

but in truth she was a victim for her whole congregation with its five convents.

In both cases the last words that those standing round heard the dying woman say aloud were: 'Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit'.

Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini¹

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And how should Aeneas Sylvius not be the first to beckon? When on the opening page of that bulky folio (Bâle 1551) there is a formula so close to us: that one should be grown up at twenty, prudent at thirty, rich at forty? Measure that formula against Dante, or even Petrarch (whom it might fit, yet who could not have uttered it), and you will see why Aeneas Sylvius claims kinship forward, more than back. The quality of his mind was also therefore sceptical, as witness that little anecdote on Scotland. 'I had heard once there was a tree in Scotland which growing on the river bank produced fruits in the shape of ducklings; and these when they reach maturity fall of their own accord, some on the land, some in the water; and those that fall on the ground rot, but those falling in the water soon come to life and straight away fly up into the air with wings and feathers. But when I eagerly investigated this thing I learnt that miracles flee ever farther off, and that the famous tree was not in Scotland but in the islands of the Arcades.' You see by that how far he set his foot. But his eye goes even further. His *Cosmography* was never finished, his *Asia* was limited, on the whole, to Asia Minor; though it ends with the eager note of discovery: 'if life is given me I have decreed to cover the site and peoples of the world'. And already, despite the limitations of his *Asia*, his gaze extends to the Irrawaddy and Peking; while in our north he for the first time enters the Baltic on the map, which none of the ancients knew. And elsewhere offers *unknown land* to the appetite of the Quattrocento, with affirmation of the circumnavigability of Africa as far as the Arabian Gulf and

¹A lecture given to the Society for Italian Studies. Pope Pius II canonized St Catherine.

India. He knows the white elephant and the virtues of rhinoceros horn, though he is unwilling to be taken in by tales of rivers larger than the Ganges, or rulers with ten thousand elephants trained to war.

We may take this as a proof that humanism, with Aeneas Sylvius, is nurtured in the past, but looks with an open eye upon the world that is, and will be. In fact, if I may amuse you for a moment, his description of Vienna might even bring us up to date. I spare you all the detail of its easy ways; but listen to this, and note particularly the close: 'Rich merchants dropping with old age marry girls, and quickly leave them widows. These find young men as husbands from their household, having often had with them adulterous custom; so that he who yesterday was poor, today turns out rich. And these then surviving take other wives, and so the thing goes in a round'. *Resque per circulum ducitur*: would it not be a pretty matter if the invention of *La Ronde* was traced right back to Pope Pius II? Or else you might like that first suggestion of impatience with German pedantry, in the same description of Vienna. There is a not unfamous theologian, Thomas Haselbach, 'whose learning I would praise, had he not lectured two and twenty years on the first chapter of *Isaiah*, and not yet reached the end'. Here in a humorous way we may feel that Aeneas Sylvius's world is close to ours. At other moments we may feel proximity in a more tragic way. Witness one passage in the *Commentaries* which looks to that danger to whose combating he gave his energies during the short years of his papacy. 'If Hungary yields to the Turks, the door is open to them into Germany and Italy, and their strength is nearly doubled . . . The Turks aspire to the empire of the west, we must meet them while they can be conquered; and before they subject the Hungarians to themselves'. I hardly need to transpose that in modern terms. Nor is that all that Pius II saw out of the end of the telescope. In his great account of Germany he noted its abundance in all manners of arms, and especially the new weapons of artillery; and yet the Empire now not what it was with Charlemagne. Partly, it is that Germany's too rich to take its arms abroad; but there is another, bigger, reason: in disunity. You confess your Emperor is great, but you obey him just as much as you like, and you like to obey him very little. 'They must learn to serve their prince who wish to rule over others: and if you Germans obeyed your Kaiser Frederick as your ancestors obeyed Charlemagne, there is no doubt your former glory would return . . . If you did this, there is no doubt but that, recovering your former reputation, you would impose your rule on many and great peoples'.

