fifteenth century the friars had accomplished the first part of their quest, namely, to the Pacific Lands. Two of them pioneered the overland route across Asia to Mongolia; three others the all-sea route from Persia to Cathay via India, and another group of friars after reaching Cathay by the overland route returned by the sea routs. These long and arduous journeys, by land and by sea, were accomplished by many other friars, but unfortunately, their names and deeds have not been recorded.

Fifteenth Century – Efforts to Break the Moslem Encirclement.

BACKGROUND:

The disasters of the last century inflicted an almost mortal wound on the body of European Christendom. The expansion of the Ottoman Turks in Europe gained momentum: they captured Constantinople (1453), made themselves masters of the Balkans by subduing Serbia (1450) and Greece; held the coast of the Adriatic almost to Venice, and gained a naval victory over the Venetians at the first Battle of Lepanto (1499 the Battle of Zonchio). The presence of the Ottomans in the Balkans was a continual threat to the rest of Europe. Deprived of the Black Sea ports, the traders from Genoa and Venice were restricted to the terminal ports of Syria and Egypt, which were under the ‘Saracen’ Sultan of Egypt. Whatever attitude the Moslems, whether Saracen or Ottoman, had towards the traders, they were united to bar effectively the way to missionary activity in the Pacific Lands, India and Abyssinia.

The central figure in oceanic navigation during this century was, Prince Henry of Portugal (1394-1460). He established a scientific school of navigation at Sagres. For the service of Portugal, he secured many of the best pilots of Genoa and Venice. The ships of Portugal now pressed forward along the coast of Western Africa, discovering Madeira (1419), the Azores (1431), and the Cape Verde Islands (1456). The Canary Islands, although discovered by the Genoese (around 1270 and 1291), were seldom visited until their rediscovery in 1341. Still pressing onwards down the coast of Africa, they reached the Gulf of Guinea (1457), the Congo (1482), and under Bartolomeu Dias reached and rounded the Cape of Good Hope (1488) – four years before Columbus discovered

America for Spain. Then Vasco da Gama, following Dias, reached India (1498) for Portugal. The last years of the fifteenth century have been aptly called "The Age of Great Discovery."

During the latter part of the fourteenth and the whole of the fifteenth century, the friars were confronted with a mounting opposition and hostility from the Saracens of Syria and Egypt: and, in the countries overrun by the Ottoman Turks, they were pursued relentlessly and could exercise no apostolate.

Recurrent outbursts of fanaticism had resulted in the martyrdom of whole communities of Franciscans as well as individual friars. Twelve friars from Mount Sion, Jerusalem – the headquarters of the Franciscans in Syria, were martyred in retaliation for the sacking of Alexandria (1365) by Peter I of Lusignan, King of Cyprus; and in 1370, sixteen other friars from Bethlehem and Nazareth died after five years' imprisonment and cruelties.

Notwithstanding this situation, the friars, in an effort to get through to the Christians in Pacific Lands, continually probed the defences of the Saracens. Individual Franciscans here and there succeeded in eluding their vigilance, but after about 1370 all idea of sending organized reinforcements had to be abandoned for the time being.

The continual frustration of the missionary apostolate of the Order by the Saracens was regarded by the friars with growing concern. It was a challenge, however, that they accepted. They had either to get through the wall of Moslem opposition in the Middle East or get round it by finding an alternative route.

The factors determining the missionary strategy of the friars in their endeavour to reach the Indian Ocean and Pacific Lands beyond were twofold. Abyssinia or Ethiopia, because of the pilgrimages to the Holy Places that came from and returned to that country, was known to be Christian, although schismatic. The theory became more and more accepted by the friars that if they could reach Abyssinia and convert it to Catholicity, they could use it as a base to further their apostolate in India and the Pacific. The second factor was the rise to maritime greatness of Portugal and the Portuguese endeavour to reach the Christian communities of Abyssinia and India by an all-sea route around Africa. Briefly, the plan of the friars was this: they would endeavour to reach the missions of their brethren in Pacific Lands and of the other Christian communities lying beyond the Islamic zone firstly by land through Abyssinia, and failing that by an all-sea route from Europe.

