

JESUIT PIONEERS

A Page of Australian Mission History

1848-1901

By VERY REV. AUSTIN KELLY, S.J.

JESUIT PIONEERS

To the lover of the few "antiquities" we have in Australia a visit to the wine country near Adelaide is well worth while. There, in the midst of sweetly undulating fields and sun-kissed vineyards, are "remains" that tell a story of great deeds of forgotten heroes. Today the motorist, as he speeds northwards from the beautiful "garden city," little dreams that where now the broad North Road stretches straight before him, some eighty years ago a lonely Jesuit Missionary urged on his faltering horse through trackless bush seeking for the Highland shepherd's hut or, more rare, for the few rude farm-houses of the Austrian settlers. And yet, if he only knew it, these woods and hills and vineyards could tell a story, quite unknown to most Australians, but worthy of an undying record in our history. Hidden in their midst, the modest buildings of rough-hewn stone built by the Jesuit Missionaries, and their own silent graves, remind us today of these men, who left home and Fatherland and sailed away into the great Southern Sea to lay the foundation of God's Church in this "lovely morning land."

It was in the month of May, that I drove from Adelaide to the old Jesuit College at Sevenhill—a drive of some ninety miles through the autumn-tinted vineyards; and it was then that I longed to let others share with me the thrill I felt on hearing of the labours of the men who had toiled for fifty-three years ministering to the scattered Catholic population and founding a diocese to hand over to others when the time was ripe.

And here fortune came to my aid. For treasured in the old library in Sevenhill, in the original German, are the letters and relations of the early missionaries; and these were being translated by one of the Fathers residing there today. A few extracts from these, chosen here and there, will reveal, far better than anything else, the noble story of self-sacrifice and zeal.

Father Peter Sinthern, S.J., an Austrian, writing on the occasion of the Centenary of the restoration of his Province, begins his Memoir of the Mission in Australia with words that we may well echo today:

"On the 8th December, 1848, the first Jesuit Missionaries, two Austrian Fathers, set foot on Australian soil; in 1901 the last Austrian Superior handed over the Mission to his Jesuit brethren of the Irish Province; and returned to his Austrian homeland. Today, when missionary activities have everywhere received such a mighty impetus, it is certainly fitting that these 53 years' work of the Austrian Jesuit Mission should be known to a wider circle. They fill a page of glory in the mission history of Austria, and of the Austrian Province of the Society of Jesus."

Father Sinthern recalls the circumstances which led to the foundation of the Austrian Jesuit Mission:

"Founded in 1836, the colony (of South Australia) ten years later was already in a position to export a considerable amount of grain. The discovery of the copper mines at Kapunda and Burra-Burra gave a strong stimulus towards its further development. Great efforts were made to entice townsmen, tradesmen, and farmers to emigrate to the colony from Germany and from England. Among the newcomers were a number of German Protestant families, who settled in the neighbourhood of Tanunda and Angaston. The good news sent home by these induced other Germans to follow in their footsteps, and the resolution to emigrate was made more easily in the midst of the confusion of 1848, the year of revolutions.

"A well-to-do Catholic of Silesia, Franz Weikert, allowed himself to be persuaded to act as the leader of a group of emigrants. He sold his large farm in order to be able to pay the passage money for all the group, a matter of £1000: there were to be none but Catholics among the company of travellers. . . Weikert, who was a thoroughly practical Catholic, did not wish to find himself and those who shared his destiny, without a priest in his new home. To secure a priest he approached the Superior of the St. Ludwig-Mission-Verein in Bavaria, the Reverend Hofkaplan Muller, of Munich, who

referred him to the Provincial of the Austrian Jesuits, and thus it was that the Austrian Jesuits secured their Australian Mission. The General of the Jesuits approved of the Mission, but insisted on two conditions, that not one, but two, Fathers should go, and that, as far as possible, they should remain together in Australia. It was at Innsbruck that the Provincial communicated the decision of the General to the assembled Fathers, and then asked who was ready to go. There was silence for a minute, and then a young Viennese, Father Max Klinkowstrom, came forward and said, 'Ecce ego, mitte me.' (Here am I, send me.) And he was sent. Then a second announced his readiness to go, a young man, Father Aloysius Kranewitter, a Tyrolese, who at his first Mass had begged God to send him wherever the need of priests was greatest. He was the second one chosen for the Mission."

Actually it was this Father Kranewitter who was to be the real founder of the Jesuit Mission in Australia; he was born near Stams in the Tyrol on the 4th April, 1817. The beauty and the majesty of the mountains that nurtured the lofty spirit of Andreas Hofer, did not fail to inspire the soul of young Kranewitter, for when he had completed his studies in the Gymnasium of Meran, he felt drawn to consecrate his life to a great ideal, and entered the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Gratz in 1836. Until his ordination in 1848 his course was the usual one followed by the Jesuit Scholastics; he studied the Classics and then Philosophy; he taught for five years in the College at Innsbruck and began his theological studies, being ordained before their completion. Fr. Sinthern has told us of the petition he made to God at his first Mass—that he might be sent wherever priests were needed most—and it was answered with a promptness that must have exceeded his wildest expectation. In that very year, 1848, amidst the turmoil of universal revolution, the Jesuits were expelled from the Austrian Empire. Many sought refuge and a field to work in, far away in the missions of the United States and Canada and of South America, while the rest were dispersed among the provinces of Europe. It was at this opportune moment that God's Providence caused Fr. Muller's request for priests to reach the Austrian Provincial, Father James Pierling. As we have seen, Frs. Klinkowstrom and Kranewitter responded promptly to his call for volunteers, and they joined Weikert's party.

".. The good ship 'Alfred,' " continues Father Sinthern, "took all the travelling companions on board at Hamburg on the 15th August, 1848, the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady. On the next great feast of Mary, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the 8th December, at Adelaide, the first Austrian Missioner set foot for the first time on the Australian soil."

