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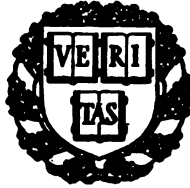
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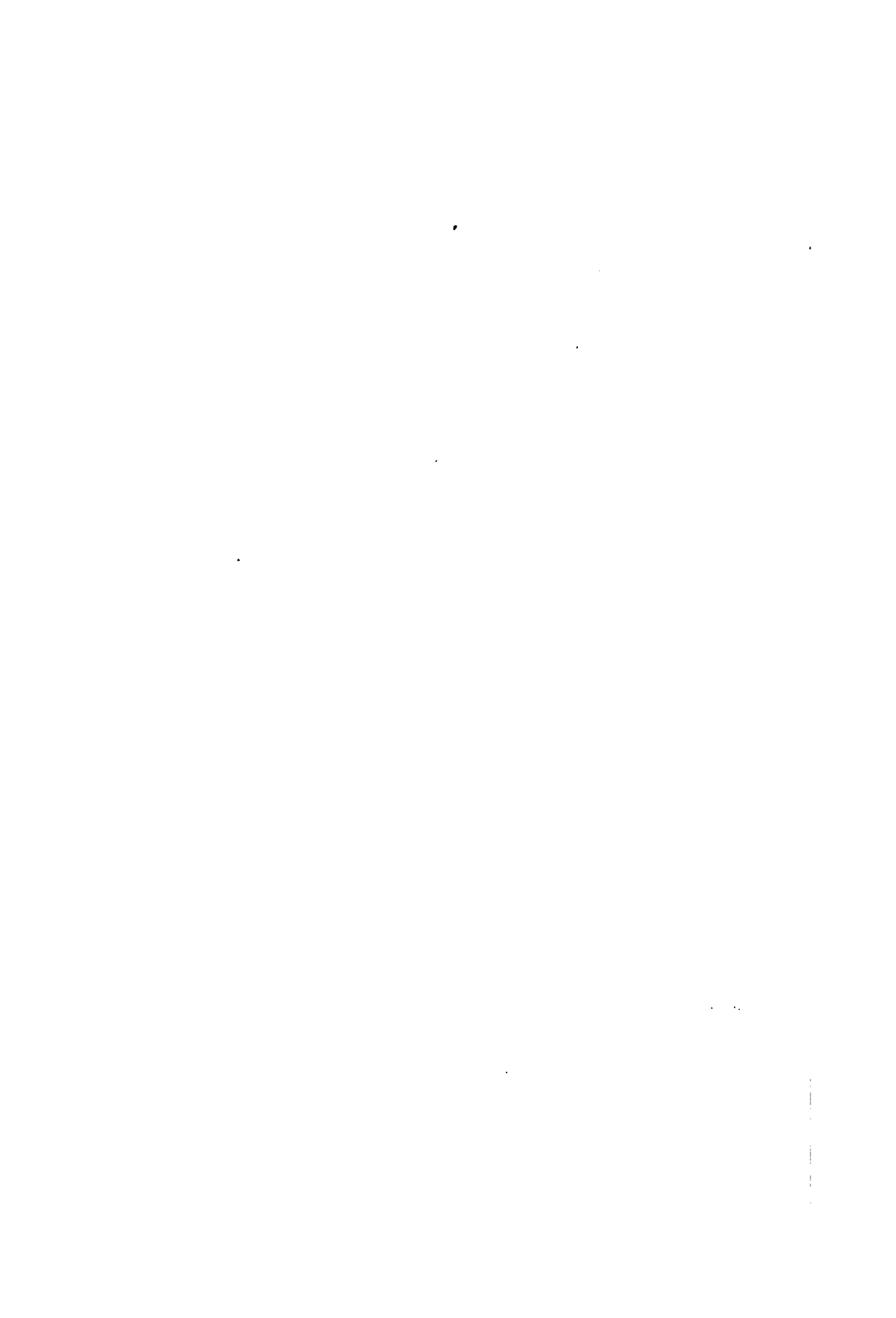
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ÆNEAS SILVIUS









*The marriage of Frederick III with Isabella of Portugal  
Edoardo de' Torni, in the library of Santa Catalina  
Lisbon*

ÆNEAS SILVIUS,  
(ENEA SILVIO DE' PICCOLOMINI—PIUS II.)

ORATOR, MAN OF LETTERS  
STATESMAN, AND POPE

BY

WILLIAM BOULTING

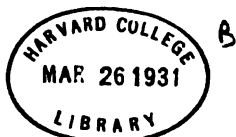
AUTHOR OF 'TASSO AND HIS TIMES,' 'SISMONDI'S HISTORY OF  
THE ITALIAN REPUBLICS, COMPLETELY RE-CAST.'

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TO PROFESSOR JAMES SULLY, M.A., LL.D.,

ETC.

MY DEAR SULLY,—Years have passed since you first held out to me the helpful hand of your friendship, and I have long been anxious to show you how I value it. So I venture to offer you this little study as a mark of admiration and deep regard. Should its quality prove very defective, at least the sentiment which accompanies the volume is sincere. You, as well as I, are interested in the great historic forces of the fifteenth century; you, as well as I, have been fascinated by the personality of Æneas Silvius, and have found it very complex and by no means easy to understand.

It seemed to me, if I may dare say so, that bias, of one kind or another, affected the judgement of more than one great historian. I found the laborious Voigt unfair and severe; Gregorovius appeared somewhat harsh; I was not quite satisfied that Weiss and Pastor, or even the statesmanlike and sympathetic Creighton, were not led a little astray by prejudices. So I had the temerity to try my own hand. Perhaps, thought I, to be unaffected by

Protestant or Catholic prepossessions may be no disadvantage; a very compassionate tolerance for human frailty may not prove wholly a defect. I tried to find out what manner of fellow-creature this Piccolomini was, and I hope that fulness of sympathy may, in some measure, make up for thinness in scholarship. Since you are so keen a huntsman after the doublings of character, I am sure you will not fail to be interested wherever I may have hit on success, while your quick sense of humour will, perhaps, keep you amused where I have failed.—Believe me, ever your attached and grateful friend.

WILLIAM BOULTING.

ROME, 1908.

*P.S.*—I regret that I could not find a really satisfactory portrait of Pius II. The well-executed medal at Milan, by Andrea Guazzalotti, official medal-designer to the Popes, is somewhat worn, and a reproduction of it would suffer the disadvantage of being derived from the cast of a cast. After Pius's death, Guazzalotti struck another medal, the obverse of which is suggestive of burlesque, although Campano, in extravagant verse, affected to admire it. The features in Giovanni di Paolo's *Incoronazione di Papa Pio II.*, now preserved in the *Archivio di Stato di Siena*, are blurred by Time.

Bernardino Pinturicchio was employed by Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini (Pope Pius III.), thirty-eight years after the death of his uncle, to paint incidents in his life. Most of these frescoes, which, still fresh and splendid, adorn the great library of the Duomo of Siena, are reproduced in this volume. The portraiture of the earlier scenes is fanciful enough, but the effigies of Æneas as Pope bear, in essential lineaments, a resemblance to the aforementioned portraits that makes me regard them as tolerably trustworthy likenesses of the man they profess to represent. Pius III., in this series, bears a strong family resemblance to his uncle.

W. B.



## NOTE

I HAVE to acknowledge my obligation, for services of different kinds, generously rendered me, to Miss Frances Whitehead; J. M. Rigg, M.A., A. R. Dryhurst, Ed. Hutton, and C. L. Taylor, Esquires, of London; and to Wm. Bliss, M.A., Archibald Constable, LL.D., of Edinburgh, and the Very Reverend Father Corney, O.S.B., of Rome. I have also to express my gratitude to the officials of various Italian Libraries for their unfailing courtesy, and especially to Monsignor Wenzel and his coadjutors at the Secret Archives of the Vatican for the facilities they so freely gave.

W. B.

## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. BIRTH AND PARENTAGE—EARLY YEARS . . .	1
II. THE CHURCH, THE STATE, SCHISMS, HERESIES, AND COUNCILS . . . . .	22
III. THE FIRST YEARS OF THE COUNCIL—ÆNEAS ARRIVES AT BASEL—HIS EARLY EMPLOYMENT THERE . . . . .	41
IV. CERTAIN EMBASSIES AND ADVENTURES . . .	50
V. ÆNEAS AT BASEL—THE COUNCIL AND THE POPE .	69
VI. ÆNEAS AT BASEL—THE SCHISM . . . . .	84
VII. ÆNEAS CROWNED AS POET—THE IMPERIAL CHAN- CELLERY—INNER STRIFE . . . . .	110
VIII. ÆNEAS AND THE RESTORATION OF GERMAN OBEDI- ENCE TO EUGENIUS—HE ENTERS THE CHURCH	151
IX. ÆNEAS AS BISHOP AND AMBASSADOR: AS CON- FIDENTIAL ADVISER OF THE CROWN—THE CORONATION AND MARRIAGE OF FREDERICK III.	176
X. ÆNEAS AS PAPAL AND IMPERIAL AGENT—THE EASTERN PERIL . . . . .	198
XI. ÆNEAS AT ROME: ÆNEAS AS MAN OF LETTERS .	212
XII. ÆNEAS AS CARDINAL . . . . .	224
XIII. THE ELECTION TO THE PAPACY—THE CORONATION OF PIUS II . . . . .	235
XIV. THE JOURNEY TO MANTUA . . . . .	248

CHAP.	PAGE
XV. THE CONGRESS OF MANTUA . . . . .	264
XVI. THE RETURN FROM MANTUA—TROUBLES AT ROME	285
XVII. THE PAPACY AND FOREIGN POWERS. . . . .	297
XVIII. THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE POPE . . . . .	317
XIX. THE CARDINALS — RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND GOVERNMENT . . . . .	332
XX. PIUS AND THE CRUSADE . . . . .	338
XXI. THE JOURNEY TO ANCONA—DEATH OF PIUS . . . . .	352
INDEX . . . . .	359

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<b>THE MARRIAGE OF FREDERICK III. WITH LEONORA OF</b>	
<b>PORTUGAL . . . . .</b>	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<b>ÆNEAS SILVIUS SETS OUT FOR BASEL . . . . .</b>	<i>facing page</i> 18
<b>ÆNEAS SILVIUS DISCHARGES HIMSELF OF HIS</b>	
<b>MISSION TO JAMES OF SCOTLAND . . . . .</b>	,, 60
<b>ÆNEAS RECEIVING THE POET'S CROWN FROM</b>	
<b>FREDERICK III. . . . .</b>	,, 112
<b>ÆNEAS SILVIUS AT THE FEET OF POPE</b>	
<b>EUGENIUS IV. . . . .</b>	,, 156
<b>ÆNEAS SILVIUS IS CREATED A CARDINAL BY</b>	
<b>CALIXTUS III. . . . .</b>	,, 224
<b>ÆNEAS SILVIUS, CROWNED AS PIUS II.,</b>	
<b>RESTOWS HIS BLESSING . . . . .</b>	,, 246
<b>PIUS II. PRESIDES AT THE CONGRESS OF</b>	
<b>MANTUA . . . . .</b>	,, 270
<b>CARDINAL PICCOLOMINI, NEPHEW OF PIUS II.,</b>	
<b>IS CROWNED POPE AS PIUS III. . . . .</b>	,, 288
<b>PIUS II. CANONISES ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA</b>	
<b>PIUS II. IS BORNE TO ANCONA . . . . .</b>	,, 352



## CHAPTER I

### BIRTH AND PARENTAGE—EARLY YEARS

IN Central Tuscany, on the ridge of three conjoined hills that break on all sides into steep declivities, lies Siena, the capital, in the Middle Ages, of a famous republic. The surrounding landscape is soft and set with vineyards; the city is girdled by defiant walls that belie the tranquil grace of the buildings they enclose. The spectacle of the fair city, 'sitting aloft like a noble maiden in armour,' gives the instructed traveller an impassioned moment, for the beauty that takes the eye is matched by memories that crowd the brain. The portals still bear the legend 'Siena opens her heart to thee more widely than her gates'; the palace of government is still adorned with ancient frescoes that set forth the blessings of Wisdom and Justice and Concord; but the city was ever one, as Comines said, 'qui se gouverne plus follement que ville d'Italie,' and Varchi justly spoke of it as 'a confused muddle of separate republics rather than a well-ordered state.' With the possible exception of Rome and Perugia, it was the most turbulent of Italian cities, and it retained, to a late date, the characteristics of the Italian commune. A mass of political and social organisations, perpetually at war, were held together only by the ties of business and

by a common attachment to the same city. There was a central government, it is true, but it was dominated by a party and lasted only until one of the many factions it affected to control grew strong enough to overthrow it. The Sienese were an energetic, proud, sensitive, and passionate people, but for three successive generations, in the latter part of the thirteenth and earlier half of the fourteenth centuries, they submitted to be guided in their policy, and they saw their dominion extended and their wealth increased, by a haughty but capable race of merchant-nobles. But the rule of these 'gentiluomini' was weakened by perpetual fighting among themselves; trouble arose from the claims of new men and of the smaller traders, and even the lower classes grasped the reins of government for a time. The 'gentiluomini' engaged in constant conspiracy to regain their lost power, and in 1385 they were exiled from the city.

Among the exiles were the Piccolomini, at this time an impoverished family. They cherished the tradition that, unlike most of the nobles of Italy, they were descended, not from barbarian conquerors, but from ancestors of Latin race. They had lost most of their fiefs, but they still owned the greater part of the village or townlet of Corsignano, a day's journey to the south of the city. Here Enea Silvio, the grandfather of the future Pope, contrived to maintain some show of rank. But he died in early manhood, and his posthumous son Silvio, left to the stewardship of guardians, found, when he grew up, that law-suits and bad management had very much decreased his heritage. His education had

been so far attended to that he possessed some tincture of letters, but it was not enough to gain him employment. So he took service as a soldier of fortune under Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the ambitious and intriguing Lord of Milan. His early life was irregular;<sup>1</sup> he made no great success in his profession, and he was wanting, either in the supple arts of a courtier, or in the ability that the Visconti demanded of their agents. He returned to Corsignano to till what remained to him of the paternal land, and vented his spleen by dispensing contemptuous remarks on the buffoons that haunted the Ducal Court. He brought a certain Vittoria of the House of Forteguerra, a young Sienese lady, as noble and as poor as himself, to the little homestead that one may still see standing on the hillside. He busily cultivated his few acres, and devoted his leisure to the Muses. On October 18, 1405, a son, the subject of our memoir, was born to him. The child was baptized by the names Enea Silvio, after his grandfather, to which was added Bartolomeo, but the last name he dropped. Enea Silvio, best known in literature under the Latinised form Æneas Silvius, soon had a large company of brothers and sisters, several of them being twins. While they endowed the little homestead with family love, they increased the poverty and anxiety that beset it.

Corsignano is a pleasant place. The scenery is not remarkable, but great woods of oak lie between it and Montepulciano, and chestnut forests invest the hills hard by. M. Amiata, mantled in white until quite late in the spring, and the singular cliffs of

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad generatorem*, September 20, 1443.



Rodocofani can be seen from the higher ground. There was enough to awaken the susceptibilities of a lad who became, of all the men of his time, a wooer of Nature and who, when he assumed the Tiara, was never so happy as when he could shake off the ceremonies of Court, put aside for a time the responsibilities of his great office, and, retiring to some silent Tuscan slope, liberate his soul as he gazed over vast, beautiful spaces, find interest in picking out the distant towers of cities that have memories, and seek for peace in the shelter of noble forest-trees that cast cool, grateful shadows over the bubbling brook. His life as a child was that of the Tuscan peasant-lad of to-day. He would follow the snow-white buffaloes as they tugged at the classic plough of hard wood, tipped with iron, watch the eye of his father fixed on the furrow, and the skilful hand with which he made his course, marvel at the deft, graceful swing of the sower, and laugh at the cheerful, dancing movement of the feet as men trod the vintage. And in winter the children would squeeze together round the *focolare* and listen to tales of old Siena and of camps in Lombardy. After winter came a yearly miracle, for the skeletons of the woods sprang into life, and a minute of picking would give more violets than the arms could hold. At the vintage, then, as to-day, there would be the merry *festa* and the singing of sweet, simple songs.

The little Piccolomini played with each other and with those children of the village that were their equals in rank. Once, it is said, they played at Pope-making, and, strange augury, the little Enea was chosen for the high office and the other children

kissed his feet. He encountered and escaped the usual perils of a country-lad. When he was three years old he fell from a high wall on to a stone, and his scalp was terribly lacerated; but one Niccolò Monticuli, "a doctor without letters," as folk call empirics, cured him with 'water-dressing, though the case seemed without hope,' but holy water was used. And when he was eight a bull tossed him high in the air.<sup>1</sup>

At a very early age he had to help both parents in farm-work, since there were so many mouths to be fed. Yet his father found time to give the bright, eager lad such scholarship as he himself possessed. The rudiments Enea had already acquired from a young priest. Of all the sixteen children of Silvio and Vittoria, only two, Laodamia and Caterina, lived to see Enea's rapid advancement in the Church. Pestilence almost decimated this family, as it did most families in the fifteenth century.

Enea must have proved himself a lad of parts, for an uncle by marriage, one Niccolò Lolli, a man of some position in Siena, offered to receive him into his family, and other relatives gave him help that he might study at Siena. So the young scholar betook himself, through lanes, to the winding high-road that lay not so very far off, and passing, belike, the pilgrims of many a far-off country, all bound for Rome, arrived at Siena full of high hope and the vague, flattering expectations of youth, to find himself ill-prepared to enter even so very poor a school of letters as Siena had become. The plebeian government of the republic was utilitarian in its views and pars-

<sup>1</sup> *Pvi II. Comment.*, l. 1.

monious in its rewards, and scholars forsook Siena for the gold that was showered on them at the courts of liberal princes. Enthusiasm for Greek, the most important influence in the intellectual development of the time, had not reached Siena: teachers of Greek demanded high fees, and manuscripts in that language were costly and difficult to acquire, and indeed the Byzantines were held in contempt. Italian pride in the literature and traditions of Rome held little sway in Siena at this period.<sup>1</sup> So Piccolomini learned no Greek, nor did he receive first-class tuition in Latin; nor did he apply himself too closely to the lucrative study of law, though Siena had a good reputation for that subject, and it was the gate easiest to force and most likely to yield reward. But, like most young men of intellectual individuality, he was his own best teacher. His powers grew rather through converse with his companions than by the discipline of the schools. His most intimate friend was Mariano de' Sozzini, a distinguished member of a distinguished race, many of whom cared for things of the mind, and two of whom finally gave their family name to a remarkable sect (the Socinians). Sozzini was a few years older than Piccolomini, and had already gained renown. A wife and other family obligations alone held him to Siena and its university. His mind was not, perhaps, of the highest order, but he was of that breed of universal men that the Renaissance produced. He was short of stature, but an all-round athlete, an accomplished dancer, and a refined libertine. As a jurist he was really great; he taught Canon law so well that scholars flocked

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *Æneas Silvius de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius II.* Erster Band, 8.

across the Alps to this second-rate university to sit at his feet. He knew some Philosophy, Mathematics, Astrology, Greek, and had dabbled in Medicine; the fathers of the State consulted him on grave, political questions, but he could turn from a state-paper to write an agreeable letter or to paint. He could endow even law with interest for everybody but *Æneas*. Yet the two became firm friends, and there can be little doubt that the young man found the elder an inspiring influence.<sup>1</sup> Another associate was Beccadelli, otherwise called Panormita, after his birth-place, Palermo,<sup>2</sup> a man who became a magnificent humanist, yet who was the most corrupt of a corrupt tribe of scholars; one who prostituted great powers in investing the worst sexual sins of the ancients with voluptuous grace, and whose *Hermaphroditus* is, as the title would indicate, dedicated to obscenity.

If Piccolomini eschewed law, he stole hours from the night to read the classics, but he had come to Siena too ill-prepared and was too ill-taught there to achieve real scholarship. His poverty prevented him from purchasing manuscripts, so he borrowed the books of others and copied them out. His taste directed him to the study of Cicero, Horace, and the amatory poets; of other authors he had little knowledge. He composed quite as much as he read: the *cacoethes scribendi* was upon him, and he practised writing historical descriptions and orations and letters in the style of Cicero. Latin was the way to advancement in days when that language was universally employed by princes, of no very high

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Comment. in Anton. Panorm.*, iii. 27; *De vir. clar.*, xviii.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Alphonsum reg.*, January 27, 1454.

education, in their state affairs. They were compelled to rely on diplomatists who were good Latin scholars. All men were then enthusiastic over the new discoveries concerning ancient culture; they attempted to reproduce it; the standard of elegant Latinity went up, and the cultivated agents of princes conquered or were conquered by the eloquent presentation of a case, or even by the mere felicity of a phrase.

Piccolomini poured forth much verse, too, both in Latin and the vernacular, most of it being such sensuous stuff as one under the vernal impulse of early manhood, and feeding on the amatory poets of antiquity, would naturally write—imitations of Horace and Ovid and Petrarch; but these verses were highly thought of by his contemporaries. He was a deft imitator rather than a true poet; the lines were hammered out with skill; they never came singing into his brain; but these juvenile exercises at least did him a service: they provided him with a large vocabulary and made him a facile and lively writer of prose.

Besides these agreeable diversions from severer studies, he enjoyed much joyous social intercourse with gifted men, most of them older than himself, but of sparkling wit and bubbling over with levity. His life was the irregular one of the mediæval student; the ladies of Siena, too, were not harsh; yet, whatever his frailties may have been, he was guiltless of hypocrisy concerning them, and there was no coarse debauchery, for the Italian of the period invested even vice with grace and imagination, and was incapable of doing otherwise.

**Æneas** had a nature open to every impression, alive to all that may affect a man, swayed in every direction by all the allurements of sense and the stimulations of intelligence. Such youth often grows into weak, ineffective manhood; but there are also rich, susceptible natures whose pollutions settle like the lees of a noble vintage and who are ultimately the richer, and not the poorer, for the infirmities that have beset them. They are more capable than others of comprehending human weakness, readier in compassion, juster in their estimates of men and life. They never become the heroes of a single idea, and therefore they never move the world as does the man whose whole being is inspired by one enthusiasm; they never become 'tigers of wrath,' but always remain as the more companionable, if less effective, 'horses of instruction.'

There came to Siena in the course of his duty the famous missionary, Bernardino, canonised soon after his death by the Church. Bernardino was a native of the city; he was now forty-five years of age. Contemporaries bear witness to his scholarship, but appear to have been most impressed by the overwhelming power of his eloquence. He could induce the fierce factions of Italy to renounce their enmities, and all who listened to him repented of their sins. Von Reumont says of him that 'he was one of those men who work by the fire of love, enkindling other hearts by the glow of their own.'

The vast market-place was crowded with men, women, and children, assembled to hear the preacher. A great thunderstorm threatened to shake the city, but Bernardino prayed, and, lo! the heavens were

still. It is characteristic of Æneas that he was not ready to grant this to be a miracle.<sup>1</sup> He never questioned the theological belief of his time, but his temperament was sceptical, none the less. 'A miracle should always be mistrusted,' so he wrote in his Commentaries on Panormitanus; it was his permanent conviction.

Then the great preacher began. Cards and dice and the fripperies of fashion were cast into the flames at his burning words; the heirs of bitter vendetta kissed each other and vowed brotherhood with tears.

Bernardino struck a deep chord in Æneas's soul. The student went to hear him again and again. He was so deeply impressed that he desired to devote his own life to the service of God. His friends tried hard to dissuade him, for they knew him better than he knew himself. Asceticism was not in Æneas's nature. At the end of his days, when he occupied the Papal throne, he visited a beautiful monastery,<sup>2</sup> and he wrote of the happiness of those who may see it but are not compelled to remain. But nothing would prevent him from consulting Bernardino, who had gone on to Rome, and he took the long, painful way on foot. Bernardino must have possessed keen insight into character. He strongly dissuaded the young pilgrim from carrying out his intention, while his wise words of comfort brought balm to the tortured spirit.<sup>3</sup> This mission of the saint to Siena awoke religious sensibilities that became dormant again; but early impressions, though they may be

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *loc. cit.* p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Monte Oliveto, near Siena.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Laurent. Leonard.*, September 13, 1445.

obscured for a season, have wondrous vitality. It seems to us probable that, when the insurgent stress of impulse had abated, words neglected and forgotten through many years came at last to fruition, and the really vital principles of a strangely manifold nature stood revealed.

*Æneas* was but twenty, and he soon plunged once again into the full stream of life. His nature was quick, eager, fertile, and the world in which he found himself was quick, eager, fertile too. The activities of all Italy were concentrated on the present, and on all things connected with the present, and, therefore, they were concerned with the wonderful past. The soil of the country bore the weight of many monuments of ancient greatness; the plough almost daily turned up some precious, beautiful relic of antiquity; the very dust under *Æneas's* foot was the dust of an heroic ancestry. The obscurest convent might be found to hoard some aged wreck of wisdom, some forgotten lore that was the instruction of centuries long passed into oblivion. Witnesses to the might and glory of Rome were ever before the eyes of her sons and daughters; the echoes of her deep voice once again broke back from every storied hillside and rang down each memorable valley, the very air bore the music of great traditions. Caesar still dwelt beyond the northern snows; he exercised no oppressive authority; he had become a welcome name that only echoed the ancient glory. The Papacy was content to accept the forms of punctilious respect as a substitute for the fervency of religious reverence, and few men vexed their souls with questions not directly connected with the vitality or the beauty



of outward things. The absence of the Papacy at Avignon had given the Renaissance a free hand ; and, in the main, its spirit was pagan and antagonistic to Christian ideals. Men became sincerely interested in the brave show of this world only. They held life by a tenure none too secure ; everything was in hazard ; how long enjoyment might endure was at that time even more uncertain than is usual in our brief and deceptive life. Insecurity in possession invariably leads to a prodigal employment of all the means of present delight. Folk did not concern themselves too closely with moral problems, and were still less disposed to be interested in the subtleties of theological or metaphysical riddles. But the very insecurity of life and fortune that augmented the importance of the present provoked men's wit to preserve these endowments. Every one became possessed of an enhanced sense of the value of life to himself ; and the struggle to obtain and keep all good things stimulated what is a natural prejudice and impelled men to seek and exhaust all the opulence that life may be made to yield. Mere physical gratification was tempered by reverence for the rediscovered wisdom of the Past. The dignity that pertained to Pagan sires conferred it on their Christian sons, and there was an essential fineness of grain in the Italian that rendered him passionately alive to every form of grace. Not enough of the past remained, however, to bind and restrict enterprise. Human society was putting forth new leaves and bearing unexpected fruitage. Relieved from the oppression of earnest religious belief, uninhibited (as the modern man is) by the restraints of convention,

the mediæval man was a natural creature, full of hot emotion and strong impulse. He opened the gates of the soul wide to receive the distinction of letters, the pride of learning, the seemliness of manners, the grace of art, the splendour of heroism, the pathos of our mortality ; he was alive even to the nobility that may reside in renunciation and the dignity that may attend on devotion. But these visitants came as immediate and passionate convictions. The passions were tempered by self-interest only ; otherwise they were well-nigh as free as winds released.

Four years after the visit of Bernardino to Siena, the one man of the western world who was a great Greek scholar came to Florence to teach (A.D. 1429). Francesco Filelfo, now thirty-one years of age, was the talk of literary Italy. Two years before he had landed at Venice, bringing a beautiful Greek bride with him from Constantinople. His mind was by no means remarkable for originality, and he was so vastly vain that it pleased him to take the wall of noble matrons, while his avarice placed his venomous pen at the disposal of the highest paymaster. But he had a genuine enthusiasm for letters, and an unquestioned mastery of much of the ancient literature of Greece. Cardinals courted, scholars flattered him, for was he not capable of conveying that immortal fame which Dante coveted, which had kept Virgil and Horace alive, being dead, and had even now restored Plato to his kingdom ?

The unexhausted kindness of relatives enabled our poor student to travel to Florence. He sat at Filelfo's feet, and, if he learned no Greek, he felt the influence of that remarkable stylist. He also fell

under the sway of Poggio. His two years' stay in Florence was no small factor in the development of his mind, for it brought him into contact with the ripest scholars and most cultivated men of the age. But he never became a scholar of the first rank, nor did he ever correspond with the great humanists on equal terms, as he did with those of inferior standing. Yet Filelfo thought so well of him that, when, in 1431, his pupil went on an academic tour to Milan, Padua, and Ferrara, the Master gave him such an introduction as must have opened to him the doors of Aurispa and Guarini, and a brilliant circle of men of position, breeding, and high cultivation. The letter spoke of him as 'of good birth, very dear to me, one who has not only attended my lectures for two years, but possesses a lively wit, a ready tongue, and a taking, polished address.'<sup>1</sup>

His relatives urged him to make use of this opportunity and secure some lucrative post. Æneas possessed his full share of the unbounded hopefulness and generous heedlessness of his years, though he was often in want of money. His dependence on his friends and the requirements of his own nature so far influenced him that he visited a famous jurist at Bologna, Giovanni da Imola. He found him a dull pedant, overfed with valueless erudition.<sup>2</sup> Æneas prized only such intelligence as is alive. Finally he started as a teacher at Siena, but he had barely settled there when war broke out. The republic of Lucca stood in the way of the Florentine merchants, who wanted a clear high-road to the sea, and their

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *loc. cit.* p. 17, note i.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *De vir. clar.*, xix.

designs caused a general war. Florence had the Pope and Venice for her allies. Siena, already outstripped by her rival, was forced to take arms, allied with Milan and Sigismund, King of the Germans and titular King of Rome. The prospects of success as a teacher, at a time of all-absorbing warfare, were small indeed, especially for one whose heart was far away in an ideal world of poems and orations and epistles, where the neatness of an epigram, not the sharpness of a sword, determined victory, and the joy of innocent conquest was obtainable, at a flash, by a glowing phrase.

But one of these curious accidents that combine with necessity to mould human destiny launched *Aeneas* into a new sphere. Henceforth for many years, with a few brief returns to his native land, he was to find a shifting home among rude, alien races across the Alps. The manner of this great change came about through certain happenings in Rome.

For centuries the Eternal City had been a centre of disorder. Barons of the Campagna occupied and fortified the ruins of Imperial Rome, and fought each other for preponderance. The Popes vainly endeavoured to assert effective power. A tempestuous populace, proud of the Roman name, and dimly conscious of their past power and glory, endeavoured from time to time to restore them, to put an end to the encroachments of the Papacy, and to subdue the barons. But they had little wealth, save what the presence of the Papal court and the multitude of pilgrims brought them. Easily swayed to opposition, they were as fickle as they were powerless. They

could neither live with Pope and Barons nor without them. When Martin v. reached Rome (Sept. 1420), he found his position one of extreme difficulty: it demanded all the resolute persistence and self-control that marked the man. The countryside swarmed with brigands, and, at first, he was obliged to make Braccio, the great soldier of fortune, Vicar of the Church, and to rely on him and his army to keep order in the Papal possessions. Martin was of the great family of Colonna, and he called on his powerful house for support; he protected his overlordship of the kingdom of Naples by obtaining important fiefs in that realm for his brothers; and he secured the Keys of the States of the Church by putting the most important fortresses in the hands of his nephews. He allowed the corporation of Rome to retain juridical and municipal powers, but he dominated the city as its monarch. The Romans prospered under his rule, and an unfriendly biographer admits that 'the streets and roads became secure, a thing unknown for two hundred years.'<sup>1</sup> Prosperity made the Romans ready for revolt. The great family of Orsini were bitter enemies of the Colonna, and, at the death of Martin, the rival families came to open war.

Now, among the many able servants of Martin was a young man, only a few years older than Æneas, one Domenico Pantagale, bishop of Fermo, better known as Capranica, from a rock-fortress of that name. Capranica belonged to a family that adhered to the Colonna; and, indeed, the fortress was one of the possessions of that imperious race. He had studied

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, iii. p. 538.

at Padua under Cesarini; von Cues (Cusa),<sup>1</sup> the German, was a fellow-pupil; and there was little difference between the ages of these three distinguished men. Capranica was shy, modest, and hardworking; he could do with little sleep; he was very learned in both Civil and Canon Law, and was also a lover of literature. His advancement in the Church was singularly rapid, for his great erudition was matched by his administrative ability, and his piety was unquestioned. For fear of jealousy, his early elevation to the cardinalate was kept a secret, except to himself and his colleagues in the Sacred College. Later, Capranica's accession to the purple was published; but he was away at Perugia, in the capacity of legate, at the time, and it was customary to send the Red Hat, the ensign of office, only to those absentees who were far away, employed in important foreign legations. On account of the unsettled state of Perugia, Capranica remained there, but when Martin died (February 29, 1431), he at once rode off to Rome. Now he had once held a financial office in that city, and the citizens regarded him, no less than the late Pope and all his abettors, as an extortionate taxmaster. Moreover, the ancient feud between the Colonna and Orsini had been aggravated by the rule of a Pope belonging to the former family—a Pope who used his relatives to consolidate his power—and the Orsini did not forget the close relation in which Capranica stood to their foes. Capranica dared not enter the city, but he remained immediately outside the walls, and strove, through the intervention of friends, to obtain admission to the Conclave assembled for

<sup>1</sup> From Cues on the Mosel.

the election of a new Pope. But he failed, and Eugenius IV., immediately on his election, roused himself against the Colonna. Capranica experienced the full force of the storm; his palace was sacked, his benefices and possessions declared forfeit, and he had to seek safety in a stronghold belonging to the Colonna.

He determined to go to Basel, where a council of the whole Christian Church was sitting, and seek justice and redress. Since Siena was at this time at war with the Papacy, while Florence was the Pope's ally, the only safe route lay through Sienese territory. And there Capranica heard of the talents of a young man of twenty-six, just five years his junior, one who was well read in the classics, could give a turn to a clever speech, or bestow a sparkle on a letter, had a little knowledge of law, and sought employment. So Capranica engaged Enea Silvio Piccolomini as his secretary, and thus the first introduction of the young humanist to public life was under the auspices of a man who had just cause of animosity against both Pontiff and Curia, and whom circumstances compelled to seek the protection and support of the predominant party in the Church, a party that claimed all œcumenical councils to be above the Pope, and loudly demanded reorganisation of the Church and reform in its administration. The future Pope thus entered life in the service of an enemy to the full pretensions of the Papacy: he was introduced to a scene where he could witness the infant stumblings of religious liberty.

He was destined to serve three cardinals, three bishops, and an emperor before he came to readjust



ÆNEAS SILVIUS SETS OUT FOR BASEL.  
*Pinturicchio, Siena.*



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his views, adopt the conservative side, and seek the feet of Eugenius.<sup>1</sup>

On account of the war, Capranica and his little party took ship at Piombino, intending to disembark at Genoa, a friendly port, for it was at this time under the standard of Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, a bitter adversary of the Pope. But when the ship had sighted Elba, and lay between that island and Corsica, a dreadful storm arose. First the craft was driven into the Gulf of Lyons by a violent wind, and then the hurricane turned round on itself and blew from the north. It seemed to Æneas as if they might be driven on to the African coast, where the lot of a slave would await them. But the hurricane veered again, and forced them through the Straits of Bonifaccio, and, somewhat abating, they were happy in being able to sail at last into Porto Venere and find shelter there. After a while the sea became calm enough for them to set their sails again, and they ultimately reached Genoa, where Capranica was warmly welcomed. Æneas's sharp eye took in all the salient points of the famous city, and, when he reached his journey's end, he wrote a wonderful description of the place to a young Siennese friend.<sup>2</sup>

Thence they proceeded to Milan, where the crafty, intriguing, pusillanimous duke received them in person. Then they rode up the valley of the Ticino, followed the arduous track that led over the snows of the St. Gothard, pursued the dangerous path above

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Petr. de Nozeto*, May 7, 1456. The cardinals were Capranica, Albergati and Cervantes: two of the bishops were those of Novara and Freising; the third is unknown.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Geo. Andrentium*, April 1432.

the leaping torrents that have eaten the mountains into such awe-inspiring chasms, reached the cliffs that line the Lake of the Four Cantons, and so passed, through a landscape that was just returning the first smile of spring, to Basel (A.D. 1432). Among the little company that took this perilous journey was another young secretary, one Piero da Noceto. Æneas and Noceto were near of an age; they had faced death together; they had many tastes in common, and they formed, during these adventures, a friendship that was intimate and enduring. Æneas was a cordial man; he was happy in the society of his fellows, and turned his best side towards them; they found his geniality irresistible, and he acquired unerring knacks of winning their favour. He had a warm, large heart, and was capable of deep and unswerving affection. If he sought the society and favour of the great it was because he was needy, and must set his sail to catch every favouring breeze. But he was happiest when he could be with those to whom he might disclose his heart and be entirely himself. Such was his character as a young man; such it remained throughout life. When he shall be Pope we shall find him forgetting his dignity in the society of two real friends with whom he had deep sympathy—both were learned men, and in one way or another shared his tastes. Ammanati, fond of authorship and the chase, and Campano, loving incisive jests and kindly satire, the one, the son of lowly people of Peschia, the other of no nobler descent than the peasantry of that Campagna from which he took his name, were chosen to be his bosom-companions by Pope Pius II.