Let us trace the story of general outline. Firstly, there is Syria, which at the time included Palestine. An event of the utmost importance as far as the West was concerned was the fall of Acre (18th May, 1291). Here the Saracens, led by the Sultan of Egypt, gained a decisive victory over the Crusaders. An immediate consequence of this was the temporary withdrawal of the Franciscans from Palestine. In 1332-1333, they re-established themselves in Jerusalem, and since this time – until today – the friars have maintained an unbroken vigil at the Holy Places.

In Jerusalem there were various communities of other Christian rites – Georgians, Greeks, Armenians, Jacobites (from Syria and India), Copts (from Egypt and Abyssinia) – all of whom carried out their respective religious functions side by side with the friars. Returning to Europe the missionary friars brought the news that beyond the Moslem Middle East there were fellow Christians. Embassies arrived, especially from Abyssinia – the land of the great ‘Prester John’ – to visit the Christian courts of Europe.

The legend of a great Christian Empire in the Far East, ruled over by an Emperor named ‘Prester John’, was current in Europe from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. His dominions were supposed to be of enormous extent; his wealth reputed to be boundless. Within his kingdoms were the Fountains of Perpetual Youth, mountains of gold and precious stones. . . . At first, it was thought his country was in Asia but later it became identified with Abyssinia.

It is obvious, therefore, that the friars were in a position to secure reliable knowledge of what was happening in Syria and also in Egypt and those Christian communities beyond the impenetrable barrier of the Moslem Middle East. Jerusalem was therefore the natural bridgehead for missionary expeditions by the friars.

Accordingly, they organized several missionary expeditions to Abyssinia, but here again each one was frustrated. The Sultan of Egypt stood in the way. He kept a close watch on the Nile and the Red Sea in order to prevent any contact with ‘Prester John’ by Western Powers. He feared the Christians of Abyssinia and Europe might enter into an alliance against Egypt.

Thus, the missionary expedition of some forty Franciscans under Blessed Albert (Berdini) of Sarteano (1439) was intercepted on its arrival in Egypt, and the friars were prohibited from proceeding to Abyssinia. Another mission actually reached the court of ‘Prester John’ (1483), but found the new Negus, Iscander (Eskender), to be unfavourably disposed towards the Latins.

Due to the frustration of their efforts by the Sultan of Egypt and the schismatics of Nubia and Abyssinia, the friars now gave their attention to a maritime alternative route. And the tide was turning in their favour. They now directed their gaze towards Portugal.

By reason of its favoured maritime position, the role of reaching Abyssinia and India by the sea route fell to Portugal. What the City-States of Italy had been, Portugal now became. The initiative in oceanic discovery had passed from Genoa and Venice to Portugal and Spain. The feats of navigation in the Atlantic of Italian pilots in the service of Portugal were spoken of throughout Europe. In time, a great plan was evolved. Christian Europe should make common cause with the Christian princes of Abyssinia and India. The great plan was to seek a maritime alternative route to Abyssinia and India; to reach these Christian people by rounding Africa, thus outflanking Islam and taking it in the rear. Pope Nicholas V (1454) blessed the project as presented by the Infante, Prince Henry of Portugal, in these words: "If he (Prince Henry) should enter into relations with these people (the Christians of the Indies), he would arouse them to come to the help of the Christians of the West against the Saracens and the enemies of the Faith."

With heroic spirit, the friars accompanied the pioneer expeditions down the coast of Africa as chaplains, and later when colonies were formed, they were equally active as missionaries.

It is an interesting story. The beginning turns about that great historic event, the fall of Acre, on the 18th May, 1291. Friar John of Montecorvino had left Persia for India and Cathay. He was the first missionary to reach the Pacific by the sea route. Strange as it may seem, in that very month, two galleys were being equipped at Genoa. With Ugolino de Vivaldo in command they sailed out of the Straits of Ceuta or Gibraltar, and then essayed to do what had hitherto been scarcely tried, namely, the sailing down the Moroccan coast beyond Cape Nun in search of an oceanic route to India. With this Genoese expedition were two Franciscan friars.