Fortunately, Father Aloysius Kranewitter was a good letter-writer, and the story of the early days of the Mission is best told in the letters he wrote to his Provincial at home in Austria:

THE VOYAGE.

Not only for the sake of the interesting matter they contain, but particularly because they throw some light on the man that was coming to Australia, it will be worth while to give some extracts from a letter dealing with the voyage. The letter is his first to his Provincial, written 10th June, 1849:

"The whole sea voyage comes back to me like an unpleasant dream, the remembrance of which brings little that is joyful, for nothing is more disagreeable than to be tossed for months on end on the wide desert sea, which one has already been gazing on to satiety. Certainly one learns from experience more than from a thousand books, but the study is painful. . . On the 15th August our ship left Hamburg harbour, and on the 19th we left the mouth of the Elbe. We were hardly floating on the waves of the sea before its almost magic power displayed itself. In about an hour nearly half the passengers were afflicted with sea-sickness. Our course lies by the Gulf Stream and the Trade Winds towards Rio de Janeiro, then we make for the Cape of Good Hope, and from there direct to Adelaide with the West Trade Winds, which always blow more strongly toward the South. The reckoning is about 90 to 100 days to Port Adelaide. On the 20th August, as we sailed past Heligoland, a Danish frigate, which lay at anchor off the south of the Elbe, caught sight of us. She at once set after us with full sail. But as she had seen us a little too late, and was stationed north of the island, though she exerted herself for an hour, she could not overtake us, and at 1 p.m. regretfully she turned back on her course.

"On the 23rd I had to baptize a child of Protestant parents; and the day before, after I had blessed it, a child was

plunged into the depths of the stormy waves. At 12 o'clock that night I was called to the bedside of another child struggling with death. It was carried off with convulsions next day. The last day of our first month out, we had the misfortune to discover that in our cabin there were some who were practically nothing but Christian pagans. An historical discussion which occurred at table revealed the fact. One of our cabin mates declared that quite a number of historical assertions had as little truth in them as the Bible itself. This declaration naturally led to others, and it became quite plain that those unfortunate men had long suffered ship-wreck in matters of faith. On another occasion one of these gentlemen maintained that, were the Catholic religion logically consistent in all its teachings, real belief would not be found any more among its members; the Protestants were already taught in their schools to cast off all belief. I was ready to argue with him on this matter, after I had instructed him as to what faith and religion really was; we could not engage in any argument regarding religion unless that were clearly settled.

"The 2nd October was a Sunday, the Feast of the Guardian Angels. It was the first day on which we were able to preach on deck to our ship's company, consisting of Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Christian heathens. After that, my companion, Father Max Klinkowstrom, preached every Sunday when the weather was fine and the sea calm, and he was always sympathetically listened to. I had time on my hands in abundance to cast my thoughts back to you and all my beloved friends at Innsbruck, to my homeland, and those dear to me there. Hardly a night passed that I did not dream that I was just as near to you as I really was far away, and with every minute was going farther away from you all. Still this was not home-sickness, nor regret, nor a longing to go back again; it was simply a painful feeling deep down in the soul.

"On the 11th October we stood before Rio's lovely harbour. The finest art could not produce a more beautiful picture. On the right and on the left at its entrance rocky heights rise up, separated only by a narrow strait, the veritable pillars of the harbour fashioned by Nature itself. On each side, on three terraces strong forts frown, with 30 cannon on each terrace. Our three-master ran up the German flag and the favouring breeze soon brought her between two lines of forts. We were questioned as to who we were and where we came from. The German flag had not yet been seen in these waters; so we had to declare this also. Then a cannon from the left-hand fort announced our arrival. . . A general permission was given for us to land. Of course we availed ourselves of the opportunity. Four negroes rowed us ashore. Rio is a city of 190,000 inhabitants, of whom about two-thirds are blacks. These do all the hard labour, for it is considered a disgrace for a white man even to carry anything through the streets of Rio; you see blacks in swarms loaded like beasts of burden, and they sing a howling kind of alternating chant as they haul things along. It is a doleful sight. Our first trip was to a German hostel, and the first thing we asked for was fruit. They brought us oranges and *Musa paradisiaca* (Bananas. Translator's note). These last were a novelty to us. They are round and long in shape, not unlike very long potatoes, about three to four inches in length, of a dark-yellow colour when ripe, with a skin about the thickness of the back of a knife, light and soft; the fruit is rather mealy, with little juice, but with a very pleasant flavour. It is quite a common fruit here.

"We had a pleasant surprise when we met the only German priest to be found in the whole of Brazil, who happened to be here at the time. He is called Reis, and comes from Vienna. He was formerly a Redemptorist, but of late years — he has been settled in the neighbourhood of Rio, about 10 miles from the city, and he comes, from time to time, to town for the confessions of the large number of German Catholics who live in Rio. He was very kind and obliging to us, and was able to give us reliable information about religious conditions here. We were not a little shocked by the picture he drew for us, and if he were not a priest we would not have believed half of what he told us. There is a general indifference and neglect in matters of religion, though there are four or five religious houses in the city, and the Italian Capuchins on a hill near the city are real men of God. He recommended a visit to these last, but it was too late to do so that evening, as we had to stay the night in the German hostel. Later in the day, however, we visited the Church of the Carmelites, where there were devotions in honour of St. Theresa. But little was the devotion we found there! When we entered the brightly-lit church, it, was like going into a cafe; people stood in groups engaged in open conversation, while loud music of a very inferior type resounded from the choir. Hardly anyone knelt, except some few, these mostly negroes, at the communion rail. The next morning, in nasty weather, we visited the Capuchin Fathers. Our route led up to a pretty hill, one of four in the city, on three of which are the homes of religious. The one to which we climbed rose in terraces, and I could see on it a