If before it was Stalin, this time it is Bismarck, and Hitler, who are caught in the lens. Nor is that the only way, perhaps, in which the latter is foreshadowed. Let us go slightly round the corner to the point. For in that attenuation of the Empire in the Quattrocento you will have scented, rightly, a break with the political thought of Dante. Certainly here (even if unconsciously, for though Pius II is not without a generous word of praise for Dante's noble poem, Dante is not a constituent in his thought) Aeneas Sylvius is explicit in rejection. 'The dignity of the empire is diminished, till even counts barely nod their head, where formerly the greatest kings bent to the ground. *Sed est omnium potestatum finis*, nor, what Virgil thought, was the Roman Empire given without end, which instead seems now so sick, that it needs think more of the grave than of a doctor'. Now the vacuum which he posits at this point we shall find Pius II filling by appeal to the principle of authority; but by the side of that there is a disillusioned look to the surface of history. And we may find ourselves hesitant over the resolution of a contradiction, to which we shall, inevitably, return. But meanwhile, what principle appears to take the place of providential empire? It is the most humanistic of all contributions. 'For it is most honourable to excel among men in that particular by which men themselves excel all other animals. Eloquence is a great thing, and if we would tell the truth, there is nothing which rules the world so much as eloquence. For whatever we do in the state we do persuaded by words, and his opinion lasts with the people who has known best how to persuade them'. As I have hinted, we may find it hard to see a unity in the personality and thought of Pius II; but here for the first time, so far as I know, we can look straight down the avenue of history to Khrushchev or Kennedy. For at this point feudalism and imperial right are both discarded, and democracy with its dangers signposted: for as Machiavelli said in his *Discorsi* somewhat later, it is always easier for the heady oratory of Mr Bevan to persuade than for the sober tones of Mr Gaitskell.

In the year that Magdalen College was founded, Aeneas Sylvius was elected Pope, and fourteen years before he had written what a German scholar called *das gelesenste Werk Enead's*, a long short story with the simple title *Historia de duobus amantibus*. Therein you will see a conflict, which he himself summed up in the famous phrase by which the pope renounced the hedonism of the scholar's youth: *Pium tenete, Aeneam respuite*. That has the advantage of being authentic, unlike the apocryphal, *Let us enjoy the papacy now we've got it*; but it is only fair to tell you

that the revision has not always been accepted. That same German, who wrote a century ago the most extensive study of Pius II, was stern in his censure: Pius II was astute and ambitious, bent on material advancement for himself, *in seinem ganzen Leben nur durch irdische Interessen geleitet*. For a long time that pronouncement of Voigt held writ, now we may discount it. But obviously in so doing we do not come to unity. Yet the contradictions we may find cannot lessen his importance for us, and may perchance enhance it; and in a brilliant moment of Italian intellectual life his range, though wholly different, is no less astonishing than is Alberti's.

The basis of his whole career is humanistic. Early among his letters there is one to his nephew Antony, on the report he has no wish to study: *Quid ergo tu miser studia despicias literarum, qui pauper es, qui nisi per magnam virtutem evadere in virum clarum non potes?* In that the success-story of Aeneas himself is clearly shown. The Piccolomini were noble, but decayed to poverty, and it is the triumph of his own intelligence which brings the rise out of obscurity. And in the treatise *De Liberorum Educatione*, written for the young Ladislas, the future King of Bohemia, Aeneas Sylvius wrote what might be the proud watchword of humanism, *SINE LITERIS OMNIS AETAS CAECA EST*. But once again, to show that this is no impractical concern with the antique past, he is there also the first upholder of the study of modern languages; and in his letter to Duke Sigismund of the Tyrol (which also is a treatise on education) he adds that what one has learnt from literature is to be of profit in life itself. 'Nor do I praise those men who so give themselves to literature that they think little of other things'. *Illi sunt omni laude & praeconio digni, qui & reipublicae servierunt, & literatum studia non omiserunt*. Such was the pattern for himself, from the moment when a passing cardinal took him as secretary from Siena, at the age of twenty six, to the distant Council of Bâle. It was in the sequel, three years later, as secretary to another cardinal, that he came to Scotland with a mission to James I. At Calais he found it difficult to go forwards or backwards, till the Cardinal of Winchester gave him letters to the English King, and so he came to London, *populosas ditissimasque Lundonias*, saw the noble temple of St Paul, the royal tombs, *pontemque instar urbis*, and what is beyond compare, the golden shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury, covered with diamonds, pearls and carbuncles, at which 'they think it wrong to offer anything cheaper than silver' (*ad quod materiam argento viliozem nefas offerre ducunt*). By which you will see that the principle of the silver collection is of some antiquity. But the English