Fifty years later one of the most remarkable books on geographical knowledge appeared. It is Libro del Conoscimiento de todos los reynos, et cetera (Book of Knowledge of all the Kingdoms et

cetera), written around 1345 by an anonymous Franciscan friar. Besides confirmation of the details of the Vivaldo expedition, we derive from it the first trustworthy indication of "a startling series of triumphs in oceanic exploration." In fact, this Franciscan was the first to mention the names of most of the Canary Isles, the Madeiras and the Azores. He is also the first to fix the location of ‘Prester John's’ dominions in Africa.

Footnote: The earliest reference to ‘Prester John’ in Abyssinia is by the Dominican Friar Jordanus (around 1338), but it is vague. More definite is that by Friar John of Marignolli (1338-1353).

The islands evangelized by the friars off the west coast of Africa – the Canaries (1403), Madeira Isles (1416), Azores (1495), Cape Verde Islands (around 1460) – were so many stepping stones that were to bring them eventually to Abyssinia and India.

The Guinea Coast was worked by the friars from Cape Verde Islands. They made many converts and founded a friary (around 1545) as a missionary base for the vast regions of the Coast, the Congo, Angola and the Island of Saint Thomas (São Tomé). Friar Luke Wadding, the Irish historian, tells of the immense spiritual fruits that blessed their work in the Congo, especially after the year 1491.

The honour of having discovered the Cape of Good Hope (May, 1488) goes to Bartholomew Dias. Unfortunately, no official report of the voyage has been found, and we are unaware of the names of the chaplains who accompanied him. We are more fortunate in regard to Vasco da Gama (1497-1499) who, after rounding the Cape, ventured on the Indian Ocean and reached Calicut in India. Here, when asked the question, "What brought you hither?" he replied, "We come in search of Christians and spices."

In this section, we have traced in some detail the story of the Franciscan missionary apostolate during the latter part of the fourteenth century and the whole of the fifteenth century. They were critical times for the Order and its missions.

It was now the dawn of the sixteenth century. And what a dawn! It ushers in new and perhaps greater glories for the Order. The discovery of America by Columbus (1492) and the sea route to India by Vasco da Gama (1498) beckoned the friars to a new and almost unlimited field for their apostolic zeal. As they extended their missionary labours further and further afield, they brought the Unknown Land of the South more and more within the range of their speculation and missionary endeavour.

Sixteenth Century – The Order's Second Spring.

BACKGROUND:

While the Ottoman Turks – the modern successors to the Saracens – were consolidating their conquests in the Balkans and planning an advance into the heart of Europe, their armies in the Middle East had conquered Persia (1515) and Egypt (1517). Thus astride the whole Middle East - they were able to seal off the second caravan route to the Pacific through Persia and India, and a third route through Egypt, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. When the reign of Solomon (Suleiman) the Magnificent came to an end in 1566, his dominion extended without a break from Algeria along the north coast of Africa to the Persian Gulf, and from Belgrade in Europe through Constantinople to the Indian Ocean. Until the beginning of this 16th century, the whole of the carrying trade of the Indian Ocean was in the hands of the Moslems of Arabia, Persia and Egypt. The wealth derived from this monopoly supplied the sinews of war without which the Moslems

could not have advanced into the heart of Europe. There is a definite relation between the waning power of the Ottoman Turks before Vienna and the growing ascendancy of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean; for the blow which the Portuguese struck at the Mohammedan power there eventually brought about the reverses of their armies in Europe. An event of the utmost importance for the West was the naval defeat of the Moslems by the combined fleets of the Holy League under Don John of Austria at the second Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

Nevertheless, the Moslem religion continued to be propagated along all the trade routes leading to Cathay. The fact that Islam controlled the terminals of the sea routes as well as the land routes along which Oriental trade made its way to Europe, brought ever increasing wealth and prosperity to the Moslem Middle East and gave the Moslem merchants a dominant position in India, Sumatra, Java, the Moluccas – in a word, throughout the whole East. It is precisely along these trading routes that the religion of Islam took root then and flourishes today. The Moslem merchants were, at the same time, the merchant priests propagating their religion. Suffice it to say here that during this period wherever the missionary friar went to propagate the Christian religion, whether in India, Sumatra, Java, Moluccas and even Cathay, he found the Moslems strongly entrenched and frustrating his apostolic work.