**At Basel the two young secretaries found gathered together the most brilliant representatives of the States of Western Europe and her universal Church: here were the ambassadors of many nations, humanists of widest culture, scholars of profoundest learning, and princes of the Church. Sometimes, too, the Emperor came to preside in person over the meetings of the famous Council.**

## CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH, THE STATE, SCHISMS, HERESIES  
AND COUNCILS

ÆNEAS found himself occupying a humble position, but, at least, he was a member of a cardinal's household, and brought, thereby, into contact with princes, ambassadors and scholars; he had opportunity to acquire a knowledge of men and of how to deal with them; he was in a school of manners and diplomacy. The Council, too, was a great stage whereon practical statesmen and thinkers of many shades of opinion and of many nations played their part. Momentous problems were presented at Basel; divergent political aims found expression there; ecclesiastical discontent opposed itself to pontifical claims; racial differences and national aspirations made themselves apparent; the revolt of the people, dimly conscious of social injustice and oppression, manifested itself under the guise of religious reform. Æneas found himself in an arena of fierce theological strife. But in order to grasp the nature of that conflict, no less than to comprehend what was in Æneas's mind when he became Pope, it is necessary to search for underlying causes; and these are best exhibited by reviewing, in swift flight, certain aspects of antecedent history.

When the half-barbarous races that occupied the

western portion of what had been the Roman Empire accepted the Christian faith, the Bishop of Rome became the sole central authority of the dismembered State, and he demanded the allegiance of the Christian world. Leo III. took it on himself to treat the incursion and rule of Teutonic chieftains as an interregnum; he revived the Empire and invested Charlemagne, the Frank, with the imperial name (A.D. 800). Nor did it seem so very strange a proceeding, for barbarian conquerors had been wont to give an appearance of legality to their government by ruling as vicars of the Empire, and in the palmiest days of Rome many a great Caesar was of foreign blood. The Empire of Charlemagne had a feudal constitution; and the Emperor and his feudatories fostered and endowed the Church. The barbarians had to be ruled as well as baptized, and, from an early period, the Church found territorial rights, social rank and baronial privileges indispensable to her existence, and even the Pope himself was compelled to reign or disappear. Hence the Church welcomed grants of land from feudal lords, and strove and intrigued for them until fully one-third of Western Europe came into her possession. The Church thus found herself immeasurably the largest landowner in the world. And not merely did the revenues of fiefs fall into ecclesiastical hands, but Europe was drained of vast sums that flowed into Papal coffers in the form of contributions. Thus, while without secular power and wealth, there had been no effective protection of religion, with secular power and wealth came the germs of discontent and decay. The holders of rich benefices grew more and more worldly;

they were bound to take the side of their immediate superiors in all quarrels (and when was the feudal world at peace?); ecclesiastical office fell to the scions of powerful families who were very unfitted to hold it, and who led the same kind of life as their relatives: nor did the most piously disposed Churchman utter loud complaint, for feudal possessions required knightly defence. Corruption and secularisation of the Church resulted.

It became the constant aim of that great statesman Hildebrand (Gregory VII.) to set the Church free from civil and military control, while it should retain that wealth and power and show of splendour necessary to impress so ungracious a world. He desired, moreover, to subdue all nations to Rome, to subject all rulers to a theocracy, wherein the Vicar of Christ should be the redresser of wrongs, the dispenser of justice, and the fountain of power among the contending races of Christianity. The Pope—this was the theory of the Church—alone held supreme spiritual sway, and the successors of Charlemagne and the Othos were his delegates, even as he himself was the delegate of God; the Pope was the overlord of rulers, who, with their underlords, administered an Empire that was continuous with that of the antique Roman world. The Emperor, it is true, held supreme temporal authority, but spirit is superior to flesh, and there are temporal matters that are subject to spiritual dictation. ‘I am Emperor,’ said Boniface VIII. to Albert of Hapsburg, when he sought confirmation; and, in the famous bull of November 18, 1302, the same Pontiff declared every human creature to be subject to the Pope. It was proclaimed, moreover,

that the temporal sword was held only '*ad nutum et patientiam sacerdotis*'—'by the assenting nod and forbearance of the Pontiff': so spake the ambassadors of Innocent III. to the King of France. And, to-day, the Pope is crowned as 'Father of kings and princes; ruler of the world.'

But mediæval Caesars were unwilling to submit tamely to such limitations of their authority; temporal rulers were indignant at the presumption of Churchmen whom they had raised to wealth and power, and who were still their feudatories. From the eleventh century, the swords of Pope and Emperor were stained with blood; for princes and barons and townships took sides to advance their own interests, and neither Pope nor Emperor had sufficient power to establish their claims or control their followers. For a time victory favoured the Popes. They humbled the proud house of Hohenstauffen to the dust. Yet their success was a triumph of the spirit only: they were unable to establish victory by the force of arms. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Pope had vanquished his opponents; but, in his own home, he was weaker than the weakest of the barons around him. In many critical moments he had received help from France. He sought a haven of refuge from the menaces of the Roman nobility and the Roman populace, and for seventy years he found one at Avignon. But in Italy he had dwelt in a city that retained Imperial traditions, and exhibited Imperial magnificence, and there he was surrounded by many wealthy states that neutralised each other's power. At Avignon he was under the shadow of a single crown. He still bore a name of



might, but the continuity of historical tradition was fractured. He had not transferred Rome to Provence. The city on the Rhone was no New Rome on the Bosphorus; his palace, however imposing, was not the Lateran or even the Vatican; it was only a magnificent mansion in a provincial town. Seven successive pontiffs were Frenchmen, holding French fiefs, and therefore vassals of the French crown; they were surrounded by French influence and dominated by French interests. A French King dared to say, 'It is I who am Pope.'<sup>1</sup> The influence of French Cardinals, the disturbed state of Italy, and the condition of Rome, now a ruined city, prevented the return of the Popes. They became greedy of gold, for the Italian states, the wealthiest in the world, almost ceased to contribute to the Papal coffers, lest their gold should be employed in building up the power of France. The Church became more and more worldly, less and less subject to authority.

Then schism broke out, and the nations took the side of one or the other of rival Pontiffs as best suited their own conflicting interests: the Church was riven almost to its foundations. Both Pontiffs eagerly sought the support of princes; both were in financial difficulties; such ancient contrivances for raising money as annates, reservations, and expectancies assumed scandalous proportions, and the respect given to the Papacy was undermined. The notion of a universal Church that should bind the nations together in a common allegiance and Christian brotherhood, and subject them to a common authority,

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, L., *History of the Popes*, English trans., 1891. vol. i. p. 134.

was so weakened, and the spirit of nationality was already so strong, that there were those who wished each country to have its own Pope, and thought that the schism was a sign that this was the intention of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was this all. The splendour of the throne of the Fisherman, the pomp and arrogance of wealthy ecclesiastics, their indolence and self-indulgence, excited deep discontent among spiritually minded men, and deep resentment, by no means always dumb, among the people. It fostered heresy; it caused a demand for reform; it provided a rallying cry for the oppressed labouring classes.

For it will be found that racial differences, social inequalities, economic pressure, and economical greed are not merely the deep sources, or at least the support, of political antagonisms, but that they often underlie the acrid contest of creeds. Religion has often been the rallying cry that has gathered men to battle for far other causes. Like the boughs cut from Birnam wood, it has covered an unsuspected advance. The banner that bore the sacred Cup, the loyalty due to the King of Heaven has proved a signal to conflict no less effective than a party-badge or a princely name. Heresies flourished most in those parts of the Ancient Empire where centrifugal tendencies had most power; it was mainly the ragmen of Milan who became Patarines; the dregs of the labouring classes, deprived of the benefits of trade-associations, joined the Cathari; of such were the Pauvres de Lyon and the masses that followed Pierre Valdo; it was the English hind that became a Lollard. One may find

<sup>1</sup> Schwab, *Johannes Gerson*, pp. 122, 123.

in all the heresies of the Middle Ages some attempt to revive the simple brotherhood of the first Christians, some renewal of the social doctrine of the Master, some crude and impracticable form of Communism. Sometimes these dangerous forces could be controlled : ecclesiastical statesmanship enticed the Franciscans and other orders to obedience, but the Albigenian and various other Communistic outbreaks had to be eradicated by fire and sword. Heresy allied itself with social discontent, and indulged in dreams of social reconstruction. The outbreaks of the degraded peasantry of France against their oppressors, when these were weakened by the wars with England, the revolts of the wool-dressers of Florence and Siena towards the end of the fourteenth century revealed to thinking men the presence of concealed forces that might wreck that institution of property, without which neither States nor Church nor culture nor comfort nor any form of religion might exist. Pope and king, bishop and baron and merchant, beneficed priest and barefooted friar, whatever their private feuds might be, were always ready to unite in crushing heresy ; for heresy was not only a religious perversity, but it dallied with dreams perilous to the safety and welfare of both Church and State ; it was frequently responsible for fierce, irrational, and alarming outbursts. And, if for no other reason than to subdue heresy, it was very necessary to reunite the divided Church ; to lead the peoples, still religiously disposed, aright, and to remove sources of discontent by reform. National ideals were still inchoate, the spiritual bond of the Western world, though weakened, was still unbroken ; a General Council of the uni-

versal Church should give force and authority to principles that were universally acknowledged.

General Councils of the Church had been wont to assemble from a comparatively early period. But they were not without menace to the authority claimed by the Papacy, and the principle they involved could readily be turned against kings. William of Occam, not the least distinguished of that illustrious group of thinkers who, for keenness of intellect, have never been surpassed, set forth that the infallibility of the Church lay in its belief at all times and in all places; therefore a Pope might err and be deposed by a General Council, or even by the Emperor, acting as supreme authority over the Christian world. While Trionfo, an Italian Guelf, and Pelago, a Spaniard, emphasised the doctrine of Papal absolutism (for was not the Pope the Vicar of God?), Marsiglio of Padua, the great Ghibelline thinker, boldly declared in his *Defensor Pacis*, a book dedicated to Louis of Bavaria, that rulers, whether of the Church or of the world, possess but delegated authority derived from the people; the Church, as represented by a general assemblage of its most intelligent members, is supreme over Popes; and, moreover, since Popes have been known to misuse their temporal power as well as to err in spiritual matters, the property of the Church may be regulated and even confiscated by the State. Such a doctrine as this was a two-edged sword; it was convenient to use against a foe, but it might be turned against one's self. Pope and monarch, in spite of their variances, found this and similar theories none too agreeable, and hence the temporal ruler always hesitated to renounce the spiritual yoke, and,

if he occasionally rebelled, he invariably resumed it quietly. For the supremacy of the Papacy symbolised and was a guarantee of established order.

The Universities were in favour of councils, and the Universities carried great weight, for in them lay the most important intellectual force of the age. The acutest minds in Europe, men drawn from every country and from every class, men mostly of mature years, were to be found at these centres of learning. The University was a democratic, self-governing body. Students, as well as professors, voted alike in the passing of measures, each 'nation' having an elective voice. The study of theology was not encouraged in Italy, and there, as well as in Europe generally, the Universities were chiefly occupied with the practical studies of law and medicine. But Paris had been remarkable for the freedom and ability of its theologians, even in the time of the Schoolmen: it pursued knowledge for its own sake. Students flocked to Paris from every country, and the decisions of its doctors in theology came to be regarded as authoritative. Still, the Papacy was not likely to forget that Paris had produced such heretics as Abélard and Arnold of Brescia, and might prove but a perilous support to orthodox doctrine and Papal theory.

The proposal of a Council to put an end to the Great Schism emanated from the University of Paris. There was intellectual anarchy as well as heresy and schism in Europe, and men sought to find some lawful court of appeal, capable of pronouncing final judgments. The rival wearers of the Tiara were asked to refer their claims to a General Council, and they affected to consent. An incompletely representative

Synod assembled at Pisa (A.D. 1409) deposed both Popes and elected a third. But the result was that there were now three Popes in the place of two. Yet Plavus, a doctor in theology of Paris, had declared the Pope to be the delegate of the Church; for, if elected by cardinals, these were originally appointed by bishops, and therefore a General Council must be possessed of full power to depose a Pope. If it be not so, is not the spirit above the letter?<sup>1</sup> And such was the revolution in the minds of thinking men that some held the presence of peril to absolve from the obligation of law.<sup>2</sup> Sigismund, the astute Emperor, was not slow to perceive the need of reconstituting authority. He was still quicker to recognise his opportunity for recovering something of the ancient prestige attached to his office. In default of a Pope, he, as Defender of the Christian faith, summoned a council to assemble at Constance, and invited the princes of Europe, or their envoys, to attend. It met in 1414, and he presided in person. To counteract the predominance of the Italian clergy, the procedure of universities was copied. Voting was taken according to 'nations,' often hostile enough to each other. Only ecclesiastics of rank voted, but Masters in Theology and Doctors of Canon Law had a consultative voice. Pisa had been visited by many of these academicians, but Constance was full of them, and the streets resounded with the denunciation of cardinals; there was even an attempt made to exclude them.<sup>3</sup> The lower clergy and the monks were busy at every street corner, preaching revolu-

<sup>1</sup> Schwab, *loc. cit.* pp. 106-108.

<sup>2</sup> Pastor, *loc. cit.* pp. 192, 193.

<sup>3</sup> Zimmermann, *Die Kirchlichen Verfassungskämpfe*, p. 29.

tionary doctrine and demanding reform. The revolt of the Hussites forced on the cry. Hatred of the corruption of the Church, conjoined with social discontent, found expression in heresy, and heresy produced a revolt within the Church itself against its existing constitution.

Reform was impossible. Everybody was eager to reform others; no party was willing to reform itself. Had it been willing there were still too many vested interests to overthrow; in spite of a few earnest men there was a vast inertia to overcome; there were intricate political and other complications to deal with, and what one faction proposed another rejected. But the Council declared its own supremacy and that of all œcumenical synods over the Papacy, burned John Hüs, the heretic, whose party inclined towards and was in league with the advocates of dangerous social doctrines, and so managed matters as to give the Church a fresh start. Martin v., of the Roman house of Colonna, ascended the Papal throne with the consent of the whole Catholic world (A.D. 1417).

The ideal of the men of Constance was essentially republican, for it aimed at converting the Papacy into a mere constitutional monarchy. Now the Pope, hitherto supported by the Sacred College, had come in the Middle Ages to hold himself as absolute sovereign; but so abased was the Papacy at the end of the Great Schism that the Sacred College tried to place severe limits on the power of the Pontiff and to exalt itself. The Sacred College, though it hated the Council, imitated it. Oligarchical government, and not absolutism, was its ideal.

## ORIGIN OF THE COUNCIL OF BASEL 33

Martin was a born ruler, but the Papal States and the Papal Exchequer were in such disorder that he had small opportunity of effecting the smallest reform. Had he attempted it, he would at once have driven the Sacred College into rebellion. He was bent, moreover, on the restoration of the Papal power, for he saw that the battle for supremacy had not been fought out to a finish. He fulfilled his promise to hold a Council every seven years, and he summoned one to meet at Pavia (A.D. 1427). Plague visited the city, and Alfonso of Aragon, the claimant to the throne of Naples (which was a Papal fief), intrigued with certain of the Council against Martin; so the Synod was transferred to Siena, and the small attendance there furnished the Pope with a pretext for its dismissal. He was too keen and far-sighted a statesman not to perceive that the success of the Council would mean the destruction of the unity of the Catholic Church. The Church would break up into fragments. The sole hope for Unity lay in Papal absolutism. The Papacy, though restored by a Council, was menaced by the Conciliar principle.

Martin v. was succeeded in 1431 by Gabriello Condulamaro, a Venetian, a man of somewhat intimidating appearance, but easily accessible, of simple habits, pious, and so generous that he was in debt throughout his life. 'He was magnanimous,' wrote Æneas of him, 'but without any moderation; his actions were ill-considered, and regulated rather by his desires than by any consideration of the possibility of carrying them out.' The cardinals, who had suffered from the stormy personality of Martin, signed a document



before they proceeded to elect a new Pope, whereby, whoever of their number should be elected, bound himself by oath to such restrictions as made the Apostolic Chair little more than the presidential seat of a permanent committee.<sup>1</sup> But such a renunciation, though not solitary in the history of the Papacy, could not be held valid, since it was contrary to Papal duty, and, in fact, not one Pope only rescinded his oath after election, and it became a dead letter.

Eugenius fulfilled his obligation to summon a new Council. It met at Basel (A.D. 1431), and the Pope sent a Cardinal-legate to preside at its sittings. This legate was the famous Giuliano de' Cesarini, a man now thirty-three years of age, eloquent, learned, and of independent mind. Though of noble birth, he was so poor a youth that, as a student at Perugia, he had been obliged to collect the ends of candles to pursue his nocturnal studies. He became a professor of Canon Law at Padua, but Martin v. was so impressed by his abilities that he gave him rapid promotion. Cesarini's bearing was dignified, his features and his manner were pleasing. He was of ascetic disposition, dining sparingly, sleeping in a hair-shirt, and keeping nocturnal vigils in church; yet he was neither hard nor narrow. He could maintain the dignity of his rank with princes, converse genially with all, and had so little disposition to scorn the humble that he was never known to neglect paying a daily visit to his sick stable-boy. He never forgot the days of his own poverty; and he rejoiced to set apart a portion of an income, that was none too large for the great office he held, for the support of poor students. He would even sell his

<sup>1</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad ann.* 1431.

books to help the needy. He refused benefices, for it was not consonant with his conscience to be a pluralist. Cardinal Branda was wont to say that if the entire Church became corrupt there was force and purity enough in Cesarini to reform it, and Bistucci wrote: 'I have known many holy men, but none like Cardinal Cesarini.' For the office to which he was now appointed he had great qualifications. He had won the respect of everybody; he was a man of great experience in affairs, skilful at organisation, and, best of all, he possessed that rare gift, temperate and unprejudiced judgment.

The Council commenced its sittings March 12, 1431, but Cesarini did not arrive at Basel before the end of the year. He was dealing with a difficulty that the Council would also soon have to encounter; one that, later on, occupied the attention of Æneas, one that bequeathed a problem to vex his pontificate—it was the fierce rebellion of the Hussites in Bohemia.

John Huss, or Hüs, a native of that country, taught that no one had a right to hold property save true believers, nor ought a ruler to be acknowledged unless his life were such as to be approveable by God. Strange conclusions were involved in these theological tenets, so strange that Louis Blanc calls Hüs the precursor of the French Revolution, and Denis says that he was the real originator of the rebellion that ended in the destruction of Catholic unity. But Hüs derived his views from England. Owing to the marriage of a Bohemian princess to an English king, Lollardism, a heresy that denounced luxury and inclined towards communism, passed over into Bohemia, and a large majority of the followers of John Hüs

embraced advanced communistic doctrines. His death at the stake was followed by universal riots, and when Wenceslaus, the king of Bohemia, supported the Council of Constance, which condemned Hüs, nearly the whole Czech nation withdrew their allegiance. Under the able statesman, Nicholaus of Pistna, and the practised general, John Ziska, they conducted offensive and defensive campaigns with perfect success.

The root of all these terrible wars is to be found in the presence of silver mines of almost fabulous value near the German frontier. These attracted a German population, the owners were Germans, and the German race began to dominate the Czech. Even in the rebellion against Sigismund (A.D. 1420), when Czech and Teuton fought side by side, it was found necessary to give them different quarters.<sup>1</sup> But this racial antagonism was complicated and intensified by an antagonism of the poor to the rich. The working of her silver mines made Bohemia the wealthiest country in Europe. 'I believe,' wrote Æneas, in his *History of Bohemia*, 'that no land was so full of imposing and richly decorated churches. They raised one's thoughts to the skies. The high altars were heavily laden with gold and silver caskets for relics; the robes of the clergy were rich and embroidered with pearls; the sacred vessels were well-nigh priceless. . . . And all this magnificence was to be found, not in cities alone, but in villages even.' The impoverished Czech, who hated the wealthy German, heard the doctrines of Hüs gladly, and soon the poor of the land, German as well as Czech, united in hate of their wealthy and powerful Catholic oppressors, whether they were of

<sup>1</sup> Maurice, C. E., *History of Bohemia*, p. 142.

German blood or of Czech. For, owing to the increase of wealth, the peasantry paid in money and not in kind, and so they could be squeezed and oppressed; common-lands were seized by an arrogant nobility, and an attempt was made to tie the labourer to the soil. Therefore the peasantry crowded into the towns and filled them with a hungry host. The poorer nobility, ruined by the Crusades, and hating the new German magnates (who plumed themselves on a higher civilisation), led the ranks of the discontented. The city of Prague was near the mines; its university was under the control of contemptuous Germans. The Czech armed himself against the German; the peasantry, aided by the poorer nobility, rose against the rich landowners, the rich miners, the rich traders, and the rich Church.<sup>1</sup> But, in the fifteenth century, ecclesiastical theory was the only theoretical system that existed—the only expression of human thought that was formulated. The Hussites demanded that the Blood as well as the Body of the Saviour should be administered to the laity at Communion, and they were consequently known as Calixtines or Utraquists. They bore the sacred Cup on their banners, and behind these standards were arrayed, not merely the masses that had been forced there by economic pressure, but zealous reformers that were animated by an earnest desire for the purification of the Church and the destruction of its temporal power. Bohemia became a democratic republic with a strong impulse towards communism. The doctrines prevalent there extended

<sup>1</sup> Kantaky (*Communism in Central Europe*) gives an admirable account of the forces at work in Bohemia, though in the author's judgement he brings out the material factors at the expense of the spiritual.

to almost every part of Western Europe. It was the blind commencement of a social revolution, the full force of which has not even yet hurled itself on the world. In 1424, the Cardinal-legate sent to Poland proclaimed that the object of his mission was the salvation of society. 'A large proportion of the heretics,' he said, 'maintain that everything should be held in common and no tax or obedience is due to superiors. Their purpose is to put an end to all Divine and human rights by force, and it will come about that neither kings, princes in their rule, citizens in their burghs, nor individuals in their own homes will be safe from their effrontery. This detestable heresy not only attacks the Faith and the Church, but, impelled by Satan, wages war on all society, and attacks and destroys its rights.'<sup>1</sup>

The legate attributes these doctrines to 'a large proportion of the heretics' only. As is invariably the case in new movements, the successful rebels were divided among themselves by economic and social forces. The various factions also arrayed themselves in the garb of religious distinctions. The most extravagant heresies were associated with the most radical social experiments, and were chiefly to be found among the poor. It was the sweated wool-sorter of Siena and Florence that revolted in the middle of the preceding century; it was the weaver who was prominent among the Waldenses of Southern France, the Apostilicians of Northern France, and the Lollards of England: the wool trade was foremost in this movement also.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Pastor, *loc. cit.*, i. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Kautsky, *Communism in Central Europe*, Eng. tr., pp. 54-56.

Driven out by the supporters of order, these heretics of a heresy withdrew to certain hill-tops, of which one, Tabor, gave them their name of Taborites. Like their predecessors in the heretical movements of previous centuries, in their endeavour to attain a rational communism they indulged in strange doctrines and practices, such as ordered promiscuity, or celibacy, or voluntary destitution; some even went about naked. Of the Adamites Æneas writes: 'They indulged in promiscuous intercourse, but no one might take a leman without the consent of Adam, their chief elder. When one of these brethren ardently desired a sister, he took her by the hand, and, going with her to the chief elder, said, "My soul is afire with love of this woman." Whereupon the elder would reply, "Go, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth."' <sup>1</sup> Ziska, the Bohemian general, burned fifty Adamites in one day. They entered the flames rejoicing and exclaiming, 'This day we shall reign with Christ.' Heretics, less progressive than the Adamites, stormed their refuge and put them all to the sword.

Notwithstanding these internal dissensions, the hosts of Europe were hurled against the heretics in vain. Over and over again the chivalry of Europe collected together: over and over again it was repelled and dispersed. Cesarini was employed in the difficult task of persuading the German princes, by no means too friendly to each other, to unite yet once more and put an end to this rebellion against the Papacy and Empire. He succeeded in uniting the princes; but this new crusade ended in crushing

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *De Ortu et Hist. Bohemias.*

defeat, and he came to Basel at the end of the year (1431) to take the President's chair at the Council. The Council had two main duties before it—to reform the Church and to put down heresy. The liberty of judgement which it claimed for itself it did not extend to others. Yet the claim expressed a revolutionary movement in the Church.

## CHAPTER III

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE COUNCIL—ÆNEAS ARRIVES  
AT BASEL—HIS EARLY EMPLOYMENT THERE

THE Council was enthusiastic for the reform of the Church. The Papacy knew the difficulties attendant on reform, and that, in the hands of a Council, any serious attempt to reach the root of the evil would induce anarchy and divide Catholicism into a multitude of warring sects. Moreover, though John of Segovia tells us that the Curia did not know that the Council of Constance had declared itself superior to the Papacy,<sup>1</sup> it is difficult to believe that the lack of official information prevented Pope and Curia from learning what must have been so generally discussed. Eugenius made the small attendance at the opening of the Council an excuse to dissolve it (December 18, 1431), and proposed to summon another Council in a year and a half. But it was to meet at Bologna, where it would be more under his control than at Basel.

Cesarini found himself in a difficult position. He owed fidelity to the Pope, whose legate he was. Yet he was convinced, not merely that the Pope's action was precipitate, but that it was wrong. 'What will everybody say?' he wrote to Eugenius. 'How does

<sup>1</sup> Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, vol. ii. p. 68. London, 1882.



everybody feel about it? Will not the clergy be judged incapable of effecting reform and pleased to wallow in the mire of corruption? Men's minds have become pregnant.'<sup>1</sup>

The Pope had committed a tactical blunder. Almost the entire Catholic world condemned his action. The Council reaffirmed the superiority of Councils to Popes and declared the dissolution to be invalid. The princes of Europe were too suspicious of Popes and Councils to become the eager partisans of either; but they recognised the Council and promised to send delegates to confer with it. There were important questions that must be dealt with, and that without delay: Christendom had to be pacified, morals reformed, heresy extirpated. The doctrines of Hus were taking root in Germany, and there had been risings in more than one place in that country. Cesarini told the Pope that if he, as president, attempted to close the Council he would be stoned to death, and another president elected. He continued to preside, the one temperate man of the whole body, taking a wider view than Eugenius, but remaining his friend, and ever anxious to effect a reconciliation. The admirable organisation of the Council was due to his genius. As an Italian, he was aware of the unresting changes in such a constitution as that of Florence and the faults of that of Venice. He endeavoured to avoid these defects. He appointed four committees, representing, with perfect fairness, the nations of Christendom and the ranks of the hierarchy. Each committee had a separate function. One sat to repress heresy, another to consider reform.

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Opera*, p. 64. Basel, 1551.

another to discuss the pacification of Europe, another for general business. These committees elected their own officers, but, to avoid the dominance of any party, their presidents vacated office at the end of a month. Each committee elected three men to serve on a committee of twelve, whose business it was to decide concerning the admission of new members to the Council, to submit business, and to receive and present reports. Each committee also sent a delegate to another committee of four that sat to receive and consider letters which, unless they could furnish good reason to the contrary, they were bound to transmit to the Council. All the four committees first named met in general congregation, and, if three of them were agreed, any matter could be brought before a general session of the whole Council. To preserve these committees from becoming stereotyped in their personality, and to keep them from forming rooted prejudices, they were constantly changed, but continuity was given to them by the retention of a certain number of members, who might not, however, be elected twice in succession. There was no secrecy about any of the meetings, and the various committees interchanged their views. The Council was in full activity when Eugenius attempted to dissolve it: it remained active, and was in full opposition to the Pope when Capranica arrived.

Cesarini had seen for himself what manner of men the heretics of Bohemia were, and he was resolved to try whether these resolute men, who could not be conquered in battle, might not be won by conciliation. He lost no time in forwarding a message to the insurgents, inviting them to send to the Council

'peaceful, humble, god-fearing men, not self-seekers—but of minds bent towards heavenly things.'<sup>1</sup>

Æneas saw the Bohemian envoys enter Basel. They came very quietly by boat, accompanied by a military guard, and bearing a banner with a chalice for device. Their garb was a strange one, that men had never seen before. Crowds lined the streets, gazing on this novel procession and wondering at the determined faces and resolute eyes of men who had defended their liberty and hurled back the hosts of Christendom.<sup>2</sup> The harlots of Basel, a numerous company, vastly increased by the presence of the Council, had been driven from the streets; the members of the Council were warned that their conduct must conform to their profession; and gambling and even dancing were forbidden throughout the city while the Bohemian deputies remained there.

The young secretary beheld a Maelstrom, a clash of contending forces that was determining more than one mighty issue. About this time the Council aimed two shafts at the Papacy that smote home. They resolved that, in the event of the Apostolic chair becoming vacant, the new election should take place at Basel, and they appointed a Conciliar legate to be sent to Avignon to inquire into the alleged misgovernment of that Papal possession. Questions of Church-government and theological issues appear dull to the modern mind, but they were vital in the fifteenth century, when so little social or political or economical doctrine was formulated: they were the only arguments that could be found to give point

<sup>1</sup> *Monumenta Concil. Gen. sec. dec. quinti*, vol. i. p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Hist. Bohemiac*, xlix.

to influences that men *felt* but could not *express*. The great causes of human action then lay, for the most part, concealed and dumb; they lurked behind many a Papal Bull and the insurgency that evoked it; they stimulated many a rallying cry of religion. A hundred alien interests were bound up with the contest between Council and Pope.

The flight of Capranica from Rome was followed by that of several other cardinals, who also came to Basel. On April 29, 1432, Eugenius was summoned to appear before the Council within three months or be deemed contumacious. Pope and Council were at open war. Sigismund, the Emperor, honestly strove to restore the unity of the Church and to pacify disturbed Christendom. But the age required a man less vain, less impulsive and less wavering, and, above all, one provided with greater material power than Sigismund, if he were to deal effectively with its difficulties. Æneas saw the Emperor ride into Basel with great pomp. 'He was a remarkably tall man,' he wrote, 'with clear, bright eyes, a broad forehead, a pleasant, rosy face and a long, full beard—a man of large intelligence, full of projects, but not keeping to them—a jocose man, fond of wine, addicted to women, guilty of adultery a thousand times over—prone to wrath, ready to forgive, a bad economist, too open-handed and ready to promise what he could not perform.'<sup>1</sup> He had been away in Italy, bent on coronation at Rome as Emperor. The Italians made him painfully aware of how unreal and ironical the authority of the Holy Roman Empire had become. It seemed as if the Catholic world were about to

<sup>1</sup> Creighton, *loc. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 162, note 2.

break up into chaos. As Sismondi says, 'the entire Church was at war with the Hussites; the Holy See was at war with the Council; the new Pope was at war with the Colonna, and his government was at war with the States of the Church.' Sigismund had little real power in Germany; he discovered that he had none in Italy; he was without money, without troops, without effective support of any kind. The Sieneſe detained him for eight months as a kind of prisoner; 'they ſhut me up,' he ſaid, 'like a beaſt in a cage.'<sup>1</sup> He was in a difficult poſition: he wanted to be crowned in order to refill his empty pockets by the ſale of privileges, but, if he acknowledged the Pope, all hope of coming to an underſtanding with his revolted ſubjects in Bohemia muſt be abandoned. On the other hand the Pope reſuſed to crown a protector of the Church who was ſo diſloyal to his truſt as to favour Councils. But Eugenius dreaded a renewed outbreak of ſchiſm. He gave way and conſented to crown Sigismund. And the Emperor warned the Council that he would die rather than ſee another ſchiſm break out at Baſel after he had put an end to one at Conſtance.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the diplomacy of Sigismund induced the reluctant Pontiff to recognise the Council, although it had ordained that henceforward no Pope ſhould be elected unleſs he took oath to obey the decrees of Conſtance and acknowledged the ſupremacy of œcumenical ſynods. On December 15, 1433, Eugenius annulled his preceding Bulls. On April 26, 1434, Sigismund being preſent, Ceſarini and four other

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, xxi. p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Creighton, *loc. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 84.

representatives of the Pope took presidential chairs at the Council. But, in spite of all Cesarini's eloquence, division remained unhealed. If the Pope sent a legate anywhere, the Council sent a legate *a latere*: it was more resolved than ever to turn its back on the accepted doctrines of Aquinas as to the Dictatorship of the Roman See.

In spite of his reconciliation with the Council, affairs still went very ill with Eugenius. He was a Venetian, and the crafty Filippo Maria Visconti, the lord of Milan, an enemy of Venice, set Francesco Sforza, the condottiere, against him. Sforza carved a little state for himself out of Papal possessions in the Marches of Ancona:<sup>1</sup> other states of the Church were in rebellion. The powerful house of Colonna was against him. In June 1434, he had to seek safety in ignominious and perilous flight from a turbulent Roman mob. He found refuge in Florence.<sup>2</sup> It seemed as if the Council would experience little difficulty in making its claim to supremacy effective.

But the Papacy has survived too many dangers ever to lose heart. Eugenius sent Cardinal Vitelleschi to Rome, a stern, rough soldier, who stood at nothing in the execution of his resolves, a man by no means remarkable for distinctively Christian gifts. Indeed the Papacy had to preserve its independence and sovereignty, and it could ill afford to fill the Sacred College with none but holy men. Warriors, diplomatists, and scholars were to be found there, as well as men of remarkable piety and purity of life.

Meanwhile, Capranica, who had been deprived of

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Flavius Blondus, *Decades Historiarum*, iii. p. 6.

his goods, and therefore had an ill-furnished purse, contrived to make peace with Eugenius. The reconciliation was very welcome to the Cardinal and he left Basel. Nicodemus, bishop of Freising, a member of the illustrious house of the Scala of Verona, took Æneas into his service. He rode with his new master to Frankfurt to attend a diet that never took place. Then he entered the household of Bartolomeo, bishop of Novara, the brother of a favourite of the Duke of Milan, a man who was frequently employed as a go-between by him and the Council in their diplomatic intrigues. Æneas seems to have found this new service agreeable: he speaks of his master as 'not only the most eloquent man of our times, but the most truly human. The man who dwells with him leads a happy life.'<sup>1</sup> Years later he wrote a letter to him that is full of affection.<sup>2</sup> He accompanied the bishop to Milan, and remained some time there. Two men, a humanist and a jurist, were candidates at this time for the Rectorship of the University of Pavia, and Æneas was called upon to plead for the humanist. Need one doubt how eloquently he would do so and the sarcastic things he would say concerning law, how rejoiced he would be to bring himself under the notice of the duke, what hopes he would entertain of obtaining his favour? The jurist had been deemed likely to succeed, but the force of Æneas's speech secured the post to the humanist. Of the duke he would see but little, and that from afar, since a barrier shielded his sacred person. For, if Filippo Maria had the cunning of a fox, he was

<sup>1</sup> Æneas Silvius in Kollar: *Annal. Vindob.*, ii. p. 703.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep.*, October 19, 1443.

## HIS EARLY EMPLOYMENT AT BASEL 49

timid as a hare. He surrounded himself with guards, dwelt in retirement, and took every precaution against assassination, of which he exhibited craven fear. He had shrewd penetration into character, and selected and rewarded his servants well, but he was not the man to assist youth for its own sake, or anybody out of kindness or generosity. He chose his servants for very definite ends, after subtle trials of their qualities, of which they were unaware. He made one serve as a check on another. All he did was directed by some subtle, secret calculation. Æneas was adaptable, had engaging manners, and was a cultivated scholar, but he hardly possessed those qualities that the Visconti required. The duke needed faithful and able agents who would blindly carry out his instructions, and not be so keen and eager as to penetrate too deeply into the workings of his mind. He pursued many ends with an intelligence so subtle that many sides of a question were present to him at the same time, and often he seemed to scheme against the very projects he entertained. Filippo Maria Visconti, like so many rulers in Italy, had attained his position by craft, and kept it by cunning and deep and tortuous designs. Æneas's hopes in that quarter were foredoomed to disappointment.