small church with two towers, on the left of which was a large building like a monastery. I thought this must be where the Fathers lived whom we were going to visit, but the church was shut up, and all around I saw Brazilian soldiers. I was told I must go on further. Finally I found a second small church on the very top of the hill and a new building beside it; this was what I sought. I was received very kindly, and I had the great delight of saying Mass once more. The little Italian that I knew proved very useful to me in making myself understood by the Father Superior. His whole appearance was 'one of kindness, piety and mortification, and when I told him who we were he invited us to stay with him. Nothing could have been more welcome to us, and even yet, whenever I think of it, there comes vividly back to my memory, standing there on its hill, the little monastery and church where we were so courteously received. I shall never forget the kindness of these sons of St. Francis; only God in His charity can repay them for it. The Capuchin Fathers have a residence in Rio which they recruit with subjects from Italy. There are four priests and a lay brother there at present, distinguished by the poverty and simplicity everywhere found among the Franciscans, and most kind and obliging. My companion (Father Max) was suffering from a severe ear-ache and had to keep his bed. But the kindness of the Fathers made it possible for me to visit the city on several occasions.

The streets are very dirty; they have pavements at the side, but one is in constant danger of tripping on them, as they are so badly built and full of holes. The houses are all low-lying, only a few two stories high, so that with its large population the city is spread out over a large area. It has hardly any note-worthy buildings. There is a museum, but it is badly arranged, and has only a small collection. Near the entrance are two wire cages in which are kept Brazilian snakes of about 12 feet long; most of the Portuguese do not go any further than these, and they seem to take the greatest pleasure in teasing the poor beasts with little sticks. The way to and from the town always took me past that little church, so that I naturally was anxious to have a closer view of it. I found that it had once had a building attached to it at one side, and this had either been pulled down or fallen down in decay. The stones that lay round about showed that it had been a building with a broad pillared entrance. The church, of no great size to look at, had two little towers over the entrance, and over the door was a date, 1565, and a little above the date the word "Jesus." You can imagine what I conjectured from this. And my conjectures were confirmed by what I learnt from the Capuchin Fathers.

It was the first and the last residence of the Society of Jesus in Rio, the church itself built perhaps by Father Anchieta. It was the most beautiful site that Blessed Anchieta could have chosen for a residence. Built on a terrace on the hillside, the building had one of the best positions in Rio; in front was a fine view of the beautiful harbour and the whole city, and behind was a fertile slope suitable for a nice garden. But now the church is closed—there are left now in Brazil only two establishments of the Jesuits, away in the interior, the nearest being S. Catarina, 40 miles from Rio. How gladly would I have flown there! But the time was too short; we had to be on board ship by next Sunday evening.

"It was the Sunday of the dedication of the church, the Feast of St. Theresa, and I was delighted to be able to say Mass still on that day, the best way in the circumstances of celebrating the dedication. That Sunday we had our last meal with the Fathers. My colleague was so much better that he was in a condition to continue the voyage. As the time for our departure approached, the good Fathers did not wish to let us go, and wanted us to stay longer with them; my colleague should first completely recover from his illness. We excused ourselves by saying that our destination was Australia; the Fathers undertook to get us berths on another ship, and even to pay for them! Surely the argument that we could not leave our own people unaided was sufficient to persuade us not to go away yet? This was a plea that had its attractiveness indeed. We could visit our brothers at S. Catarina, we could see Brazil with its primitive forests, we could recreate ourselves by a pleasant journey, we could stay for a time with people so worthy of a visit, and perhaps we could do quite an amount of good work among the many Germans to be found in Rio and elsewhere! But our call was further afield. We had quite a tender leave-taking, and the kind Fathers were moved to tears at our departure."

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, the 8th December, 1848, Father Kranewitter and his companions landed at Port Adelaide.

"ALL NEW AND UNKNOWN TO US."

"On the 4th December we heard the cry, 'Land! Land!' and could you describe the emotions in the hearts of all of us at the cry? It was Kangaroo Island that lay straight in front of us. On the 5th December we lay in the Outer Harbour of Adelaide; we had still to go up a narrow bight to reach Port Adelaide, the harbour of South Australia proper. This inlet of the sea follows a serpentine course inland for about two English miles and the water is very shallow. A good tide and wind are necessary to sail up it, and often a ship must lay in wait for eight days for a favourable chance. We reached Adelaide on the 8th December, having left Hamburg on the 15th August.

"Having more than enough of ship life, we seized the first opportunity of landing. We were fortunate enough to be able to do this in the afternoon. A launch lay alongside the 'Alfred' and its pilot agreed to bring the passengers to land at a reasonable price. At four o'clock Father Klinkowstrom and I, Mr. Weikert and three other of our company, stood on Australian soil; in front lay a broad stretch of deep sea and behind was a plain bounded by hills covered with green trees stretching right across in bow shape from side to side. The first thing we noted was the sand with its mussels and cockles, and then the plant life, all new and unknown to us. Not a shrub, plant nor tree like those at home, except perhaps the red stock-kith-flower that grew wild in the sand ridges.

"Adelaide is situated about two German miles inland, hackney-coaches ply constantly between the harbour and the city, and these brought us there by eight o'clock in the evening. It was only after much trouble that we found the 'Catholic Chapel,' and the residence of the Bishop, as well as that of the Right Reverend Dr. Backhaus.

CLARE VILLAGE.