Events of epoch-making importance were now occurring. The tempo of Portuguese and Spanish discovery and expansion was being accelerated. The Portuguese, keeping to the 'eastern voyage,' had rounded the Cape of Good Hope under Bartholomew Dias (1488), thus paving the way for Vasco da Gama (1497-1499), who succeeded in reaching India. Led by Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese overthrew the maritime power of the Moslems by capturing Goa (1510) and Malacca (1511), so that within a few years they became complete masters of the Indian Ocean. Albuquerque's next move was to send an expedition (December, 1512), under the command of António de Abreu (d'Abreu), to the famous Spice Islands or the Moluccas, mainly for the purpose of reconnaissance. Ten years later, a trading and colonizing expedition under Antonio de Brito occupied the Moluccas, establishing themselves at Ternate. This colony had as chaplains several missionary priests. To the north of the Moluccas, the Portuguese coasted along Cochin-china (Vietnam), reaching Macao (1514). To the south in the direction of Australia, they accidentally discovered New Guinea in 1526. Jorge de Meneses was the navigator.

Those feats of navigation and conquest were equalled only by the Spanish, who, taking the 'western voyage,' had reached America (1492) under Christopher Columbus; twenty years later (1513) Balboa stood on a 'peak in Darien' (Panama), the first white man to look out over the broad Pacific. Then followed Magellan's voyage to the Philippines via the Strait that bears his name. His two ships, the Trinidad and the Victoria visited the Moluccas (November-December, 1521); the Victoria sailing for Spain via Timor and the Cape of Good Hope, thus becoming the first ship to 'put a girdle round about the earth.' Within a generation (1492-1527), therefore, Portugal and Spain had extended their sway over the seas of the whole world. They had met at the Moluccas to the north of Australia in 1521, and were now converging on Australia itself.

An event that was to have considerable influence on the destiny of Portugal in world affairs occurred during the years 1580-1640 when Portugal was annexed by Spain.

Already we have seen that Ptolemy's conception of the Indian Ocean as a completely land-locked sea had been disproved by Friars John of Montecorvino and Odoric when they sailed from the Persian Gulf and took the all-sea route via India to China. It was only after the discoveries of Vasco

da Gama and Magellan that cartographers began to produce maps bearing some semblance of reality.

As far as the Terra Incognita was concerned, it was still only a semblance. The authority of Ptolemy still prevailed. This was shown by the fact that when Orontius Finaeus drew his double cordiform (Heart-shaped) map in 1531, incorporating the early discoveries of the Portuguese and the Spaniards, he made the Tierra del Fuego, which Magellan had seen to the south of the Strait that bears his name, the tip of a huge continent which extends around the southern portion of the world, reaching as far north in the Indian Ocean as the Tropic of Capricorn. Over this area he printed: Terra Australis recenter inventa, sed nondum plene cognita. (The Land of the South recently discovered but not yet completely explored.) As far as I know this is the first map on which the words `Terra Australis' appear.

This century witnessed the break-up of Christian unity in Europe – the revolt of Martin Luther (1517) and the final break of Henry VIII with the Church (1537); and two fatal reverses suffered by Spain – the successful revolt of the Netherlands (1572), and the destruction of the Armada (1588).

The closing years of the fifteenth century witnessed the voyages of Columbus to America and Gama to India. The dawn of the new century found the friars busily preparing for missionary work in these newly discovered countries; their hopes were that they would become bases for their missionary expansion towards the Terra Australis.

The Portuguese friars sought to turn to the best advantage the missionary opportunities, which these discoveries made possible. The year after Gama returned to Portugal, eight friars accompanied the first colonizing expedition under Pedro Alvares Cabral (Pedralvares) to India. That was in 1500. Subsequently, most fleets coming to India from Portugal brought friars as chaplains and missionaries.