feared he had a secret mission, and back he went to Bruges to take ship from Flanders over the stormy seas. I omit the tempest which took them near to Norway, and in despair of all, but in the end they made the land, and Aeneas Sylvius a pilgrimage of ten miles barefoot to the nearest church at Whitekirk. When he had rested two hours he found no movement in his frozen feet, and only the necessity of finding food, of which none was there, forced activity, and brought warmth. But on this ordeal he blamed the gout which nearly cost him the papacy. From James I he obtained some favour, his expenses were defrayed, and fifty nobles added with two horses as a present. The poverty of the land, however, did not escape him, nor that the greatest pleasure to a Scottish ear lay in abuse of Englishmen. When the time came for return, and the same shipmaster offered passage, his courage failed him, and he preferred, disguised as a merchant, to travel overland. Even so he found himself a traveller in a land where strangers were looked on as men of Ind or Ethiops, and where wine and white bread were unknown. Moreover, at nightfall, all the men retired to a distant tower, for fear of the Scots, leaving Aeneas alone with two servants and the hundred women of the local population, *nihil enim his mali facturos hostes credunt, qui stuprum inter mala non ducunt*. In spite of night alarms he came to Newcastle, which seemed to him the first glimpse of returning civilisation, the first inhabitable part, for Scotland, and that part of England which is next to Scotland, 'has nothing like our habitation'. At Durham he saw the tomb of Bede; at York, a great and populous town, a church worthy of note in all the world for its size and workmanship, and a chapel full of light with walls of glass and slender columns in between: one of those northern experiences he remembered in the building of the Duomo at Pienza. As he rode he made acquaintance with an English judge, bound to London for the assizes, who told him what was going on at Arras, as to one who knew nothing of its affairs. And added curses for the Cardinal of Santa Croce, Aeneas's patron, as a wolf in the clothing of a sheep. A pretty irony, wrote Aeneas, that this judge brought him safe to London, who, had he known his man, would soon have thrown him into prison. In London he found a royal interdict, by which no foreigner could leave the island without royal letters, which he did not dare to ask. So he corrupted the guardians of the port of Dover with his Scottish nobles, an easy task with such a class of men, *quibus nihil est auro dulcius*.

So he came back to the Council of Bâle, and played an important part in its proceedings, and raised his voice, in the struggle between

Eugenius IV and the Council, for the democratic principle of conciliar superiority to the Pope. The king always less than the kingdom, Christ came to minister, not to be ministered unto, the right of the Church in general Council to depose a pope . . . It is from such positions that he will make the most specific retractation. But meanwhile, this democratic theory takes him on, when the Council deposes Eugenius, to be secretary to Amadeus of Savoy, its antipope. And this is the bridge that sent him into Germany, on a mission from Felix V to the Emperor Frederick III at Frankfurt in 1442. The emperor crowned him as poet, offered to take him into his service: enough to tempt him to believe, after the atmosphere of theological disputes and juridical contests, that here he could live *sibi et Musis*. Thus, for a short while, since Felix was unwilling to release him, he was at the same time secretary of an antipope and of an emperor. Naturally, his new hopes were not fulfilled quite as he thought. His position as an intruder was precarious, as a dependant, humiliating and uncomfortable. It was only with the coming of the Imperial Chancellor, Gaspar Schlick (son of an Italian mother) that his position became assured. And we might put here what he wrote in another context to this friend and patron: *Non enim ut volumus, sed ut possumus vivendum est. Coaptanda est tempori vita nostra*. Which, in another key, anticipates by a century the conclusion of Montaigne in his last essay: *Nostre grand et glorieux chef-d'oeuvre c'est vivre à propos*. And by adaptation, though he hankered to see the German Aeneas become Italian again (a thing not to happen for fifteen years), he found some prosperity and some influence. We may take as indicative of the latter, and of a changing attitude, what he says himself in the *Commentaries* about the moment of accession of the aged Calixtus III in 1455. Many in Austria urged on Frederick that now was the time to coerce the holy see, to win freedom for Germany by shaking off the yoke, and denouncing the conventions made with Eugenius IV. But Aeneas replied that it was not to Casesar's purpose to diminish the authority of the Roman pontiff in order to win the favour of the people, inconstant in its nature; nor should one loose the reins to the multitude, hostile to rulers; between princes sometimes friendship is possible, *inter plebem, & regem odium immortale*: the Pope needs the help of the Emperor, the Emperor that of the Pope. And here there is clearly formulated that alliance between the altar and the throne, which will last in Europe until the future Pius VII preached his sermon of 1796, and found surprisingly democracy sanctioned in the Gospel. By then he had already renounced, at the Pope's feet, his earlier doctrine of conciliar