To this period of Æneas's life belongs a poem which has not been preserved. The name 'Nymphilexis' suggests the amatory character of the work, and a letter which has come down to us, bearing the date March 1, 1435, addressed to Mariano de Sozzini, says, 'I have despatched a little book of more than two hundred verses which I have called *Nymphilexis*. It is in praise of your Baptista.'



## CHAPTER IV

## CERTAIN EMBASSIES AND ADVENTURES

THE statecraft of the fifteenth century was a policy of cunning and trick: the worst maxims set forth by Machiavelli in his *Prince* were in daily use. That writer only analysed and gave scientific precision to the habitual practices of his own and the preceding century. Æneas was made the unconscious participant of one of the ingenious stratagems of his age. His master, the Bishop of Novara, was a trusted agent of the crafty Visconti, and went, in the spring of 1435, to Florence, where Eugenius had found refuge, bearing a show of friendly intention towards the Pope. Niccolò Piccinino, 'the skilled and famous'<sup>1</sup> captain of one of those armies of mercenary soldiers that had replaced the militia of cities, and were at the service of the highest bidder, was in the pay of Milan. But he affected to have ordered his soldiery to pile arms (for it was still winter), and to be himself under medical treatment at certain baths that lay in Sienese territory. A certain Riccio, a young Florentine, who was scoundrel enough to do any villany for gain, perhaps at the instigation of Cosimo de Medici, approached the bishop, and unfolded to him a plan to seize the person of the Pope.

<sup>1</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

Sooner or later Eugenius would be going outside the walls of the city for change of air or the performance of certain ecclesiastical functions; Piccinino could lie in ambush, pounce on the unsuspecting Pontiff, and carry him off. The bishop listened to the proposal. He gave Æneas a letter, bidding him carry it to Piccinino, but of what it might contain he said not a word.<sup>1</sup> So Æneas rode off, first to Siena, where he had the joy of seeing his relatives and friends again, and then to the baths. There he would make his way through the crowd of traders and harlots and rabble that accompanied the camp, giving it the appearance of a kind of travelling fair. He found himself, at last, in the presence of one of those wonderful soldiers of fortune whose vast practical abilities enabled them to become the despots of rude troopers, and convert their armies into roving states. Piccinino would be surrounded by his warriors that looked like 'moving fortresses,' for their armour was so heavy and complete that each required two attendants, also in full panoply, to mount and dismount him. The secretary might hold some conversation with the scholars that accompanied the general, executed his diplomacy, and gave literary polish either to the terms he exacted from the states of Italy or to the menaces whereby he controlled them. The audience over, Æneas rode back to Siena, only to find that some letter of the bishop's had been intercepted and deciphered, that Niccolò had cast himself at the Holy Father's feet, seeking pardon and avowing his own guilt, but not that of the Duke of Milan, and that Riccio was in prison undergoing torture. Æneas fled

<sup>1</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

at once to Santa Maria delle Grazie, and prayed there to the Mother of God to save him. Then he sought the protection of the Cardinal Niccolò d'Albergati, whom he convinced of his innocence, and who took him into his household as secretary. Eugenius was magnanimous or prudent enough to pardon the bishop. He was sent back to Milan, and he reappeared at the Council, still the uncompromising foe of the Pope. Riccio was found hanging by the neck dead, probably by his own act.

Æneas's new master, Albergati, was a Carthusian, an ascetic who never ate meat, wore a hair shirt next his skin, arose at midnight for prayer, yet a man of gracious and cultivated manners, a great humanist, a skilful diplomatist, and accounted upright in his political dealings as judged by the standard of his times. Like all princes and men of wealth and position, Albergati was a patron of scholars, for whom he found busy employment in giving point and polish to the artifices of his statecraft. His housemaster was Tommaso Parentucelli, the son of a surgeon, destined to ascend the Apostolic Chair as Nicholas v. Parentucelli had studied at Lucca and Bologna, and his first employment was as tutor to certain noble Florentine families. He was of small stature, with short, feeble legs; his face was pale, his lips heavy and protruding; his voice was raucous; but his flashing eyes indicated an alert intelligence. He possessed a prodigious memory, and was gifted with a great flow of language. 'What is unknown to Parentucelli,' wrote Æneas of him, 'lies beyond the sphere of human learning.' The Cardinal and his housemaster were on terms of deep and affectionate intercourse;

## CERTAIN EMBASSIES AND ADVENTURES 53

Albergati confided his most secret thoughts to Parentucelli. But nearer to Æneas in years and in keen zest for life was another member of Albergati's household, a fellow-secretary, no other than his old friend Noceto. In the service of Albergati Æneas enjoyed glimpses into the policy of one of the most accomplished diplomatists of his age; he saw something of its best society. Fast days were rigidly observed; silence and self-denial were the rule of the house; but when guests were assembled there was feasting, accompanied by all the brave magnificence of the age.

Albergati was instructed to go to Basel, but he must first visit Milan on a diplomatic mission to its duke, thence proceed to the retreat affected by the Duke of Savoy, and so on to Arras, where a council was summoned to discuss the settlement of the war between France and England. Albergati and his household started in July 1435, and, after visiting the Court of the Visconti, rode across Western Lombardy, ascended the outposts of the Alps along the romantic cliffs of the Dora, crossed the bare, desolate St. Bernard, followed the valley of the Rhone, and, coming to the Lake of Geneva, took boat for Ripaille. Here dwelt a prince who had offered to mediate between Pope and Council. The union of worldly craft with religious zeal is no uncommon phenomenon, but Amadeo VIII. of Savoy was a very remarkable example of this conjunction of qualities. His was a character that might surprise those uninstructed in the grotesque complexities of the soul. Like most members of his able house, he had fished, not without success, in troubled waters. He had enlarged his

own domains at the expense of his neighbours. By a series of well-contrived marriages he had allied himself or the members of his house with some of the most powerful princes in Europe. When his wife died, for reasons that are variously stated, and in which piety may have played a part, he retired from the world, but did not deem it necessary to abandon his title or relinquish the financial control of his State.

The boat that bore the travellers drew up at a beautiful spot on the southern shore of the lake. Amadeo and the six recluses of the military order he had founded, mantled in grey, with crosses richly wrought in gold hanging to their necks, and leaning on long staves, came forward with their priest to greet the visitors. Amadeo and Albergati were not strangers to one another. Aforetime Albergati had found welcome at the ducal court and been received with customary pomp and ceremony. The Hermit-Duke embraced the Cardinal, and the visitors were conducted to a luxurious dwelling, the Temple of St. Maurice, a building that was half fortress, half palace. 'Here,' says Æneas,<sup>1</sup> 'the duke lived days more pleasant than penitential.' Perhaps, already the experienced man of affairs foresaw schism and the possibility of his own elevation to the Papacy. How far Albergati trusted the royal recluse we do not know; how the other young secretary read him is recorded. Piero da Noceto, when he and Æneas were alone together, went to the wall and wrote thereon a quotation from Cicero: 'The deadliest and most deceitful wrong is that wrought by a hypocrite.'

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

From Ripaille the Cardinal and his household proceeded to Basel, where they found that the Council, fixedly resolved to reform the Church, had begun with its Head. They had just deprived Eugenius of the time-honoured claim of the Papacy to annates and other sources of revenue, and had thus reduced the Pope to penury. From Basel the travellers proceeded down the Rhine by boat, passing many a romantic rock whereon barons had built their eyries to pounce down on merchants and levy toll for the privilege of passage through their dominion. Leaving the Rhine, they came to Aachen, the ancient capital of the Empire, and so, by Liége, Louvain, Tournai, and Douai to Arras, a city under the sovereignty of its bishop, and therefore selected for the diet as a neutral place. *Æneas* found himself present at the most magnificent congress that the mediæval world had yet beheld. The noblest knights, the most famous warriors, the ripest statesmen were gathered to arrange peace between France, Burgundy, and England. The moment seemed to be opportune, for France was well-nigh exhausted, Burgundy was on the point of concluding an agreement with France, and England was hardly in a condition to prolong an expensive war. For her king was a minor; the Duke of Bedford, her chief statesman and general, was in declining health, and the other ministers of state were paralysed by mutual jealousy. The legate of the Council was there as well as *Albergati*, his presence giving open evidence of the strained relations that existed between Eugenius and the Baselites. But all hostilities of every kind were invested with a magnificent veil. There was perpetual parade of knightly pageantry. Dazzling

tournaments and jousts followed each other in swift succession; mystery-plays, the handmaidens of religion, delighted all, and sumptuous feasts concluded the labours of each day.

But soon Æneas was withdrawn from these pleasures. He was entrusted with another secret mission. In his *Commentaries* he says it concerned a certain prelate; in his book on *Illustrious Men*, he says it was to effect the liberation of a certain captive; Campano, the poet at his court when he became Pope, concluded from many a chat with His Holiness that it was to urge the Scottish king to attack England, and so, divide her forces and compel her to come to terms with France. It is likely that this was the truth.<sup>1</sup> But probably the secretary was quite unaware of the contents of the missive he carried. He was chosen for such an important embassy because a mere secretary would not be so likely to arouse suspicion on his journey as a diplomatist of higher rank. Never was a man less reticent by nature than Æneas; never has a man left so faithful a portrait of himself to posterity; he had neither self-consciousness nor wary vanity nor dissimulation in his composition, but he had acquired a knowledge of the world in a wonderful school, and had been taught to keep a silent tongue.

The mission must have been very acceptable to one possessing so fresh and eager a mind. He was to visit a wild and almost unknown country. He even dreamed of extending his journey to the almost fabulous Orkneys. But his troubles began directly

<sup>1</sup> The author could discover no documents in the secret archives of the Vatican to throw light on this mission. Few letters are to be found there bearing an earlier date than 1500 A.D.

he arrived at Calais. News had reached the English garrison there of the defection of the Duke of Burgundy, and he found his way barred. Soon, however, permission to pass arrived from Henry Beaufort, Cardinal of Winchester.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to interpret Beaufort's interference. He may have done so at the request of Albergati, knowing perfectly well that the permit would be ignored and the secretary turned back when he arrived on English ground. On the other hand, it might be urged that we do not know what secret forces were in operation, so lost or concealed are the workings of mediæval diplomacy. Beaufort stood accused by his rival, Gloucester, of dishonesty, and had not yet received the royal pardon; England was brought into disorder by the long minority of its king; a little later Beaufort sought as warmly for peace with France as Gloucester opposed it. He may have been a traitor to his country for his country's good, or to advance his own power. That he was ignorant of Albergati's design is hardly probable.

One day in late autumn, then, Æneas was free to depart, and, in a few hours, saw the white cliffs that owed no authority to the Holy Roman Empire or any foreign land. He was allowed to disembark and pursue his course towards London. The Cathedral of Canterbury was not then surmounted by its superb central tower, but the interior would be gay with banners of transparent painting, a peculiarly English art, and Æneas was lost in admiration of a magnificent display of jewels that have disappeared; he tells us that the shrine of St. Thomas,

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Comment. in Anton. Panorm.*, iii.



'the fame of which is spread throughout all lands,'<sup>1</sup> was all ablaze with 'carbuncles and diamonds and precious pearls; the meanest of the countless votive offerings was of silver.' On the gardens of England, though even then they were a feature of the land and made the mean cottages look pleasant, he passes no remark. He mentions Strood, 'whereof the natives are reputed to be born with tails'—a piece of information probably intended to impose on the traveller, but that reached amused and decidedly incredulous ears. In London he would find many Italians, for the external trade of the country was mainly in their hands.

Europe in the fifteenth century was gay with fantastic costume. Each locality had its distinctive dress, great cities were beginning to exhibit the swift changes of fashion, and the keen eyes of Æneas, who had a great admiration for blondes, would note the manners and dress of the English fair as well as their faces and figures—the way they carried their heads in the air, their hair, puffed out into horns with a crown on a pad between the puffs, and their excessively short-waisted gowns. But he recorded his adventures from the dignity of the Papal Chair, and he tells us nothing of such irrelevant trifles. He had lived long enough north of the Alps to feel no great surprise, perhaps, at seeing a drunken lady, nor at hearing her discharge a volley of cacophonous oaths;<sup>2</sup> he would remark the extravagantly long shoes of her lord, the toe brought to a peak, and his turban or

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1. A very complete description of this journey was recorded by Æneas, after he had assumed the Tiara, in his *Commentaries*.

<sup>2</sup> 'How the good wyf taughte her daughter' (a courtesy poem of 1430).

other fantastic headgear.<sup>1</sup> He would find himself among a cheerful and contented people, keeping a vast number of feast days by well stocking the pot and indulging in noisy merry-making, for even the unskilled worker lived well. He was surprised at the wealth of London and at the number of its inhabitants; he was struck by the lordliness of old St. Paul's, and he was shown a translation of Thucydides, six hundred years old, which was carefully preserved in the sacristy.<sup>2</sup> He visited 'the wondrous tombs of the kings'<sup>3</sup> at the Abbey; he saw, with curiosity, the strange bridge over the broad Thames, and noted that the current below was swiftest at flow of the tide. But he found his progress northward barred, and was ordered to leave the kingdom.

So there was nothing for him but to return to the Continent and attempt the hazardous passage to Scotland across the North Sea. He took ship again at Sluys—the outlet for the commerce of Bruges—a miserable little Dutch townlet now, but then 'the busiest port of all the west.'<sup>4</sup> It was the depth of winter, when the winds blow fierce and strong. The boats of those days were so clumsily built and ill-bolted that they often foundered in a heavy sea, or went to pieces after a little buffeting by the waves. Nor was tempest the only danger to be feared: the seas were infested by pirates, and ships usually sailed together, in little fleets, for safety. When Æneas reached the middle of the treacherous North Sea, the wind, that hitherto had been favour-

<sup>1</sup> Harleian MSS.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Johan. de Hinderbach*, June 1, 1451.

<sup>3</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

able, veered and grew into a hurricane, and the little vessel laboured for life among great waves. Many terrible hours of suffering and fear were endured; even the skipper gave up praying, and all awaited the end. The winds drove them nearer and nearer to the cruel, iron-bound coast of Norway, where they must have been dashed to pieces on the rocks; but then the blast changed its direction and set them backward towards Scotland. And, at last, they made Dunbar.

This terrible voyage lasted twelve days. When peril had been at its worst, Æneas vowed to take a pilgrimage, barefoot, to the nearest shrine of Our Lady, if ever he might set foot on the solid land again. Directly he landed he fulfilled his vow. He dragged his exhausted body 10,000 paces through the frozen air and across deep snow.<sup>1</sup> Night overtook him, too, for the cold sun of the North shines, as he tells us, only for a few hours in winter. His feet were frost-bitten, and his servants had no small difficulty in dragging him back to his lodging. The fulfilment of this pious vow brought on an attack of gout, a complaint that, for the rest of his life, returned again and again to torment him.

As soon as he was able, he rode on to Edinburgh and presented himself at the Royal Court. James I. then sat on the Scottish throne, a royal author, whose *King's Quhair* we still read with delight, for it is filled with the genius of minstrelsy, and sprang from the heart of a true poet. James was remarkable among princes: he had married for love. When held a prisoner in England, he had seen the Lady

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Europa*.



ÆNEAS SILVIUS DISCHARGES HIMSELF OF HIS MISSION TO JAMES  
OF SCOTLAND.

*Pinturicchio, Siena.*



Joan, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, through his dungeon bars. Straightway she held him in a very different and more agreeable kind of captivity, and now she shared his throne. James was an able statesman, but the turbulent Scottish nobility had got out of hand during his long imprisonment, and resented his attempts to institute a strong, central government. Two years after Æneas's visit they murdered their would-be ruler.

The king received the young ambassador kindly; but Campano tells us<sup>1</sup> that James, though he would not help England, declined to attack her; yet he promised to send an embassy to Arras. He presented Æneas with fifty nobles, a pair of fine steeds, and a pearl of price. Æneas, always devoted to his family and full of filial affection, sent the jewel to his mother.

The young Italian humanist found himself in a strange land and among a crude people. He was in a new kind of world, one full of wonder. Though he could not understand the language, he was unwearied in observing all things, great and small, and he was eager to obtain information from priests and interpreters. Geography was one of the subjects that found a welcome place in his encyclopædic mind; he saw the connection between geography and history, and his geographical writings were deemed so valuable that Christopher Columbus obtained and read them. He noted the relation of Scotland to England, and described it. All that he saw remained deeply graven in his memory, and he has left us a

<sup>1</sup> Campanus, *Vita Pii II.*, apud Muratori, *R. I. S.*, t. xxiii. Part II., p. 989.

valuable record of the Scotland of his age. 'It is a cold land,' he says, 'not very productive, and a great part of it is covered with pine-forests. There is a subterranean rock there, of a sulphurous character, which the Scots dig out and use as fuel.<sup>1</sup> The cities are undefended by walls; the houses for the most part are put together without cement; the roofs are of turf, the doors, in the country, mere ox-hides. The people are poor and rough; there is plenty of meat and fish for them, which they devour voraciously; the men are little, but bold; the women fair and comely, but licentious.'

This charge against the Scottish women is a grave indictment. For in the fifteenth century, the proprieties of sex were little regarded throughout all Europe, and the blessing of the Church on a union was usually postponed until pregnancy was far advanced. Bastardy was very common, and, in Æneas's own land, as one learns from the diaries of the merchants and other sources, a husband's bastards by another woman were kindly received and brought up by his wife if they were born before his marriage to her, or even if they came into the world afterwards. Great families were strengthened by the support their illegitimate scions gave them, and, in Italy, the ablest man of a ruling family took the helm of state no matter in what irregular fashion he might have entered into it. Æneas had a great admiration for fair women: he was swarthy, and could never quite understand how the German came

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, lib. 1. It would appear as if the Scots were already engaged in working superficial coal-seams. But peat may be the substance referred to.

to admire those that are dark ; he expresses his astonishment that men of that country should worship a perfectly black woman, and take her for a Venus.<sup>1</sup> A fair Caledonian became his mistress during his stay in Scotland, and she bore him a child, but it died.<sup>2</sup>

Our author goes on to say : ' Women kiss one another very rarely here ; less often in fact than they shake hands in Italy. Wine is neither produced nor imported. The horses are small, quiet beasts, and there are few stallions ; they are neither shod nor combed nor bridled. The Scots oysters are finer than the British. The people export hides, wool, salt-fish, and pearls to Flanders. There is nothing that a Scotsman will listen to with greater pleasure than abuse of the Englishman, who bears the reputation of being deceitful. The country is only partly under cultivation, part of it is quite wild, and there is only a little of it under the plough. The men of the forest-district speak a different tongue from the others, and sometimes they are so famished that they are reduced to eat the bark of trees. Wolves are unknown, however.' He gives us the strange information that trees whereon rooks have built are forfeit to the king. Creighton has pointed out that a law was passed in 1424, by the first parliament of James, to the effect that, since rooks do injury to corn, the birds were to be allowed to build, but in no wise were the fledglings to be suffered to fly ; and if an empty nest were found by Whitsunday, the tree was

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Procopium*, December 9, 1443 ; *Ep. ad Mich. de Fuellendorf*, October 1, 1444.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad P. de Nozeto*, May 1443.



to be hewn down and become the property of the crown. Æneas is a restless seeker after all kinds of information: he is for ever making inquiries; he wants to know why Britain is so called, and why the opposite coast of France bears the same name.

The skipper who had brought him to Scotland wanted to take him back, but he had had enough of the sea. He remembered his classics, and that the man who risks a *second* voyage has forfeited the right to complain of Neptune. He preferred the risk of riding through England. It was a happy thing that he came to this resolve, for, as he watched the vessel putting forth to sea, he saw it heel over and founder, and only four of the sailors were rescued.

There were plenty of Italian merchants travelling in all parts of Europe, so he determined to pass for one. He procured a suitable dress, rode off southward, and presently found himself across the Tweed, in a border-land, rude, uncivilised, and appallingly unsettled. At night he arrived at a village and put up at an inn, where he dined with the host, who supplied him with fowl and goose and vegetables, but wine and bread had to be fetched for him from some monastery. A multitude of women, all of them pregnant, came crowding into the room with their good men, and eagerly demanded of the priest who this man might be: Was he an Æthiopian or an Indian? Might he even be Our Lord Himself, since he had bread and wine? The bread and wine and all that there was had to be shared with these folk. The feast was prolonged until the second hour of the night, when the priest, the host, and all the men of

the jovial party took their departure, telling Æneas that it behoved them to seek refuge in a peel-tower some distance off, for they were afraid there might be a raid that night of the Scots, who were wont to cross the river at low ebb and plunder. They refused to take Æneas with them in spite of his strong entreaty ; not even a bribe would tempt them. And they left him in the company of the women, for though many of these were buxom and comely, the men told him they could safely leave them : wicked as the enemy was, the ravishing of women could not be charged to him. So Æneas remained with his two servants, a guide, who was also an interpreter, and about a hundred women, who gathered in a circle as close to the fire as they could, and many of them told tales or chatted with the guide. When very much of the night had worn away dogs began to bay and geese to cackle. Then there arose a tumult, as if the enemy were already upon them ; all the women took to their heels, running this way and that ; the guide vanished, and Æneas took refuge in his bedchamber, which was the stable. There he awaited the issue, not without trepidation, for he knew nothing of any way of escape, and expected to be the prey of the first marauder that should enter his place of refuge. Soon, however, the guide and the women returned, for they found that the animals had been disturbed by the advent of friends, not of foes ; and when day dawned Æneas took up his journey again. 'He soon arrived at the New Castle, which men say was constructed by Caesar, and welcomed the sight of a habitable city ; for Scotland and the part of England that is next to it possess no dwellings like ours ; it is a dreadful waste-

land, and, in winter, unwarmed by the sun.'<sup>1</sup> Then he reached Durham, and was careful to visit the grave of the Venerable Bede; and he proceeded thence to York, 'a large and populous city.' The great Minster was nearly finished; the central tower had only just been put up, but there was no rood-screen then, nor were the two bell-towers erected. Though the fine taste of the early Italian Renaissance had already returned to traditions of long level lines, vast spaces, and cool shadows, so beautiful and suitable to a warm climate, Æneas could appreciate the delicate, subtle entanglement, the profound suggestiveness, and the soaring sublimity of Gothic architecture. We have read that he was impressed by St. Paul's; he also speaks with enthusiasm of the churches of Nürnberg and the lofty and richly decorated buildings of Lübeck.<sup>2</sup> His taste was so catholic that, while he admired ancient sculpture, he thought that of Orvieto not inferior to it;<sup>3</sup> he found pleasure in the suitability of the English Gothic to the climate; for a northern church should be like a lantern of jewelled glass, since heaven vexes it so little with its effulgence. 'York Minster,' Æneas says, 'is a marvel for all men; a church full of light; for the walls are of glass held together by slender pillars.'

Between York and London he fell in with a party of riders, whereof the most important was no less a personage than a Justice in Eyre returning from assizes. The supposed Italian merchant and the judge rode together, and it must have amused Æneas

<sup>1</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil.*, Piccolom., *Opera Omn.*, ed. Basel, pp. 1054-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. iii.

when his companion inveighed against that 'wolf in sheep's clothing, Albergati, and his intrigues at Arras.' Of course, however much Æneas may have known or suspected concerning his mission, he listened with the attention that is due to news, and probably speculated on what would be done to him if the judge knew who he was. When he reached London it seemed, at first, as if there were no road of escape open to him, for no one might leave England without a royal permit; but he pushed on to Dover, and found that the guards of the harbour were open to a bribe. They smuggled him on board a ship, and so, in the springtime (A.D. 1436), he found himself once again in Basel. Albergati was away with Eugenius at Bologna, for the Pope had left Florence and taken up his abode in one of his own cities (April 22, 1436), but Albergati had left Piero da Noceto, Æneas's co-secretary behind him. Doubtless the two young men were rejoiced to be together once more, and Piero would make Æneas 'fight his battles o'er again.' 'I was unwilling to go on to Bologna,' he says, 'for I feared they would charge me with complicity in the old affair of the Bishop of Novara; so I resolved to remain at Basel among the foes of Eugenius.'<sup>1</sup> After a short stay with Eugenius, Albergati returned to Basel, but he soon left again, for the antagonism between Pope and Council was getting more hopeless day by day. Æneas stayed on. He was determined to succeed in life. He knew that the elegant accomplishment of verse-making might add to his reputation, but would hardly lead to any

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Petrum de Noceto*, May 1456; Æneas Silvius, *De vir. clar.*, v.

betterment in his position ; so he read much and far into the night, spending the hours in studies not wholly congenial. Noceto, who shared his bedroom with him, would come in laughing, and scoff at such wasting labour ; ' Fortune does not bestow all her favours on the scholar,' he would say. But the light young secretary could not divert Æneas from his resolve.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Petrum de Noceto*, May 1456.

## CHAPTER V

## ÆNEAS AT BASEL—THE COUNCIL AND THE POPE

THE Council had acquired some credit by patching up a truce with the Bohemians. The more moderate men on both sides honestly desired to come to terms. The leaders of the Council at Basel, as well as those of the Utraquists or Calixtines, had done their best. Points of difference were threshed out by small committees. Each party remained unconvinced, but both sides curbed themselves and forbore, though occasionally a moment of excitement caused that to be said which evoked sore feeling. When the envoys left Basel, Cesarini blessed them. And the chief representative of dissent, Rokycana, afterwards chosen by his countrymen to be Archbishop of Prague, declared his sense of the brotherhood of all Christian believers and the independence of his sect by returning the blessing: he raised his hands and prayed the Lord to give peace to the Council. One fat Catholic bishop ran, panting and weeping, after the departing heretics, to wring their hands. But the Council was secretly busy, fomenting all those internal differences among the Hussites that had been revealed to them in the negotiations. The Hussites declared, as one man, for receiving the Communion in both kinds: the chalice was painted on their flag; it had become a symbol of

nationality. But there were those among them who preferred to trim their beards delicately, liked their wives to wear long trains and their daughters to be dressed in a manner that would not spoil their charms.<sup>1</sup> And there were those of opposite social convictions who would seize these well-trimmed burghers in the public streets and straightway relieve them of their beards. Minute differences of faith gave emphasis to social cleavage within the ranks of national dissent. It is true that the fiercest of the precisians, the Tabornites, had been expelled from the cities and dwelt on certain hills. But there were still extremists, in sympathy with the refugees of Tabor, that remained among the Utraquists. Procop, the successor to the famous Ziska, the warrior, and a small party of the outlaws, cherished black resentment in their hearts; their minds were set on the confiscation of the property of the Church. John of Palomar, an envoy sent by the Council to Bohemia, wrote, in his secret report, that the majority of Bohemians wanted peace and union with the Church, but this faction held them back.<sup>2</sup> The extremists were not content to be a mere drag; Procop raided recalcitrant districts of Bohemia; he besieged the German and Catholic town of Pilsen. He was defeated, his troops mutinied, and he was compelled to resign his command. The presence of envoys at Basel put heart into the Catholics of Bohemia. Among the Utraquists old divisions deepened and new differences appeared. They suffered from that lack of organised unity that is always a phenomenon of assaults on vested interests and accepted customs.

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Maurice, *History of Bohemia*, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> *Monumenta Concil. Gen., sec. xv. Concil. Bas.*, i. 388, ii. 431.

Most Bohemians got sick of perpetual strife, and desired nothing but peace. In fact, reaction had set in. The Taborites and irreconcilables made their last stand in battle with the Utraquists. They were defeated and almost annihilated : Procop and thirteen thousand Taborites lay dead on the field. Both sides were chargeable with cruel massacres ; and men had become sick of slaughter.

Military adventurers of all kinds crowded into Bohemia and lowered the tone of the army ; the zeal of reformers waned ; to the horrors of civil warfare were added those of famine and plague. All these causes inclined the nation to come to terms with Sigismund.

Already, at the end of A.D. 1433, the Council had agreed to sanction, subject to certain modifications, the famous four articles or compacts that were propounded by the Bohemians. They were : 1st, That they should enjoy the free preaching of the Word of God ; 2nd, Excepting those who lived in mortal sin, the laity were to receive the Blood as well as the Body of Christ ; 3rd, The clergy were to be deprived of secular overlordship and property ; 4th, Mortal sin was to be forcibly repressed. But it is usually not difficult to twist sanctions, however carefully they may be drawn up, and the compact was differently interpreted according to the predilections of party. The Emperor Sigismund was equally astute in taking advantage of the wording of these articles and of the reaction that had set in. He put forth all his diplomatic skill to be recognised by Bohemia as her king, and, on July 5, 1436, he rode up to Prague in royal state, and gave the Bohemian nation a charter by signing the compact.



The Pope, at this time, was living in exile from Rome, supported by the alms of the faithful. Not merely was he unable to keep up due state, but he could barely furnish the necessary funds for embassies; he even paid his secretaries and officials with difficulty. This was the pass to which the abolition by the Council of pallium-fees, annates, and other sources of income had reduced him. The Council had agreed that some means of providing for the necessary expenses of the Papacy must be arranged. Eugenius sent envoys to expostulate with the Council for non-provision. The only reply he got was a satiric reference to the poverty of Peter the fisherman and his brethren. But the members themselves had deprived their barb of its point. They were zealous for the reform of Eugenius; on their own reform they were not so eagerly bent, though it was quite as much needed. Many honest men in the Council earnestly desired reform. But reform, whether undertaken by Council or Pope, met with the same insuperable difficulties. And a Council, like any other large assemblage, whether it be a diet of princes or a mob of priests, is hardly likely to distinguish itself in wise statesmanship. It did not suffice the Council to sneer at the Pope: the Emperor must needs be flouted too. The Council entered into close relations with his crafty, shifty feudatory, the Duke of Milan. 'I am a fifth wheel; an impediment to the Council,' said Sigismund, when he left it<sup>1</sup> (May 19, 1434). He recommended a return to the old manner of sitting as 'nations.' Reform would, he believed, be more quickly arrived at in this way. But an Œcumenical Council was as little disposed as a

<sup>1</sup> Joh. Segob., *Mem. Concil.*, 663.

Catholic Pope to further the development of the spirit of nationality or aid the peoples to take a first step towards national independence. Sigismund departed, calling the Council 'a cesspool of iniquity.'

Indeed the members of the Council spoke of piety and practised pluralism. No one could uproot one single abuse; so impossible was reform that the Council issued no serious edict against simony, or the loose life of the higher ecclesiastics, or the employment of the clergy in worldly service. No attempt was made to raise them from their incredible ignorance. On the contrary, Basel became notorious for its harlotry and impurity during the stay of the Council in the city, and Eugenius informed its members that they gave abundant exhortation to good deeds but failed to set an example.<sup>1</sup>

Yet men did not lose faith in a Council that represented Western Europe and the whole body of Catholic believers. The Council of Constance had been successful in healing the Great Schism. The conciliar principle was maintained by arguments drawn from history; it was elaborated into a theory, and supported by the Universities. Delay, perhaps was inevitable, men thought; the Pope was in abasement and exile; the sole hope of the Church resided in its Œcumenical Congress.

But a fatal blunder had been committed by Cesarini and other men of liberal mind. They had opened the doors of the Council too wide; the democratic parliament assembled at Basel was not of a character or constitution to rule the destinies of ecclesiastical empire. At Pisa and Constance many

<sup>1</sup> Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, vii. 663.

of the prelates were by no means learned, and the presence of jurisconsults, as advisers only, was welcomed.<sup>1</sup> At Basel, the generous Cesarini declared that he valued men, not their rank. Nicholas of Cusa would have no eligible person excluded, for was not the council one designed to represent the whole Church? Shoals of monks and priests, bent on reform, goaded by a grievance, or seeking promotion, flocked to Basel. Troops of scholars came from the Universities and received a glad welcome, for their services would be invaluable in the determination of many a knotty point. The admission of lay envoys sent by princes was opposed; for did not the bishops of their rule represent them? Æneas tells us in his Commentaries on the Council that he was strongly in favour of the admission of the lower clergy, but opposed to that of the laity. Ecclesiastics below the rank of subdeacon, that is to say laymen (for such have not taken upon themselves the sacred vow), were admitted. Æneas was one of these men in minor orders, yet he presided more than once over the committee called the Deputation of Faith. Many great ecclesiastics were unwilling to see themselves overwhelmed by such a crowd. Men came to the Council when it pleased them and left it when they chose; self-seekers stuck to it like burs. Basel was full of priests and monks drawn from the immediate neighbourhood. Long after Æneas was convinced of the futility of the conciliar principle, he wrote, 'no one at the Council, however lowly his rank, unless he were a criminal or of infamous character, found admission denied to him.' 'There was so great a

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *loc. cit.*, p. 106.

crowd that no voice was effective, no guiding influence was felt; heads were counted and judgment neglected.'<sup>1</sup> 'The Council of Basel,' says Turrecremata, 'was a scandal to the whole Church, and this was brought about through the unwise granting of voting power to so many men.'<sup>2</sup> And Æneas, with very little exaggeration, describes how 'cooks and stablemen were to be found there.'<sup>3</sup> Still, holy and wise men, who hated Papal usurpation, remained faithful to the conciliar principle, and gave weight by their presence and sanction to the futilities of Basel. There were two chief parties in the Council. At the head of one stood the judicious Cesarini, supported by Cardinal Cervantes, whom Æneas speaks of as 'a reasonable man, one desirous of peace; he was the most upright of men.'<sup>4</sup> Cardinal Albergati, Torquemada, a Spanish canonist and theologian of high standing, and Nicholas of Cusa also acted with Cesarini. This party defended the Pope, but made sincere and honest endeavours at mediation; they were supported by the masters in theology of the Universities, and, for political reasons, by the Florentine and Venetian republics. Antagonistic to the legates of Eugenius and their party were the subjects of Milan and Aragon, the French, who attended in great force, and, in the main, the great body of jurists. The leader of the opposition to the Pope was Louis d'Allemand, Cardinal of St. Cecilia, commonly known as the Cardinal of Arles. D'Alle-

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Comment. de Conc. Basil.*, apud Fea, C.: *Pius II. a calumniis vindic.*, p. 46. Romæ, 1823.      <sup>2</sup> Voigt, *loc. cit.*, p. 108, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> Mansi, *Pii II. Orationes*, i. 231: *orat. adv. Austriales*, 1452.

<sup>4</sup> Æn. Sil., *Comment. de Concil. Basil.*, apud Fea, C.: *Pius II. a calumniis vindic.*, p. 40.

mand had been a favourite with the late Pope, not undeservedly, for he was a scholar, a generous patron of learning, and a man of character. 'He was,' says Æneas, 'patient of injury, not easily provoked, remarkably generous, but a bitter hater of Eugenius.'<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Milan co-operated with D'Allemand and his party, for his own purposes, it need hardly be said, and not for the purification of religion. There was a middle party, led by the gentle, temperate John of Segovia, and the Spaniards at the Council often followed his lead. But, in the counsels of the synod, few men were temperate. The Pope was reduced to desperate straits; he was in danger of becoming the servant of what, in modern parlance, might be called a fickle parliamentary majority, and resistance might seem almost hopeless, for his supplies were cut off. The Council also required money. It usurped the Papal right of issuing indulgences and filled its treasury with the proceeds of the sale.

The Council regarded the Papacy as the usurper of many rights, and especially of property that was vested in the Church; the Head of the Church was the source of her corruption. The Pope looked on the Council as a 'headless, formless monster,' bent on the spoliation of Christ's Vicar and the destruction of His organised Church. No basis of agreement could be found between these entirely hostile forces: to show the least sign of weakness on either side would have been suicidal. Both parties sought for political support to strengthen their position; both were bidding eagerly for the favour of certain personages who affected to represent the Eastern Church.

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Comment.*, apud Fea: *Pius II. a calumniis vindic.*, p. 66.