After the capture of Goa, the Franciscans established a house in that city as a base for their missionary activity in India and the Pacific. During the taking of Malacca, Friar John Aleman, one of the chaplains, was commended to the King by the Captain, Afonso de Albuquerque, for heroic virtue and conspicuous bravery.

In 1534, Pope Paul III established a bishopric at Goa with jurisdiction over all the territory held by Portugal from the Cape of Good Hope to the extreme East. Friar John (João) Albuquerque, O.F.M., came to Goa (1539) as its first bishop.

From Goa the friars established churches and houses of the Order at Cannanore (1500), Meliapor (Mylapore) and Madras, the traditional site of the tomb of the Apostle Saint Thomas (around 1505), Bombay (1534) and other centres in India; at Ava and Pegu in Burma (the Franciscans served there from 1557 to 1818); at Siam (Thailand) (around 1550), Cambodia and Cochin-china (Vietnam in 1565), Macao in China (1584); they were also at Malacca (1584), Java (1585), Borneo (1587), Soemba (Soepa) and Ceram (Seram or Sian) (around 1550) and Makassar (missions sent between 1592 to 1595) in the Celebes; at Panarman and Balembangan in Eastern Java (missions sent between 1586 to 1598).

A contemporary event of importance to the missions of the East was the arrival in Goa (1542) of Saint Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary of the East. For six months, the Franciscans accorded him hospitality at Goa. He then left for the Fishery Coast mission in the south of India. But here two factors led him to abandon this mission to his Jesuit brethren and seek souls farther

afield. These were the disgraceful behaviour and avarice of the Portuguese traders towards the natives and the frustration of his work by the Mohammedans. We next find him engaged in missionary activity at Amboina in the Moluccas (in 1546).

The missionary apostolate of the Portuguese friars coming "eastward" had its counterpart in the contemporary activity of their Spanish brethren, who were approaching the Terra Incognita by the "western voyage." They had accompanied Columbus on his second voyage (1493), and thereafter a veritable procession of friars was to follow these pioneers to consolidate and expand their work. They had reached the mainland at Darien (Panama) as early as 1514, Peru (1532) and Chili or Chile (in 1553). The Franciscan Province of the Twelve Apostles, with headquarters at the Convento de Jesus, usually called "San Francisco," Lima, was established in 1553.

Now let us digress and pass in brief review the Spanish expeditions in the Pacific. That it was an era of remarkable maritime and missionary endeavour may be gauged by the numerous Spanish expeditions that left the shores of Spain (Magellan, in 1519; Loaysa, (García Jofre de Loaísa) in 1525), Mexico (Saavedra, (Álvaro de Saavedra Cerón) in 1527; Hernando de Grijalva, in 1537; Ruy López de Villalobos, in 1542; Miguel López de Legazpi (Legaspi), in 1564) and Peru (Mendaña, from 1567 to 1569; Mendaña and Quiros (Pedro Fernandes de Queirós), from 1595 to 1596; Quiros, again from 1605-1606) for the Spice Islands and the adjacent continent. But for the most part, they took a northerly course, until the expedition of Mendaña.

With the exception of the Grijalva expedition in 1537, which, though fitted out in Mexico actually sailed from Peru, all the voyages from the Americas across the Pacific had, up to this time, gone forth from Mexico. It was to be expected that the news of the discoveries made would in time find its way to Callao, in Peru. For example, Saavedra's recently discovered "Isla del Oro" – the Island of Gold (the Schouten Islands just North of New Guinea) – was said to yield up immense treasure, and there were other spice islands awaiting discovery in the south-west that would bring untold wealth. Besides, it was the common belief that one of the Incas, in a voyage to the westward from Peru, had discovered two islands and had brought back gold and silver.

The arrival of Spanish adventurers from distant ports would have confirmed the stories current at the time, and these would have lost nothing in retelling. Thus, the imagination of the seafaring population frequenting the taverns at Callao was stimulated beyond measure as they greedily drank in the tales of the undiscovered lands in the Pacific. It was the age of gold, and to the Spaniards the whole unknown world was only awaiting discovery to yield up its riches. The babble of the taverns came to be debated questions in the palace of Lope García de Castro, Governor of Peru; and scenes of the wildest excitement prevailed when it was noised abroad that he had received orders from King Philip II of Spain to send an expedition "for the discovery of certain islands and a continent – tierra firme."