"Great was our joy to have reached the goal of our voyage, and it was a great consolation to us to have completed the journey on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and on the next day to be able to say Holy Mass again after such a long interruption. Weikert, a simple, honest- countryman, the father of eight children, and a fervent Christian, leased a piece of land about 60 miles north of Adelaide, near a little hamlet called Clare Village. Most of the inhabitants of the village are Irish Catholics, and they have built a small church, which the Bishop will consecrate soon. Since I, as far as the languages go, could help at the same time the German family of Weikert and the Irish Catholics, I decided to accompany him. The Bishop approved of the plan. He thanked Weikert for bringing us with him, and commissioned me to give especial attention to the German Catholics, who live scattered about the country. I was to visit them and often go the rounds of my district, and if at any place there was a good many living together he would secure me an altar stone and Mass vestments for them; up to the present, owing to the scarcity of priests who could take care of them, often, for a very long time they had had no opportunity of attending to their religious duties, and this put many of them in danger of losing their faith. I very gladly undertook this task and on the 14th December (1848) I set off with Weikert for Clare Village.

"It was midsummer, all the grass was dried up with the heat and the sun burnt fiercely, though the heat of it was tempered by a slight cool breeze. Even in our own Tyrol it is more fatiguing to travel on foot in the summer heat than it is here. The heat is not so oppressive, since it is freshened by a prevalent sea breeze, and heavy dew falls every night, although often for months on end there is not a drop of rain. On the 20th we arrived at Clare Village, and took up our residence in a perfectly new house which an Irish Catholic had built on a section of land a little off the road in a low-lying valley.

"As people speak here it is a 'large house,' though it is only one story high with five rooms and no windows. Though this dwelling seemed to us mean and narrow, it was the best in the neighbourhood, and its pretty setting, together with the pleasant mildness of the climate, made it quite a tolerable place to live. We found the church only half finished, and so I had to hold Divine Service on Sundays and Feast Days in the house of an Irishman. I could not start on my rounds as soon as I should have wished, for the winter rains came on too soon, and I had no horse at my disposal. I have now remedied that defect, and next week I hope, under the protection of the most Blessed Virgin after the Feast of her Assumption, which I intend to celebrate here, to begin my first mission journey. May the Holy Mother and our loving Father Ignatius secure blessings from heaven for the enterprise."

FAILURE OF A GREAT SCHEME.

Despite the courageous vein of this letter, we notice already that Weikert's noble enterprise had ended in failure. True, Australia must be ever grateful to him for the splendid Catholics of Austrian stock that have since played such an important part in the Catholic life of South Australia, but his scheme, on which he had spent his small fortune, was to create a wholly Catholic settlement, with the farms of the Catholics lying about their church and, I suppose, on every farm one of those wayside shrines so dear to Austrian Catholics. He was to be bitterly disappointed. The party he had brought out scattered, and that explains why Fr. Kranewitter finds himself ministering to a widely dispersed flock from the house of an Irishman. Weikert, once a wealthy landowner, had to be content to lease land, and to struggle to make ends meet.

What was Father Kranewitter to do? He consulted the Bishop of Adelaide, Dr. Murphy, who arranged that Father Klinkowstrom should stay in Adelaide, but that Father Kranewitter should go north with Weikert and his family and share their home, making of it a centre from which he could sally forth to attend to the spiritual needs of the Catholics scattered thinly in the surrounding country. He became, indeed, a shepherd, who had to go in search of his flock. As he had no horse, nor money to buy one, he travelled on foot, seeking for his fellow-emigrants. He found many of them settled near Angaston and east of Gawler, some fifty miles from Clare Village.

"On the first Sunday of the month I pay a missionary visit to the German settlements. My congregation is as yet very small. I have found about forty Catholics, who live in the midst of bitter Protestants and hardly dare to profess their faith. However, a change for the better is apparent. Protestants are becoming more tolerant and the Catholics come regularly to Mass, wherever it is said, even from a distance of eight or ten miles."

Father Kranewitter's companion, Father Max Klinkowstrom, after but a few months' labour among the Catholics in Adelaide, was compelled by ill-health to return to Europe.

"My companion, Father Max Klinkowstrom, remained in Adelaide to attend to the spiritual needs of the German Catholics in the city; he carried out this duty conscientiously until he was compelled to return to Europe. The climate of Australia was quite unsuitable for him, and the doctor in Adelaide, Dr. Bayer, a German, told him that the Australian sun played havoc with such as have trouble with the liver, that it was like poison for him, and that he must go back. Violent head pains and diarrhoea had nearly brought about his death already. On the 17th March, 1849, as an English ship sailed that day for London, he took ship back to Europe. God in His love so arranged matters that the news of his departure reached me at the same time that your letter to me arrived."

Happily, Father Kranewitter was not left alone for very long, for in the month of April, 1849, two Jesuit Lay-brothers, Brothers Schreiner and Sadler, arrived in Australia to help him in his Mission.

A REVIEW OF THE MISSION.

"I received your letter before Holy Mass, and at once recognized the handwriting of the address, but did not open it then. I, first seeing myself left so deserted in union with the Holy Sacrifice, united my will with that of the all-beneficent God. After Mass I opened the letter and what a surprise I had! I am not to be left alone; for your letter informed of the arrival in the near future of two helpers from Europe. Think with what delight I devoured the lines of your dear script full of fatherly affection. Was it not the merciful providence of God that brought together the sad departure of my dear companion and the consoling news of the near arrival of two others! How happy I was to see good Brothers Schreiner and Sadler arrive here in April, quite hale and hearty, just at the time that we needed hands for our work! We are building on to our house a hut which will serve as a sleeping-compartment for the two newcomers; they are now having plenty of hard work and much discomfort; but soon things will be better and their work will be richly rewarded: I have made a contract with Weikert to share with him for some years labour and attention to the property and profits, expenses and receipts. Our neighbour, who has a lease of the better part of the block of land on which we live is going back to Adelaide and has handed over to us his small house and his lease under very favourable terms. And so we have living accommodation which is sufficient for our means, though not attractive in appearance, and sufficient income to live on. For this year then we have two pieces of land for cultivation and so are quite safe financially. We intend to keep house with Weikert for two

years, and meanwhile look round for an opportunity and then buy from the Government a fertile piece of land in a good position. If this plan is not displeasing to God and has His blessing, I am quite sure that it will prosper. Unless I am much mistaken, in four years I should be in the position to send you the passage money for those who would be pleased to come to us, especially if you would send us some more helpers, for labour is very costly here. These should not look for easy conditions at first, and must be ready for hard work; but, as I said before, labour reaps a quick profit here.