supremacy; and in a way he will never again renounce this principle of authority. Yet some of his most significant observations suit uneasily with it.

It is here that we can look to a work which has an English interest. For Alexander Barclay, priest and monk of Ely, who wrote the first English eclogues about 1514, in putting into them the 'miseryes of Courtiers and Courts of all Princes in generall' stated that these were 'gathered out of a Booke named in Latin *Miseriae Curialium*, compiled by Eneas Sylvius, Poet and Oratour'. And here we may expect to find the observations which undermine, rather than those which support, authority. And they are of a radical importance which anticipates the repudiation, by Guicciardini or Machiavelli, of the principle of legitimate sovereignty. 'For you will find today scarcely any rule which was not born or continued by a cheat'; as for the liberality of princes, there are few who give, and what they give is only what they've taken; here the cause of the poor is never defended, justice is venal, speech always shameless, mercy, religious zeal, or charity is lacking, only envy and ambition rules. . . . No wonder the conclusion is, shun the court and flee to private life. Nor will you be surprised at the anecdote which he tells elsewhere, of the Franciscan preacher at Vienna who noticed that the Emperor Albert was asleep, and who asked the congregation in a loud voice, if princes could be saved? And when he had shown it to be a dubious and very difficult matter, he added, 'Come, there is hope, for if they have been baptised, and die in their cradles, we need not despair entirely of their salvation'.

I shall come back to this matter of political reflection. But let us look another way. In the letter where he hoped not to spend all his life outside Italy he said as well: 'I have been so far careful not to involve myself in holy orders. For I fear continence, which though it is to be praised is more probable in words than in fact, and is more fitting for philosophers than it is for poets'. Now in the *obiter dicta* with which Platina ends his life of Pius II you will find one which touches on a controversy not yet wholly dead: *Sacerdotibus magna ratione sublatas nuptias, maiori restituendas videri*. And alongside that we may place an episode which antedates his entry into the imperial service, since it goes back to 1441. This brief encounter you will find commemorated in a letter which he sent to his father (Ep. 15, ed. 1551). 'You write, father, that you are uncertain whether to be glad or sorry that the Lord has given me offspring. But I see cause for joy, not sorrow. What is there sweeter than to produce one's kind . . . so that another little Aeneas may play around

you. . . . But perhaps you mean that you are sorry for my crime, and that the child is born in sin. I do not know what opinion you have of me. Certainly you did not give birth to a son of stone or iron, when you yourself are flesh . . . I confess that I have erred, and am not holier than David, nor wiser than Solomon. This is an ancient and inveterate sin, nor do I know who is without it'. He adds the anecdote, how not two years ago at Strasbourg he met a woman coming from England (she has been taken to be English), staying in the same hostelry as himself, neither unlovely, nor advanced in years. She spoke to him in Italian, a language she knew well, which pleased him more . . . In short, he pressed, and she resisted. On the eve of her departure, he begged her not to bolt her door, and she denied him any hope. But when silence had descended, he tried his luck: the door was shut, but it was not fastened . . . Her name was Elizabeth. And hence the boy which he sent home with the letter to its grandparents.