And this brings us to what we might call the "Franciscan Expeditions" in quest of the Terra Australis.

Two ships were prepared, and Castro placed Álvaro de Mendaña, his nephew, in command. This expedition was accompanied by four Franciscans from Peru as chaplains and missionaries. Whatever may have been the motives that animated the rank and file of the ship's company, it is clear from the narratives that Mendaña regarded the venture not only as a voyage of discovery, but also as a missionary expedition for the salvation of the natives of the Terra Australis. The expedition sailed from Callao on 19th November, 1567, reached the Island of Santa Ysabel (Estrella Bay) three

months later, 9th February, 1568. (Santa Isabel Island is one of the Solomon Islands.) The Spaniards subsequently stayed at Guadalcanal (Port Cruz) and Makira or San Christobal (Port of Our Lady's Visitation); the time spent at the three islands of the Solomon group was six months. They set sail from San Christobal on their return journey 11th August, 1568, reaching Colima, Mexico, 23rd January, 1569, and their home port of Callao on 11th September, 1569, thirteen months after leaving San Christobal. Although Mendaña believed that the islands he had discovered were the outposts of the great continent of his dreams, two factors – the want of provisions and the unseaworthy condition of his ships – determined him to forgo further exploration until a more favourable occasion. But he always cherished the hope of returning to these islands, where he would establish a base for "the discovery of the Southern (Continent) tierra firme." On their return to Mexico and Peru, the friars gave enthusiastic accounts of this vast missionary field, with the thousands of natives they had seen who were awaiting conversion to the Faith, and of their hopes in the Terra Australis, as soon as it is discovered.

One of those who had listened to the stories of the friars who had returned with Mendaña was a lay-brother named Brother Anthony of San Gregorio. Moved by the plight of the natives in the Solomon Islands, and fired with zeal to evangelize them, he sought and obtained permission to return to Spain to seek labourers for such a rich field of missionary endeavour. He succeeded in gathering together sixteen Spanish friars, and the scope of their mission included New Guinea as well as the Solomon Islands. The whole sixteen had now assembled at Seville ready to take their departure, and were just about to embark when news came through from their superiors, at the instance of the King, that they were to go to the Philippines instead. This they accordingly did. On the voyage to Mexico seven of the sixteen died. These were replaced by other friars from Mexico. Continuing their journey across Mexico, they embarked at the port of Acapulco and reached the Philippines in 1577, eight years after the return of the Mendaña Expedition. Since that time, more than two thousand friars from Spain have taken this route to the Philippines, from which base they have spread the Gospel throughout the East and also in the direction of the Terra Australis.

From the Philippines, the friars fanned out to China (1579), Siam (1583), Japan (1582), Borneo (1587). They founded the first house of the Order at Macao (1579) and at Malacca (1582), but because these two places were Portuguese possessions, they were taken over by the Portuguese friars in 1584.

Let us return to Mendaña and the hopes he entertained of establishing a base in the Solomon Islands for the discovery of the Terra Australis. Almost thirty years were to pass before Mendaña, with Quiros as chief pilot, four vessels, 358 persons, two secular priests and one Franciscan, Father Juan de Contreras, proceeded to carry out his plan of colonization. Unfortunately, they failed to find the Solomons, eventually landing at Santa Cruz Islands to their South-east. The expedition spent two tragic months on the island, during which mutiny and disease took their toll; Mendaña and the two secular priests dying at Santa Cruz Island. The survivors eventually succeeded in reaching the Philippines. Fray Juan de Contreras was among those who survived the expedition. On reaching Manila, he became affiliated with the Franciscan Province there.

Obviously, the friars were now drawing closer and closer to the realization of their quest. It could not be far off now. Their burning desire was to discover and evangelize the Terra Australis and thus win more souls for God. Let us see the dramatic developments of the next century.

Seventeenth Century – Decline of Spanish-Portuguese Missions in Pacific.