Though Constantinople was deemed well-nigh impregnable, many Greeks desired the support of the Western powers. All was not taken by the followers of Mahommed; much of the ancient Empire might still be recovered. To get the sympathy of the West they sought for reunion with its Church. The Pope, the Council, John Palæologus, the Emperor of Byzantium, and certain ecclesiastics of the Eastern Church were in negotiation concerning an European congress for union, which was to be held in Western Europe, and which the Greeks promised to attend. If it met at Basel they would have to cross the Alps, and the journey would prove too great, too difficult, and too expensive. Rome, that would have seemed of all places the most suitable, was out of the question. For Eugenius had not yet dared to return thither, and neither the Greeks nor the Council would have cared to give the Roman Pontiff the prestige and advantage that their appearance at the foot of the Apostolic Chair in the Apostolic city would bestow. It was necessary, then, to find some city, easy of access alike for Greeks and Western Europeans, but sufficiently wealthy to contribute towards the necessary expenses. The project was keenly debated, both in the Curia and in the Council, and the Greeks negotiated with both parties to secure the best terms possible for themselves. Florence, Avignon and Pavia were proposed.

Æneas found himself, a man of letters, cast into an arena of fierce theological disputation and political warfare, where oratorical power was in eager request and led to preferment. Like a pleader in a law-court, he was ready to place his powers at the

disposal of a client, without concerning himself too closely with the exact justice or expediency of the cause he was to maintain. That was a question for the Court to determine: his sole duty was to do his best for his employer. Pavia lay in the duchy of Milan; the orator who appeared on behalf of the duke was an incompetent speaker, and the fathers heard him with impatience. His cause, indeed, was hopeless. The French party would never consent to give up Avignon for Pavia; the Venetians and Florentines, who belonged to the Papal party, were foes of the duke, and were still less likely to do so. Æneas was asked to plead for Pavia. It was a great opportunity. He was to appear before the assembled representatives of Europe, and could make his force felt by the most important audience conceivable: cardinals and ecclesiastics of rank and the envoys of the Powers would be there. He might achieve the special favour of the duke. He spent two days in preparing his speech, so he tells us:<sup>1</sup> he sat up, working at it the night before its delivery,<sup>2</sup> probably to give it its finishing touches. The product of these labours was an oration as dexterous as it was brilliant, and though it did not change the mind of the assembly, they heard him with rapt attention: the benches were as if spell-bound. Æneas says that he was careful to avoid saying anything that might give offence;<sup>3</sup> and he did not omit the adulation of princes that the etiquette of the time demanded: indeed he gave special praise to the Duke of Milan,

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., De Concil. Bas.*, apud Fea, C.: *Pius II. a calumniis vindic.* Romae, 1823.

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Æn. Sil., De Concil. Bas.*, apud Fea, p. 66.

of whose patronage he entertained high hopes, but of whose character, later, if not now, he formed a juster estimate.<sup>1</sup> Things were said in the fifteenth century, in eulogy of princes, so smooth and servile that, to-day, they would only arouse contemptuous mirth or merited indignation, and defeat their own ends. He won the ears of the Papal party when he said that no one ought to disregard the Pope's authority before the Church condemned him. Thus he adroitly yielded due honour to the Pope while giving the Council the supremacy it claimed.<sup>2</sup>

The reader will find the oration full of animation. Here, instead of the dull speeches, full of scholastic learning, to which the fathers were accustomed, was a new style, persuasive oratory, apt quotation from the classics, Ciceronian Latin, not perfect indeed, not the ponderous labour of a pedant, but alive. And it was delivered by an accomplished orator of engaging personality and clear, resonant voice, who always kept to the point, yet invested his argument with scholarly dignity and relieved it with literary reminiscences, whose periods had the grace and lightness of a bird's flight, yet who could drive an argument home with the precision of a skilled marksman speeding his arrow. The speech for Pavia was the first of a long series of oratorical efforts, many of which, like this, were wasted on futile subjects at a futile Council, but some, like the one delivered at Mantua, were noble calls to action in a worthy cause. 'No one of his time made so many speeches on so

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., De Concil. Bas.*, apud Fea, p. 40; *Europa; Pentalogus; Ep. ad Procop. de Rabenstein*, June, 1444.

<sup>2</sup> *Mansi, Sacror. Concil. Collect.*, xxix. Venet., 1784.



many important occasions.'<sup>1</sup> They are marred for the modern reader by the redundancy of Scriptural and classical quotations which an age that yielded servile authority to antiquity demanded of all literary efforts.

The speech was delivered in May 1436. Party feeling already ran very high. The Papacy was opposed to the selection of Avignon, for, although a Papal possession, that city lay under the shadow of the French Power. The Papacy bore in mind seventy years of 'Babylonian captivity,' the proximity of Paris, and the herds of Parisian scholars and French priests that would flock to Avignon and dominate the Council. The Pope and his Curia had seen shoals of monks and copyists and unbeneficed clergy and discontented men fill the Council at Basel, seeking personal promotion there, and not the Church's welfare. They wished to keep power in their own hands; they desired to preserve the universality of the Church and its independence of all princes and powers other than themselves. It was feared that if Eugenius were to die during the sittings at Avignon, a Frenchman would be elected and the Papacy become bound once more, and perhaps finally, to France. Nor were they in favour of Pavia, a city under the control of Eugenius's foe. But the Council, on the other hand, knew very well that what the Pope desired was to get it to sit at some Italian city, where Italians would predominate and dissolution be easy to effect.

The struggle between Papalists and Baselites grew ever more bitter. The legates pointed out that the

<sup>1</sup> Campanus, *Pii II. Vita*; see Muratori, *R. I. S.*, iii. pars ii.

councils of old were attended by priests of episcopal rank only, and, moreover, that the mental and moral qualifications of a voter may be of some importance—should even carry more weight in a question than a mere number of votes. But they were howled down by almost the whole body. Doctors of civil and canon law, nay bishops and even archbishops, would have none of this doctrine. The cooler heads on both sides tried to mediate. But priests and those in minor orders—practically laymen—came crowding in from the immediate neighbourhood. It is said that men knowing not a single word of Latin, and therefore totally incapable of understanding the proceedings of the Council, were to be found sitting on its committees : they were taught the formula whereby they could record their vote. Masters converted their servants into members of the Council to add to the voting strength of their party.<sup>1</sup> Each meeting was stormier than the last. Cesarini, even, lost his calm bearing ; his measured manner gave place to excitement ; he looked perturbed, and his words came tumbling out of his mouth.

Eugenius and his Curia saw that the time had come for bold and resolute action. If they did not push their opportunity, both Papacy and Christian Church would be ruined. The Archbishop of Taranto was sent to Basel. He was a man of energy and conviction, and he gave heart to the Papalists : they began to see that the Council was preparing its own ruin, and that the hour had come for the Papacy and its followers to make a last stand. The quiet old minster above the Rhone became a theatre of passion. It

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *loc. cit.*, p. 123.

seemed as if its red stone might take a yet deeper hue. One day it was filled by a shouting mob of armed men: happily they were so many and so closely squeezed together that they could not draw their weapons. Rival prelates, pale with anxiety, rushed to forestall each other, to seize and occupy the altar. They gabbled the Mass, they sang in opposition to each other; the discord was appalling, the din deafened the ears. As each party launched its decree, its opponents tried to drown the voice of the reader by raising the psalm *Te Deum laudamus*. Æneas was present at these disgraceful scenes, and has recorded them.<sup>1</sup> 'So great was the shouting that you would find the toss-pots of a tavern better behaved,' wrote he to a friend.<sup>2</sup>

Voigt, quite gratuitously, accuses Æneas of having been active for Avignon.<sup>3</sup> Now, he definitely says in his epistle of retractation,<sup>4</sup> 'I played no remarkable part therein; for I was of the settled conviction that the frivolous Piccolomini had throughout no great insight into the confused tangle that there was then, and how only one point of view was admitted by the entire government of the conciliar theory.' He wrote on May 21, 1437, 'We have become a horrid monstrosity, such as the world has never seen or heard before. . . . If you ask my opinion, there are few on either side whose acts are directed by their conscience. God knows which side has the truth. I do not see, nor, if I saw, would I dare to write it.'

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Comment. de Concil. Basil.*, apud Car. Fea, *Pius II. a calumniis vindic.* Romae, 1823.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Petr. de Nozeto*, May 20, 1437.

<sup>3</sup> Voigt, *loc. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>4</sup> See *Pius II. a calumniis vindic.*, Car. Fea. Romae, 1823.

## THE COUNCIL AND THE POPE 83

He was a humanist, full of love of letters and joy of life. Fate, not inclination, had cast him into this theological bear-garden. But his graphic pen recorded what his keen eyes saw, and his open ears listened to. We can hear the quick heart-beat of the combatants; we are made to feel that momentous issues are at stake; we positively are present at the final tempestuous scene.

## CHAPTER VI

## ÆNEAS AT BASEL—THE SCHISM

THE last violent scene at Basel took place on May 7, 1437. On the 29th, the Pope decreed, in open consistory, that the meeting with the Greeks should take place in Italy; for his diplomatists, more skilful than those of the Council, had prevailed; moreover the Eastern monarch and the Eastern Churchmen, who were subordinate to the monarch, had a natural bias for personal authority, and were better instructed in the prestige that attached to the Papacy than assured of the might of a Council. On July 31st the Council commanded the Pope to present himself before them at Basel within sixty days. On September 18th, Eugenius declared the Council of Basel to be closed, and ordered a new Council to assemble at Ferrara. On January 24, 1438, the Council suspended the Pope. Meanwhile the Papal legates departed from Basel, one by one, and shook the dust of the city from their feet. One by one, they turned their horses' heads southward, not without sorrow, and, in time, many of the noblest spirits at Basel found themselves gathered together round Eugenius and the Sacred College. The duty was not painless, but it appeared to them to be imperative. Parentucelli, even when he became a Pope himself, declared

that 'the Roman Pontiffs have stretched their authority too far, and left the other bishops no jurisdiction.'<sup>1</sup> Nicholas of Cusa left early; he soon learned to regard the Council as a degenerate, anarchical mob, and resolved to support the regulative control of the Papacy. Cesarini and Cervantes were slower to admit the failure of the conciliar principle. But they were driven to conclude that there were more at Basel whose lips played with the magic word 'reform' than bore it in their hearts. They were the last of the Papal party to leave. It shows how completely one opinion prevailed at Basel—perhaps it shows us what self-seeking was in the hearts of most—that Æneas tells us 'there were few who departed with Cesarini, and they were believed to have done so in order to save their benefices.'<sup>2</sup> But there were honest, sincere enthusiasts still left at Basel, men who execrated Papal autocracy as an usurpation, discredited alike by history and the existing corruption of the Church. They clung to the Council as the only hope of amendment. The universities remained wholly on the conciliar side. Louis d'Allemand, Cardinal of Arles, presided now. The learned jurists and theologians, Juan de Segobia and Thomas de Courcelles, remained, and a knot of moderate men gathered around them. These went by the nickname of 'the Greys,' for, while prepared to accept logical consequences, they did not deem unconditional submission to D'Allemand one of them. They wished to preserve their own freedom of thought; and were rather inclined to take up a neutral position with

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, iii. pars ii. f. 895.

<sup>2</sup> Pius II., *Bulla retract.*, ed. Fca, *loc. cit.*, 155.

regard to Baselites and Papalists alike. They counted for very little, but they had the support of the German princes.

The feeble occupant of the throne of Constantine, a personage remarkable for crabbedness of temper and dullness of intellect, arrived at Ferrara on May 7, 1438. Though reduced to a realm contained by the walls of a single city, that city still remained the one unconquered fragment of the Roman world, and John Palæologus was the successor of rulers that for a thousand years had claimed the ancient empire as their possession, and received the homage of no inconsiderable part of it. He entered the city of the Estensi in great state, 'riding a horse covered with purple trappings, and the Princes of the House bore a sky-blue baldacchino over his head.'<sup>1</sup> But Eugenius was compelled to transfer the Council from Ferrara to Florence, for Niccolò Piccinino was abroad ravaging the country, and the roads were unsafe. In Tuscany, too, the Greeks would be more in the Pope's hand than near the sea-border; he could be sure, also, of getting supplies into his treasury (and of these there was great need).

The Greeks came in the vain hope of procuring aid from Western Christendom. They found it indifferent to the fate of Constantinople; indifferent even to the schism in its own Church. Many wished to return, but the Emperor overruled them. Months passed in weary disputation. At last Bessarion, Archbishop of Nicea, a liberal-minded patriot, persuaded his colleagues that, if the Turk were to be hurled back from the gates of Constantinople, union with the Western

<sup>1</sup> Geo. Phranzes, lib. ii. cap. 15.

Church must be effected—therein lay their only hope. Latin supremacy was a small matter now that the followers of Mahommed had triumphed throughout the East. He persuaded himself and his colleagues that the truth concerning the Procession of the Holy Spirit and the use of leavened bread lay with Roman Catholic Christianity. The Greeks abandoned dogmas that had served as rallying cries in the antagonisms of East and West. Bessarion moved a resolution which declared the Roman Pontiff to be the Vicar of God, the Father and Shepherd of all Christian peoples. It was a striking scene. The great Duomo of Florence was crowded with faithful adherents of Eugenius and Greek prelates, clad in the superb silken vestments of the Eastern Church. Submission was rendered to the Pope, and Bessarion, stepping forward, exchanged the kiss of peace with Cesarini. Men supposed that the breach that had persisted for so many centuries was healed, and Eugenius wrote to the Christian princes that he, the Pope, had effected, not without infinite labour, what no other agency could have brought about.<sup>1</sup> The submission of the Greeks restored no small measure of authority to the Papacy, and it diminished the prestige of the Council in equal degree. The Pope, and not the Council, had healed the gaping wounds of so many ages. The tide was on the turn. Once again the unyielding policy of Rome proved successful; once again the forces of attack would divide and rend each other; once again the precise moment for action had been rightly judged; once again the Pope stood at the head of Christendom (A.D. 1439).

<sup>1</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad ann.* 1439.



But the Eastern Emperor returned to the curses of his people; he had betrayed his Church, and his Church was the bond of union of races that for centuries had remained faithful to the Imperial idea. Four years later the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem denounced the 'robber-synod of Florence.'

Meanwhile the principle of nationality, abandoned by the Greeks, began to manifest a sturdy growth among the Western peoples. Charles of France, the feudal superior of a nobility ruined by the long wars with England, was surrounding himself with new men that were his creatures, thereby laying the foundations of a consolidated France under an absolute monarchy. He called loudly on Pope and Council to end their differences, and then confirmed the decisions of a national synod held at Bourges, which, by a 'Pragmatic Sanction,' overrode all mandates of the Pope, cut off his revenues, determined French ecclesiastical rights, and practically created a French national church, subordinate to the king. German rulers also lectured the Council, and inclined towards the establishment of a national church for the whole German land. John of Lysura, a German who had been educated in Italy, was the soul of the movement. Diet followed diet; the princes declared their neutrality, March 17, 1438, and, on March 26 in the following year, the Diet of Mainz copied the example of the Synod of Bourges. Though Eugenius was growing stronger than the Council, the power of the mediæval Papacy had become a little faint and unimpressive; the Papal taxes were resented as a baneful outrage; the feeling of national independence

was spreading throughout Europe. The Council despatched anxious missions to Germany and elsewhere. In these legations Æneas, who had manifested his powers in the speech for Pavia, was called on to take a subordinate part.

He had cast in his lot with the Council. He had little more natural liking or aptitude for theology than for law, but he possessed quite as much capacity for effective action in a council-chamber as for the quieter but more enduring communications of the study. Environment counts hardly less than essential nature in the development of character; it is the chief determinant in the direction taken by power. Æneas was cast into cross-currents of theology and politics, and he was carried along by the momentum of the forces which played around him. 'I was like a young bird just flown from the nest when I came from Siena; I was raw and inexperienced; we deemed that to be true which everybody said; we did not suspect their statements': it is thus that, many years later, he wrote to the rector of the University of Köln.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, at first, he concerned himself very little with theological discussion: he accepted the view current at Basel, and he enjoyed the skill with which he could endow dull theological propositions with literary grace, and so gain the applause of learned men. He was needy, and one must live as one can, not as one would. There is even a pleasure in adroitly steering one's bark through troubled waters. But he never sold his soul for wealth, though he was influenced by a love of decent comfort and refinement and lettered ease. He spent his

<sup>1</sup> Letter of August 13, 1447, ed. Fea, *loc. cit.*

leisure with other young secretaries and scholars, attached to the Council, in discussing the classical authors and philosophy and the merits of women and wine. He was witty, good humoured and kindly, and men sought his society. He was a popular member of the light-hearted circle of young men that he calls 'the Basel Academy';<sup>1</sup> they were occupied throughout the day in the pressure of business or the pursuit of learning; they sought relaxation in the immediacy and joy of life, and passed hilarious nights together. Half-suffocated in the grey tide of affairs, they exulted to escape to more cheerful fields, and it must be owned that they held no more passionate prejudice for chastity than other men of their time.<sup>2</sup>

Then came the schism within the Council. Æneas was a many-sided man and could see many sides of a question. 'The more you know of a subject the greater may be your doubt concerning it,' he was wont to say.<sup>3</sup> Was the schism very serious after all? The Universities supported the Council; it was by no means certain that the breach would be permanent. He wrote to his friend Noceto, who was still in the service of Albergati: 'both sides have strong leaders; both sides produce strong arguments; a decision is impossible. The French party has most prelates, but which side has most probity is quite another question. The greater number of theologians are on the legate's side. There you have all the guidance there is. Some are *mendicantes* and others would

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Petrum de Nozto*, September 18, 1453.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Nicol. Amadamum*, 1442 et 1443.

<sup>3</sup> Campanus, *Vita Pii II.*, apud Æn. Silv. *Opera*. Basilee, 1551.

be *manducantes*. Do you ask my meaning? There are very few that I can trust as being led by their conscience.' He believed in the conciliar principle, and, when schism came, that the directive purpose of the Holy Spirit would declare itself in the evolution of events. 'It was with no venal spirit,' he assures us, 'that I held that the Council should not be at the beck of rulers, but should submit itself to the direction of the Holy Spirit.'<sup>1</sup> But he also admits that his chief desire at this time was to get on in the world. 'Then I was a layman, and I shared in the general malice of the laity against the Church, nor was I so anxious to discover truth as to secure my own advancement.' He was conscious of great powers requiring a wide field for their due exercise; his nature was almost encyclopædic in its scope, and to satisfy it some secure position must be obtained. He had a keen zest for life; the desire of the cultivated humanist to make all things go pleasantly; to speak smoothly and avoid all causes of offence. Many motives conflict in a complex nature; no solitary impulse is likely to dominate it. His letters are remarkable for their candour. That he took chiefly an academic interest in the discussions at Basel is clear from them. He was not, at this time, a member of the Council. But the atmosphere he breathed was thick with charges against the misgovernment of Eugenius. 'No one among those at Basel might be listened to if he defended the Roman Curia or gave Eugenius a favourable word. But whoever spoke ill of the Roman See, condemned Eugenius, and detested the Curia, was held in the highest

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. retract., loc. cit.*

consideration.'<sup>1</sup> 'We wrote letters and pamphlets whereby we got high praise and we were very proud of them.'<sup>2</sup> So wrote Æneas in his retractations. His inner life was set on letters and success and amusement.

The Pope was deemed by the great majority of the Council to be contumacious. It probably never entered Æneas's mind to desert to the Papal side. Cesarini thought very highly of him as a scholar,<sup>3</sup> but that great figure dominated the memory of Pius the Pope more than it did the mind of Æneas the secretary. 'Often we find in a footstep what we failed to see in a face.' Æneas had no very deep spiritual perceptions at this time; the strife around him was vital, but it was not of a character calculated to stir his nature to its depths.

He was capable of great personal loyalty, and an event now happened which bound him to the conciliar side. Francesco di Picciolpassi, Archbishop of Milan, was a man not unlearned. The light, easy, vivid style of the secretary so took his fancy that he asked Æneas to polish his own work. The speech for Pavia had elicited thanks from the Duke of Milan, and Æneas hoped to get employment in the ducal service. The Archbishop offered him the Provostship of S. Lorenzo in Milan—a position which could be held by one who was practically a layman—that is to say, one in minor orders—below the rank of sub-deacon and untrammelled by priestly vows. But the chapter had selected its own man, and a dispen-

<sup>1</sup> In Fea, C., *Pius II. a calumniis vindic. : Ep. retract.*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *Bulla retract.*, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> See the letter of May 1, 1443.

sation was required from the Council to overrule the chapter. Æneas petitioned the Council for a dispensation, and his petition was contested. But opposition to him was directed less by principle than by personal jealousy. He made an able appeal: 'You will act according to your sense of what is right, Fathers,' he said. 'I do not ask you to decide contrary to what you deem honour to require at your hands. Should you decide in my favour, however, I should prefer such a token of your good-will, even if I never got the office, to the office itself as conferred by any mere capitular election.'<sup>1</sup> Such sleek blandiloquence was irresistible. The Council readily complied. But it should be remarked that, in issuing a dispensation, it arrogated to itself a privilege which it had denied to the Pope.

After the plague, Æneas rode to Milan only to find the Provostship filled up by the duke, and clamoured for by a Papal nominee. Æneas petitioned the duke, and still hoped for success. He threw away fifty ducats in fees besides the expenses of more than one journey over the Alps.<sup>2</sup> On his return to Basel, the archbishop requested him, although a layman, to preach for him on the day of St. Ambrose, that saint being the patron of Milan. The congregation, composed of scholarly and distinguished men, listened with rapt attention. Here were no dull, threadbare platitudes, no dreary outpourings of scholastic theology, but words that were alive, happy illustrations drawn from Holy Writ, and still happier quotations from those heathen authors that all men loved and admired.<sup>3</sup> Æneas tells us that he was of opinion that the Classics

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *loc. cit.* 149.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.* 292.    <sup>3</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

furnish the soundest, practical guidance for life.<sup>1</sup> His brilliant audience were warm in their congratulations.<sup>2</sup>

He soon rose rapidly in the service of the Council, especially under the Anti-Pope it elected. In a year or two he became scriptor, then transcriber of protocols; then corrector, or overseer of the scribes; then he was promoted to posts usually reserved for doctors of canon law, becoming first, abbreviator, an officer entrusted with letters and the less important documents of the Council, and afterwards superintendent of abbreviators. He was often appointed to the Committee of Faith, sitting among theologians, and was sometimes chosen to be its President; and, more than once, he was selected to be of the Committee of Twelve.<sup>3</sup> His gracious bearing, his amiability, his great mental endowments, and his discretion marked him out for diplomacy; and he was sent with missions, thrice to Strassburg, twice to Constance, once, at least, both to Frankfort and Savoy. Gratitude demanded, his duty required that he should defend the Council that he approved, that employed him, and that gave him advancement: intellectual assent and obligation conspired to make him the Council's man. The ink flew from his facile, willing pen in numerous tractates. 'It caused me no blush,' so he says a few years later, 'to write pamphlets and foolishly attack Papal authority, nor,' adds he with simple and characteristic vanity, 'was the name of Æneas of small account among the

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Epistola ad Sigismundum, Ducem Austriae*, December 3, 1443.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *De vir. clar.*, xxi.

<sup>3</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

enemies of the Roman Curia.'<sup>1</sup> It may be doubted whether these writings were inspired so much by polemical impulse or a strong sense of obligation as by the delight of a ready penman in his skill—the pleasure he takes in lucid exposition and happy illustration and clear, pregnant phrase.<sup>2</sup> The sound of his own sentences probably had a charm for Æneas greater than the attraction of conciliar principles. For this Voigt chose to pillory him. Seldom have three closely printed volumes of accurate research been marred by more persistent anxiety to brand a man with the worst motives, or by such deliberate refusal to entertain those more charitable interpretations of human character which, oftener than not, are nearest the truth.

His earlier literary activities had quite another direction. At Basel as at Siena he had indulged in day-dreams. Platina credits him with three thousand poems.<sup>3</sup> He sang of wine and women; he wrote satires and eclogues and elegies after the manner of the Ancients. The *Nymphilexis*, an erotic poem of at least two hundred lines, has perished; only the dedication to his friend Mariano de Sozzini remains.<sup>4</sup> Campano tells us it was sprightly and spirited, but

<sup>1</sup> See the *Epistle of Retraction*, written to the Rector of Köln. 1447. Ed. Fea, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> His *History of the Council*, to some extent a polemical tract of this period, is full of pithy, pregnant remarks: e.g., 'There are none to whom some happiness does not fall, whom God does not somehow recompense here; and obstacles that are like mountains may glow with celestial light'; 'A man is most shocked by vices that he himself is not guilty of'; 'Worth without power is a mockery'; 'Such is the essential power of goodness that its very foe is compelled to strive for it.'

<sup>3</sup> Platina, *Vita Pii II.*

<sup>4</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Mar. de Soc.*, March 1, 1435.



the metre was not too correct. In truth his verse had not the inevitableness and spontaneity that belongs to the born poet; the lines did not come singing into his brain. He merely turned eloquent prose into passable verse. Yet his contemporaries thought highly of him as a poet. These poetical exercises did him the usual good service of making him master of a large vocabulary and teaching him the value of point. He learned how effective is the precise epithet; how that is the best style which best brings the subject quite home to the reader's mind. Later in life he wrote plays and brilliant dialogues; later still he indulged in hymns and epitaphs, and, when he became Pope, he still amused himself by capping rhymes with Campano, and he versified on religious subjects.

But his letters have a unique charm. He was a voluminous correspondent, and he took no pains to put on disguise with his friends. One sees the man just as he was, without any self-consciousness. If he poses, it is just as a child might do. In reading them one is attracted to a welcome personality, a warm friend, who chats and sometimes grows eloquent. His style is always fresh, though, perhaps, a little overcharged with those literary reminiscences, Scriptural and classical, that the taste of his age required. Ideas and emotions and prejudices chase each other like the clouds: the momentary feeling is there, the passing half-thought, the fleeting impulse. Hence it is dangerous and unfair to fix Æneas by a single unguarded expression. The letters reveal a man chatty but wise, and sympathetic; not devoid of human frailty himself, and therefore condoning

the weaknesses of other folk. No painter ever fixed the inmost soul of his sitter on canvas with greater candour than Æneas reveals himself in his letters; no man has ever laid his soul more bare, or with so little concern.

Soon after the stormy sittings at Basel, Sigismund, who had restored some shadow of authority to his high office, died, and on March 18, 1438, the day after the declaration of German neutrality, Albert of Austria, his sister's son, was appointed to fill the vacant throne. The Council sent an embassy to congratulate the new monarch, and of this legation Æneas found himself a member. He speaks of Albert as 'a man of great stature, a mighty hunter, ready in warfare, better at deeds than words, looking up to men on whose opinion he confided rather than relying on his own judgement. His complexion was dark, his eyes fierce, he hated all manner of wickedness.'<sup>1</sup> Æneas found his old master, the Bishop of Novara, at Vienna, whither he had been sent as the envoy of Milan. The bishop got him to write a Latin speech, whereof the king understood not one word. Eugenius sent ambassadors too, but Albert would declare neither for Pope nor Council. His position was too uncertain. He was King of Hungary, but his hold of the country was not strong, and the Turkish terror overshadowed the Hungarian crown, while Bohemia was still in revolt. The Emperor was feebler than any of the princes that had elected him: the brief resuscitation of Imperial prestige by Sigismund perished with that monarch.

Æneas was shocked at the complete ignorance of

<sup>1</sup> Æneas Silvius in Palacky, *Italienische Reise*, 116.

the Austrians of all the refinements of life. He found them innocent of learning, barbarous in their manners, untouched by the ideality, the unsealing of the spirit, the unveiling of beauty, the warmth and glow of life that Italy knew. The Austrians were still a dull, gross, and indecorous people.

He rode back through a famished country, for the crops had failed. 'In Bavaria, children, both boys and girls, clamoured for bread and fought for a crust as dogs will for a bone.'<sup>1</sup> As was usual in the Middle Ages famine was followed by pestilence. Next year (A.D. 1439) a grim and inexorable horror took up its abode in Basel. It was the loathsome, dreaded plague. Three hundred dead bodies and more were carried every night to the pits; in all, five thousand people perished. The pestilence spared neither old nor young: the Patriarch of Aquileia, well stricken in years, the youthful Pontano, already the foremost of jurists, succumbed. The virile illusion that man can command his destinies—that support of vigorous manhood—was broken: abject fear fell on all. Æneas had the courage to stand beside and comfort the dying Pontano; he gently urged him to submit to the will of God, and meet the inevitable with manly courage. In the watches of that same night, at the very hour when a fellow-countryman was being borne to the grave, he felt that he himself was ill, and, seeking for the fatal swelling, discovered it. A friend and his own servant bravely elected to watch by his side. But they called in an ignorant practitioner, because a certain Parisian doctor, who was credited with skill, had the common weakness of his profession: he was a

<sup>1</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

sceptic. The quack, 'since the left groin was affected, opened a vein in the left foot; sleep was forbidden for a whole day and part of the night; then a powder was mixed up, and had to be drunk, but the nature of this the physician refused to state.'<sup>1</sup> Local applications were used, but Æneas grew worse and worse. For six days and six nights he tossed about in fever, and was tortured by intolerable headache. He was supposed to be dying; a priest was fetched; he made confession, took the sacrament, was anointed, and looked death in the face. That is no unwholesome experience for any man in the pride of life. He recovered by degrees, but it was reported that he was dead, and the rumour reached Milan. And so he lost all prospect of obtaining the provostship, for the duke put some one else in the office. But he would not abandon hope of recovering it, and continued to petition Visconti. He could even deal with the report in a spirit of grim humour. 'If I were indeed defunct,' he wrote to the duke (long after he was aware of the true fact), 'if I were indeed dead, as my foes have reported to your highness, I should hardly be now writing to you, unless such a thing is possible to the dead. But, by the indulgence of Heaven, I assure you that I still enjoy the upper air.'

Probably the spirit of religious prejudice that excluded the doctor from Paris also prevented his friends from calling in a necromancer, the last resource in such cases. But Æneas would never have permitted it so long as consciousness remained. Once, after one of his many journeys to Milan, he lay there, sick of fever, for seventy-five days, and they brought a

<sup>1</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

magic-worker to his bedside, but Æneas would have none of him, though he was reputed to have cured two thousand soldiers in Piccinino's camp. While still an invalid he cured himself by riding over the high passes of the mountains to Basel.<sup>1</sup> His attitude towards necromancy is shown, as well as his painstaking courtesy and sense of humour, by a later letter, written to his brother: 'The bearer of this came to me to ask if I knew of a Mount of Venus in Italy, where magic arts are taught. His master, a Saxon and a great astronomer, is desirous of becoming a pupil. I told him I knew a certain Porto Venere very well' (the Harbour of Venus), 'as being a port on the rocky coast of Liguria, not far from Carrara, for I passed three nights in sleep there on the road to Basel. And I found for him that there is a mountain called Eryx, in Sicily, which, once upon a time, was sacred to Venus, but I could find nothing about magic being taught there. Then, while talking, I remembered hearing that near Nursia in the old duchy, in Umbria, beneath a precipice, there lies a cave whence water flows, and that witches, dæmons, and spirits of the night frequent it, and that a sufficiently audacious man may hold converse with departed spirits and acquire magical arts there. I had not bothered my head about it, for, if that is the way in which knowledge is to be acquired, one is better without it.'<sup>2</sup>

As an officer of the Council, Æneas felt obliged to continue the employment of his ready pen in defence of the conciliar principle, and the Council was equally bound to recompense his services. He was presented

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Opera omnia*, p. 531, *et seq.* Basileæ, 1553.

to a canonry at Trient, a position which a layman might hold. But when he arrived there he found a German in possession : the chapter had 'foisted a sly, contentious man into the office,' he tells us.<sup>1</sup> The declaration of neutrality had thrown the German Church into the utmost confusion : often, as in this case, there were rival claimants to the same benefice ; a bishop and his chapter would take different sides, and it was no uncommon thing to hear Eugenius anathematised to-day, and the Council to-morrow, from the same pulpit.<sup>2</sup> Both ecclesiastical and political anarchy reigned in Germany, and hence the Pragmatic Sanction of that country failed to found a national church.

The Council was presided over by a solitary cardinal (D'Allemand), but it had the strong support of the universities, the discontented, and the great body of reformers ; and, having suspended Eugenius on January 24, 1438, and waited a year and a half for his submission, on June 25, 1439, it declared him deposed. Busy negotiations were carried on with a view to the election of a new Pope. A legation was sent to confer with Amadeo, the hermit-duke, and Æneas was commanded to accompany it ; so once again he found himself sailing down the pleasant lake and received in the country-mansion, where the recluse enjoyed a delightful *villeggiatura*. There was a strong party in the Council that favoured the election of the duke ; there were those that believed him to be a true hermit—one that had voluntarily abandoned the vanities of this world. Moreover, he was wealthy,

<sup>1</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1 ; *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Barnesium*, December 5, 1442.

<sup>2</sup> Pückert, *Die Kurfürstliche Neutralität*, p. 140.

his race was allied by carefully selected marriages with more than one royal house; his domains, occupied by mixed races, and lying between France, Italy, Germany, and Spain, gave him a position of almost cosmopolitan neutrality; the powerful Duke of Milan was for him, he was astute by nature and a prince of vast experience, and seven Savoyard bishops had joined the Council. Truly, he knew but little Latin; but he was clever, and would be able to pick up enough of it to serve every practical purpose.

But, like most possessors of great wealth and power, Amadeo was avid of more. He finessed with the Council, for he desired to be Pope in reality as well as in name and to have an assured income that would more than enable him to support his pretensions. At last he consented to become a candidate. Æneas was now a man of so much importance that the Council wished him to vote at the approaching election, and offered to grant him a dispensation whereby he might become sub-deacon and deacon in a single day. He declined the honour. His refusal has been attributed to interested motives. It has been said that he was not satisfied with the security of the new Pope's position, and was unwilling to compromise himself. But, in preceding schisms, on making submission, Anti-Popes and their adherents always met with honourable treatment and received due recompense. And, indeed, so it fell out with Amadeo and his adherents. Æneas was a keen reader of character. Probably he was not altogether satisfied with Amadeo; probably, too, while he was willing to defend the Council as its servant, he was not anxious to undertake the direct personal responsibility of voting for an

Anti-Pope; perhaps, too, he saw that by the election of a monarch the Council would abrogate its position. But there was a stronger reason still. So far, he was in minor orders only; he was really a layman; he had not taken the vow of celibacy. And he felt himself little capable of keeping that vow. 'I cannot trust myself to take a vow of continence.' It is thus that, four years later, with the utmost frankness, he writes concerning the priesthood to a friend: 'it is truly a virtue, but more easily honoured in lip-service than by conduct, and is more in keeping with the philosophical than with the poetical temperament.'<sup>1</sup> Such a scruple had little weight with the priesthood, of his time! The Bishop of Lübeck proposed at the Council that the clergy should be allowed to marry, for, so far from keeping their vow, hardly one priest in a thousand could be found without a concubine, and the confessional was suspected of abuse. Bistucci tells us that Cardinal Cesarini stood out a marvel to all men, for he was believed to have remained chaste throughout his whole life.

Æneas, then, refused to take the vows; but he accepted the post of Clerk of the Ceremony at the election. On November 5, 1439, Amadeo was declared Pope. He took the title of Felix v., and on June 24, in the following year, he made a pompous entry into Basel, accompanied by his two sons (to whom he now resigned the government of his domains) and by all the chivalry of Savoy. Æneas formed one of the escort that conducted him thither. Precisely a month later, Felix v. was crowned with a costly tiara amidst the jubilation of fifty thousand spectators.