I have quoted from that more extensively than I should, perhaps, have done, for it has always seemed to me one of the most engaging of his letters. By compensation I may quote less than I should from the two literary documents of this same category. Both of them belong to one year, 1444, but their destiny has been curiously opposite. The *Story of Two Lovers*, the most-read work of Aeneas, was printed, reprinted, and translated. The Plautine comedy called *Chrysis* has been preserved in a single ms. at Prague, to be printed once only 500 years after its composition, in 1941. Perhaps that was as well for Pius II's reputation, and I had better only say that if the full affirmation of the themes of women and wine is to your liking, here is a learned, and bawdy, trifle which might engage attention, and which reflects, as well as Plautus, something of the atmosphere in which the pleasure-loving secretaries of Frederick moved. The *Story of Two Lovers*, Euryalus and Lucretia, has also been taken, in spite of the classical names, as being an adventure of the Gaspar Schlick whose importance for Aeneas's career we have seen. There is alleged to be—amongst the many—a Venetian edition whose title page shows Pius II relating the story to the assembled College of Cardinals. That is an unlikely picture, and Pius, indeed, specifically abjured the novella. But compared with the comedy *Chrysis*, if not a chaste, it is a moving story. Euryalus, the handsome, powerful young German in the entourage of the Emperor Sigismund, sees in Siena the young matron Lucretia, married unworthily. Their flame is mutual, though they do not know it, and she is jealously guarded (her husband Menelaus). I leave out the vicissitudes, the rapture snatched,

the final pining and death of Lucretia, to find round one character the reflection we have found elsewhere. For here is a Pandalus, brother-in-law to Lucretia, and to his help finally Euryalus makes resort, with proffers of friendship and of gratitude. I leave out the casuistry on no heart except of flesh, for the kernel is Euryalus's offer to make Pandalus a County Palatine, so that all his posterity should enjoy the title. Pandalus does not despise the title, no of course, but he would rather (or so he says) have done this if it were possible for Euryalus without Euryalus knowing, and he does not put such a reward as a condition of his help. And in this spectacle of Pandalus hiding his greed for a title to be earned by pandering, Aeneas's reflections flare into seriousness: 'This man has gained a County as his reward for pandering, and his posterity will show the golden diploma of his nobility. In nobility there are many degrees, my friend, and indeed if we looked to the origin of whom you will, I think, you would find no noble house, or very few, with an unblemished origin'. And he proceeds to the taint of wealth, wealth which is the precursor of nobility: No one makes a big bundle unless he cuts all the plants; men amass great riches, nor do they mind whence they come, but that they come abundantly, and all approve this saying: Whence you have them no one asks, but you must have them. And when the coffer's full, then nobility is asked for, *quae sic quaesita nihil est aliud quam praemium indignitatis*. The reward of unworthiness: like the other, on rule, this is uncompromising language, and its congruence lends it strength. In spite of his conversion to the principle of authority, there is an afterthought which remains as strong as the principle. And here perhaps is the time to come back to this matter of political reflection. No discovery has had greater fortune in modern criticism than that of Croce that Machiavelli was the first who saw the autonomy of politics, their being amoral. It is not my business now to tell you that I think this discovery meaningless when you apply it to Machiavelli, but if I add a couple of observations of Pius II you will see, I hope, that there was no need to wait for Machiavelli. In the *Commentaries* Pius observed of Sigismondo Malatesta, who being defeated, yet sought the application of an alliance made with the Prince of Taranto: *Sed nulla victo foedera prosunt: pacta cum sorte ipsa resolvuntur*. And at the end of the *History of Bohemia* comes a double comment on the death of his pupil Ladislas King of Bohemia at the untimely age of eighteen, so that both Hungary and Bohemia passed to men of low degree. 'So it pleased God, of old they would have said it was the play of Fortune. But we attribute all to divine providence. Some cast aspersions on the

election of either king, saying force was used, and that what fear extorted has no legality. We are persuaded that kingdoms are won by arms, and not by laws. *Nobis persuasum est, armis acquiri regna, non legibus*. I leave to you the reconciliation of the remark on providence: but is it not plain that one who speaks this language knows all that can be known of the scission between politics and morals?