BACKGROUND:

The rise of Holland and England as maritime powers, and the rapid decline of Spanish-Portuguese colonial power are big factors of this century. The Dutch appeared off Amboina in 1599, returning again six years later (1605) to capture it. The union of Spain and Portugal under one crown (1580-1640) was of doubtful benefit to Portugal. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588,) the sea lanes of commerce were wide open to rampant privateering. When the Portuguese secured their independence again in 1640, they had been driven from the main trading centres of the Spice Islands by the Dutch. Other reverses followed in quick succession. Malacca, the key port of East Asia, fell to the Dutch (1641), and proud Goa was besieged in 1643. By 1666 the Dutch had eliminated the influence of Portugal and Spain in Indonesia (with the exception of Timor), pushing the Portuguese back to a few ports in India and forcing the Spaniards to vacate the field, since their troops had to be withdrawn from the Moluccas (1663) to defend the Philippines against attacks from Chinese pirates and the Dutch.

Nor were the English to be denied. By a marriage treaty (1661) between Charles II and the Infanta of Portugal (Catherine of Braganza), Bombay was ceded to the British as part of the marriage dowry. Two years later the English expelled the Portuguese from the important trading centre of Cochin (Kochi, India).

The Portuguese have a claim to have discovered Australia in 1522. (Cristóvão de Mendonça, a known explorer of Sumatra, is most often suggested as the navigator.) There is absolute certain evidence that the Dutch ship Duyfken, under Willem Jansz (Janszoon), visited the western coast of Cape York Peninsula in March, 1606. The Spanish, under Luís Vaz de Torres and Diego de Prado, with three Franciscans, passed through the Torres Strait in October, 1606.

The century was still young when six Spanish Franciscans accompanied Quiros on his celebrated voyage (1605-1606) in another attempt to discover and evangelize the Terra Australis. On reaching the island of Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides Group (Vanuatu), Quiros thought he had actually discovered the Terra Australis itself. Then there occurred the remarkable ceremony of the taking possession "of all the islands and lands that he had discovered and desired to discover as far as the South Pole," named them Austrialia, and dedicated them to the Holy Spirit, Espiritu Santo, because the ceremony took place on Pentecost Sunday, 1606. The full name by which these lands were to be known was Austrialia del Espiritu Santo.

The names were given by Quiros only after some forethought. The name Austrialia, for instance, was chosen not so much because the word Austrial was the ceremonial form of the Spanish adjective for southern, but because Quiros wished to honour the King, whose dynastic house was Austria (the German ‘South-land’). And no doubt Quiros consulted the friars regarding the dedication to the Holy Spirit, Espiritu Santo, as also for the other formulae used in the Acts of Possession. Five years later, in Quiros' Memorial, for the sake of euphony it would seem, the name was changed from Austrialia to Australia – as far as I know this is the first time the word "Australia" appeared in print. In passing, too, it might be remembered that Australia's first solemn dedication was to the Holy Spirit.

Quiros, driven from the island by gale and mutiny, returned to Peru, but Torres, with Prado, sailed north-westward and then, coasting the southern portion of New Guinea, he named bays and rivers after Franciscan saints, for example, Island of Saint Anthony of Padua, of Saint Bonaventure, of Saint Clare, Port of Saint Francis, Bay of Saint Peter Alcantara, et cetera. They reached Manila in

1607. As they sailed through the Torres Strait, they saw in the south an island much bigger than the rest. Here they anchored. It was Mount Ernest Island, which the Spaniards called Monserrate because it greatly resembled the hill of Our Lady of Monserrate in Spain. It is probable that from this vantage point the friars caught a glimpse of Cape York Peninsula, twenty-seven miles away. If, however, this was the case, they were unaware that the great south-land, which had beckoned them and their brethren for more than three centuries, was so close. That was in October, 1606. Even so, they were beaten in the race, since the Duyfken, under Captain Willem Jansz, had already reached Cape Keerweer in the Gulf of Carpentaria, in the previous March.