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Petrum de Nozeto, February 18, 1444.*



On the recommendation of D'Allemand, Æneas was appointed Papal Secretary. He had to take his part in the diplomacy of Felix's court. Each Pope angled for the support of the European powers, but these had little to gain from either Pontiff, and indeed were very busy about their own affairs. The zeal of the Duke of Milan cooled. He had secured his end: there was now a rival to Eugenius the Venetian, the friend of his own rivals and enemies, the republics of Venice and Florence. The French king refused to support Felix, and told him he would do better to show his wonted wisdom, and employ himself in giving back peace to the Church. The inner reason of this excellent advice was that Eugenius favoured the claims of the house of Anjou to the Neapolitan throne. The rival of Anjou, the King of Aragon, hung aloof, for he still hoped to win Eugenius over to support his own pretensions. The universities stood alone as the firm supporters of Felix. The Cardinals he created were less learned, less gifted in diplomacy, and less renowned for piety than those of Eugenius. The Council that set out to reform the Church had miserably failed to do so, and now it had established a disgraceful schism. The election of Felix vastly diminished its importance, and, though it sat for four years longer, its time was wholly occupied in adjudicating on wretched squabbles about benefices. And want of means compelled both Felix and his Council to continue the very abuses they had condemned, and that had called the Council into being. Æneas found he had accepted a position in which advocacy was expected from him. His sense of loyalty, his immediate and unquestionable duty

appeared to him to be the doing of his best for his employers. And this was the easier, because it was no light task for any man to disentangle the confusion of rights and usurpations and injustices of the ecclesiastical problem. Both sides adduced strong theological arguments; both sheltered themselves behind ecclesiastical theory. Felix's position was by no means hopeless; that of Eugenius was stronger, but by no means established; the Holy Spirit had not yet given unmistakable evidence of His intention; it was hard for any temperate thinker to come to a conclusion. Cesarini was a learned theologian, an acute logician, an earnest man, yet he had hesitated for a long while before he went over to Eugenius. In most of the great questions that divide mankind, the precise nature of the forces that conflict, the real issues they involve, the unchallengeable line of action they demand, are rarely manifest to the men with whom the momentous decision rests. The real problems at issue are revealed only to posterity, when the fatal act is long over, when its results have come into being and a new generation is already confronted with new perplexities.

And Piccolomini was a humanist first. He was in love with life, he had no inborn taste for theology, he took no delight in ecclesiastical strife, and, so far as his position forced the serious consideration of these questions on him, his judgement inclined him towards the assertion of Church freedom, and his interest induced him to side with Felix and the Council. His tractates of this period merely invest the arguments of others with literary grace. They are presented in so novel a way that they overcome the repugnance

of the natural man to the dryness of the subject-matter, and hold him captive. They present the arguments of opponents with perfect fairness, but there is a dexterous thrust, here and there, to the end Æneas had in view. He was convinced that in His own good time the Holy Spirit watching over the guidance of God's Church would manifest His will.

Perhaps the ablest of these productions is a set of Dialogues, the occasion of which was an answer given by the University of Köln to questions set by the archbishop of that city. The last of these was as to the legitimacy of the Council sitting at Basel, and the University declared it to be legitimate—unless it had been lawfully translated. 'The sting of the scorpion lay in its tail,' said Æneas, and he proceeded to extract it. The Dialogues are works of consummate art; their setting is truly delightful. Æneas had no real creative faculty; perhaps his only original contribution to human knowledge was his perception of the dependence of a people's development on the physical characteristics of their land. But he had wit and imagination, and he never touched a theme without endowing it with freshness and charm. Poggio had already imitated the dialogues of Cicero, and Æneas improved on the Italian model. He and Martin Lefranc, a French co-secretary, have been wandering in the country, and they are returning towards evening to Basel. They praise the delights of country-life: the thoughts are Virgil's, the prose is Æneas's own. They perceive other members of the Council, Nicholas of Cusa and Stefano di Caccia, a jurist of Novara, standing, talking earnestly together. So they hide behind some bushes and listen. Both

pairs dispute in turn. The discussions are managed with great literary skill: we never get wearied, for scholastic argument and quotation are relieved by reminiscences of the classics and historical memories and archæological observations. Then Cusa and Caccia stop their discussion to say the Canonical hours, a duty which Æneas characteristically observes, 'may be a relief to the dreary life of the monastery, but becomes an irksome task to the scholar.' Then Æneas and Martin discover themselves, and Æneas contrives to hint to the Council that he could do with more means. It is most gracefully done: he has nothing at home for his evening meal, so he tells the others he will invite himself to sup with them.

The arguments are perfectly familiar and worn, but he introduces them with a vivacity and force very foreign to their original authors; the interest never flags; there is keen thrust and satiric quip; the portentous activity of the religious tongue, and the real indifference of the theologic heart are not spared. Here is no waving of dull banners of pedantry, but the quick clash of sharpened intellects; yet the antagonists fully respect each other; they remain friends in spite of difference, and go to take their supper together in the heartiest good fellowship. And the free breeze of heaven blows, all the while, over the landscape of which the disputants are the central figures.

Another delicate hint that Æneas remains insufficiently remunerated is conveyed to his employers in the introduction to his *History of the Council*, a work in three books, which wraps up party-advocacy in

the form of attractive narrative. It ends with the election of Felix. (Later in life Æneas began to rewrite the story of the Council, but left it unfinished.) 'I really ought to be putting by money for my old age,' runs the introduction, 'and not expending my powers on the writing of history. My friends complain. They ask, "What are you about, Æneas? Have you no shame at being a pauper at your time of life? You ought to know that a man should be in his full vigour at twenty, become cautious by thirty, and well-to-do by the time he has reached forty. After then it is too late to repair mistakes." I must grant that they are right, and, time after time, I have turned my back on poetry and history, yet, like a poor moth, I flutter back to the flame. Such is my nature, and so must it remain. After all, poor people as well as the rich manage to get through life. If it is wretched to find oneself poor in one's old age, it is still worse to be old without the solace of letters. So I will put up with the will of Heaven, and take up the burden of my old age, as Horace says, "neither bearing it ignobly nor without a lute."'

Literature and the duties of correspondence were by no means Æneas's sole employment. He was frequently sent on missions to various parts of the Continent. He learned to endure the heats of summer and the rigours of winter, riding along unsafe roads, and finding them always rough and sometimes well-nigh impassable. Occasionally he would find a welcome at rich abbeys and be sumptuously fed; often he had to put up at humble priories that could only provide scanty fare and were wretched shelters from wind and weather, or at worse inns, where the coat-

of-arms, gaudily painted over the doorway, was scarcely matched by the dirty, plain-deal furniture within doors, but nevertheless was the token of distinguished patronage. Here he would be kept waiting for his meals until all possible guests were assembled, whittle what salt fish or ham he wanted with his own knife, take his soup or gruel with a wooden spoon, wipe his mouth with a coarse, beer-stained table-cloth, and be ushered by a surly landlord to an unclean bedchamber, and discover that he had to lie in foul linen with human and other companions. No wonder that, when he became Pope, his cardinals complained that he was so little attentive to comfort that he would lodge himself and them in any miserable monastery or vile village.

## CHAPTER VII

ÆNEAS CROWNED AS POET—THE IMPERIAL  
CHANCELLERY—INNER STRIFE

THE Emperor Albert died on October 27, 1439. The Teutonic tradition of an elected war-chief was preserved by the Empire, though there was a strong tendency to favour a single family. In theory, it was held that the Imperial office was too sacred to be transmitted by blood: practically, it suited the princes to confine the dignity to one House, because the strongest candidate was rarely to be found in it, and the reign of a weak prince undermined Imperial authority and so left them at liberty to fight one another. Nor was the practice quite unacceptable to the Papacy, for a feeble secular monarchy gave all the greater prestige to the triple crown. The electors were seven in number: the three Archbishops of Mainz, Trier, and Köln, who represented the Church, the King of Bohemia, the Dukes of Saxony and Brandenburg, and the Palgrave of the Rhine. Sometimes, in days of peril, a strong Kaiser was desirable, but there was no need to elect a strong successor to Albert; there was nothing to fear from France, assailed as she was by both Burgundy and England; Burgundy was fully occupied with France, and the chief desire of the electors was to reduce the Imperial

power and be free to gain, each one, his own ends. They elected Frederick, the brother of the dead Emperor, the youthful head of the house of Hapsburg, a poor prince, whose revenue was vastly inferior to that of such states as Milan or Florence, over which he was supposed to exercise the Imperial authority.

Frederick was a big, well-built man in his twenty-fourth year: he had been better educated than Albert. He was a phlegmatic person, however, whose dull feelings and slow intellect were reflected in his stolid face. 'His expression never changes,' wrote Æneas to the Imperial chancellor.<sup>1</sup> His nature was cold; he disliked wine, lived chiefly on vegetables, and his private character was irreproachable; but this was less due to moral conviction than to constitutional tepidity. He disliked the coarse jests in which his courtiers indulged, was retiring in society, seldom spoke, and listened with closed eyes.<sup>2</sup> He was unimaginative, wanting in enterprise, and had no genius for great affairs. But he was industrious, methodical, and attentive to detail, however unimportant, and he was careful to safeguard his purse. In fact, the burgher's habit would have become this dull, decorous person; he would have made a staid and successful Nürnberg or Augsburg trader. Yet the apparent man, as he counts more or less among his fellows, is often grotesquely at variance with his own heart's desire. It is strange to find this prosaic, parsimonious monarch possessed by a passion for precious stones, and sparing no expense to acquire them. And he

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Caspar. Schlick*, December 28, 1443.

<sup>2</sup> *Campanus, Joh. Ant., Ep., vi. 15.*



took an interest in 'the most innocent of human occupations'—he was fond of the garden.

The schism in the Church and the neutral attitude assumed by the German princes caused the summoning of numerous ineffective diets. Æneas remarks that 'each diet was pregnant, for it gave birth to another.' Embassies from both Popes attended these Councils of the Empire, and Æneas, now become the secretary of Felix v., was sent to one held at Frankfurt in 1442. This brought him into contact with the Bishop of Chiemsee, an ecclesiastic who prided himself on his appreciation of style, and the wily Æneas perceived in this an opportunity to secure a patron. He sent a specimen of his own scholarship to the bishop in the form of a letter, and begged him to condescend to correct it. Of course there was nothing to correct; on the contrary, the bishop was glad to get Æneas to write letters for him, and then he was wont to spoil them, saying that, if he did not do so, they would not be taken for his.<sup>1</sup> The Archbishop of Trier also took a great fancy to the Papal Secretary, and these patrons brought him and his writings under the notice of the Emperor.

There was a popular belief that the Caesars of ancient Rome had been wont to crown the illustrious poets of antiquity on the Capitol. Petrarch was crowned there, in the preceding century, by reason of this tradition; the Emperor Sigismund had crowned Beccadelli at Siena; and, at various times and places, similar honours had been bestowed by Italian rulers. The German monarch was quite willing to renew Imperial traditions and emulate his more civilised

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Proem. ad Comment. in Anton. Panormit.*



ÆNEAS RECEIVING THE POET'S CROWN FROM FREDERICK III.  
*Pinturicchio, Siena.*



neighbours. So a diploma set forth that 'We, being desirous of following in the footsteps of our predecessors, who, as we believe, were wont to crown distinguished poets on the Capitol, after the manner of a triumph . . . do now resolve to distinguish the unparalleled and illustrious Æneas Silvius,' etc.<sup>1</sup> The honour was conferred with great parade; there would be eulogy, reading of his verses, disputation, and finally Caesar would put a laurel wreath on his brow. Henceforward, until he becomes a bishop, his letters bear the superscription 'Æneas Silvius, the Poet.'

The Bishop of Chiemsee asked him whether he would accept a post that was vacant in the Imperial Chancellery, which was quite distinct from the Austrian. Felix gave him much work and little reward; even if he put in a word for a friend it fell on deaf ears.<sup>2</sup> He had spent himself freely in Felix's service and he felt aggrieved, for, at Rome, unmarried secretaries might expect a great ecclesiastical career. A few months later we find him writing to a friend, complaining that at Basel they are not in the habit of rewarding meritorious service, which causes a thinking man to question the validity of their claims.<sup>3</sup> Æneas was not the only one in whom a latent suspicion of their flag has been aroused to activity by non-recognition of their merits. But Felix was obliged to keep all benefices in his own hands, and the Council assented to this, for it was not always

<sup>1</sup> The diploma bears the date July 27, 1442, and is given in Chmela, *J. Registers*, vol. i. Appendix, No. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, vol. ii. p. 243 and note 2. London, 1878.

<sup>3</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad amicum quendam Basiliensem*, October 1443.

easy to meet the expenses of his Papacy. There can be little question that the impecuniosity of Æneas helped to open his eyes to the doubtful legitimacy of the Baselite Pope and how his authority was on the wane. But he would not leave Felix until he could do so honourably. He waited until Frederick reached Basel (November 1442), and then the Emperor asked the Pope for the service of his secretary, and Felix consented, solely because he was unwilling to offend so important a person. Æneas left Basel with the Emperor, but Felix expected him to act as his agent, and he did so for a few months. He must have been aware that he would find no easy bed at Vienna; he knew the Cimmerian darkness that brooded over the land, how depressing it would prove to one brought up in the sunshine of the Italian renaissance to dwell deep in Germany; how repulsive would be the habits and manners of his future colleagues. But he found his own views about the Schism were far from being fixed convictions; they were suffering alteration; they did not justify him in suddenly turning over to Eugenius, and it would not have been decent to do so, even if he had been assured of a good reception. Caspar Schlick, the head of the Imperial Chancellery and the confidential adviser of Frederick, had a partiality for Italian scholars; he had once been the guest of Æneas's aunt and had stood godfather to her son: something might be hoped from him. These were the reasons why he 'was unwilling to go straight over to Eugenius.'<sup>1</sup> Æneas was in the habit of setting down every transitory feeling, every stray thought that might visit

<sup>1</sup> He merely records the fact. See *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

him while he was wielding the pen, but there would seem to be rooted conviction in his complaint to his friend Giovanni Campisio. He regrets the waste of so much time at Basel: 'There I found myself stranded,' he says, 'and I knew not how to escape save by burrowing yet deeper into German earth.'<sup>1</sup> Even in the miseries of his new position, he could write how happy he felt 'to have escaped from the bickerings of priests and to be able to get some enjoyment out of life.'<sup>2</sup>

Caspar Schlick, to whom he looked for advancement, was the capable son of an incapable father. He was of burgher descent, had acquired a knowledge of both civil and canon law, and combined these achievements with native shrewdness and marvellous business capacity. He was a rare reader of men, but he was incapable of entertaining great projects, and his conduct of public affairs was marred by a private vice—he was avaricious. Often he failed to think broadly for his master, because he was thinking narrowly for himself; but his craft was consummate, his tact perfect, and so he was able to cover up his defects. In other respects his private character stood no higher nor any lower than that of the average man of his time; he had not disdained to add to the other services he rendered the Emperor Sigismund by playing the part of Sir Pandar, and, could it have entered into his head to refuse, there were plenty of knightly courtiers who would have replaced him in that congenial office. He was brave; he had fought with distinction against both Hussite and Turk; he

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Johan. Campisium*, 1445.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1443.

had acquired vast political experience, for he had been a member of many embassies, and Frederick was the third Caesar who chose him for confidant and adviser.

The politics of the Imperial Court presented the familiar spectacle of two contending parties. The nobles in the Council represented the claims of their order; ecclesiastics and jurisconsults supported the demands of the burghers. The Kurfürst of Mainz was the nominal head of the Chancellery, but Schlick was, to all intents and purposes, Chancellor. Under him were the secretaries, and Æneas was now appointed of their number. They received no direct payment, nor were they allowed to ask for presents from those who had business with the Chancellery, but they were not prohibited from receiving them.

It was a miserable life. In a letter to Sigismund, the young Duke of Austria,<sup>1</sup> Æneas complains, 'We are all squeezed together in the same abode; many as we are, we eat and drink at the same table. Ants are not more crowded in their habitation than we in our single hall.' And then he gives an illustration of discomfort which shows that a habit, still regarded by the modern Italian as laudable and necessary to health, bears the sanction of time: 'One cannot even spit comfortably, but one must needs soil the clothes of a neighbour.'<sup>2</sup> There was much jealousy among the secretaries too, and, as one older than themselves, a foreigner and a protégé of Schlick, Æneas experienced, to the full, the malice of which these young men were

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Sigismund. Duces Austriae*, December 5, 1443.

<sup>2</sup> See also *Ep. ad Johan. Freund*, June 1, 1445.

capable. They took advantage of Schlick's being away to give the former secretary of a Pope the lowest place at table and the worst of their bad beds; they scoffed at him and flouted him at every turn. It was as well that he did not always understand their cacophonous jeers, for if they spoke German the sneer missed fire; he never gave himself the pains to learn what was, at that time, an unlettered language. When Schlick was away on a mission at Nürnberg, his position became well-nigh unendurable. One Wilhelm Tag, a Bavarian, was left in charge of the Chancellery, and this man had a rooted antipathy to all Italians; he treated Æneas so contemptuously that the Chancellor, on his return, put him under Æneas, 'so that all might learn how easily the humble may be exalted and the proud abased.'<sup>1</sup> Æneas wrote to a young friend, 'There is, believe me, no more hard-hearted camp than the court of a prince. There, envy, jealousy, calumny, hatred, enmity, infamy, insult and ceaseless torment take up their abode—things that only patience can subdue.'<sup>2</sup> We are reminded of the celebrated outburst of Guarini in *Il Pastor Fido*. Æneas was dainty in his food: he found the fare provided for him coarse and detestable. He was naturally refined and his taste had been cultivated: the brutal forms that vice took in Germany offended his Italian sensibilities. He could not suffer himself to degenerate, though he tells us that he believes it easier for an Italian to drop into such German ways as gobbling at table than for a German to acquire the finer manners of

<sup>1</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Caspar. de Fara*, October 5, 1443.



Italy.<sup>1</sup> However, he made the best of the situation, and doubtless enjoyed the painting of his miseries, for he does this with rare humour.<sup>2</sup> He was only admitted into the presence of Caesar at public audiences. The cook, the cupbearer, the falconer, the stable-boy, and the dog-keeper were passed on into the royal presence, but the scholar, though poet-laureate, was told by the porter to be about his own business.<sup>3</sup> 'Our only concern is to curry favour with the great, and hold on to it,' he writes. 'If men were contented to be humble in station, and were as eager after their soul's welfare, few would be found indulging in such a scramble.' He was conscious, at least, of the possibility of a nobler kind of life than the pursuit of court-favour.

If he breathed an atmosphere of insult and intrigue within doors, he had to put up with equally coarse manners without, and submit to the scorn of an arrogant nobility. No one seems to have had very much polish of manner or culture of intellect to commend him. He tells us how Heinrich, Count of Goriz, who was the father of two little sons by a noble and virtuous Hungarian lady, was wont to awaken them from deep sleep in the middle of the night, and ask them if they were not thirsty. Then he would get out of bed and force them to drink wine. The poor children, dead asleep, might murmur and spew it out of their mouths, whereupon the father would turn to his spouse in high disgust and dudgeon and shout, 'These brats be none of mine, strumpet ;

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *De liberor. educ. apud Opera quæ extant omnia.* Basileæ, 1551. fol. 965 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, *Tractatus de Curialium miseriis.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, *Pentalogus.*

no sons of mine would sleep the whole night through without drinking.’<sup>1</sup> Here, even if great folk had patronised him, was no society for the cultured Italian scholar; one, moreover, who, in spite of his own noble birth, had the true democratic feeling of an Italian. In his novel *De Duobus Amantibus*, as well as in his *History of Bohemia* (chap. ii.), he speaks with scorn of mere rank, and describes the ignoble means by which it has usually been obtained. The barons had no other interests than hunting and fishing.<sup>2</sup> Of certain princes, he remarks that such people rejoice in dogs and horses, and will be remembered when they depart this life just as much as their animals. He found little to commend in the professors and students at the University of Vienna. ‘The students,’ he says, ‘give themselves over to pleasure; they are gluttons and wine-bibbers; they prowl the streets at night and attack citizens; their minds are wholly taken up with light women.’<sup>3</sup> He tells us of a Leipzig student ‘who was held in high honour by his fellows, for he had outdrunk fifty of them, and so bore the palm. For there is a custom at the gatherings of the Saxons to give the place of honour to those who can swill the most, and they call the pastime a drinking match.’<sup>4</sup> He describes Neustadt as a city of monks and Jews; Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola are inhabited by barbarians.<sup>5</sup>

He yearned to return to his native Italy. It set

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Comment. in Anton. Panorm.*, i.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, *Ep. ad Johan. Campisium*, July 22, 1444.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, *Ep.* 185., *Opera quæ extant omnia*. Basilee, 1551. fol. 719.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, *Comment. in Anton. Panorm.*, ii.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*, *Ep. ad Caspar Schlick*, March 1444; *ad Johan. Peregallum*, April 16, 1444.

his pulses beating to see the Italian embassies arrive and hear the soft, free flow of his native tongue. He tried to reconcile himself to his fate. He is better off, he says, dwelling with foreigners in plenty than in indigence at home.<sup>1</sup> But waves of severe homesickness swept over his soul, and, at times, almost overwhelmed him. 'There is nothing I have dreaded more,' he writes, 'than to lay my bones in foreign soil, though where they lie does not affect our destination to heaven or hell. But so it is, I know not why, death would come with less of bitterness if I were supported by the arms of brothers, sisters, children, and grandchildren. And is close friendship so readily formed here as at home? Elsewhere, I find no intimacy possible that can be so sweet and enduring.'<sup>2</sup> And, later on, when his prospects had improved, he writes, 'When shall I return to my native land? Oh, that it could be this year! I am on my travels. But whither? In Germany. But to what part? To the Hungarian frontier. Here am I established; here must I live and die, without relatives or friends or acquaintances or the friendly talk of yourself and others. Oh, that I had never seen Basel; then had I died in the land that is home, and lain in the bosom of my progenitors. A crust of bread had been more grateful there than fat-living here. I may say that I am dead already. My life is no better than that of Naso, when he dwelt at Tomi, in banishment. I admit that I shall attain a satisfactory position in the future; my services are recognised. But what is the good of it without companionship?

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Silvii, Ep. ad Hieronymum Senensem*, July 1443.

<sup>2</sup> *Id., Ep. ad Julianum Card. S. Angelo*, May 28, 1444.

Have I then no comrades? Well, truly there are good, sincere folk enough, but they do not take up their abode with me among those things of the mind that I care for,'<sup>1</sup>

Æneas was prudent and patient. He was an eminently companionable man. He spoke all men fair; and the world usually returns us our own treatment of it. When he became Pope, he referred to the time as one when he 'copied the much abused ass that drooped his ears, awaiting the moment when his back might be released from its heavy burden.'<sup>2</sup> He found it difficult to ingratiate himself with one man, a certain John Gers, 'a disagreeable person of somewhat malign nature'—so he describes him.<sup>3</sup> Gers was a domestic tyrant, but showed resentment when Æneas referred to his wife, a plain, stupid woman, as more remarkable for her good disposition than for her other endowments. He got on very well with a certain Michael von Füllendorf, a good-natured Swabian, addicted to women and wine;<sup>4</sup> but Æneas shocked this virtuous gentleman and others by the freedom of a comedy which he wrote in the style of the Latin dramatists. What learning his fellow-secretaries possessed was scholastic, not humanistic; and, whatever we do, a certain code of propriety must be preserved.

The secretary did not neglect to seek the favour of his chief. He took no pains to disguise his motives. He told him that 'a useful friend is more to be sought

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Johan. Campisium*, end of August or beginning of September 1445.

<sup>2</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Johannem Gers*, September 22 and November 3, 1444.

than a merely honest one; for such friendship is of value nowadays; the stoic may prate in his privation about austere virtue; but *that* doctrine has been at a discount this long while.<sup>1</sup> 'We must deal with men as they are'—judgements of which Schlick would heartily approve. Æneas never failed to get the good-will of any one to whom he paid court. He measured his man with almost unerring accuracy, said precisely what would take him, and presented that side of his complex character that would be most likely to please. Schlick admitted him to his table and gave him his confidence.<sup>2</sup>

The frequent journeys to Graz and other places, though 'wild and barbarous races inhabited them,'<sup>3</sup> were a source of pleasure to one who delighted in travel and loved to see everything and record what he saw. He rejoiced to be in the country. When he became Pope, he spoke of himself as 'a lover of woods and one eager for all fresh experience.'<sup>4</sup> When pestilence once drove Frederick to Brück, Æneas found a great charm in scenery so different from that of his Italy. Few men have found greater kinship with Nature in her many attires and in all her changing moods than he. He wrote of Brück as 'a place confronting two sister-streams that unite there, and then flow on as one to the Piave. Here are held fairs at Martinmas that last fully eight days, and I and the rest, being set at liberty, sometimes go and

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Caspar Schlick*, November 1, 1443.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, December 26, 1443.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Johan. Peregallum*.

<sup>4</sup> 'Silvarum amator et varii vivendi cupidus,' a phrase whereon Campano played in a metrical pun:—

'Quod placeant silvæ et magnum lustraverit orbem  
Silvius hac genuit conditione Pater.'

look at the wares, and sometimes take a walk into the country. There, with no little refreshment of soul, you may mark the sunlight smiling on the mountain-slope, the mystery of the forest, and the clearness and purity of the stream.'<sup>1</sup>

Æneas never forgot to keep a smiling face and a pleasant tongue for friend and foe, rich and poor, and, at last, his imperturbable good-humour and kindness prevailed over his colleagues. They were compelled to respect him and even give him their affection. But he did not remain contented with his position; he had not yet found so wide a field as his powers needed; he sought greater independence than an income derived from casual *largesse* might grant. He would not abandon all hope concerning the lost provostship at Milan; he was very persistent in his efforts to recover it, and he persuaded the Emperor to use his influence with Visconti. It was soon after he entered the service of the German Caesar that he wrote the letter to the Duke of Milan, of which a sentence has already been given—an epistle in which the fawning servility then required of the true courtier is relieved by a touch of ironical humour. A certain note of independence, even, may be read between the lines of an epistle that is formally obsequious: the letter hints that Æneas can prove quite as serviceable to the duke as the duke to him. It runs: 'If I were indeed dead, as my foes have told your Highness, I should hardly be writing now, unless by a miracle. But, by the indulgence of Heaven, I am become secretary to the Most Serene King of the Romans, a position which, if not satis-

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Johan. Lauterbach, November 13, 1444.*

factory in all respects, may enable me to do honour to Your Excellency. But, though they have killed me, I may yet contrive to be even more vitally serviceable to your High Honour than a mere living person. I deserve better things, for, that the right lies with me cannot be disputed, and I could be exceedingly useful to you. Wherefore, I beseech your Clemency to turn the matter over and restore my office at S. Lorenzo to me, that I may be bound hand and foot to your Honour in a position that I covet. If you should do so you would attach not myself alone, but would gratify the king, who is writing on my behalf. However, whether you entertain my appeal or no, I am always at your service, but I shall be the more so if I obtain it.'

He tried to ingratiate himself with Sigismund, the youthful Duke of Austria. He hoped to find a Mæcenas in Schlick, and wrote him letters full of mellifluous adaptations of classical poetry. 'I would haunt a cool grove with the Muses,' he says. 'I am out of place herding with the crowd . . . then should my name be not all forgotten by posterity, and most surely so if thou befriend me, O my Caspar, in whose command over my life I cherish pride.'

Schlick was no Mæcenas; pelf and power were his ambition, and he only toyed with the Muses. Æneas saw that it would only be by the exhibition of business ability and industry that he could hope to win the Chancellor's favour; 'nor was he deceived,' he tells us.<sup>1</sup> Convinced of his diplomatic skill, Caspar employed Æneas in an attempt to secure the rich bishopric of Freising for Heinrich Schlick, his brother.

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

Nicodemus, in whose service the secretary had been during early days at Basel, was dead, and so a benefice of unusual value had become vacant. A few months after leaving Basel, Æneas wrote more than one appeal to D'Allemand, Cardinal of Arles, who still remained President of the Council, setting forth the merits of Heinrich (who was really a worthy and excellent man). Of course Frederick had interested himself in the success of his Chancellor's brother. 'I had thought so powerful a prince would have received some attention'—so Æneas wrote. 'However, this expectation was disappointed; the petition met with flat refusal. Meanwhile the chapter, whether lawfully or unlawfully, elected the Cardinal of St. Martin, who is on his way to you for confirmation. Once again His Imperial Dignity writes you, desiring his suspension, and asking you to defer his confirmation. I, also, would urge and entreat you, for the welfare of the Council, not to trifle with the request. For surely it were wise to render such a Prince favourable to yourself and the Council, he being one to whom all eyes are turned, one that neither gifts nor entreaties can persuade to injustice. Heaping annoyance on annoyance will not bend His Clemency from his course. Remember, too, the great influence that Caspar, his Chancellor, has over him, and that, if you gain his favour, you have little to fear from other people.'<sup>1</sup>

Now this Cardinal St. Martin was a natural son of Duke John of Bavaria-Munich; he had declared for Felix, was a personal friend of the all-powerful D'Allemand, had influenced his brother Albert, the

<sup>1</sup> See his two Epistles to D'Allemand of September and October 1443.



reigning duke, in favour of the Anti-Pope, and had written against the neutrality of Germany. The Council still refused the Emperor's request, and stood by St. Martin, while Eugenius supported Heinrich Schlick. This refusal certainly prejudiced Frederick and Caspar in favour of the legitimate Pope, and it did not incline Æneas to remain in close sympathy with Felix, for he deemed his action in this matter of a piece with the failure of the Baselites to fulfil their promises to himself. He writes to a friend, 'The last words you said to me at Basel were that the Holy Pontiff, Felix, would secure me a benefice, whether I were there or away, and you assured me that you would work to that end; but nothing has followed, although I have been of service to our Holy Pontiff with His Majesty the Emperor, and may be so constantly.'<sup>1</sup> Five months later he wrote to his friend Campisio, who was in Eugenius's service, 'Deeds are stronger than promises. The Chancellor is bound, hand and foot, to acknowledge this favour, and, unless I mistake, he will do so. You may persuade the cardinals of this.'<sup>2</sup> Men did not set boundaries between the spiritual and temporal kingdoms in the fifteenth century. Both made one single world of God. We may, perhaps, be confident that the more enlightened churches of to-day are free from such influences and intrigues of earth.

There can be little doubt that Æneas had seen and experienced much at Basel that gave him small confidence in Felix. So far, he was a self-seeker, even as most men were self-seekers in this miserable schism,

<sup>1</sup> October 1443. *Kunde für Oester Geschichtsquellen*, xvi. 345.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Campisium*, February 18, 1444.

one unwilling to risk his own interests, in a measure a disappointed man. There was no question of ecclesiastical reform now, either with Eugenius or with Felix and the Council; each of the rival Popes was supported by a party in Europe whose loyalty sprang from political cleavage and not at all from ecclesiastical conviction. The nations and their princes used the Church to political and even to personal ends. Æneas was no enthusiast; he had suffered the sting of no divine gadfly; he was not the man to suffer deep agony in spiritual wrestlings for truth, to delve in search of it with painful labour, or make for it through blood and tears. He was a man of the world, and knew that the enthusiast, proud of possessing absolute truth, often hugs a false jewel, a one-sided fallacy, to his bosom. He was keenly alert to every side of a question, and he had the defects usually attendant on this quality. His character was open to so many influences, he was tugged at by so many forces in so many different directions, that it was not possible for him to become quite single-minded or the devotee of a solitary idea. For many reasons, both personal and impersonal, his way was by no means clear to him. No one had a stronger sense of duty that was imposed on him; as a servant, he fulfilled the obligations of a servant loyally. We shall see, however, that his mind was not at peace concerning the Church: still less was he at peace with himself. Diplomatic duties often imposed caution, but his letters to his friends are so unrestrained, so entirely without *arrière pensée*, that the man's soul is exposed there, naked, to our view. It is true that he is so sympathetic that he cannot help writing a different sort

of letter to each different sort of man. The discerning eye can read what manner of man the recipient is more readily than the character of the writer. Few folk are aware of how complex the nature of the simplest man is; most are under the illusion that they themselves are quite single-minded; they are incapable of understanding a many-sided character, and think that it cannot be ingenuous and sincere. Now, these easy, familiar letters have little that is disingenuous about them; there are hardly any attempts at self-concealment, and such are quite transparent; Æneas's essential honesty shines forth in them, and he speaks so openly of his own faults and vices that they stand out in very high relief. The absence of any trace of subterfuge produces a positively deceptive effect, and so Æneas has come to be misjudged by scholars incapable of understanding that complexity may be combined with candour. And they have laid particular stress on chance words. But isolated sentiments in the utterances of a man of complex character must be taken in relation to the whole mass.

Let us, with the warning not to be too much influenced by solitary passages, see what he says at this period concerning his relation to the Schism. On leaving Basel, he wrote to Guidoforto, a doctor in both laws, concerning his claim to the provostship and the relations in which he stood to the Duke of Milan. There is a remarkable sentence in this letter which shows that he is seriously perturbed. 'I cannot speak of obedience in other matters, since I follow the king, who is entirely neutral, *though I might write more if it were prudent.*' To the Arch-

bishop of Milan he wrote, December 5, 1442: 'Best of Fathers, write me in such wise *that I may come out from among the indifferent and be made whole*. For I have an inquiring spirit, when my words and deeds, done according to the prince's will, do not put it out of the question (for I wish to limit myself to his intention).' At Vienna he came across Cesarini and Carvajal again. Eugenius had sent them, as his legates, to advance the claims of Ladislas, King of Poland, whom the nobles of Hungary had chosen to be their king, while Frederick supported the legitimate pretensions of his ward, also named Ladislas, who was the son of his dead brother Albert. Cesarini and Carvajal stayed more than once at Vienna. Felix also sent legates, but Cesarini and Carvajal were the better diplomatists, as we can see from a letter that Æneas wrote to D'Allemand: 'The Cardinal of Aquileia is seriously ill, nor do so many incline to him as to Cardinal Julian, nor is Aquileia such a strong man as Carvajal.'<sup>1</sup> Both Cesarini and Carvajal paid the secretary great attention. He came into close contact and had much serious converse with them, and the personalities of both men impressed him deeply. To this intercourse, in large measure, he attributed his conversion to the side of Eugenius. But he held back. 'If you perceive, you should act according to your perception,' Cesarini told him. When Æneas became Pope he wrote: 'John Carvajal was very active. He was Apostolic Envoy, a Spaniard by birth, who, when Julian died, succeeded him in the Cardinalate. With him we had many a friendly dispute. Indeed, not a single

<sup>1</sup> *Æstor. Geschichtsquellen*, xvi. 344.

learned person came to the Court, but we fell to and debated these matters. Then Caesar summoned a diet at Nürnberg, with a view to union in the Church, and decreed that the Pontiff should be exhorted to assemble a new Council at Constance and send a legate, and, moreover, induce the Baselites to transfer themselves thither, so as to give peace to the Church. They were the first to refuse. Learning this, Thomas Assalbach, a distinguished German theologian, said, "Now, I know that the Baselites are not directed by the Holy Spirit, seeing that they shrink from obeying such a reasonable command of the Emperor." And so said many other learned and unquestionably holy men.<sup>1</sup>

But Æneas hesitated for a long time. He wrote to Carvajal, pointing out difficulties that beset the problem: 'After my withdrawal from Basel, I kept silence on ecclesiastical matters, for I observed that the folk there were swayed by human passion, and were not under the divine guidance. You urge me to speak right out, and imitate Æneas in harness, but I prefer to maintain my silence, because my opinion would be satisfactory to no party, and is indeed by no means satisfactory to myself. But, since you wish me to declare myself, I am ready, though you will hear what you do not wish. . . . Not those are worthiest who hold fast to their dignities, but those who are ready to lay them aside. . . . You are a forbearing man. I want to open my heart to you. For, if one is to speak at all, let him speak right out. So, here am I, Æneas in panoply: that is how I bear myself. He shall be my Anchises

<sup>1</sup> Bull of Retraction in *Fœa, loc. cit.*

whom the Universal Church shall declare. But, so long as Germany, which is the greater part of the Christian world, remains uncertain, I also, am doubtful. I incline mine ear, awaiting unanimity; nor do I trust my own judgement in matters of faith. Farewell.'<sup>1</sup>

The Schism seriously disturbed him now, and he was desirous of seeing ecclesiastical peace restored, no matter by what means. To the Bishop of Chiemsee he wrote: 'If I were Caesar, I would call on all the princes to send envoys to some appointed place and arrange the affairs of the Church. . . . For people and priesthood would follow the princes. If it might not be called a Council, it is the *thing*, not the *name*, we care for. To end the schism is all important: call it what you please, but let it have consequences.'<sup>2</sup> And, about this time, he wrote the *Pentalogus*, wherein Frederick, the bishops, Nicodemus of Freising and Sylvester of Chiemsee, and Caspar Schlick discuss the affairs of the Church. The work presents various views fairly and exhaustively, shows an earnest desire for union, and contains noble and eloquent digressions, and some wise observations of truly statesmanlike quality. Of such is a passage wherein he tells us how great deeds and great virtues can only be duly set forth by letters, and thus remain permanent memorials and examples for mankind. 'Letters as much as arms hold an Empire together. And, would you know why the Papacy surpasseth the Empire so much in these latter days? It is chiefly because of its superior discipline in literature.