"Make whatever arrangements seem best to you, and let us know of your intentions. With my heart full of gratitude I kiss your hands for sending me here, and for the help that you have sent me too. If it should please you to make any changes in our disposition, or send us anywhere else, we would gladly exert ourselves to obey the slightest indication of your wishes; if we should receive further helpers it would be an inexpressible consolation. Meanwhile, we act according to the first suggestions you gave us, making no change, which was to aim at securing a good piece of land with fertile soil, and to set our good brothers to cultivate it.

"You might think that this country is almost over-supplied with priests, seeing that a Bishop and ten priests have charge of a Catholic population of only about 4000 souls; but that is not so at all. South Australia is a colony in process of very fast development. The first settlers only came here about 10 years ago, and already the population has grown to 40,000. Every month ships come from England with immigrants, and every year from Germany, and of the immigrants a small number set themselves up in the city, while the greater number settle on the land.

If the growth in population continues I shall soon need priests for a college. Any helpers who are coming to us or intend to come in the future should bring with them, above all things, all that is needed for Sung Mass. We have a small church without a tabernacle or altar pictures, and, except for the set of Mass Vestments that I brought with me; there are hardly any serviceable ones to be got.

"I shall now tell you something about the financial side of our farming. All the soil is wonderfully fruitful here. The first year, without any help from manure, it produces a very fine crop of wheat. A section of land such as the immigrants usually buy or lease here is 100 acres, forming a square, so that each acre runs for 200 feet in both directions. The work of cultivating a piece of new land is certainly hard and constant, but the return is great; to take an example, a ton of potatoes costs £10, or 100 florins of English money, and a good acre gives a return of five to six tons, and often eight to nine. A ton of oaten hay is worth £5. Wheat is, at the least, always a profitable crop, good land giving 20 to 30 bushels (a bushel is equivalent to a tyrolese staar) per acre, and a bushel of wheat is sold for 3/- The climate is extremely mild, so that the keeping of cattle practically costs nothing, as they can be let run freely on the pasture lands during the whole of the year without the need of Stalls for shelter; you only have to milk the cows Morning and evening in an enclosure of some kind. It is winter here now, but it is little different from a summer in the Tyrol. On the coldest day we have had there was some ice in the morning; but the sun soon made it melt. The winter here merely serves to provide the soil with moisture so that it may be in a condition to produce its various types of fruit. One finds practically no fruit growth here, but whatever one plants and cultivates gives a good crop, especially vines and Southern European fruit trees. No-one, then, will have a reason to regret tilling this soil. But whoever expects to find everything here already will be bitterly disappointed. Hence it is necessary to bring with one house and land implements, and seeds of all kinds.

"As regards the black natives living here, they are, in a word, just grown-up children. They are swarming at this moment all around our house with a number of scraggy-looking dogs; but as I can make nothing yet of their language, I am not in a position to announce the Gospel to them. They are very like our gipsy folk in Europe in appearance, and the only beggars in the country. I intend to write some more about them in my next letter, when I have got to know them better myself, and also after I have learnt more about them from the German Catholics whom I shall meet on my mission round. It is possible to send letters to Europe every month from Australia now, and there are prospects of a fast steamship service between Australia and Europe; I would make good use of this for sending letters."

In one of these promised letters Fr. Kranewitter can report some spiritual progress and even begins to hope that South Australia may one day rival America in extensive Catholic settlements, but he still finds it hard to hold out much prospect of speedy success with the blacks.

NEW HOPES AND AMBITIONS.

"Our little house, of split tree trunks bound together, with a roof of thatch, has only two rooms, but all the same we three live in it with a German doctor quite satisfactorily. We are living about half a mile from Clare in a delightful valley, quite alone, in peaceful isolation, Brothers Sadler and Schreiner are active at work on the farm, I see to the spiritual ministrations for all of us, and every first Sunday make a missionary visitation to the German settlements. My flock here is certainly a small one, but in the German villages I have already found more than fifty Catholics. The poor people are planted in the midst of Protestants of a fanatical and pietistic stamp, and hardly have the courage to proclaim themselves openly as Catholics. But already much of that has been changed. The Protestants do not dare to mock so constantly as they used to do at the Catholic Church, and a young man who through cowardice had allowed himself to be taken up by one of their congregations came back after my third visit to his good mother the Catholic Church. I find the good people most zealous in their attendance at Mass, and although many live two or three leagues from the house in which I say Mass, they are always most regular in attendance, and the delight that they always show at having their spiritual director once more with them, is always a rich reward for the tiring journey. I travel about 30 leagues to these people, and on the way I rarely meet a soul, and still more rarely a human habitation; and as one finds here instead of fresh springs and murmuring brooks, only now and then a tank of collected rain water, the heat of the sun and the thirst is very trying during one's travels... .

"This so far is the scope of my missionary work. It is a small beginning, but in the course of time we may easily advance much further than that. This rests largely with my superiors and depends on the hidden designs of eternal Providence. The colony is in process of growth and the number of its mines are a guarantee of abiding prosperity. It is probable that the number of German Catholics will soon greatly increase, and what has been done in America may soon be accomplished in South Australia too; to say nothing of the aboriginals the conversion of whom will give work for us to do of no small magnitude. All the attempts made on them by the Protestants of the various sects have so far proved useless.