And as for realism, just over fifty years after Aeneas Sylvius Machiavelli gave a short idealised account of Germany, seeing it through the spectacles of Caesar and of Tacitus, whereas Aeneas Sylvius, in the long *Apologia* to Martin Meyr, recently reprinted with the significant title *Germania*, throws brilliant light upon a scene known at first hand for fifteen years. Here for the first time Strasburg equals Venice, Prague is no less noble than is Florence. Reluctantly, I turn away from this, for sake of time, and offer you instead an anecdote which may point us a new way. When Pope, Pius raised Orlando a Florentine, a hearer of cases in the Sacred Palace, to the bishopric. He had been always poor, though learned, and a holder on to justice. And though he had hoped well of Pius, yet he had never coveted any bishopric, thinking himself happy enough if he earned 300 gold coins a year in minor dignities. But when he was informed that the bishopric of Florence had been given him, he began to be foolish in the manner of men, who never reach so high a grade that they do not seek a higher one, and are then most wretched when they seem most successful. Orlando thought that a bishopric could not have come so easily and so un hoped for, without a cardinalate coming far more easily. . . The wretched man became so wedded to this hope, that he never saw a messenger coming to him from the Curia but that he thought he came with the hat for himself, and then when cardinals were created afterwards, and he learnt no mention had been made of himself, he was so stricken with grief (he who had wept tears of joyful surprise upon his nomination as Bishop of Florence) that he fell ill and died.

You will realise that I have not really stepped aside, for where Orlando's hopes failed him, Aeneas Sylvius's succeeded with a speed that may seem phenomenal. He took the first orders in 1446, by 1457 he was a cardinal (after being successively Bishop of Trieste and of Florence), and in the Conclave of 1458 he was elected Pope as Pius II. You will find in his *Commentaries*—the first great autobiography of modern European literature—a modest account of the circumstances of the conclave, and you can find it, quite recognisably the same, but more highly coloured and more circumstantial elsewhere. I shall omit all

but the culminating point. The opposition to the Cardinal of Siena had accused him of being poor, gouty, a poet and a humanist; and a strong faction had formed for the French Cardinal of Rouen. Had it not been for the eloquence of Aeneas, who won back some of those who had given their word because they feared the hostility of a pope who seemed assured of election if they did not side with the majority, Rouen's elevation was a *fait accompli*. But Aeneas Sylvius reacted, and the voting in the scrutiny gave him nine votes and Rouen six, with twelve votes needed for a two-thirds majority and valid election. At this juncture all sat waiting for the possibility of accessions, that is the individual transference of votes. All sat in silence, pale, as though beside themselves; none dared speak or move their lips, or even any other part of their person, except their eyes, which they now turned this way, now that. Then the Vice-Chancellor Roderick (who was, as you may realise, nephew of Calixtus III, the Spanish Pope, by name Rodrigo Borja, later to make his niche in history as Alexander VI) getting up, said 'I accede to Aeneas', words which seemed a stab to the heart of the Cardinal of Rouen, who turned pale as death. After this there was another silence, each looking at the other's face, showing by signs the passions and affections of their minds; already they seemed to see Aeneas elected Pope, and some, foreseeing this, went out in order to avoid the bad fortune of that day, with the excuse of needing to leave the room; but not being followed by the others, they immediately came back again. Then James, Cardinal of Sant Anastasia, said: 'And I too accede to the Cardinal of Siena'. All once more remained astonished and bewildered, losing the power of speech; there was now only one vote needed for Aeneas, for twelve votes were wanted for the election of the Pope. Cardinal Prospero Colonna wanted to acquire the glory of proclaiming by himself the Pope, and rising to his feet wanted in the usual way to give his vote with gravity, but in the midst of doing so he was embraced on either side by the Cardinals Bessarion and Rouen, and by them rebuked seriously for wishing to side with Aeneas; but when he remained firm in his purpose they tried by main force to take him from his place, the one holding his right arm, the other his left; but Prospero Colonna, paying no heed to their words (though he had given his vote to the Cardinal of Rouen), yet since he had an ancient friendship with Aeneas, turning to the other cardinals, 'And I', he said, 'accede to Cardinal Aeneas, and make him Pope'. And when they heard this, the sails of the adversaries flopped, and all the cardinals, without wasting time, threw themselves at the feet of Aeneas, and saluted him as Pope.