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Johan. Carvajal*, October 23, 1443.

<sup>2</sup> *Id., Ep. ad Sylvestr. episcopum*, December 1443.

For the Imperial Power was always stronger in mere arms than the Papal. As wisdom in letters exalts the Roman Pontiff, so Imperial ignorance debases the Empire. A people is subject to two great powers that keep them in restraint. They are culture and the force of arms. Those are perfect, O my King, who unite civil power with mental cultivation. They may behold their labours rewarded. For they have acquired knowledge of what is for the public weal; they possess themselves, too, and are not readily turned aside from wise counsels.'

Early in 1444, Æneas received a letter from his old friend Noceto, who was in the employment of Eugenius, and who, finding himself in pressing need, begged his former companion to exercise his influence at Court, and work for Eugenius, for he, Noceto, would stand better with the Pope if his friend Æneas would come round to his side. 'You urge me to favour your party on your account, if for no other reason,' Æneas replied; 'it is an adjuration of almost compulsive force. But you must learn that I serve a prince who belongs to no party; whose sole aim is union. Nor, if what is in the royal mind prove successful, will you be in any way worse off, but, as I think, far better provided for; for, if God shall give union, the Curia and its officials will be well to do, and both you and I will derive profit from it. But I know not when that will come. Meanwhile, I try to stand well with the king. I obey him; I follow him; his desire is mine. I shall oppose him in nothing that does not directly affect myself. I am a person of small importance now, and, if I did otherwise, I should fall to the ground and come to

nought.’<sup>1</sup> The reader must infer from this letter that Frederick was already inclining favourably towards Eugenius. Four months later Æneas wrote to Cesarini: ‘It will be difficult to get out of this neutrality, because so many find it profitable. Few follow truth; almost everybody seeks his own personal advantage. This new doctrine of neutrality is welcome precisely because no one can be deprived of what he holds, whether he has come by it squarely or not. And the ordinaries get what benefices they desire. Believe me, it is no easy matter to tear his prey from the fangs of a wolf. But, so far as I can see, all Christian peoples are for Eugenius. Germany is so divided that I would fain see union there, because I believe the nation is not influenced by fear, but by its own free decision.’

Æneas means that there is no external political pressure there: the country is not like France or Aragon or an Italian State, forced into partisanship by the exigencies of *foreign* politics. Within the German State, there existed, of course, the antagonism of the Emperor and his feudatories, and this was the chief and final determinant of Frederick’s return to Eugenius’s obedience. Still, it was a free struggle in the sense that Germany was independent of other interests than those of its own conflicting forces. And there were many earnest and conscientious men in Germany, men desirous of nothing better than the Church’s welfare, and they were not without influence in the counsels of the princes. Nor was Frederick himself inaccessible to honest conviction.

He continues: ‘Whithersoever the king and

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Petrum de Nozeto*, January 16, 1444.



electors incline, I and my dependants will follow, nor have I greater trust in my own judgement than in that of others. I am impelled to write this, or not at all, and, henceforth, I must be excused if I maintain silence. Farewell, and make use of me at your pleasure.'<sup>1</sup> In the same year he wrote to his old master Capranica to the effect that he would gladly come to the feet of Eugenius, and is endeavouring to do so as far as his feebleness will allow.<sup>2</sup>

One observes in these letters a gathering earnestness, an increased anxiety for the welfare of the Church, a gradual and sincere change of view. But here is a man naturally prudent, one taught caution by a large experience of the world and by diplomatic training; he will not let zeal run away with him; he is neither a saint nor a theologian, he will not wreck his career for a conviction that may be mistaken, and he mistrusts his own judgement in matters of religion. 'Shall a man take up arms and confront death in a barren cause?' he asks in his book, *Concerning the World*. 'The safest thing is to abide by a friend's judgement,' he wrote elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Evidence of an increased moral earnestness is also present. In the autumn of 1444 he urges his friend, John Thuscon, to purchase a Bible. 'I joyfully resist worldly allurements,' he writes, 'and would serve God alone, and, since I have ever sought after knowledge, I know not how I can render Him more pleasing service than as a man of letters.'<sup>4</sup> And a benefice, though it might involve a vow hard to keep, would not be unacceptable, nor, in those days

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Julian Card.*, May 1444.

<sup>2</sup> Voigt, *Die Briefe des Æneas Sylvius*, *Ep.* lxxxiii., S. 352.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. Sil., *Comment. in Anton. Panorm.*, l. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. ad Johan. Thuscon*, October 31, 1444.

of pluralism, would it interfere with his continuance in the king's service. He would be set free from his disagreeable surroundings in the Chancellery; and so he makes himself agreeable, as he so well knew how, to more than one possible patron. His religious zeal has by no means subjugated self; still, he is more in earnest for higher ends. And yet it is precisely in these years of deepening character that we are astounded at a remarkable outburst of erotic sentiments, an amazing rebellion of the natural man. What is the explanation of this strange phenomenon? In order to find an answer we must pass his literary productions, at this period, in review.

It can be hardly necessary to remind the reader that sexual irregularity in the fifteenth century must not be judged according to the standard of the twentieth century as accepted by middle-class Protestants. It was lax, and transgressions were by no means anxiously concealed. We have seen how almost universal concubinage was among the clergy. The morals observed in a Wiltshire village to-day are a pale survival of what was general throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. In Italy, and, to a less extent, in other countries, families strengthened themselves by the welcome support of vigorous bastards. The ablest man succeeded to an Italian throne whether he were of legitimate birth or not. During more than a hundred years all the rulers at Ferrara were bastards. Chastity was regarded as the ultimate proof of extreme sanctity. The severe Dante placed sinful lovers in that circle of transgressors which was the remotest from the centre of hell and in the region of purgation which lay nearest to the Earthly Paradise.

Towards the close of his first year at the Chancellery, we find Æneas (who, if he had no great admiration for German princes, liked to stand well with them) writing a letter to Sigismund, Duke of Austria, a lad of seventeen, urging him to bend his mind to letters and wisdom, and warning him against flatterers and the temptations that beset a prince.<sup>1</sup> Eight days later, he sent him a novel concerning the loves of Hannibal, Duke of Numidia, and that fairest of virgins, Lucretia, the daughter of the King of Epirus. It was obviously intended to amuse the young prince, but a letter accompanied it, saying that it might enable him to effect the conquest of a young lady with whom he was in love. One can hardly suppose that the girl, if a German, would understand the Latin tongue; the apology for the novel is obviously a fiction, and the tale itself was intended to gain the young duke's ear and favour. 'You importune me with some bashfulness'—thus runs the accompanying letter—'to write you such words of love as will persuade a young girl, whom you court, to yield to you. Another man might deny the request, fearing to corrupt you. But I accede, for I know life. If a man does not fall in love in youth, he is doomed to prove himself an old fool later on, and become a public butt at a time when love is out of place. I know, too, the power of love to excite virtues that lie dormant in youth. One man, in order to please his lady, will put forth his prowess in arms; another, in letters. For, since reputation attaches to merit, the lad in love develops his powers to be worthy in his mistress' eyes. Very likely you will find your prize less valuable than you

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Sigismundum, Ducem Austriae*, December 5, 1443.

think ; but, with a little advice, it may be a means whereby you may obtain some excellence. Youths must not be held too tight, or they become degenerate and listless ; pranks must be allowed to them ; they need a slack rein that they may pleasure heart and soul, distinguish good from evil, and learn the crafty ways of the world and how to escape them. Hence I have complied with your request, and send you what was demanded, on condition that you do not neglect the study of letters for love. See to it that, as the bee gathers honey from flowers, so you disentangle the virtues of the goddess of love from her blandishments.<sup>1</sup> As Pope, Pius had to pay heavily for this letter. Probably it was written in this way : Sigismund was pursuing the usual diversions of a youthful prince, and Æneas as a man of the world took the facts as they were, made the best of them, and followed up his previous letter on the cultivation of the mind, by an attempt to steer the young prince as well as he could. He will give him a hint that may be useful and that yet will not alienate a possible patron. But it may have been written at some moment when he took an attitude of defiance and bravado towards those scruples concerning sexual relations which we shall find were assailing him now that the question of an ecclesiastical career was pressingly before him. Anyhow, one should note, in this epistle, a debased flavour of that doctrine of Love the Regenerator, which, coming into Italy from Provence, dominated Italian literature—a doctrine found in its highest spirituality in the writings of Dante, and revived, in the sixteenth century, as the ridiculous courtly service of Love.

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Sigismundum, Ducem Austriæ, December 13, 1443.*

In six months' time, we find him seeking to please Schlick with the novel *De Duobus Amantibus*, a work that has been translated into most European languages. Under the guise of the loves of Euryalus and Lucretia, certain passages between the Chancellor and a fair wedded-lady of Siena are invested with literary charm. Æneas took Boccaccio for his model, and he indulged in a fair measure of the licence of that master. The novel is one of passion and intrigue. The passion is the quick, hot fire of Italian youth; the atmosphere that which Romeo and Juliet breathed, where sensuous emotion ripens in a night. The intrigue is managed with a skill that reminds one of the antique dramatists, and foreshadows Pietro Aretino and Molière. The situations often have the fun of farce; the conversations are full of genuine humour; the construction is less strong, forceful and condensed than that of Boccaccio's tragic tales, but there are graceful, eloquent, and charming passages. The delightful inconsequence of the woman in love is wonderfully drawn—the battle in her breast when the tongue denies the love that fills her heart. Æneas would appear, from his writings, to have held no very exalted notion of womankind. 'They are frivolous, feeble, faint-hearted creatures,' he wrote.<sup>1</sup> He read the hearts of Glycerium and Philorcium of the inn where he took his wine, and was acquainted with all the workings in the bosom of a coquette. It was, however, fashionable to repeat 'Quid femina levius,' and imitate the gibes of the Classics. He used ancient attacks on women to enforce the doctrine of continence. But he showed great affec-

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Ep.* xcix., p. 588. Ed. Basilee.

tion for his mother and sisters, and he held the Mother of Our Lord in special veneration, composing hymns in her honour, making frequent pilgrimages to her shrines, loading them with gifts, and relying on her protection.<sup>1</sup> He appreciated the comparative freedom accorded to the German woman, and remarks that 'it is a mistake, widespread in Italy, to safeguard woman as a miser does his gold. In my judgement this does more harm than good, for all women want a thing only the more if it is denied to them. Their nature is such that what you want, they do not desire, and what you do not incline to is precisely what they hanker after.'<sup>2</sup>

Noceto asked his advice as to whether he should marry his mistress who had borne him several children. Æneas has learned that all women are not angels, and furnishes precisely the argument that would be likely to prevail with Noceto. 'I have had experience,' he replies, 'and, if I were going to marry, I should choose a mate that I knew all about. I speak quite frankly with you.'<sup>3</sup>

About this time he wrote *Chrosis*, a comedy in the style of Terence. It has perished, but we may take it that it would serve us as another of the many

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Opera Omn.* Basileae, 1551, p. 964. See also *Pii II. Commentarii Rerum Memorabilium Joanne Gobellino jamdiu compositi.* Francofurti, 1614, pp. 131, 360.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Silvius, *De Duobus Amantibus*. By the time that Æneas had come to occupy the Apostolic Chair, the novel was copied and recopied, and so widely spread throughout Europe that he found it impossible to suppress it. He deemed it necessary to urge, as some excuse for the work, that it contains a moral lesson, and he regrets that men lay emphasis on the indelicacy of the story and neglect what they might profit by (see *Epistle* 395, ed. Basel). He would be a close and attentive reader who should easily glean a moral from a tale the sole object of which was to amuse.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Petrum de Noceto*, January 16, 1444.

illustrations we possess of the corrupting effect of the baser kinds of Latin literature on the Humanists. Many men in the Middle Ages and Renaissance wrote lascivious works. Most of them were so ingenuous as to do so without a blush: a few append a moral tag to serve as an excuse. Æneas is at strange pains to defend the irregularities of his life and writings. He tells one friend that 'he who has not been singed by the fires of love is a stone or a beast.'<sup>1</sup> 'Who at thirty, with half his life gone, is without reproach?' he asks of another. 'I cast love from me that has brought me into a thousand troubles.'<sup>2</sup> 'By the undying gods, what can be sharper, crueller, and more unmanly than to separate lovers? It gives me no surprise that a man burns for a maid, and seeks to perpetuate his kind. It is a manly passion, implanted by Nature. If there be a man who has never loved a woman nor felt the sting of attraction, he is either a god or a beast. One may be fond of dogs or jewels or wealth, and no disgrace attaches. Where lies the shame if one loves a woman, the highest of created beings.'<sup>3</sup> It is quite exceptional to find an Italian of his period conscious of any such shame or seeking any such defence. For the hypocrisy of northern nations was no characteristic of the Italian, whatever his other vices may have been.

Somewhat earlier than these letters Silvio Piccolomini the elder received what is, perhaps, the most astounding epistle father ever received from son. While at Strassburg, on a mission of the Council,

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Marianum Socinum*, July 3, 1444.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, *Ep. ad Caspar Schlick*, July 3, 1444.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, *Ep. ad Johan. Campisium*, June 1, 1445.

Æneas met a British (or Breton?) woman named Elizabeth. Probably she was of our own race, for he had a great admiration for fair women, and this young person, lively and able to speak Italian (for she had been in Italy), took his fancy. She bore him a son, that first saw the light at Florence, and Æneas wrote to his father, asking him to receive the child, according to the wont of Italian families of the period. The letter is adduced by Voigt as one of the evidences of a corrupt nature. That it is pervaded by a certain tone of bravado may readily be granted: the deep ground of this we hope presently to make clear. Æneas, denied the joy and affectionate intercourse of family life by his poverty and position, makes appeal to the feelings natural to an aged man who has become a grandfather. Silvio would appear to have been somewhat of a rake in the days when he was a soldier in Lombardy, and Æneas's acquaintance with human nature had taught him that such men are apt to take a pride in the memories of their own unbridled youth. The whole letter is a marvellous revelation of the paternal character—the not unkindly man, rendered a little severe by poverty—become with years a somewhat rigid moralist, a little pietistic perhaps, yet whose eye may still sparkle and the ashes of his ancient fires revive at suggestions of the gallant, licensed days of his youth. Æneas appeals, first of all, to a grandparent's natural affection; next, he reminds Silvio that he, too, may charge himself with no less a folly; then, in order to show that the son is really his, he proceeds, still preserving this second vein, to give a detailed account of how his relations with



Elizabeth arose, and he does this in such a way as to take the chief blame on himself.<sup>1</sup> 'You wrote,' so the letter runs, 'that you do not know whether to be glad or sorry that God has given this little child. But I see grounds for joy only, and none for regret. What is sweeter than to beget offspring in one's own image, to see one's own race continued, to leave some one behind to fill one's place? Recollecting one's own childhood, what is happier than to behold a child of one's very own? To me, at least, to have multiplied, and to know that I shall leave offspring on earth when I take my departure hence is full of joy. I thank the Lord who has formed a child in his mother's womb, so that a little Enea shall climb your and my mother's knees, and be a comfort to his grandparents. If my own birth gave you delight, father, shall not my son's too? Will not the boy's face be welcome to you when you see in it my own again? Will it not be charming when a little Enea clings round your neck and cajoles you with his childish wiles?

'But you will say, very likely, you are angry at my offence, since the boy is one born out of wedlock. I do not know what you take me for. Certainly you yourself are made of flesh and did not beget a son of stone or iron.<sup>2</sup> Surely you must remember what kind of a spark (*gallus*) you have been in your time. I, also, am no eunuch, nor one of the frigid sort. At least I am no hypocrite, wishing to appear better than I am. I frankly confess that it is a fault. I am

<sup>1</sup> For this portion of the letter, the reader must refer to the epistle itself. *Æn. Silvii, Opera Omn.*, Basileæ, 1551, *Ep.* xv., September 20, 1443.

<sup>2</sup> An excuse drawn from Boccaccio, iv. novella 1, and iii. novella 5.

not holier than David nor wiser than Solomon. It is an old vice, bred in the bone, and I know of none that are free from it. If it be a sin to follow natural impulses, it is an universal one. And I do not see why one should be severely reprehended, since Nature, that does nothing amiss, has implanted this instinct in all creatures.<sup>1</sup> Mankind also desires to multiply. But you will say—so I perceive—“there are limits within which this is lawful, outside wedlock it is not lawful.” That is true, and, even so, incontinence will often obtain within the matrimonial bounds. To eating and drinking bounds are set also; but who regards them? Who is so upright as not to fall seven times a day? Let the hypocrite profess that he is without sin. I am quite unaware of any such merit in myself, and the Divine Compassion alone gives me hope of pardon. God is aware that we are all weak and prone to sin, nor will His fountain of forgiveness cease, that flows to all.’ The grandfather was little touched by this appeal.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing to indicate whether the child grew up to man’s estate, or what became of him.

Æneas’s letters to his friends are just as devoid of concealment as the one addressed to his father. ‘I am amused that any one should say that I lead a

<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo Vallo, in his *De Voluptate ac vero Bono*, puts the following words into the mouth of Beccadelli, the author of that infamous work, the *Hermaphroditus*: ‘What Nature has formed and produced cannot be otherwise than holy and deserving of praise. . . . Kindly Nature is the same, or almost the same, as God.’ He praises Plato’s idea, in the *Republic*, of community in women as being after Nature, condemns continence as a crime against Nature, and pronounces all sensual pleasures to be good. It must be remembered that Beccadelli was an intimate friend of Æneas during his university days at Siena.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Gregor. Lollium*, January 15, 1444.

chaste life,' he wrote to one of them. 'I am a poet, not a stoic; but I dare say I shall get discredit for not being more discreet in what I say. What I am I declare.'<sup>1</sup>

The tone of bravado, of self-defence, to be found in some of these letters is precisely that adopted by men who are conscious of maintaining an untenable position, or who cling to a favourite vice. If they are naturally candid, if they love truth and are conscious of the demands of duty, the vigour of their apology is often a measure of the severity of the inner conflict. It may be taken as a proof that they find their conduct unsatisfactory to themselves.

Now, when Æneas arrived at Vienna, he was cast into the society of men younger than himself—men who did not share his intellectual tastes. When set free from the dull routine of official life they pursued pleasure riotously, and he joined them at the tavern. He was framed for social intercourse; he yearned for his home-land and his friends, for whom, as his letters show, he entertained deep and enduring affection; he could speak no German. Fate had denied him the pleasures of domestic life; he could have made a home very happy, as his devotion to his mother, his sisters, and his nephews shows, but to do so was not his lot. In many respects he was a disappointed man; his real intellectual interests lay in poetry, in noting all that he saw, and conveying his own vivid feelings about many things in fresh and forcible phrases, and in tracking events to their causes. But fate had cast him into the world of diplomacy; diplomatic treatment of those above him in rank was the

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Silvius, Letter to Wilhelm von Stein, July 1444.*

only way to escape from penury and a position unworthy of his powers. Yet he did not like diplomacy; he was of too candid a nature to feel quite happy in such employment; it did not always leave his conscience at ease. Æneas felt it necessary to furnish an excuse to Schlick, of all people in the world, for Schlick's and his own conduct when the Chancellor employed him to secure the bishopric for his brother. Christ Himself, he urges, did not always declare all that was in His mind or His real intention. 'Nothing,' he says in his *Commentaries on Panormitanus*, 'is more wobbling than a lie, nothing so stable as the truth.'

Nature had designed him for a man of letters; the irony of life had condemned him to be a state-official, had destined that his genius should waste itself on theological subtleties, ecclesiastical squabbles, and the machinations of policy. He was an exile from all that rendered life most dear. What wonder that he took refuge in sensuous pleasures? New convictions arose, but he still tried hard to batter himself into enjoyment. But such dissipation as his colleagues indulged in could have given but little delight to this man of forty, worn with the hardships of more travel in more lands than any man of his time had undertaken; worn, too, by work, worry, shortened sleep, and irregular and often scanty meals. He was tortured by frequent attacks of gout; he was already bald, wrinkled, perhaps feeling a little older than his years. The blondes of a German inn brought no sunshine to his heart; the pleasures of sense palled on him; he was tasting fruit that once had been pleasant to the palate, but the keen edge of appetite and enjoyment pertains to more youthful years.

He was far from being at peace with his own soul. At such moments forgotten impressions are apt to come back. Perhaps the preaching of Bernardino, that had once so strongly affected him, was remembered. Had the saintly Cesarini, at whose table he so often sat, and with whom he held such serious conversation, no influence over the soul of his guest?

He possessed the intimate confidence of the king and his chancellor, and found himself growing in favour with them daily. But, as a foreigner, he could never obtain commanding employment in Germany unless he held some position in that truly cosmopolitan institution—the Universal Church. He never cared for wealth, but he loved the refinements of life, which are unobtainable without means, and he was miserably poor: some of those tempting manuscripts, for example, that he was always on the look-out for and that he frequently discovered, might be his if he were better off. He was fully conscious that he possessed great powers, and church-craft and state-craft would afford him a field for their exercise. He regarded ecclesiastical matters as of vastly more serious importance now than he did in earlier life; he felt the sobering influence of age and experience; he was a practised hand at affairs, and regarded the political world of the Empire from its very centre. An ecclesiastic career would furnish scope for his powers, release him from pecuniary embarrassment, and satisfy the deeper yearnings of his soul.

Never was there a man of more complex nature. Simple as a child in some things, he saw all sides of a question at once, he was drawn by diverse allurements, storm-tossed by many conflicting emotions.

A not unworthy ambition as well as a deepened moral and religious sense were at variance with the natural tendencies of a literary and joyously artistic temperament; the spiritual was at war with the natural man. Æneas the theologian and philosopher stood in arms against Æneas the poet. Even as early as November 1444 he wrote from Nürnberg to John Gers that he 'has become strong and can praise chastity.' The struggle was severe, but servitude to the flesh was weakened by disillusion and the passage of the years. He had held back from taking orders because he feared he could not keep his vow;<sup>1</sup> now, at last, he accepted a benefice in the remote mountains. Once having accepted a new obligation he would fulfil it loyally. On May 2<sup>d</sup>, 1445, he informs his friend Campisio that he has been presented to a benefice, and is to be ordained; on March 6, 1446, he tells him that the deed is done; he is a sub-deacon and soon will be a priest. 'That levity of mind which would have held me among the laity is passing away. I wish for nothing more eagerly than to become a priest now. . . . Therefore do I render God thanks, and I will submit to His Will only, and conduct my life in accordance with it.' Pastor has discovered the record of his admission to the rank of priest in the *Liber Officiorum* of Eugenius: he was ordained presbyter in February 1447.

He bitterly repented, now, of his erotic writings, so many of which, too, were of such recent dates. He made the usual vain attempt at trying to undo the past. His letters to his friends John Freund (March 8, 1446), to Nicholas Wartenburg and Ippolito

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sylvii, *Ep. ad Petr. de Nozato*, February 18, 1444.

of Milan (December 31, 1446), and to Carolus Cypriacus, although written in the vein that would exactly commend themselves to their recipients, gave evidence of sincere repentance. He learned, to his regret, how widely his novels were circulated, and he wrote an earnest retraction and the work *De Pravis Mulieribus*, the precise dates of which are unknown.<sup>1</sup>

The first-named of these productions is a letter of advice to Freund, who was one of his co-secretaries in the Chancellery. It exhibits Æneas's wonted penetration into the recesses of the human heart, and how unerringly he could read what other folk would be sure to think and say concerning himself. He writes: 'As regards your light o' love whom you have given in marriage, I commend your action. What is better than the wedded state, with the babes it brings; gifts, these latter, to the State for its defence and preservation. But it is unnatural for you to grieve over what you have done. Repentance should follow wrong-doing only. Why, therefore, should you regret having done a good deed? Deeds, not words, tell. If you have given her to an honest man, all is well. You have done what is pleasing to God and disregarded the criticisms of men. Remember that Scripture couples fornication with death. You will say, "How straight-laced Æneas has become!" It is true that I have a different sort of reputation now from what I used to have at Vienna and Frankfort. I do not deny my past, dearest John, but we are older, nearer to death, and it behoves us to think

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, Anton, *Æneas S. Piccolomini als Papst Pius II., sein Leben und Einfluss auf die literarische Cultur Deutschlands*. Graz, 1897.

less about life and more about the grave. Wretched is that man, and devoid of the grace of God, whose soul is never touched, who never examines his own heart, nor seeks to amend his ways, nor thinks of eternity. I have been a great wanderer from what is right, but I know it, and, I hope, the knowledge has not come too late. My fortieth year is here, and with it the day of mercy and salvation.

‘Forget all about the girl. If you wish for eternal life, do as if she were dead. How poor would be your joy with her, how fleeting is our delight in women, how momentary the satisfaction, how foolish the man who loses eternal happiness for the brief delights of this world! I preach to you because you are well aware how the poets moralise on the subject. . . .’ Then Æneas appeals to John Freund’s pride, reminds him that, if he chooses another girl, he will merely have escaped from one fire to pass into another, and quotes from the Classics concerning the levity of woman. He proceeds: ‘But I am afraid it is useless for me to talk seriously with you, because you will not give me any credit for sincerity. You will say that I am a man full fed who calls on the hungry to fast. Yes, I must admit that this is true. I am nauseated. But supposing that, spurned by Venus, I should seek consolation with Bacchus. Here also were sin. I am not, indeed, surprised that a strapping, full-blooded fellow like yourself should fall in love (though I doubt whether your boasts are not stronger than the facts warrant), but, let it be as you say, then, the stronger the temptation, the greater is the merit of resisting it. I, by Hercules, am far from being naturally continent, and to speak truly, Venus avoids me now



quite as much as I turn my back on her. But I thank God that my temptation is lessened, so that I can overcome it. You will say, "Why yield the spoil to the enemy before he is victorious?" but this maxim has no application to spiritual warfare.' And so the argument is continued, with quotations from the Bible and the Classics. Could anything be more transparent, sincere, and candid than this letter? Yet Voigt finds in it 'eine Bordell-Comödie';<sup>1</sup> a 'farce of the brothel'!

Æneas judged himself by a higher standard than that employed by his contemporaries. No one regarded incontinence as other than a foible; most folk pronounced it praiseworthy. Æneas's father is the only one who seems to have condemned his son's irregularities. Even the austere Gregory Heimburg, the precursor of severe German Protestantism, though he became a bitter foe of Pope Pius, never reproached him in this regard. He sneers, indeed, at a Pope who is fond of bastards, because Pius favoured the claims of Ferrante to the Neapolitan throne; he accuses him of defending adulterers at Mantua, he covertly hints at the licentiousness of early writings, but he does no more. It would hardly have occurred to any one to hurl so trifling a matter even at the teeth of a Pope.<sup>2</sup> A layman might do what a man who became Pope should not have written about.

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *Ænea Silvio Piccolomini als Papst Pius II.*, i. 438.

<sup>2</sup> See Goldast, *Monarchia*, ii., or Freher, *Rerum Germanicarum Scriptores*, ed. Struvii, ii.; Pez, *Rerum Aust. Scriptores*, ii., and the speech preserved in the Munich Archives, Cod. lat. 522, fol. 161.

## CHAPTER VIII

**ÆNEAS AND THE RESTORATION OF GERMAN OBEDIENCE  
TO EUGENIUS—HE ENTERS THE CHURCH**

SOON after the accession of Frederick, at one of his innumerable diets, the majority of the Electors were in favour of recognising whichever Pope might favour precisely those reforms in the Church by which they would obtain most power and advantage. At the diet of Frankfort (A.D. 1442) five of the Electors inclined towards Eugenius, but Frederick could not afford to quarrel with Felix and the Basélites, for that would imply the antagonism of Savoy and strengthen the opposition to him that existed throughout Switzerland. Swiss Cantons held possession of certain lands that had belonged to the House of Hapsburg, and Frederick had not yet abandoned hope of recovering them. The Electors still preserved sufficient respect for Caesar to leave the matter in his hands. Felix, through Cardinal D'Allemand, offered the hand of his daughter Margaret, the widow of Louis of Anjou, to Frederick, with a dowry or bribe of 200,000 gold pieces. But Frederick held back. When he left Basel with Æneas in his train, he said, 'Popes have sold their rights before to-day, but Felix would fain buy them.'<sup>1</sup> He, as well as other shrewd

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *De Dictis Alfonsi*, lib. ii.

observers of character, held Felix in no very high estimation. Soon after the Anti-Pope's election Cesarini wrote to Rome: 'Fear not. The victory is with you. The Council have elected a man revealed to them not by the Holy Spirit but by earthly motives. I dreaded lest they should choose some poor, learned, holy man, whose virtues had been a danger. They have chosen a man of the world.'<sup>1</sup>

But a wealthy prince with a marriageable daughter finds many friends. The Electors inclined at once towards Felix. One of them, the Pfalzgraf of the Rhine, secured Margaret and her huge dowry. They all flouted their Emperor. They were less disgusted with his inertia than eager to take advantage of his supineness and push their own claims, increase their own power, and enhance their own prestige. Zürich had supported the claim of Frederick to the ancient possessions of the House of Hapsburg in Switzerland. The Swiss closely beleaguered the city, and the Electors refused to help their monarch. The 'Armagnacs,' soldiery left unemployed by the cessation of the French war with England, were sent by the dauphin to aid Frederick, for the French prince was glad to get them out of France, and hoped by their means to push forward the boundary of French territory. But the Armagnacs met with such sturdy resistance from the Swiss that they retired to certain lands of the Empire in Alsace, and subjected them to rape, fire, and pillage. Hence, at the diet of Nürnberg, Æneas heard Frederick overwhelmed with

<sup>1</sup> Fea, *Pius II. a calumna vindic.* Rome, 1822; (Pii II., *Comment. de Concl. Basil.*), p. 79.

invective and reproach, nor, for twenty-seven years, did the Caesar dare to face a diet again. Four of the Electors were now on the side of Felix. They saw an opportunity to take advantage of the supineness of Frederick and aim a blow at the royal authority. They assumed religious zeal, but it was a mere veil for political intrigue. Æneas saw through these stratagems of statecraft. 'We are ready,' he wrote, 'at the command of a secular power, not merely to abjure a Pope, but to deny Christ Himself. For love is dead and faith lies buried.'<sup>1</sup> But later on, as a practical politician, he did not disdain to utilise the strategy of others, bent on self-advancement, to further what he deemed the just and right cause.

Eugenius had repaired, by dogged persistency, the damage caused by his rash obstinacy. The large-minded policy that united the Greeks with the Roman Church added enormously to his prestige; the attacks of the Council only served to throw the most distinguished theologians, the most saintly men on to his side, and they took up his cause with ardour; Vitelleschi, his military lieutenant, had reduced Rome to such order that the Pope was able to return to his own see and dwell there; Castile and Scotland had come over to his obedience; the King of Aragon, now master of Naples, had entered into alliance with him. But the battle was not at an end in Germany; the Electors were intriguing with France, the natural foe of their country, and, since Anjou was expelled from Naples, Eugenius could expect no aid from His Most Christian Majesty. Yet it was clear that the traditional persistency of the Papacy had prevailed;

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Ep.* liv. Ed. Basel.

once more, as so often before, the dark hour had proved but a passing eclipse, and the authority of Rome was, in measure, restored. Only Germany remained to be won. Frederick had never been unfavourable to Eugenius, and the action of the Electors inclined him to support the Pope, for he needed what protection Rome could give him against domestic foes. Nor was this all. A terrible disaster had happened in Hungary, an event that spread consternation through Europe; a danger was imminent that demanded the union of divided Christianity: the Turk had almost annihilated the Christian forces at Varna; the noble Cesarini and Ladislas, King of Poland, were among the slain. And the Hungarian nobility opposed the claims of the youthful Ladislas to the Hungarian throne, which the death of Ladislas of Poland had rendered vacant. If Frederick were to restore the aims of Imperial authority, then, and to check the Turkish advance, the aid of Eugenius was necessary to him.

Æneas was present at the Diet of Nürnberg (A.D. 1444), and there he perceived, not only how feeble the Caesar really was, but how weak was the bond that united the self-seeking Electors. Felix and the Council had refused the request of the German princes to summon a new council. Æneas, appointed by Frederick as one of his commissioners in ecclesiastical affairs, was sent, though still a layman, with three other delegates, to lay the same proposal before Eugenius and request him to summon the Council in a definite (namely, two years') time. Æneas had waited for the Holy Spirit to give an unmistakable direction to events; and it was now quite clear that

Europe was passing over to the side of Rome. He began to take a much stronger and more active part in the attempt to determine the Schism. 'Opposition is useless,' he told Schlick, 'and will only lead to new schism.'<sup>1</sup> Eugenius had won Schlick over by nominating his brother to the vacant bishopric, and Frederick was only awaiting an opportunity to come to terms. Æneas had acquired the close confidence of both Schlick and the king, and he found that his counsels had weight with them. Aforetime he had been, he could have been, no other than an eloquent mouthpiece; but now he found himself in a position where his own opinion and advice were sought. Experience had deepened his sense of responsibility; he perceived that Frederick, though by no means devoid of sound judgement, was tardy in action and sluggish in thought—a man to be led, not to be followed. He determined to do all that in him lay, and conduct Germany over to Eugenius. The greater part of the Catholic world had decided: for the sake of religion, of Christian peace, and, above all, for united action against the rapidly advancing Turk, the Pope must be supported. Æneas had the adaptable mind of the practical statesman, who will undertake nothing that is not opportune and expedient. His large intellect enabled him to grasp great conceptions and lofty ideas; he honoured them, but he believed the when and how of their realisation must depend much on circumstance and, often, on device. A new and noble duty was before him, but he would undertake it with prudence and conduct it with caution—with boldness, though, if boldness

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Ep.* liv. Ed. Basel.

should become opportune. In the spring of 1445 he joyfully set out on his journey to Rome. Once again he would behold his beloved land and the faces of his kindred.

When he arrived at Siena, his simple-minded relatives, ignorant of the immunity accorded to an Imperial envoy, were struck with horror at the notion of his venturing near Eugenius. They remembered his entanglement in the Bishop of Novara's plot and his many writings against the Pope. One and all, they begged him not to venture into the lion's den; they clung fast to him and sought, with tearful entreaty, to turn him from his purpose. His pontifical pen records, with dry humour, how they told him of 'the cruelty of Eugenius, how unforgiving he was, how no compunction, no sense of right ever restrained him, how he was surrounded by agents that stopped at nothing. Once in Rome Æneas would never return.' The envoy could not hold himself back; he entered into the spirit of the comedy. Assuming the rôle of a hero, he proclaimed that 'duty must be performed, even at the cost of life,' and so, tearing himself away from those that would have restrained him, he rode off for Rome.<sup>1</sup>

The Papal legates in Germany had prepared Eugenius for Æneas's coming, and his kindred's fears were soon turned into joy at his success. He received a cordial welcome at Rome, for all were aware how very useful the Imperial secretary could be. Before unfolding his mission, however, it was necessary to be absolved from the Papal anathema pronounced against adherents of the Council. Two cardinals led

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.



ÆNEAS SILVIUS AT THE FEET OF POPE EUGENIUS IV.  
*Pinturicchio, Siena.*





him into the Papal presence. When he had knelt and done reverence to the Apostolic feet, Eugenius presented him with both hand and cheek to kiss. Æneas then spoke to His Holiness in a singularly bold and manly way. 'Holy Father,' he said, 'before I deliver the king's message, I wish to say a few words concerning myself. I am aware that you have heard much about me, and that little of it is to my credit. I must plead guilty to having spoken and written and contrived much against you at Basel. I did so, but it was less designed against yourself than, as I then thought, to serve the Church. I did wrong; but I erred with many men of high reputation. I followed Julian, Cardinal of St. Angelo, Niccolò, Archbishop of Palermo, and Ludovico Pontano, Apostolic notary. These men were regarded as the very eyes of the law and masters of truth. Need I speak of the Universities or of other schools, of which most were against you? Who would not have gone astray with such a company? But, when I discovered the error of the Baselites, I confess that I did not come over to you, as most did. I was afraid of falling from one error into another, as one escapes from Scylla to be caught by Charybdis, and so I joined the camp of the neutrals. I was unwilling to pass from one extreme to another without taking time and reflecting. I remained three years with the king. But, as I heard more and more about the points of difference between the Baselites and your legates, it became clear to me that the right lay with you. Therefore I rejoiced when the king himself wished to open relations with Your Holiness by my means. I hoped to be restored to your favour. So,

now I stand before you, and I ask your pardon for what I did without true knowledge.'