The conversion of our blacks will always remain a difficult and repulsive task here; for all the evil conditions that men found among the lowest tribes in America are to be found amongst these people. They have no fixed place of abode, but wander over the country in small groups, they are divided into many different tribes, they either have no chiefs or have little respect for them, they are not at all numerous, and yet every second hundred of them will have their own peculiar language; so little is the idea of a Supreme Being developed amongst them that you would hardly credit their ignorance. They are not of evil disposition, you would rather say that they are of a kindly nature; they are not a warlike race, and in general are devoid of any outstanding sign of real character. They shun work like lazy children and for a little bit of work they want 'Plenty to eat'; but in spite of all this I believe that a missionary of the True Church would not work without profit among them."

Inscrutable are the ways of Divine Providence. Reading these lines of the Jesuit Missioner eighty years after he penned them, we wish that his dream of a great and populous Catholic land had come true. But he had not reckoned with the greed and folly of men. The poor aboriginals are gone, and gone because unchristian men denied them the right to live and refused to them the civilizing message of Christian Truth. Gone also are the prosperous German villages because the call of the "accursed gold" lured the simple farmer from his vine-garlanded cottage to the reeking "diggings" of Victoria.

Bitter, indeed, are the thoughts of what might have been but for the folly and the greed of men.

TWO GREAT PLANS.

The struggle for very existence which absorbed so much of the missionaries' time, must have caused Father Kranewitter to chafe at the slow development of their spiritual work. Two plans he had at heart, with which he hoped to lay the foundations of an enduring apostolate; firstly, he wished to form a purely Catholic settlement with its church and school, and secondly, he longed to establish a College of the Society of Jesus. To realize both these projects he prayed and worked, and, thanks to his trust in God and his courage and foresight, realize them both he did, before he was recalled to

Europe in 1856. He writes to his Provincial on 2nd May, 1850:

"I have just made my mission visitation of the German settlements for the first Sunday in April, after which I went on about 30 English miles to Adelaide to pay a visit to an old Catholic lady and her daughter who arrived in Australia about four months ago to strengthen their Faith, which had met with various strong trials; I got back on the second Sunday to the station where I always say Mass on that day. A few minutes before I began, a letter from overseas was handed to me, sent to my address by Dr. Backhaus. What a delightful surprise it was to receive a letter from Your Reverence! I opened the envelope—there were two enclosures—and in one of them two most valuable money bills. This was quite beyond my expectations. At once the thought flew to my mind—Is it the passage money? I did not read the letters then, but laid them quietly together, and first at the Mass that I was on the point of celebrating I availed myself of the opportunity of begging God to make me fully resigned to whatever the letter might bring me. After my devotions I could not wait long before opening the letter I was longing so much to read. You could not easily realize the effect that your beloved writing and your fatherly words had on me under the circumstances in which I was, still less could I put it in words. We send you our most heart-felt thanks for the generous gift of all that the letter contained. We shall consider it as a treasure entrusted to us, and make use of it in the very best way we can. As I was not more than 50 English miles from Adelaide, I decided to make the most of my opportunity and to return to Adelaide, to cash the draft, to have an interview with the Bishop, Dr. Murphy, and communicate the whole matter to him, and to find out from him in person what way I might act most in accordance with his wishes, so that I should be able to send you news at once about the matter. What an improvement has been made in our affairs in the course of a year Your Reverence will already have seen from my other letter. We are in such a fortunate condition that very soon we may hope to have a proper German Mission Station; what our hampered circumstances have so far made impossible, will certainly be a reality in the course of a year, if God so wills. Most of the German settlers that I visit at present on my rounds are to be found in a place which is very unprofitable to them, where they settled on their first arrival, owing to their ignorance of the condition of the land. All this can be remedied now .at one stroke. It is quite easy to secure land of a better quality under favourable conditions. A good piece of land can be rented by them in common, with right of purchase, and be settled with good practising German Catholics, and in this way we shall have our first independent settlement. I do not yet see clearly how it will all work out in detail, but I am quite certain that it will come. It would be better to choose a place at some distance from the city. All this will shortly be decided upon, and I shall not delay to send you news of the result. The Bishop quite approves of the plan, and will himself contribute to its realization. May we not hope that at this spot a fire may be kindled from which the torch of Christianity may be lit to spread the Truth to the Interior of this quite unknown part of the world? Were not our Fathers the first to penetrate into the inner heart of other parts of the earth? Would that I should be one of these missionaries!"

SUCCESS.

Writing on 29th January, 1851, he relates how he has been successful in the preliminary negotiations for the two projects he had so much at heart.

"About six miles from here, where the range of hills on which Clare lies, opens out on to a wide plain, there is to be found, clinging closely to the hills, a fine stretch of land, quite level and open, without trees or rocks, about a square mile in area. Without any further preparation the farmer could drive his plough into the soil at one end and run his furrow unhindered to the other. Two deep ditches which in winter carry the water from the hills away from the level ground bound the spot to south and north and conceal copious springs of fresh water, where they run from the recesses in the hill, and which are called "gullies." Your Reverence will realize that I quickly made up my mind, and I had good reasons too. For over the whole wide stretch from here to Adelaide, to east and west, no better site was offered. The two springs are above all quite a triumph for a settlement in South Australia, where springs which give unfailling sweet water are rare indeed...

"A beginning has been made to secure a property, and a fine one at that, for our Society. . By a most fortunate chance, or, rather, by the kindly disposition of Divine Providence, it came about that one of the finest sections in the

neighbourhood, a little way from the road, appeared on the horizon. . . . I met an agent, who told me of a piece of land that was good, and which could be leased for £2 per acre with right of purchase and £14 to £20 rent. These were the easiest conditions I have so far heard of; and so we went off together to see the place. He brought me to an allotment no more than two miles from here, a Section over which I had already walked with the deepest longings that one day we might call it our own. I had hardly the patience to walk around it from corner to corner, and hardly had we finished our walk than I blurted out: 'I will take it.' Delighted with my find I hurried home, almost at a trot, and there was waiting for me a letter full of kindness from your fatherly hand. Is it not remarkable that Your Reverence's letters nearly always arrive at an important phase of our life in Australia? The dear companions, who with such courage and generosity have received their mission to far-off Australia, will now, if God so wills, find things better."

