

CHAPTER II

THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY THROUGH DISCOVERY AND COLONISATION

WITHIN a few years of one another Columbus discovered America and Vasco da Gama reached India by sailing round the Cape of Good Hope. The Pope claimed the spiritual sovereignty of the whole world, and authorised the conquest of new lands by the discoverers on the condition that wherever they went they should plant the Cross. Priests accompanied the voyages of the great discoverers, not only to minister to the members of the expedition, but to establish the faith in the new lands. The zeal of the Spaniards for the conversion of the heathen made the expeditions of Columbus, Pizarro, and Cortez for the discovery and colonisation of the New World assume almost the appearance of a Crusade. They did not shrink from violent measures if gentle measures were not