The Pope replied: 'You fell into error with many. We cannot refuse to pardon the repentant, for the Church is a loving Mother. You have reached the truth: take heed that you hold it fast. You occupy a station where you may defend the truth and benefit the Church. We will forget the injury you have done Us and love you well, if you continue to deserve Our love.'<sup>1</sup> Æneas wrote about the interview to his friends when he returned to Vienna. 'When I saw Eugenius,' he says, 'he was as well as an old man can be. . . . He will not promise to grant the king's request, nor allow a Council to be held in Germany, nor fix a date for one.'<sup>2</sup> The Papacy has never failed to give its right value to the policy of Quintus Fabius Cunctator.

The cardinals received him heartily and treated him with all due honour; but his former master in Albergati's household, Tommaso Parentucelli, now become Bishop of Bologna, and destined, in no short time, to occupy the Apostolic Chair, turned aside rather than take his hand. Perhaps Parentucelli thought him still under censure. Of lofty spirit and remarkable directness of mind, a plain-dealer and plain-speaker, the bishop was a man ready to confront a world in arms with a single purpose in his soul; ready to subdue it to his will or be broken in the attempt. He and Albergati had always been for Eugenius. He was incapable of understanding the subtle, complex character of Æneas, his adaptability

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Leonard. Episc. Patav.*, May or June 1445.

and circumspection, his wide, cautious outlook, his awareness of all the difficulties of a situation, his skilful manœuvring to overcome them. Parentucelli may have fallen into the error that a great and minute scholar has not avoided.<sup>1</sup> It may even have seemed to him that he had before him, not the wary politician, sincerer and less self-centred than most of his tribe, but only a disingenuous trimmer, a time-server and a toady.

But there was just enough of truth in the unspoken judgement to cut Æneas to the heart. He resented it. He cannot forget the incident, even when he becomes Pope, and it is characteristic of him that he records it. 'How ignorant we are of what the Future is to bring about!' he remarks, and somewhat ingenuously adds, 'if Æneas had known that Parentucelli was to become Pope he would have forgiven him.'<sup>2</sup> He would have been restrained by respect for the Apostolic Chair, for the Chosen Vessel, and by worldly prudence. The old experienced statesman approves of caution in the conduct of life. Like so many of the Pope's incidental remarks, this admixture of simplicity and shrewdness brings the very man before us. Friends soon brought about a reconciliation. Perhaps Æneas was never a favourite with Tommaso Parentucelli, the housemaster who, as Bishop of Bologna and Pope Nicholas v., never took him to his heart: yet, henceforward, the two men co-operated in perfect agreement, to great ends.

Æneas now finally takes his stand as a supporter

<sup>1</sup> The author refers to Voigt.

<sup>2</sup> Fea, *Pius II. a calumnia vindic.*; (*Pii II. Comment de reb. Basil.*), p. 88.

of the theocratic throne. The Turk was fixing himself firmly in Eastern Europe and rapidly advancing his forces towards its centre; no limit seemed to be set to his victorious progress; the growing spirit of nationality was adding terrible force to the existing antagonisms of Christendom: to Æneas, there seemed no other way to repel the Infidel and unify the nations than by upholding Christ's Vicar as the Father of all peoples. In the Vicegerent of Heaven lay the sole hope of public safety and public order. Shall we condemn his judgement? Let it be granted that no tyranny is so terrible as a spiritual despotism. Is the spectacle, to-day, of feud and anarchy in the great Empire of Constantine; is the crushing burden of our national debts, the oppression of militarism, the veiled enmity of nations that, unconscious of irony, name an armed truce 'peace'—each a consequence of the failure of Papal theory to realise itself—so entirely preferable? We know how limited was the power of Papal authority, even at its height, to bring the Princes of Europe under control; we may perceive that the dream is one that has come through the gate of ivory and not through that of horn; but the conception was no ignoble one; it did not seem impracticable to Æneas, nor does the Papacy, to-day, regard it as other than a destiny not yet fulfilled.

Æneas resolved to do all that he could to procure union. He wrote to one of his friends at Rome: 'If my embassy can get anything from you it will be the safer and render it easier to lead all into union. The electors met at Frankfort on St. John's day, nor is there any one who does not expect novel events from

it. But God, who is wiser than we, will direct the result.'<sup>1</sup> And he wrote to a German friend: 'My journey has the honest object of procuring unity. What I shall further report concerning the Frankforters, time will show. My silence may be taken to indicate what may be brought about.'<sup>2</sup>

On his way back to Vienna, Æneas revisited Siena, and embraced his aged father for the last time.

Eugenius replied to the Electors' request for a council by a series of hostile measures. At the request of the Duke of Cleves, he removed certain lands from the jurisdictions of the Archbishop of Köln and the Bishop of Münster, and he denounced the latter as a 'son of wickedness.' He agreed to purchase the aid of Frederick by giving him the right of filling up six important German bishoprics during his lifetime and by granting certain concessions. Heimburg says that he promised to pay Caesar 221,000 ducats, whereof 100,000 were to be furnished by Eugenius and the remainder by his successors.<sup>3</sup> The expenses of the projected journey to Rome for Imperial coronation would furnish an excuse for this bribe. Eugenius followed all up by a Bull deposing the Archbishop-electors of Köln and Trier (February 1, 1446). Each side miscalculated the strength of the other. Eugenius overestimated the power of Frederick, and the king placed too high a value on the restored Papal authority.

The Electors, however, abandoned the intrigues they had been carrying on with Felix, and turned to

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Johan. Campisium*, May 21, 1445.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Johan. Freund*. From Vienna, 1445.

<sup>3</sup> Diix, *Nicolas von Ousa*, i. Beilage iv.

the king, entreating him to renounce his understanding with Eugenius. Then they met at Frankfurt, and agreed to forsake Felix and acknowledge Eugenius if the Pope would accept such decrees of Basel as related to reform, recall all censures directed against neutrals, and agree to summon a council within a year in a German city (March 1446). If Eugenius refused to conform, they would accept the Council of Basel; but knowledge of this was to be withheld from the Pope.<sup>1</sup>

They sent Gregory Heimburg, a zealous reformer, and other envoys to announce their decision to Frederick. After seeing him, the embassy was to proceed to Rome, but by no means to show the documents they bore to Eugenius unless he accepted their terms without reservation; above all, their resolve to pass over to Felix, if these were rejected, was to remain a secret from the Pope. The king received the envoys in the presence of six of his counsellors. They, but not Frederick, were sworn to secrecy.

Frederick found himself placed in a difficult position. Carvajal and Parentucelli were at his Court, bearing with them the Emperor's treaty with Eugenius for ratification. Frederick complained to the Electors' envoys that it was quite a new thing for arrangements to be made behind the monarch's back and his assent demanded before he had fully and freely discussed the questions they involved. He agreed, however, to summon a diet in the autumn (A.D. 1446) to receive the Pope's answer. Although he had taken no oath, it was incumbent on the duty and dignity of the throne to preserve secrecy; yet he felt

<sup>1</sup> Pückert, *Die Kurfürstliche Neutralität*, p. 259.

it desirable to give Eugenius an inkling of the hidden reservation.<sup>1</sup> He told Parentucelli, directly the envoys had left, that he had better hasten his departure for Rome, relying on the astuteness of the Legate to penetrate the meaning of such strange advice, and he sent Æneas with him as his own envoy. As an Imperial Secretary, Piccolomini was bound by general oath to secrecy, but he may not have been one of the six counsellors who took the special oath.

Sending Æneas with Parentucelli was an astute piece of diplomacy. A little more might leak out on the way, and it would give Eugenius a diplomatic advantage to appear to treat the Electors' legation as if that were one and the same with the legation of his friend, their master. He could confound the two together. The secretary, in his *History of Frederick*, tells us that 'the bishop, though he could not know all, guessed much,'<sup>2</sup> which speaks well for Parentucelli's training in Albergati's household, for he was by nature phenomenally straightforward in his own dealings. In Piccolomini's Commentaries on the Council we learn that 'instructed by Æneas, Parentucelli warned the Pope concerning the matter, and advised him to give the envoys a mild answer.'<sup>3</sup> There was no need to speak right out. Under such circumstances it is easy to lead up to a question, and a shrug of the shoulders, a single glance, a dubious tone will answer it. Æneas has been charged with double dealing. If he was the servant of the Empire, the Electors had forced their king's hand, and he was

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment. de rebus Basil.* in Fea (*Pius II. a calumniis vindic.*), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Silvius, Hist. Fred.* in Kollar, ii. p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> *Pii II. Comment. de rebus Basil.* in Fea, p. 91.



bound to be faithful to the real interests of the Empire, which he identified with those of the king: the Empire could not continue to exist if the king's authority were flouted and curtailed by his lieges. He knew that the king would approve of his action. And there are few occasions when the close observer will not discover that, so far from the course of duty being wholly indisputable, it usually involves a decision, not between plain right and plain wrong, but between doubtful courses of action, all of which involve some wrong. The future of Christendom was in the balance: the unity of the Church was within view, and, if Eugenius remained in the dark, an unguarded reply would renew and reinforce schism, perhaps to the destruction of Catholic Christianity.

There might be found those who would hold these reasons as weighty, and sufficient excuse for Æneas's conduct. It is a question for casuistry, and Æneas, certainly, was never visited by the slightest misgiving that he had acted otherwise than in the manner that strict allegiance to duty and moral obligation demanded of him. To-day, even, we hardly apply the standards of conduct and honour required in private life to the statesman. Æneas held the views of a practical politician. 'Wisdom,' he says, 'fears Destiny not one jot. The wise apply their intelligence to the events that Time unfolds, and expect men to act according to their nature.'<sup>1</sup> 'The fruit of a man's life is the unfolding of his nature. What the prudent enjoy is due to their superiority; what the less gifted miss is due to their inability to profit by experience. So success does not always come from honest service,

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Silvius, Hist. Fred.* in Kollar, ii. p. 192.

nor is failure always the result of crime. Most useful results in human affairs are the consequences of correct judgement.'<sup>1</sup>

Æneas, as envoy of Caesar, introduced the embassy of the Electors, and hinted, in the vaguest way, that a favourable reply to their requests would bring peace to the Church. Heimburg set forth the demands of the Electors in a hard and almost peremptory way. Eugenius was attentive. He remained silent for a while, and then returned an indefinite, diplomatic answer. He must take time for consideration.

Heimburg and Æneas recognised one another as irreconcilable foes. Their enmity endured throughout their lives. In appearance and in character no men could be more completely contrasted. Æneas was of slight and unimposing figure; he bore the marks of travel and vigil; his face was worn; he was grey and looked prematurely aged; but his eye retained its youthful fire and flashed forth keen and brilliant glances. Heimburg was a big, bulky man, full fed, yet of imposing presence, with a fat, honest, German face. He was a clear, straightforward speaker and his words came from the heart; but, when annoyed, he could show himself a master of bitter sarcasm and biting irony. Æneas was fluent; Campano tells us that his oratory was overladen with thoughtful digressions, and his selection of words was not always such as an exact scholar would approve. But no one could be more forcible when he spoke on a matter that he held at heart. He did so now. Heimburg was an enthusiast for reform, and he nursed the rancour of a disappointed zealot: he detested the opportunist with

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Hist. Fred.* in Kollar, ii. p. 258.

all his soul. To this obstinate, hot-tempered, straightforward precisian, Æneas appeared nothing but a cunning, insidious, double-dealing Italian.<sup>1</sup>

Heimburg chafed at the Pope's evasive answer. Æneas tells us, with malicious enjoyment, how he would take the air in the evening, sweating with heat but still more from rage, and pace up and down, panting for breath, his breast and head bared for coolness; he would lash himself into a still greater fever and perspiration as he execrated Eugenius and the cardinals. Æneas had a private interview with the Pope and advised him to compromise. Eugenius seemed to assent. The cardinals entertained the envoys, and finessed to discover what they were holding back. Finally, the embassy was told that the Pope would send his reply to the forthcoming diet at Frankfort. An embassy that the Electors sent to Felix and his Council met with no better treatment than the one sent to Eugenius.

At the Diet of Frankfort (September 1446) a reply was received from Eugenius. It was evasive. Eugenius and the Curia knew that, whatever the religious zealots of Germany might desire, the princes were actuated by no motives that were not entirely political; that each sought only to consolidate and extend his own power, and that, if only time could be gained, dissensions would assuredly arise among them. In utmost need, in darkest eclipse, Rome has never forgotten to maintain her pretensions, for the Pope, as a rule, and some, at least, of the Sacred College, have always been convinced of the justice of their claim to universal authority, and remained unyielding in their

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Hist. Fred.* in Kollar, ii. p. 123.

demand for obedience. They have always refused to establish a precedent that might abase the theocracy. Eugenius was as stiffnecked before the princes as he had been before the Council, and with greater reason. He was able to make a firm stand because he knew that they were to be bought. Æneas tells us frankly that he himself paid two thousand florins to the confidential advisers of the Archbishop of Mainz.<sup>1</sup> In that age bribes, under the excuse of rewards for right-doing, were quite usual, and were not censured.

Æneas was so earnestly energetic at this congress and throughout all these transactions that it would be natural for him to exaggerate his own importance, and it is possible that he has given posterity the impression that he had a greater share in bringing Germany into obedience to Eugenius than was actually the case. But he certainly drew up a proposal which, to use a phrase of his, 'squeezed the venom' from the Electors.

It was evident that the peril in which the Papal party was placed, though greatly diminished, remained very real. Some concessions must be made. Æneas prepared a document whereby, on the one hand, the Electors should surrender their neutrality and the deposed archbishops return to their obedience, while, on the other hand, the Pope should restore the archbishops, summon a Council within ten months, and recognise certain decrees of Constance and Basel until such time as the future Council might choose to reconsider them. He acted in a manner that suggested

<sup>1</sup> See his *Hist. Fred.* in Kollar, p. 128 *et seq.*, and his *Commentaries* in Fea, p. 98.

to the prince that he was directly commissioned by Eugenius to make this offer. D'Allemand was present at this diet, and Æneas tried to win him over, but was snubbed for his pains. The Cardinal requested him to be modest and reserve his counsels for Eugenius. Parentucelli and Nicholas of Cusa accepted his proposal. Carvajal was reluctant to do so; he and Æneas came to high words, for the Secretary feared that all might be ruined. Heimburg and Lysura asked him whether he had come from the juridical school of Siena to lay down the law for Germany. He kept himself under control and did not reply. The Cardinal of Arles was not listened to by the diet. He and his companions rode back to Basel wholly disheartened. On the road they were attacked by a band of robbers and the Cardinal only escaped by the swiftness of his steed. 'Christ,' said he, 'was sold for thirty pieces of silver: Eugenius has offered sixty thousand for me.' 'The league of the electors,' says Creighton, 'had been overthrown at Frankfort, and with it also fell the cause of the Council of Basel. Germany was the Council's last hope and Germany had failed. The diplomacy of the Curia had helped Frederick III. to overcome the oligarchical rising in Germany, but the Pope had won more than the king. The oligarchy might find new grounds on which to assert its privileges against the royal power; the conciliar movement was abandoned, and the summoning of another council was vaguely left to the Pope's good pleasure. The ecclesiastical reforms which had been made by the Council of Basel survived merely as a basis for further negotiations with the Pope. If the Papal diplomacy had withstood the full force of the

conciliar movement, it was not likely that the last of the falling tide would prevail against it.'

In a very short time the Council ceased to exist. Felix was made a Prince of the Church and allowed to retain the outward honours paid to a Pontiff. D'Allemand retired to Arles, where the sanctity of his life brought him universal respect, and, after his death, miracles were said to be wrought by his corpse. John of Segovia retired to a small episcopal see in his native country and employed the remnant of his days in the useful task of exposing the fallacies of the Koran.

The proposals of the diet were laid before Eugenius by Æneas, Procopius of Rabstein, a Bohemian, who represented the king, John of Lysura, who appeared as vicar of the Archbishop of Mainz, and others. They met at Siena, and rode on to Rome, a troop of horsemen sixty strong. They were received by the Pope and fifteen cardinals. Æneas made a speech remarkable for its plausibility and the dexterity with which he avoided giving offence either to the Germans or to Eugenius.<sup>1</sup> The members of the Sacred College set themselves out to entertain and flatter the envoys. Æneas promised Eugenius that the king would both recognise him and order the city of Basel to withdraw its safe-conduct from members of the Council. Eugenius was feeble now, and drawing very near to death: he accepted the general principles set forth by the Germans; but the astute diplomacy of the Curia drew up the articles in so loose a manner as to open ways of escape from their provisions; and the Pope signed a secret state-

<sup>1</sup> It is given in *Mansi, Pii II. Orationes*, i. p. 108.

ment that whatever concessions he might have given were wrung from him when he was weakened by sickness, and were never intended to derogate from the doctrines of the Church or the authority and privileges of the Apostolic Chair.<sup>1</sup> But the simple-minded Germans, led by Lysura, believed that Eugenius had acted in perfect good faith and that his successor was bound by the document he signed. Eugenius had only just sufficient strength left to receive the envoys, and Æneas gave in a declaration of fidelity to the Pope, who handed him his Bull. A few days after (February 23, 1447) the Pope breathed his last. After a stormy pontificate, during which the Church was rent asunder, the Apostolic Chair abased, and almost universal contempt exhibited for its authority, Eugenius saw, in his last days, some measure of Papal power and prestige restored and the healing of schism close at hand. This Pisgah vision of promise that greeted his dying eyes was due, in part, to his resolute firmness and, in part, to the activity of partisans that were converts to his cause. No man is so zealous as he who has changed his convictions, and Eugenius would hardly have triumphed but for the zeal of Æneas and other seceders from the Council of Basel.

It was usual to employ able ecclesiastics in the service of the state when they happened to be learned and experienced men, and it was well understood that when Æneas became a cleric he would still continue to serve the king. Rare at all times is the combination of literary temperament with

<sup>1</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad ann.* 1447.

practical ability; far rarer is such a combination of literary power with great capacity for statesmanship as Æneas exhibited. Frederick rewarded him with a parish in the Tyrol. Æneas describes it as 'reached only by a difficult pass over lofty and precipitous mountains, a place surrounded by snow and the horrors of ice, frozen out three parts of the year. The husbandmen of the valley are compelled to dwell within doors throughout the long winter. They are dexterous workers in wood, carving chests and doing other skilful carpentry, and they take their manufactures down to Bozen and Trent. But most of their time they waste at chequers, at which they are marvellously quick. No warfare calls them to arms, no ambition affects, no lust for gold disturbs them. Time creeps on while they are looking after the hay-crop or attending to their herds; their beasts share their dwellings, and drunkenness is unknown, for cheese and milk are their only meat and drink. The church is far away, and they keep the frozen bodies of those that die in the winter season until the thaw comes. But, when summer is established, folk assemble from all parts of the parish, and a long funeral procession is formed, and everybody is busy spreading news of what has happened meanwhile. So simple a life should make them the happiest of mortals, were they as good as they are primitive. But they are given over to fornication and adultery, nor does a man among them ever take a woman to wife that is a maid. Æneas did not hold that benefice long.'

So wrote he, when he became Pope. He could not

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.



speaking the patois of the Sarantener Thal, and he felt that his powers would be thrown away on these raw mountaineers. The stipend was only sixty ducats a year, and the fee for investiture was one hundred and forty ducats. His life's work lay in far other directions. But he did not take orders to acquire this benefice, and he was never in possession of it. Frederick's right to bestow it was more than questionable, and Albert of Austria, in whose dominions it lay, asserted his rights in this and other matters, while the local parliament would have none of the king's nomination. So, for the third time, Æneas's ecclesiastical hopes were doomed to miscarry. However, not long afterwards, the Bishop of Passau presented him to a benefice at Anspach, and then he took the vow concerning which he had had so many misgivings. On March 6, 1446, he writes to Campisio, 'I have conquered that levity of mind that kept me among the laity,' and adds that he is a sub-deacon now, and hopes to be admitted to the diaconate in eight days' time; Campisio may live to see him a bishop. His parishioners were mostly handicraftsmen and farmers, but fine oratory was indispensable on such an occasion, and the display of scholarship, in season and out of season, was in fashion. Æneas wrote a sermon in Latin that is earnest and sincere enough, but was quite as much intended to be read by the admirers of style as to be listened to by the good folk at Anspach. It was adorned by quotations from the sacred Epistles, Lactantius, Ovid, Juvenal, Seneca, and Epicurus. 'I am deeply sensible of what manner of burden I have undertaken,' says the new vicar, 'I know the obliga-

tion to which I am sworn. I have taken an oath to point out the heavenly way to you, and to care for your souls. . . . I will strive, not only to make you better men and women, but also to improve my own character. Thus may we gain the everlasting life together. But I am not skilled in your speech, so, though sometimes I will write you letters, I will employ a vicar as my interpreter, and he shall unfold the word of God to you, and point out the road that leads to bliss.<sup>1</sup> Pastor has discovered that eleven months after taking orders, Æneas was admitted to the priesthood. The record of the event is contained in the *Liber Officiorum* of Eugenius, and it took place at Rome a few days before that Pontiff's death.

It is clear that Æneas was possessed by no fierce fire of evangelical enthusiasm. But he could be a kindly friend to those in need of counsel or help. His advice was sought on the very difficulty that had delayed his own entrance into holy orders, and the dates of his anti-erotic writings should be carefully noted.<sup>2</sup> They begin with his pastorate. Once, during this period of deepening earnestness, his duties called him to a town in Franconia, and a woman came running up to greet him. She was 'no great beauty, having a strange figure, short and stumpy.' He asked her how she was, and what she did there, and if she came on some love-affair, for he recognised her as one whom he had seen at Basel. She replied that she was well, had no lover, and maintained herself

<sup>1</sup> *Pis II. Orationes*, in Mansi, i. p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> The epistles to John Freund, to Nicholas Wartenburg, and to Ippolito of Milan, all lie between March and December 1446. His work *De Pravis Mulieribus* is undated, and also his letter to Carolus Cypriacus, a nobleman, containing an earnest denunciation of his novel *De Duobus Amantibus*.

by needlework. Then she took him to the humble room that she occupied, and showed him the clothes she was working at, and, whatever his suspicions might have been, there was no evidence of her leading other than a decent life. 'Have you no husband?' asked Æneas. 'Yes, but I am better away from him,' she answered. Æneas asked more questions and found that the husband was a certain Hermann Aspel of Basel, from whom the woman had separated years before. Aspel had persistently maltreated her, beating her with fist and stick, and threatening to kill her. 'But why do you not go back to him and try to live with him again?' asked Æneas. 'Because he has taken another woman to live with him,' she replied. 'But he may have repented, and be willing to live with you again,' urged Æneas, and, acting according to his lights, he offered to find out all about her husband, and to try to effect a reconciliation. He gives the account of this little adventure to a clergyman resident at Basel, whom he begs to gather what information he can, and try to get the concubine out of the house, so that the wife may be free to return.<sup>1</sup> As a cleric, his friends found him precisely the same kindly, genial companion as before. 'What Michael and I chiefly long for,' he tells an intimate, when he is away on one of his innumerable journeys, 'is that we may meet and chat, and laugh and drink and sing together once again.'

Two months after he was ordained priest, Tommaso Parentucelli, now become Nicholas v., advanced him to the bishopric of Trieste. The Pope invaded the right of the king in doing so; for the benefice was

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Opera Omnia*. Basileæ, 1551, Ep. xcix. p. 588.

one of those reserved to Caesar by the compact between the latter and Eugenius. But Frederick had also nominated Æneas, so no difficulty arose. Both king and Pope were under deep obligations to him. It was he who guided Frederick to renew to Nicholas the obedience he had yielded to Eugenius, and he had prepared the way for the restitution of Papal authority in Germany. For the fourth time he encountered the resistance of a chapter. That of Trieste made an attempt to elect their own bishop; but they were powerless to oppose Pope and Caesar in accord with one another.<sup>1</sup> The way now lay open to the highest seats in the hierarchy of the Church.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Voigt's judgement on Æneas's character has been repeated recently, without any evidence of a re-examination of the facts, by Dr. A. Meusel, in his *Enea Silvio als Publicist: Untersuchungen zur deutschen Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte*, Hft. 77. 1905. But Dr. Meusel deals exhaustively and destructively with Æneas's treatise, *On the Origin and Authority of the Imperial Power*. Yet it may be allowed to us to remark that Æneas was no jurist—only a man alive to large ideas and skilful in finding arguments to speed them. Scholastic quibbles and meticulous pedantry were alien to his nature, and scientific method and historical criticism were unknown in his age.

## CHAPTER IX

## ÆNEAS AS BISHOP AND AMBASSADOR: AS CONFIDENTIAL ADVISER OF THE CROWN — THE CORONATION AND MARRIAGE OF FREDERICK III.

ÆNEAS was present at Eugenius's funeral, and, in spite of the solemnity of the occasion, he witnessed much that excited his keen sense of the ludicrous: there were customs observed quite incongruous with a spectacle that should have been impressive, and these, he says, he would like to see abolished. 'Servants presented to each cardinal a box painted with his coat-of-arms and containing a repast; his household followed it, and then a train of priests and parasites, that bowed to the dinner. These gaudy dinner-boxes were borne through Rome with much solemnity, so that each procession resembled a separate funeral cortège. Four mourners stood beside the coffin of the dead Pope to flick the flies away, but, it being winter-time, there were none: perhaps, however, a refreshing breeze was created for Eugenius, who was not there.'<sup>1</sup>

Æneas was selected to be one of the cross-bearers at Nicholas's coronation.<sup>2</sup> The procession was headed by the Blessed Sacrament, and many torch-bearers guarded it. Three banners and an umbrella preceded

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Hist. Fred.* apud Kollar, *loc. cit.*, pp. 104, 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Relatio* apud Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* iii. 2. p. 896.

the Pope, who rode a white horse, bore the Golden Rose in his left hand and employed his right hand in blessing the people. The envoys of the King of Aragon (who held Naples of the Papacy as a fief) and the barons of Rome took turns at leading his horse. At Monte Giordano, the Jews presented Nicholas with their book of the Law, which he accepted, but condemned their interpretation of it. The ceremony took place at St. John's Lateran, and, at its close, gold and silver medals were given to the cardinals, prelates, and envoys. A feast followed, the Pope dining alone in his palace, and everybody else in the House of the Canons. 'We' (Æneas and Procopius) 'were the guests of Cardinal Carvajal.'

When Æneas arrived at Rome a rumour of the death of the Bishop of Trieste had reached the city. Eugenius intended to confer the benefice on him, but the report proved to be premature. But soon afterwards the bishop died, and Nicholas, as we have seen, carried out Eugenius's desire. As a humanist, Nicholas loved to advance his fellow-scholars. Vespasiano Bistucci tells us that his eloquent oration at the funeral of Eugenius gave him the Papacy, a statement which, though not correct, is evidence of the high estimation in which oratory was held in the fifteenth century. 'Nicholas began all the liberal studies early in life,' says Æneas in his ambassadorial report; 'he is familiar with all the historians, poets, and cosmographers; he is well acquainted with the theologians, and is well read in civil and canon law, and even in medicine.'<sup>1</sup> The new Pope found the

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Relatio*, A.D. 1447, apud Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, iii. 2, p. 895.

states of the Church still in disorder; the national church of France was practically independent of the Papacy; there was still a rival Pope; the Papal revenues were much reduced, and it was all-important that Germany should not remain alienated. 'Nicholas succeeds to difficulty,' wrote Poggio; 'the realm is a hurly-burly, and, what is even more embarrassing, quite ruined.'<sup>1</sup> If arms had been at his command, the new Pope would hardly have used them; he was essentially a man of peace; 'he prayed Heaven that he might never use any other weapon in his defence than the one God had given him.'<sup>2</sup> This peaceful scholar, though he was a man who loved to express himself freely, was called to a position that required stratagem and manoeuvre, and he found a use in the services of Æneas, the scholarly diplomatist.

On March 30, 1447 (he was not yet nominated to the bishopric), Æneas rode off for Germany. It was a month later that he became Bishop of Trieste. In July, he was sent by the king, with another representative, to the diet of Aschaffenburg, but he, no less than Nicholas of Cusa, the Papal Legate, represented the claims of Rome. The diet decided that Nicholas should be recognised, and a fresh diet was agreed on, to arrange what compensation was to be given to the Pope in lieu of the time-honoured perquisites that had been withdrawn. Æneas then went to Köln to win over the archbishop. He was successful in his mission, but the University taunted him with being a turncoat. Indeed, he found himself regarded as a Judas who had sold his master for

<sup>1</sup> Poggio, *Ep.* ix. 17.

<sup>2</sup> See *Vespasiano di Bistucci*, apud Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, xxv. 270, *et seq.*

silver, and he felt obliged to vindicate himself from the charge. He wrote an open letter to the Rector of the University. 'I am but a man,' he says, 'and therefore born to sin; I have gone astray, and am fully aware of it. And I give thanks to God who rescued me from further error. No one who reads my writings will deem that I was so perfectly convinced, so entirely rooted in my opinions, as to be incapable of change. It were unfortunate for men if they could not alter their judgements! Augustine denounced the books he had written.<sup>1</sup> We are free agents while life lasts, and are judged by our final state of mind; the evildoer may find salvation by remorseful repentance. In the spirit of Saul going to Damascus, an enemy of Christianity, I went to Frankfort.' He recounts his experiences at Basel; how he came to see that the Pope was neither heretical nor schismatic, nor a cause of scandal, and that, therefore, he could not be deposed, while the Council was illegal, since it sat on at Basel when it had been translated by the lawful head of the Church. Nor did it represent the Universal Church, in which the Holy Spirit resides: it was supported by Savoy alone among the nations. Men highly revered by the Church have erred and been forgiven. Therefore as a human being, subject to error, he, also, might repent. 'Is faith only to be found at Basel, as Apollo gave oracles only at Delphi? By refusing to go elsewhere, the Council showed that it had little faith in itself.'<sup>2</sup>

Gregorovius remarks that 'this retraction, which

<sup>1</sup> See S. Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis, *Episcopi Retractationum libri duo*, apud Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, t. xxx. ii.

<sup>2</sup> This epistle of retraction and also the Bull of Retraction, which is an expanded form of it, issued when Æneas became Pope, are both given in Fea, *Pius II. a calumniis vindic.* Rome, 1822.



he addresses to the surly theologians at Köln, bears no trace of hypocrisy nor yet the contrition of a repentant devotee. It is a confession, written in an elegant and rhetorical style, of a man well acquainted with the world, who solaces himself with the axiom that to err is human. Devout Christians may judge whether St. Paul or St. Augustine would have regarded Piccolomini as their equal, as a hero whom conviction has redeemed from error. There were, however, men of sincere piety as well as pedants and scoffers who made Pius suffer for the sins of Æneas. But was he not the son of the century? The recollection of his past, which, moreover, had not been sullied by any crime, soon vanished in the genial humanism, perhaps in the general depravity of his day, and if ever the errors of youth may be pardoned to age, Pius II. may claim forgiveness.<sup>1</sup>

Gregorovius should have observed, however, that the epistle addressed to the Rector of Köln University is an apology for adherence to the Council only. No one had accused Æneas of other sin; least of all of sexual offence. Who in that age would have thought it necessary to do so? He had been under no vow of continence; only recently had he taken orders. Yet in his later renunciation—the Bull *In minoribus agentibus*, published April 26, 1463,<sup>2</sup>—though it is based on this epistle, the Pope would seem, implicitly, to refer to other errors than polemical writings against Eugenius. He had written condemning his erotic writings. Now, he says: ‘The

<sup>1</sup> See Gregorovius's account of Pius II.'s reign in his *History of Rome*, English translation, pp. 171-172.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit., p. 3.

Pope is ashamed of his errors, he repents of the evil that he has said and written; yea, passionate is his contrition; yet he has done more harm by his writings than by his deeds. But what shall be done? The word, once written, takes wing; it cannot be called back. Oh, that what has been published could be blotted out. . . . We were ensnared by our own writings, as is the weakness of poets, who love their works as if they were their children.' The epistle to the Rector is a manly confession of a mistake. It may be allowed that it was eloquently written, for Æneas would not have anything flow from his pen that did not conform to the requirements of style. The Bull, surely, is sufficiently remorseful to gratify the most exacting of precisians; only, unfortunately, Pius was too well acquainted with the secrets of the human heart not to be aware that much may always be pleaded in palliation, if not in excuse, of his own and other folk's transgressions. Perhaps, had he omitted the excuse, the deep contrition he assuredly felt would have been more generally appreciated.

The princes of Germany perceived that if they could stand well with the Pope, they might squeeze concessions both from him and Frederick, so, at an assembly held at Vienna (February, 1448), they signed a concordat, wherein not one word was said about those conciliar decrees that the Papacy had accepted but ignored. All the princes had contrived, in one way or another, to secure something for themselves, and Frederick was obliged to put up with just what concessions the Papacy was willing to grant him; for without Papal support he could not hope

to hold the electors in check. Everybody was offered and took some kind of bribe to keep quiet.

But, if the storm had abated, an after-swell still troubled the waters. At a congress held at Bourges (June 1447), the King of France secured for himself no small measure of ecclesiastical control that had hitherto belonged to the Papacy. Burgundy, Castile, England, and Scotland were preparing to follow his example. In November 1448 Æneas wrote to the Pope: 'A time of peril is before us; on every side bad weather is threatening, and the storms that are coming will put the skill of the mariners to the proof. The waves from Basel have not yet gone down; the winds are still struggling below the waters and hurrying along secret channels. That consummate actor, the devil, sometimes assumes the part of an angel of light. I know not what attempts will be made in France, but the Council still has adherents. We have a truce, not peace. Our opponents say that we have yielded to force, not conviction, and that what we have once taken into our heads we keep firmly fixed there. So we must expect another battlefield and a fresh struggle for supremacy.'

If Æneas acted as an ecclesiastical agent for the Papacy, he was also busily employed by Frederick on purely political business. Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, died on August 13, 1447, and the city soon established a republican form of government. Milan, while owing fealty to the Empire, had once been a self-governing commune, and Barbarossa and his illustrious grandson Frederick, *Stupor Mundi*, had tried, repeatedly but vainly, to suppress its liberties. But local nobles had succeeded where

Emperors failed. The antagonism of classes, the need of strong government within the walls and of an effective and continuous policy in regard to subject-communes and foreign powers, had enabled, aforesaid, first the Torriani, and then the Visconti, to seize the helm of state. The title of duke had been granted to the Visconti by Imperial decree, and that family had intermarried with royal houses of Europe; but they were regarded by their subjects as First Magistrates only, raised to power by election or tacit assent. An illegitimate daughter, Bianca Maria, was the sole issue of the late duke, and she had become the bride of Francesco Sforza, a soldier of fortune, whose services her father was compelled, though very unwillingly, to reward by the gift of her hand. The republic was hardly constituted when it became split into factions by economic and social forces, and the freedom of the city was threatened by Sforza, by the Duke of Orleans, who claimed the throne in virtue of his descent from the Visconti through the female line, by Alfonso of Naples, who asserted that the late duke had named him as successor, and by Caesar himself, on the ground that the fief had lapsed. Æneas Silvius had been sent, soon after the duke's death, to bring the divided city back to its allegiance. He found that the turbulent citizens were willing to do homage to Frederick what time he might come to claim the Lombard crown, but were by no means disposed to concede any further privileges. And now, again, in 1449, when the city was closely invested by Sforza, he was sent to proffer the king's help. He addressed a great gathering of the townfolk and promised that the king should advance immediately

to the relief of the beleaguered city, if the government gave Frederick the full rights that an overlord might claim from a lapsed fief. The government had no small difficulty in calming the excited people: they had to promise to appoint a committee and give the proposal a favourable consideration. Then, as he had done on the previous visit, Æneas visited Sforza in his camp, with the hope of coming to some understanding with him, but received the curt reply, 'Let the king do what he likes; when I have taken Milan I will be faithful to him as my overlord.' Æneas perceived that Sforza was a man of great determination and force of character, and mutual respect seems to have grown up between the two. Early in the following year the condottiere entered Milan, and was welcomed as a deliverer by the people whom he had starved into submission, for he brought abundant provisions with him. He assumed rule and exercised impartial justice; and Æneas tried, though vainly, to get Frederick to recognise him as legitimate ruler. Later on our bishop sought for some recognition of his services from the usurper; for we still frequently find Æneas resembling the pushing professional man, who does his duty but expects his reward, is keen to perceive when his own personal interests coincide with larger duties, and makes his way, in no small degree, by being useful and agreeable to all those with whom he has to deal.