Father Kranewitter, it is true, even early in his Mission work, experienced many disappointments and saw the promise of failure, nevertheless he planned and prayed with his eyes fixed on a glorious future. His letters home show him as a man of God and as a shrewd and prudent man of affairs; to his foresight we owe the founding of the German and Polish settlement at Sevenhill and the College and lands that gave stability to the Jesuit Mission and served as a spiritual centre from which radiated through the South the life-giving light of the Faith.

"As I told you before, we bought a piece of land on which to found a permanent station, and here again I must say that God in His loving Providence has blessed our plan and prospered it. . . . The Mission now owns 700 acres of land of which a part is overgrown with stout gum trees, while a part consists of rich soil suitable for tilling and pasture, but most of all for the planting of vines.

"What a beautiful place for a college!" said a Protestant on a visit to us, rightly guessing, even though he was not a prophet, at the thoughts which we, however, had not yet openly expressed. The fine healthy position of the place beside a spring of water which one so rarely finds in Australia marks it off as especially appropriate for such a purpose and one could hardly undertake anything more profitable to the good cause in Australia than the opening of a college to train up men in the true Catholic spirit.

"But in these times when the hire of labour is so costly, since the discovery of gold mines, when one must give an ordinary labouring man £50 a year and his keep, and pay a bricklayer 14/- for a day's work, building is not to be lightly undertaken. But, when in the second half of 1855, as we had expected, the price of labour became more moderate, we set our hands to the work in God's Name, and started to build a house to satisfy our immediate pressing needs, and to accommodate a few pupils."

Now that the opening of a Jesuit College was assured Fr. Kranewitter could pause to take a breath, and his superiors decided that it would be a breath of his native air. In October, 1852, there had joined Fr. Kranewitter one who was to become the best known and best loved priest in South Australia, Father Joseph Tappeiner. This heroic missionary at first, owing to his as yet imperfect knowledge of the English language, restricted his labours to the German population, while Father Kranewitter attended the distant stations and looked after the Irish Catholics in Clare, the Burra, Undalya and Saddleworth. From 1853 to 1855, Father Tappeiner visited regularly Tanunda, Adelaide and Bomburnie.

Father John Pallhuber arrived in the beginning of 1856. He was destined to do strenuous work as a missionary, for which he had been prepared by a seven years' residence in, the Province of Maryland, U.S.A. His arrival made possible the recall of Fr. Kranewitter, who left Sevenhill on March 28th, 1856, to proceed to Austria for the completion of his theological studies and the making of his third year of probation. Of his recall Father Kranewitter writes:

"In November, 1855, my fellow-worker, Father Tappeiner, made his first mission journey 100 English miles to the north, and visited afterwards all the scattered Catholics of German speech south of here. At Christmas he stayed in Adelaide to assist in the work there. On his return he brought the news that my successor, Father Pallhuber, sent by our superiors, had arrived in Adelaide from North America. My orders were to return to Europe to complete my studies and prepare for my profession. On the 28th March on board an English ship I was carried out on to the high seas once more; we rounded Cape Horn, and under the loving protection of God reached London after a voyage of 100 days. At the beginning of August, 1856, I stood once more on thy native soil, which I had left eight years before."

In 1859 Father Kranewitter returned to Australia, where he worked on the South Australian Mission until 1870, when he was sent to take care of the German Catholics in Melbourne. For ten years as a member of the Jesuit Community at St. Ignatius', Richmond, he discharged this duty faithfully, winning for himself universal esteem. The "History of the Society of Jesus in Australia" says of him:

"A model religious, cheerful, exact in all details of duty, of tender piety and gentle as a child, he was beloved by his penitents, who made it their mission to induce others to choose him as confessor. A wetting received during a visit which he paid to a country district to say Mass and administer the Sacraments, brought on an illness which affected his lungs, and consumption caused his death in less than a year. He removed for change of air a few days before he died to Heidelberg, a village near Richmond. On the day of his death he asked by telegram to be relieved from the obligation of reciting the Divine Office. He also sent word that he felt much weaker, but thought there was no necessity for any Father to Visit him just then. As he grew worse he was urged to have another telegram sent, but he shook his head, saying, 'God is good, He will take care of me.' His trust in the Divine goodness was not in vain; for as soon as the first message reached Richmond, Father Mulhall determined to go at once to Heidelberg. He did so, and on entering the sick man's room, the latter exclaimed: 'Thanks be to God that you are here.' A short time afterwards Father Kranewitter died. It was the 25th August, 1880."

The College of St. Aloysius, Sevenhill, founded by Father Kranewitter, was therefore the first Jesuit College in Australia. For thirty years it struggled against difficulties of every kind, the great distance from any centre of population, the scattered nature of the Catholic stations and the lack of funds, until finally in 1886, when the colleges in other States were opened, it was closed. It became, what it is today, the Church and Residence of St. Aloysius.

We must not forget, however, that in spite of its chequered career, nearly 400 pupils had passed through its classes during these 30 years, and some of these achieved distinction in after life. One of the first pupils was Julian Tenison Woods, afterwards so well known as a priest and scholar.

For a time Sevenhill served as the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus, and in 1866 there came to St. Aloysius' College to enter the Society, Thomas O'Brien, a native of Sydney, the first Australian to enrol under the banner of St. Ignatius. It is interesting to note that as Father Thomas O'Brien he was the last Rector of the old College when it closed its doors in 1886.