Pium tenete, Aeneam respuite. The six years from 1458 to 1464 saw an admirable unity of purpose in a pope often nearly incapacitated by his infirmities. You will have noted the significance of the dates: the pre-occupation of Pius II was to stem the advance of the Turk, to pacify Christendom as a preliminary for a crusade. To achieve this purpose he called the representatives of the princes of Europe to Mantua, and to this idea he at length gave his life when the effort and the disappointment of his rendezvous at Ancona proved too much, and he died there in 1464. What was typical was the outcome of a plenary indulgence in Germany for those who took arms against the Turk: those who collected together were more of the faithful than an army. They were poor and unarmed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The rich and powerful, caught in the pleasures of this world, take little thought for the things of the next one. Of this purpose, in a different way, the noblest document is Pius's famous letter to Mahomet II, the 396th of the Bâle edition. If he could not rouse Europe, might he not by force of eloquence win Mahomet? Hence this appeal of 1461 or 1462, which rings with a fine idealism. The peoples of Europe are more than the Turk can overflow, he who has been held on the Danube for seventy years, and among peoples where Caesar came and saw and conquered. But there is another way to spread Mahomet's empire among the Christians, and to make his name glorious; and for this neither gold, nor arms, nor armies nor fleets are needed. A little thing can make him the greatest, the most powerful and the most famous of all now living. You ask what it may be? It is a little water for baptism, acceptance of the Christian creed, and belief in the gospel. Pius enumerates the examples: Constantine and Clovis, Stephen of Hungary . . . and then proceeds to an exposition of Christian principles, with a rebuttal of Mahometan ones. And it is here that we may find the most specific repudiation of the sensuality of the period of his comedy *Chrysis*. For there are no Mahomedan delights in paradise, nor does he care for carnal desires who enjoys spiritual goods. On the one side, Pius was right in his judgment: the headway of the Turks was over, though the threat remained uncomfortably close. But Mahomet knew no Latin, and if he could have understood the language of Pius there might have been no need to send the letter. It was like sending Stalin a treatise on the English way of life: if he could understand it he would have been already the cricket captain in the Anglo-Soviet Test.

You may feel that this noble hope diminishes somewhat the claims that I have made before for Aeneas's realism; and I should like to go

back to some of those antiseptic judgments on power and rule. And I shall think wistfully too of the descriptive passages in the *Commentaries*, descriptions of natural scenery that have been called the most moving before Rousseau. But you will find them freely quoted from in Burckhardt's chapter on the *Discovery of Natural Beauty*; and I shall only add here, for reasons you will guess, that Aeneas Sylvius is the first to see the broom flowering upon the hills. Outside Viterbo he climbed up by pleasant ways, *in quibus cum genestae ingens vis est, eaque florida, crocea magna pars agri videatur* (where there was a vast amount of broom, and that in flower, so that a great part of the country showed up yellow). And then again elsewhere he climbed and looked upon the whole prospect of the Tyrrhenian coast belonging to the Church; and here also, *maxime vero genesta placuit, quae flore suo magnam cooperuit camporum partem*. Nor, since the date is what it is, can I refrain from telling you that Aeneas Sylvius is the first author, so far as I know, to record the custom of giving Christmas presents: *nunc praesertim quando Salvatoris nostri natalitia celebramus, in quibus mos est fidelibus Christianis invicem munera missitare*. But to that, lest you should think this Christmas present is too long, I shall only add one detail. It comes when Pius II was visiting the monastery of Santa Maria Palazzuolo. 'Before you enter the monastery there is a high rock like a wall on the left hand, in which the fasces of the Roman consuls, and twelve axes had been carved according to the ancient custom. Six the ivy had covered, six were still visible. Pius, kindly to the memory of antiquity, ordered the ivy to be removed. *Pius hederam iussit amoveri antiquitatis memoriae favens*. It is a subject which gave rise to one of the most pleasing of Piranesi's Views of Rome, which I would have liked to bring with me. But you will see, I think, why I have quoted it, and I hope that you will think of me as acting to the memory of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini as he to the memory of antiquity. From over an old, and pleasing, author I have taken a little ivy, and if you now will gaze yourselves you will find pleasures of your own.