This was a time, too, when the Spanish friars of the Philippines were turning their eyes southwards towards Australia. They had reached the Moluccas (their mission there lasted from 1606 to 1666), the Celebes (1610), Moro (1613), Formosa to the north-west (1633), and Sangihe Islands off North Celebes (1642); on the other hand the Portuguese friars had established missions in Sumatra (1638, and again from 1668 to around 1789), Flores (missions sent between 1665 and 1670), Solor and Timor (1670). Slowly but surely the friars were moving south in the direction of Australia, and would undoubtedly have reached New Guinea and Australia itself had they not been halted by the Dutch, whose conquests in Indonesia had stayed their southward progress.

The missionary labours of the Portuguese and Spanish friars followed largely the fortunes of their own nationals.

The decline of Portuguese power and influence in India and the East Indies left the missionaries to the mercy of the Dutch and the Moslems. The Franciscans, being Portuguese or of Portuguese parentage, and belonging to the religion which the Dutch persecuted at home and abroad, were expelled from most of the missions, their houses being either destroyed or confiscated. As a result of the Dutch incursions, they lost seven friaries, four schools and one hundred and twelve missions and parishes. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, few Franciscans came from Portugal, so that their number had dropped to 206 and by 1713 to 160 religious.

Then the Portuguese government made the fatal mistake in 1835 of suppressing the religious Orders at Goa, including the Franciscans; so that by the middle of the nineteenth century there were only a few aged Franciscans labouring here and there in Portuguese or British India. These facts are mentioned to show how the Portuguese influence in the Indian and the Pacific Oceans, once so promising in fruits of discovery and the missionary apostolate, had within two centuries receded from a far-flung empire to a few isolated ports in the East.

A hundred and seventy-one years were to pass after Quiros and Torres before a Franciscan was to reach Australia. The memorable day of triumph for the Order was the 26th January, 1788, and the name of the friar was Pere Louis Receveur, O.F.M., chaplain and scientist in the La Perouse Expedition. As the two vessels under Jean-François de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse proudly entered Botany Bay, the last ships of Captain Arthur Phillip's fleet were leaving for Port Jackson. To the mind of Friar Louis Receveur, as he looked towards its shores, the thought must have come unbidden of the centuries-old Franciscan quest for these Southern Lands, and the words of Quiros are still more true upon his lips: "O Land! sought for so long (by the friars), intended to be found by many, and so desired by me!" He was the last of those heroic friars who suffered and even died in the pursuit of their quest for Pacific Lands and the Terra Australis, a quest that they began in the thirteenth century and which was continued century by century until its realization in his own time. It was one of the ironies of history that it was not, after all, a Portuguese nor a Spanish friar who

was to be the first to reach the Unknown Southland. That honour was reserved for a French confrere. Still, there is poetic justice at least in the fact that probably the first priest to say Mass on Australian soil was a member of the Franciscan Order.

For Father Receveur, however, the day of triumph was couched in circumstances of tragedy. Three weeks after his arrival, he died (February 17, 1788). In claiming for herself his mortal remains, which now mingle with her soil beneath the altar tomb at La Perouse, Botany Bay, Australia pays a silent tribute to the undaunted courage and missionary enterprise of the friars down the centuries in their quest of these Southern Lands.

And now that the quest of many ages was accomplished, a new era of missionary endeavour begins for the Order of Saint Francis in Australia itself. We pass from the period of Discovery to that of the Pioneers. The chapter opens at the beginning of the nineteenth century when we find the friars in Rome and Ireland working for the cause of the struggling Church in Australia. During the second quarter of the century, we record the arrival in Australia of individual friars as missionaries apostolic. We recall such names as Fathers Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan (in Melbourne, later Bishop of Adelaide, then of Goulburn), Laurence Bonaventure Shiel (in Victoria, later Bishop of Adelaide), Nicholas Coffey (Dean at Parramatta) and Peter F. O'Farrell (in Sydney and Bathurst), et cetera. In the second half of the century, foundations of the Order itself were made in Australia and New Zealand.

On October 31st, 1939, the Franciscan mission in Australia was raised to the status of a Province and today throughout these Southern Lands are to be found two hundred friars of Saint Francis in fifteen houses of the Order.