In the meantime, as year by year missionaries arrived from Europe, the work of spreading the Gospel went forward steadily: from the rough stone fortress at Sevenhill the "White Horsemen of Christ," as so many valiant knights, sallied forth bearing the Standard of the Cross, preaching, teaching, healing and by their selfless lives winning the love of the simple pioneers and kindling in their hearts the love of Christ. Churches and schools and stations they raise as they push farther and farther into the unknown, following in the wake of the intrepid settlers. I cannot name them all, but just a few to show how far-flung and how thorough was the work of these Jesuit Missioners: Mintaro, the musical Spanish of its name recalling the rapture of the muleteers as they drove their teams on to the mines at Burra-Burra; Tanunda with its glorious grapes; Wakefield; Koorunga of the mines; Bomburnie with its model German Village; Undalya and Farrell's Flat; then far away to the north, Jamestown and Port Augusta.

A FLOURISHING CATHOLIC COUNTRYSIDE:

Of this rapid spread of Catholicism Father Tappeiner tells in a few vivid lines in a letter to the homeland:

"When the foundation was laid of the church at Min-taro there were only three Catholic families with their dependants in the place, now it is our strongest station. The whole district, especially towards the north, is dotted with the homes of practising Catholics so that the larger number of them find it necessary to assist at Mass outside the doors of the church."

At the end of the letter he adds:

"What I say of Mintaro is true, more or less, of the other stations, no church can hold all the faithful. Fifty or more are obliged to hear Mass at the church door."

Among all the missionaries the personality of Father John Pallhuber stands out as being that of a Xavier or an Anchieta.

A scholar to whom the direction of the studies at the College at Sevenhill was entrusted, and who was the wonder of all for the breadth and versatility of his learning, theologian and classical scholar; and, as an Apostle, one who counted as naught toil and danger in the quest of souls.

From Sevenhill he writes:

"Every month I cover, at the very least, 1000 English miles.

"Here is the routine I follow: On Thursday morning I leave on horseback or by the waggon, taking with me everything I shall need on the journey, including a chalice and wine for Mass.

"I have two routes to choose from, one of which will secure me a night's lodging once on my way, and the other perhaps three. Either way I must go through fields and scrub and even forests, some of them stretching for more than 20 English miles. As for water, there is scarcely a drop, and what there is, is foul or salty; at times I lodge at a shepherd's hut, where I say Mass and baptize the children. Before my track was well-worn and familiar, I got lost sometimes, but, thanks be to God, I have always been fortunate enough to find my way again; not everyone has been so fortunate, for several have met disaster on this trail.

"On Friday evening, as a rule, I reach Kadina, a little town of two to three thousand inhabitants, about 60 miles from Sevenhill. Here for the last five years I have invariably lodged with the same family. As soon as I arrive I visit the sick and transact any business that awaits me; then on Saturday morning, at half past nine, I hear confessions and say Holy Mass, after which I visit the good folk and settle their little troubles. I then go to Port Wallaroo, six miles away to the west by a rough horse track; in this small place of some 3000 souls I first make known my arrival and arrange for the morrow, and in the evening make my way back to Kadina. At six o'clock on Sunday morning I ride or drive to Wallaroo, where I hear confessions and say Mass, give an instruction and baptize the children: at ten back as fast as I can to Kadina, where I do the same. I have something to eat at midday and at about two o'clock I set out for Moonta, another town of three or four thousand people, twelve miles to the south, where I go through the same round of work. At midday, according to the needs of the case, I return to Kadina or to Wallaroo. Then lest my normal work at Sevenhill should suffer, I must, sometimes on Monday evening, more usually on Tuesday, and in exceptional cases on Wednesday, set off on my return journey."

It was only the tall gums and the laugh of the kookaburra that reminded me, as I stood waiting for the high-power car that was to whisk me back to the ugliness of modern life, that I was in Australia and in the twentieth century. Surely this old stone house, with its high gables and its dormer windows, its stone-flagged passages and its dungeon-like cellars, is a little bit of mediaeval Europe that has lost its way in the bush or has slept or wandered for centuries in the manner of the fables! And this old Gothic church, built by the hands of religious brethren, surely it has watched over the fortunes of some Austrian village and seen the centuries slip by, seen Crusaders ride past and heard the tocsin sound as armies, like the ages, rolled on! And I thought of the more than thirty heroes that sleep their last sleep in the vault beneath the old church, of Pallhuber the scholar, a peer of the grandest missionaries, of the beloved Tappeiner, of Rogalski of the Poles, whose little church I had seen abandoned at Hill River, its door ajar and still the glorious oil-painting of St. Stanislaus over the altar, sent it was from Poland to raise the hearts of the exiles; I thought of them all, how far away from home and friends and from their beloved Fatherland, they had dreamed a great dream of founding another great Catholic land, had prayed for strength in this same stone church, before this same tabernacle over which hung, as it hangs today, the great Madonna sent them by King Ludwig of Bavaria, and how strengthened to bear the heats and burdens of the day, they had gone forth, from their very door at which I stood, down that same straggling path, out into the bush.

Of such men and of such a work as they have done there can be no thought of failure.

There must we end the story of the pioneer Jesuit. The work he had so bravely begun prospered and became a centre of spiritual strength for South Australia, and who can measure the extent of the influence for good that the lives and labours of the Austrian Fathers who followed him, has had on the spiritual life of our beloved land? Strange to say, and, indeed, prophetic of the expansion of his work, rather Aloysius Kranewitter's earthly remains lie, not with his brethren in the vault of the Old Church at Sevenhill, but he alone of these devoted men, is buried with his Irish and Australian brethren in the

cemetery at Boroondara in Melbourne. From his place in Heaven he must contemplate with joy the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of his landing in Australia, and it will not be merely the massive buildings and wide grounds of the Jesuit colleges or the grandeur of the churches that will fill him with gratitude, but the number of souls that have found salvation and sanctification through the work of his Order. Fr. Kranewitter was a builder and an organizer, but a man of God first.

Nihil Obstat:
WILLIAM M. COLLINS, D.D.
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur:
✠ DANIEL MANNIX,
Archiepiscopus Melbournensis.