Schlick died in 1449, and, after his death, Piccolomini, Bishop of Trieste, was even more busily employed by the king and had more of his confidence than Æneas the secretary. Frederick was now thirty-five years old, and he thought it high time to provide an

heir for his throne. He sent his envoys in every direction to seek for a suitable bride, and he selected Leonora, the daughter of the King of Portugal, and niece of the King of Naples, for the honour. She was a girl only just entering womanhood, but she already had other princely suitors. Frederick was preferred, however, for, as Æneas tells us, 'the title of Caesar was held in more veneration abroad than at home.'<sup>1</sup> He was despatched to Naples to arrange the marriage, and, on the way, he received the welcome tidings that the Pope had made him Bishop of Siena. 'The journey,' he tells us, 'was by no means without its perils.' The river, 'which rises in the Volscian mountains, is a deep stream, overshadowed by woods, and many of the trees bend in low arches over the water, like so many natural bridges. The boats that bore Æneas and his company were very small indeed; the boatmen, whom we compelled to row by night, turned ill-tempered, and often their oars struck against these trunks; once, in the deepest darkness, we had to cling on for dear life to a trunk, and were in danger for two hours. A little while afterwards, a boat sank here, and eleven men were drowned. But, not far from Cumae, where we had to cross another river near its mouth, and less labour was required to propel the boat, it capsized, and men by clinging, and horses by swimming, had to struggle for their lives.'<sup>2</sup>

From Naples, after a successful mission, he rode back to Rome. It was Jubilee year, and he asserts that forty thousand pilgrims arrived every day, an incredible statement, though Cristoforo da Soldo writes

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Hist. Fred.* in Kollar, ii. p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Pis II. Comment.*, l. 1.

that 'a greater crowd of Christians was never known to hasten to any Jubilee: kings, dukes, marquesses, counts, knights, and people of every rank came there daily in such multitudes that there were millions in the city. And this lasted the whole year, except in summer, when the plague carried off a countless number. But hardly had it abated and the cold season come round, when the crush began again.' Æneas arrived in winter. He found a French embassy there, urging the fulfilment of the Papal promise to summon a fresh council, and demanding that it should be held in France. When he announced the approaching marriage of Frederick and the monarch's intention of coming to Rome for coronation to the Pope and Curia, he cleverly introduced a request that the council should be held in Germany.<sup>1</sup> This demand coming from the Imperial Ambassador enabled Nicholas and the Curia to postpone the threatened danger. In a later speech, delivered at Vienna, the bishop said: 'It pleases neither the King of Aragon, nor him of England, nor him of Portugal, that it should be held in France. I, by the sanction of Caesar, said so in public consistory at Rome, in the Jubilee year, and dissuaded them from it, not without good reason,'<sup>2</sup> and, in his *Commentaries*, he tells us that it was he who put off the attempt.<sup>3</sup> Since all the Christian princes were not agreed as to the place of meeting, there was a fair seeming of excuse for postponing the meeting itself.

Taking advantage of the canonisation of St.

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Orationes*, apud Mansi, i. p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid. loc. cit.*; *Oratio adversus Australes*, i. p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

Bernardino, which had just taken place, Piccolomini advised that Fra Giovanni Capistrano, on whom Bernardino's mantle had fallen, should be sent to preach the word through Germany; perhaps he would win back Bohemia to the faith. Such was the power of this remarkable preacher that, though his Latin exhortations had to be interpreted to the Germans, his mission to that country was a great success. He was revered as if he had been one of the Apostles come back from the dead; thousands crowded to hear his sermons, and the sick were brought in numbers to touch the hem of his garment and be healed. But the penetrating eye of Æneas perceived some swelling vanity and arrogant self-sufficiency hiding beneath the friar's frock; rightly or wrongly he judged that, at bottom, the ardent enthusiast had a shallow character, and when he became Pope he resolutely set his face against canonising Capistrano.<sup>1</sup> From Germany Capistrano went on to Bohemia, but his emotional methods had less effect with the Calixtines. Cusa was there, trying to win over heretical scholars by argument, and Æneas was sent to try his diplomacy; for Frederick hesitated to proceed to Rome for his coronation until Bohemia should be less unquiet. A Bohemian party favoured him, but the greater part of the nation wished him to give Ladislas, the youthful heir to their throne, into their hands, and the object of Æneas's mission was to exercise his persuasive oratory at the Bohemian Diet. Though the miserable Caesar dared not face the Electors at a diet, though he feared that his dominions would be attacked

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Hist. Bohem., c. 65; Pii II. Comment., l. xii.*



during his absence, he yet hoped to increase his prestige by assuming the Imperial insignia; he was almost penniless, too, and hoped to fill his purse by the sale of privileges in Italy; further, he was pledged to meet his bride in that country. So Æneas was despatched to do what he could towards the pacification of Bohemia.

He passed through Tabor, the headquarters of the Bohemian extremists, and he tells us of symbols, hung over the city-gate, which set forth their separation from the Catholic Church. They were a shield, bearing a cup-holding angel for its device, and the effigies of blind old Ziska, the heroic genius who had organised the defence of Bohemia and led her peasantry to hurl back, so many times, the united chivalry of Europe. He found the Taborites quite well-to-do people, for the spoliation of the Church and booty acquired by war had enriched them. Their system of education was good, though the extremists despised classical scholarship since, in a measure, it was the distinction of a class. Yet many were instructed in Latin, and Æneas says that their love of literature was the one good point about the people. The Bible was much studied by them. Æneas wrote a letter to Carvajal giving an account of the heretics.<sup>1</sup> 'The Italian priests,' he says, 'should be ashamed, for it is certain that not one of them has once read the Bible.' . . . 'They are not all of one faith, for every one in Tabor may believe what pleases him. Nicolaitans, Arians, Manichæans, Arminians, Nestorians, Berengarians, and Poor of Lyons are all to be found there. The highest in consideration, however, are

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Silv. Piccolomini, Opera Omnia. Basil, Ep. cxxx.*

those arch-enemies of the Roman see—the Waldensians.’

From Tabor he proceeded to Beneschau, where the diet was held, for Prague was plague-stricken at this moment. He pointed out that young Ladislas was too young to reign, and promised that matters should be arranged, if Bohemia would wait peacefully for Frederick’s return from Rome; but he was heard with very little attention. He was more successful with George Podiebrad, a man who was rapidly advancing to the position of Dictator in Bohemia, and Æneas promised him that he should receive the recognition of Frederick as governor of that country. He thought Podiebrad an ambitious man, yet harmless and easy to manage: he lived to discover his mistake.

On his return journey he revisited Tabor, and a disputation was arranged to take place between the scholarly ambassador and a crowd of heretical priests. Good humour prevailed throughout the discussion; but it was evident that it could lead to no good result, and Æneas withdrew with a witty *argumentum ad hominem*. ‘The Pope and his cardinals are given over to avarice and gluttony,’ urged a round, fat ecclesiastic; ‘their belly is their god, and their heaven lies in their money-bags.’ Æneas laid his hand gently on his adversary’s comfortable paunch, and, amid good-humoured laughter, asked if *that* came of fasting and self-denial.

When the Austrian nobles learned that Frederick intended to take the young Ladislas with him to Rome, they threw off their allegiance; but, being too weak to employ force against them, the king

started on his journey, taking Æneas with him. By the end of December 1451 he reached Italy, and was soon disillusioned as to the power of the Imperial name in that country. Caesar was still surrounded by a halo of prestige, but Italy was no longer a mere truss of communes: the leading cities had subdued the territories surrounding them and become the capitals of wealthy and powerful states. The Italian, too, is a keen critic, and Frederick was not the most dignified of emperors. Yet a nervous thrill went through Italy when Caesar crossed the Alps, for the various states feared that the delicate balance of power, maintained by their antagonisms, would be disturbed; but this fear soon passed away. Still, the republic of Siena and the Pope remained apprehensive. Siena feared that her bishop, belonging, as he did, to the aristocratic order of her citizens, would use his great influence with Frederick to destroy her liberty, and Nicholas dreaded that Frederick would use his projected alliance with the Pope's feudatory (the King of Naples, uncle of Frederick's prospective bride) to the disadvantage of the Holy See. Æneas had no small difficulty in persuading Nicholas that his fears were groundless.<sup>1</sup> Even so, the Papal legates compelled Frederick to take an oath that he would neither issue edicts nor administer in any way during his stay in Rome. But the royal progress through Italy proved to be a mere harmless, antiquated parade. Poggio spoke of Caesar as 'the Imperial puppet.' Frederick swallowed all affronts to his authority, and gave himself up to the enjoyment of the pageants provided for his amusement.

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Hist. Fred.* apud Kollar, ii. 187.

He avoided Milan, where the usurper, Sforza, reigned, and passed through Venetia, Ferrara, and Siena. When he arrived at Rome, he excited the derision of the citizens by exhibiting an unkingly interest in the wrecks of time, and, on his return journey through Venice, he achieved contempt by going about the city in disguise, to haggle with the shopkeepers and purchase fancy-wares at prices that were not Imperial.

Æneas was sent on to Leghorn to await the arrival of the Princess Leonora. He had to wait a wearisome while, for the Portuguese fleet took no less than one hundred and four days to reach Leghorn. At last it arrived with the bride-elect (February 2, 1452)—a strong force of galleys with two thousand soldiers aboard; for corsairs rendered the Mediterranean unsafe. Now, the Portuguese ambassador stood on punctilio, and refused to entrust his charge to any one of less rank than the Imperial bridegroom. He and Æneas argued the question for more than a fortnight, and at last the matter was referred to the princess herself, who sensibly refused to be the victim of ceremony, and replied that she accepted the arrangement made by her future husband. On February 24, Æneas escorted Leonora to Siena, where the citizens had been amusing themselves and the Emperor with splendid entertainments, though they almost disregarded the claims of his well-nigh exhausted purse, and gave him but a small donation. One is surprised to learn that, when the phlegmatic Caesar saw his bride in the distance, he turned pale, for she seemed such a little doll, but a nearer view convinced him that she was of average height, really

lovely, and that her bearing was sufficiently regal; and then his colour came back, and his stolid face beamed, for he knew that his envoys had not deceived him. We are told that 'her beauty paled before her mental endowments,' but we must remember this is said of a princess. The maiden was sixteen years old, with an open brow, black, sparkling eyes, a very white neck, and she blushed in a delicate, becoming way.

The comely ladies of Siena (and where is womanhood more gracious?) ascended platforms, indulged in stately dances, and recited poetical compliments to the princess, and other compositions in praise of love and beauty; but the Portuguese courtiers conducted themselves so as to outrage their proud sense of the proprieties, and they retired from the scene with due dignity. Æneas showed himself at his best in witty jest and sprightly conversation.

From Siena the cavalcade proceeded to Viterbo, where, according to antique usage, the mob claimed their perquisites and tried to snatch the rich panoply that was held over the Emperor. He seized a lance and fought his way to the hostelry, not without receiving some blows.

At last they reached Monte Mario. Frederick was usually impassive, but he looked down from the brow of the hill on the classic ruins and Christian basilicas of Rome with emotion. Can we wonder? For Rome garners the ages as they pass and folds them peacefully in her bosom; she has seen eras depart as so many morning mists; change may wound, but cannot dissolve her, for she is undying; time is the record of her fiats, and these have moulded the world. Even

the rude German knights exclaimed that the sight of the ancient city repaid the journey. Turning to Æneas, the king asked him many questions, and then, 'Methinks the time will come when you will be a cardinal,' said he, 'nor will your good fortune cease with that; you will rise still higher; the chair of St. Peter awaits you. Have care that men do not deride you when you reach it.'<sup>1</sup> Alas! the Emperor-elect had proved how vain is human dignity when divested of power.

As they approached the city the cardinals came forth to meet them, and Frederick was told that this was an unprecedented honour, but Æneas 'thought of the time when the Pope himself used to advance and give welcome; still all earthly power is subject to vicissitude.'<sup>2</sup> According to custom, the king spent the night outside the walls at the house of a Florentine banker, while Æneas visited Nicholas to dispel his fears. 'It is wiser to fall into the error of unjustified suspicion than into that of over-confidence,' replied the Pontiff.

Next day Caesar and his bride-elect entered the city. Already we note the vulgar side of the Renaissance in its love of personal display. Leonora's horse had trappings of cloth-of-gold, she wore a mantle of the same costly material, and a great gold necklace encircled her white neck. Frederick's raiment, with its jewels, was valued at two hundred thousand ducats. The clergy and nobility awaited them at the gates, with the Prefect of Rome, who bore a

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The greater part of this account and of what follows concerning the coronation is taken from Æneas Silvius's *History of Frederick III.*

naked sword. Three thousand Papal horse and two hundred Papal foot, under the guise of a guard of honour, followed the German knights and soldiery, prepared for any sudden attack or emergency. When the King arrived at St. Peter's he dismounted, and was conducted by the cardinals to the Pope, whose foot he kissed and to whom he rendered a lump of gold. The Pope presented him first with his hand, and then with his cheek, to kiss, as Eugenius had done to Æneas. Then the Mediæval Caesar knelt, and the descendant of the Fisherman blessed him and made him sit by his side.<sup>1</sup> Æneas says that never before had an Emperor received such a friendly greeting from a Pope. On March 16, Frederick received the historic Iron Crown of Lombardy, which contains a piece of the true Cross; for he would not take it in the dukedom, since Sforza was a usurper there. Æneas laughed to himself at the title, 'King of the Romans,' for that 'became extinct with Tarquin, until the Germans revived and applied it to their own German king.' During the next three days Frederick was busy seeing the sights of Rome and holding diplomatic interviews with Nicholas concerning what service they could render one another; but the Pope set his face dead against a council. On the 19th, the Imperial Coronation took place. Two platforms were erected outside the old basilica of St. Peter's, one being for the Emperor and the other for his bride. Here Frederick took his oath, and was then admitted to the College of Canons, and he donned the Imperial robe, which Æneas thought looked

<sup>1</sup> Enekel, quoted by Pastor, *History of the Papacy*, English trans., ii. 15.

rather old and shabby. Then both he and Leonora were anointed on the shoulder and right arm. The crowning and marriage took place in the church, and the newly-wedded pair returned to their respective platforms to hear Mass. Æneas remarks that the crown on Frederick's head was supposed to be that of Charlemagne, but he knew better, for he noticed that it bore the Bohemian lion, and was therefore not older than Charles iv.'s time. Then the Pope and Emperor walked, hand-in-hand, a little way, and the Pope mounted his horse, and Frederick held the reins for a short while. A procession then formed and traversed the city, the Pope giving Caesar the Golden Rose<sup>1</sup> on the way. On the road back to the Vatican, at the bridge in front of the tomb of Hadrian, Frederick dubbed three hundred knights, much to the amusement of Æneas, for they were ill qualified to be Imperial riders, and Italy was not a land where the institutions of chivalry flourished.

On March 24, the bridal pair set out for Naples, where the bride's uncle, Alfonso, had prepared great festivities; but Æneas was left in charge of the lad Ladislav, Frederick's ward. In the dead of night he was summoned to attend the Pope, who informed him that a plot to carry off his charge had been discovered. Precautions were taken at once to keep him secure, the very cardinals being forbidden to take the young

<sup>1</sup> The Rose, of wrought gold, set with gems and blessed by the Pope on the Fourth Sunday in Lent with certain ceremonies of ancient date but obscure meaning, is mentioned in the eleventh century. Its first recipient was the licentious Joanna of Naples (1366), and since then it has been sent to many royal and dubious personages, including Isabella of Spain and Louis Napoleon in the last generation. But the custom of sending a few shavings from St. Peter's chair, set in gold, is as old as Gregory the Great (see *S. Greg.*, ed. 1705, lib. ii. 648, 796, and 1031).



prince out hunting with them, and, on hearing the news, the King hurried back from Naples.

When Frederick was on the point of leaving Rome, Æneas, on his behalf, thanked the Pope and cardinals for their hospitality at an open consistory, and added that another emperor would have insisted on a council, but Frederick was convinced that the Pope and his Curia were the best council. The truth was that Frederick was compelled to be the obedient servant of the Pope, for Austria, Hungary, and Moravia were in open rebellion against him, and they and Milan were intriguing with France. But the submission was by no means unacceptable to Æneas in his change of view as to Papal claims. He, almost alone of any European statesmen, saw the peril to Europe that arose from the dissensions of Christians while the Turk pursued his career almost unchecked, and how great was the need of complete union if he were to be hurled out of Europe. On April 26, the Emperor and Empress rode forth from Rome, and Æneas accompanied them, bearing with him a commission to act as Papal Nuncio in Bohemia.

Æneas tells us that, though Leonora of Portugal was wedded to Frederick, she had not become his wife; he wished the consummation of marriage to take place in Germany, for he was a formal man and insisted on the punctilious observance of ceremony.<sup>1</sup> The maiden was unhappy, for she thought her husband indifferent to her, and she expressed her view with the customary frankness of ladies in the fifteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> More than a century later, in 1579, Guglielmo II., Duke of Mantua, requested that the consummation of marriage between Alfonso II., Duke of Ferrara, and his daughter Margherita should be postponed until she entered Ferrara. See the author's *Tasso and His Times*, pp. 240, 241.

For some time her uncle, Alfonso, prayed in vain that the consummation might take place, but at last he induced Frederick to give way. According to German custom, the Emperor ordered the marriage-bed to be prepared, and, in the presence of the King of Naples, the courtiers, and the bride's maids-of-honour, both he and Leonora being fully attired, the Empress mounted the bridal couch and the Emperor lay by her side and solemnly kissed her. Leonora's ladies, who had no knowledge of German customs, became very much alarmed, thinking they would be put to shame, and protested vigorously, while Alfonso did not disguise his amusement. 'Such,' says Æneas, 'was the custom of German princes.'<sup>1</sup> At the desire of the Portuguese ladies, the bridal bed had been consecrated with holy water; but the following night, when the marriage was to be consummated, Frederick, who thought the couch might have been poisoned or placed under some necromantic spell, ordered it to be changed for another.

<sup>1</sup> The ceremony was a publication of the marriage whereby it became indisputable, and was even employed in marriage by proxy.

## CHAPTER X

ÆNEAS AS PAPAL AND IMPERIAL AGENT—THE  
EASTERN PERIL

FREDERICK returned to Germany to find it in full revolt. His ally, the Pope, threatened the rebels with excommunication, and the menace was treated with contempt. Germans, Austrians, and Hungarians were ready to unite with French and demand a Council; Frederick was powerless to resist. The Papacy became seriously alarmed, for it depended on Germany for a large part of its revenues, which now came sparingly from other countries. If Germany were to follow the lead of France and establish a national church, the Pope and Curia would be reduced to penury. A General Council might limit authority, but a German 'Pragmatic Sanction,' similar to that of Bourges, would be followed by the decay of Catholic organisation; if supplies were cut off, Catholicism could not continue to exist. For, as with any other state, the entire ecclesiastic system of the Papacy, its hierarchical ordinances, and all the principles on which its universal government is conducted, cannot endure if they be deprived of the resources by which they are fed. Heresies without end will flourish, and all shadow of obedience will disappear in general religious anarchy.

Æneas pointed out to Frederick that he could not keep his ward, Ladislas, for ever, and it is probable that he advised him to bend before the storm. The young king was released, and Æneas was despatched, with two other envoys, to a diet held at Vienna during the winter of 1452-3. It was a stormy assembly. One day, when the Emperor was taking private counsel of Æneas, Cusa and the Bishop of Eichstädt, Albert of Brandenburg rushed into the chamber and loudly abused everybody present, declaring that he cared not a jot for Emperor or Pope. 'It is the common fault of princes,' remarks Æneas, 'that, being brought up among inferiors in rank, who are ready to applaud everything they say, when they come to mingle with their equals, they will brook no reproof, but fly into a rage and lose all self-control.'<sup>1</sup> Later on, when the Emperor had asked one of his counsellors to obtain an opinion from the princes, Albert took the envoy by the shoulders and thrust him out of the room, exclaiming, 'Are you a prince then, that you come in among princes?' Æneas found his old enemy, Heimburg, at the diet, who bitterly opposed him, but he concocted a crucial dispute, and triumphed so far as to get the princes to postpone its discussion to another diet.

It was now that Æneas made one of his ablest and most powerful speeches. 'The Austrians,' said he, 'have taken up the same position as the Waldensian heretics; nay, they are no better than the Saracens. For, in their pride, they say, "What is the Pope to us? Let him say his Masses; we rely on our swords." They demand a Council. Is the Pope, then, guilty

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Hist. Fred. III.*, apud Kollar, ii. 417.

of heresy or schism, or has he altered the government of the Church? Councils! Why, I saw cooks and stablemen sitting with bishops at Basel, and giving laws to the Church. And, in your wisdom, you will appeal from an ignorant to an instructed Pope. That is to say, you divide the Pope into two parts, and appeal from one half of him to the other. It is a device worthy of Plato's *Republic*, but not to be found in practical life. And I fear you will not get a Council either, for it depends on the Pope whether it shall be summoned, and it will be a score of years, or perhaps a century, before he does so; for he must judge when it is expedient and desirable. You talk of Councils every ten years. Why, the last sat for twenty! I wish that the times were ripe for a Council, and this is the Pope's desire also; then the dreams of these men would soon be dispelled. They appeal to a universal Church, that is to say to men of every station, to women and children, as well as men; to the laity no less than the clergy. In early times, when the body of believers was very small, such a thing was possible. But now, how can they all meet together, and how are they to appoint arbiters to resolve difficulties? An appeal to the Last Judgement would show just as much practical sense.'<sup>1</sup>

The oration produced no effect; the progressive abasement of Frederick remained unchecked. But the princes were vastly more eager to aggrandise themselves than to reform the Church. Frederick, probably advised by Æneas, requested the Pope to withdraw his threats, and Nicholas consented to do so.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Orat.*, apud Mansi, i. 184 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Voigt, *loc. cit.*, ii. 88.

For many years the prescient eye of Piccolomini had perceived the danger of Christian dissension while the Moslem was steadily advancing his rule. As early as 1444, a letter to Campisio shows his eager interest in the Eastern campaign. At the Coronation of Frederick, he burst forth into a passionate exhortation to resistance. He saw how Hungary remained the sole barrier of Christianity against the infidels, weakened as Central Europe was by internecine struggles.<sup>1</sup> On May 29, 1453, the Crescent supplanted the Cross at St. Sophia. The news soon spread far and wide, and Europe learned with dismay that the last vestige of the Empire of Constantine had disappeared, and that the Turk had gained the firmest foothold in all Europe for further advance. Frederick professed, and doubtless felt, anxiety, but he 'sat at home doing nothing; he amused himself by catching birds and attending to his garden.'<sup>2</sup>

But the grave danger stung Æneas the statesman into activity; it aroused Æneas the scholar to the peril in which the priceless libraries of Greece stood. 'Now is the river of all culture choked,' he wrote; 'now has the fountain of the Muses ceased; now are poetry and philosophy buried. Who cannot but mourn such an overthrow of letters? Homer and Pindar and Menander and all the illustrious poets have died a second time. And great as this disaster is, one yet more terrible threatens the Christian faith, and a yoke may yet be put on Christian peoples.'<sup>3</sup> He wrote to the Pope, serving up excuses for Papal

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Johan. Campisium*, May 5, 1444. Voigt, *Collect.* S. 390.

<sup>2</sup> Matthias Döring, quoted by Creighton.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Card. S. Petri ad Vincul.*, July 21, 1453.

supineness that were only a veil for reproof and exhortation. 'Historians of the Papacy,' said he, 'when they reach your time, will record this of you: "Nicholas, a Tuscan, was Pope for so many years. He recovered the patrimony of St. Peter from usurping tyrants; he united a divided Church; he built the Vatican and splendidly restored St. Peter's; he canonised St. Bernardino of Siena; he celebrated a Jubilee, and crowned Frederick III. But in his time Constantinople was taken by the Turk and plundered" (or, it may have to be written, "burned and razed to the ground!"). For though you strove with all your might to give aid to the wretched city, you were unable to unite the Princes of Christendom in the defence of the Faith. The danger was over-stated, they replied; the greedy Greeks exaggerated their peril to get money sent over. Your Holiness did your best: no blame can be laid at your door. Yet the ignorance of posterity will not fail to put the shame on you, when it shall be told that Constantinople was taken during your reign.' Then Æneas goes on to urge him to summon a congress of princes.<sup>1</sup> He also writes to the cardinals: within a month Capranica, Scarampo, Cusa, and Carvajal received stirring appeals from him;<sup>2</sup> nor, this done, did he desist from repeated efforts to arouse them from their indifference and awaken them to the magnitude and imminence of the danger. Isidor of Russia, too, warned Nicholas that the Turk would be in Italy in eighteen months, unless the peace of Christendom could be secured.

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Sanct. Dom. Nich.*, July 12, 1453.

<sup>2</sup> See the letters addressed to the Cardinals, of Fermo, July 11; Aquileia, July 12; S. Pietro, July 21; S. Angelo, August 10.

But Æneas had at heart a larger policy than the repulse of the Moslem even. He desired Christian union; he perceived that the present was an unparalleled opportunity for the Pope to regain his prestige and to attempt the establishment of a new Pax Romana under the guidance of the theocracy. Nicholas proclaimed a universal peace, equipped a small fleet, and promised remission of sins to Crusaders;<sup>1</sup> perhaps this was all he felt he could do in the face of so many difficulties that beset him at home and abroad. Moreover, the most eager of his desires was to embody the sublime truth of Christianity in the dazzling splendour of its chief see.<sup>2</sup>

However, an Augustinian friar, sent by Venice to her foe Sforza, the ruler of Milan, arranged a treaty at Lodi, and the Italian states, exhausted by war, agreed to a twenty-five years' truce. Meanwhile Æneas was urging the Emperor to convoke an European Congress. 'I have spoken much with Caesar about this disaster to the world,' he writes; 'I find him well disposed, but wanting in power.'<sup>3</sup> He got Frederick's permission to appeal urgently to the Pope in his name. He entreated Nicholas as 'representative on earth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, from whom this movement proceeds, to write to kings, send legates, and warn and exhort all princes and states everywhere, to come in person or send delegates. Now, when the evil has only just happened, is the time for us to hasten and call a congress. Command all foes to make peace with each other, or, at least, to agree to a truce, while

<sup>1</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad ann.* 1453.

<sup>2</sup> See Manetti apud Muratori, *R. I. S.*, iii. 2. p. 945.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Sanct. Dom. Nich.*, August 11, 1453.



they turn their arms against the foes of the Cross. If your Holiness were to throw heart and soul into the matter, there cannot be a doubt that many kings and princes would obey your call; for zeal for God and the Faith is not dead.<sup>1</sup> But, 'the matter did not please the Apostolic Chair,' Æneas tells us. 'Most likely Nicholas dreaded that such a meeting would give an opportunity for complaint; for nothing is secure in that high vocation. The stir of a great assembly brings forth much: the supreme authority is unfriendly to innovation; for discontent is encouraged when there is hope of change.'<sup>2</sup>

Though Æneas wrote to Carvajal, 'Never have I, in my ten years' service, spoken to Caesar so much as about this matter or found him listen so seriously,'<sup>3</sup> Frederick feared to face the Electors at a congress, and he refused to go, saying that he 'could not afford to sacrifice his own to general interests, nor did he find any one who was more eager for the good of others than for his own benefit.'<sup>4</sup> However, he invited the princes of Europe to assemble or send delegates, and he nominated certain German princes to attend the congress, and sent Æneas to act as one of his deputies. The congress was brought about by the exertions of Æneas, and to him, therefore, is due the honour of founding the first assemblage of European statesmen for a common object and the common good. But his

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Ep. ad Sanct. Dom. Nich.*, August 10, 1453. See also Weiss, A., *Æn. S. Piccol. als Papst Pius II., sein Leben und Einfluss auf die literarische Cultur Deutschl.* Graz, 1897, p. 34 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> See Æn. Silvius, *De Ratesponensi Dieta*, in appendix to Mansi, and his letter to Leonardo de' Bentivogli, the Siennese ambassador at Venice, July 5, 1454.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Card. S. Angel.*, September 3, 1453.

<sup>4</sup> Æn. Sil., *Orat.*, apud Mansi, iii. 9. Lucae, 1755-59.

energies broke themselves against a barrier of indifference and inertia. He carried an Imperial letter to Louis of Bavaria, and found him just ready to set out hunting. The Prince read the missive, and said he very much appreciated such a compliment, but he was young and inexperienced, and would not, therefore, accept the Emperor's invitation, but he would send representatives. Would Æneas join the hunt with him? The dogs were barking meanwhile, and everybody was cursing the envoys for hindering their sport. Æneas and his friends declined the invitation, whereupon the huntsmen wound their horns and the Prince and his friends galloped away.<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Cusa, when he drew near to Regensburg, where the Congress was to be held, asked whether he should go on, and who would pay his expenses. The state of Mantua never received an invitation; that of Siena got one too late; Ferrara and Lucca sent excuses; the other Italian states, England and Scotland did not reply. Charles of France was jealous of Burgundy, and he wrote to Nicholas that he would take up arms if Germany did; Christian of Denmark regretted that the notice was too short, also, he was occupied with a war against Norway, but when the moment came for action he would be found ready; Poland sent envoys, but only to protest against the Teutonic knights; the King of Portugal was ready, but his people murmured. The truth was that the feudal system was breaking down; many lands were exhausted by war, and most rulers were busy consolidating their own possessions and establishing a firmer rule. Venice feared Sforza, the

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *De Ratesponensi Dieta*, in Appendix to *Orationes Pii II.*, ed. Mansi, part iii. pp. 5-13.

formidable occupant of the adjoining state, and was anxious to preserve her commerce with the East; so she made a treaty with Mahommed; and Genoa, weakened by faction, gave her Eastern possessions into the keeping of the Bank of St. George. Only Philip of Burgundy was enthusiastic for a crusade, and he was a hot-headed windbag. He prepared for the Holy War by an allegorical pageant, a banquet, and a dance, and, laying his hand on an emblematical live peacock, vowed to the All Seer that he would turn the Turk out of Europe. The peacock, led by two charming maidens, had for its companions an elephant, a Paynim giant, and one Oliver de la Marche (who tells the tale) playing the part of the Captive Church. Oliver wept and groaned and prayed for succour, with interludes of the famous music of Flanders. Philip promised to send sixty thousand men; and, so eager did he seem, that he was asked to allow the Congress to assemble at his castle. But Æneas tells us that his way of life was not to rise until noon, then to attend to some few affairs of state before dinner, dine, take an afternoon nap, do a few gymnastic exercises, go to supper and eat on until very late; then listen to music and entertain himself with dancing: more serious business would have quite put him out. Yet he came to the Diet. Æneas made a stirring speech, but, as it was in Latin, most of the hearers did not understand it. The Bishop of Gurck translated the oration, but it produced very little effect. The Congress passed brave resolutions which were committed to parchment, and Æneas thanked the Duke of Burgundy for his enthusiasm in a cause in which his ancestors had

distinguished themselves. Then the assembly broke up (May 1454).

He was bitterly disappointed. A week later he wrote to a friend: 'My desire is greater than my hope. For I cannot persuade myself that any good result will follow. You will ask, why? My reply must be, What ground do you find for hope? Christendom has no head that all men will obey. Neither Pope nor Emperor receives what is due to him; for reverence and obedience are nowhere to be found. Pope and Emperor have become mere dignified but empty titles; they are no more effective than two impotent pictures in a frame. Each state has its own ruler; each ruler is dominated by his own particular interest. What eloquence could draw such dissentient, antagonistic powers together, and induce them to take up arms under a single standard? And, if they could be gathered together in battle-array, who would have such temerity as to take the chief command? What common plan of action could be devised? What discipline could be enforced? There are so very many different nations, and who could shepherd such a mixed flock? Who has command of the multitude of tongues they speak, or is able to deal with men of such widely different manners and character? Where is the mortal man that could bring England into accord with France, or Genoa with Aragon, or conciliate Germans, Hungarians, and Bohemians in their disputes? Let a small army embark in the sacred cause and it will be annihilated by the Paynim; let a great host set forth and its internal enmities will destroy its organisation, and its end will be general ruin. Look

where you will there are difficulties. Behold a true picture of Christendom as it stands.'<sup>1</sup> Piccolomini had hoped for such another gathering as Clermont witnessed in the days of Peter the Hermit. But the rulers of Europe no longer aspired to become kings in Asia; they were entirely occupied in making their rule effective at home. Enthusiasm for religion, too, chiefly animated the poorer classes, who had no great earthly expectations.

The Imperial cause had become hopeless; only comparatively unimportant services occupied Piccolomini's powers, and he knew his talents to be such that they could be employed more effectively and in a wider field. Moreover, though economical, he remained necessitous. He had been compelled to pay heavy fees to the Papacy on accepting his bishopric; Siena was not a wealthy see, and he had to hire a substitute; and he tells us that although Caesar was gracious in all other matters, he did not make him a sufficient allowance.<sup>2</sup> 'Rectitude in conduct is excellent,' he had written many years before, 'yet it must be confessed that it makes considerable difference whether it is observed in comfortable circumstances or in penury.'<sup>3</sup> Hitherto, in spite of the homesickness that never left him, he had thought it well, for Frederick's sake and his own, that he should remain in Germany, and he loved power and position. The preceding year he had written to a relative who urged him to return to Italy: 'While I am with the Emperor, the Pope and cardinals yield me some little

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Leonardo de' Bentivoglio, July 5, 1454.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Henricum Senfalsleben*, January 22, 1454.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. Sil., *Hist. Concil. Basil.*, l. ii.

honour; were I at Siena they would forget all about me. I know in how little esteem prelates are held by the Curia. Believe me, I made no mistake. I really cannot compliment you on your penetration in supposing that I should be more highly thought of if I dwelt nearer the Pope. The Roman Curia regards position, not the man. My place impresses them more than my personality. As an Italian prelate, beloved by Caesar, I occupy a unique position. Solely for that reason do I count for a little. If I once left the Imperial Court I should be unheeded; and there's an end.'<sup>1</sup> But it was clear now that the alliance between Emperor and Pope had achieved no great success; that Æneas could do little more for his master, who was getting more discredited by the princes every day and was flouted by them on every occasion. He asked Frederick to dismiss him, but the Emperor found his services much too valuable, and refused the request. Frederick dared not go to the approaching diet, and he wished Æneas and the Bishop of Gürk to represent him there.

When the next Diet was opened (October 1454) the Hungarian envoys declared that they would accept terms from the Turk if Christendom sent them no aid. Piccolomini rose, and addressed the Diet in words of burning eloquence.<sup>2</sup> Capistrano tells us that the speech was wonderful; the subject was as exhaustively and prudently treated as it could be.<sup>3</sup> It took two hours to deliver. But the Diet was imperturbable on such a point. It had assembled in

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad G. Lollium*, July 1, 1453.

<sup>2</sup> The speech is given in Mansi, i. p. 263. See Platina, *Vita Pii II.*

<sup>3</sup> See Capistrano apud Wadding, *Annal. Minor.*, vi. p. 105. Romae.

a hostile spirit, and only concerned itself with the local quarrels of Germany. With difficulty, Æneas extracted a promise from the princes of granting some small help towards a crusade. They said they could do nothing until peace was restored, however; and since all were self-seekers, there was no hope of peace. They ranged themselves into two parties. The Pfalzgraf, egged on by Jacob, Bishop of Trier, led the one; Albert of Brandenburg, the other. The Pfalzgraf won over Albert of Austria, by proposing to depose Frederick in his favour; that done, a new Council should be summoned and ecclesiastical reform would follow. It was agreed that a new Diet should meet at Neustadt, in February 1455, ostensibly to discuss the projected crusade, but really to break up the alliance between the Pope and Emperor. It is strange to see how tradition still rendered such a combination alarming to the princes. Æneas wrote to Capistrano a letter that is filled with bitter irony. 'Bring your oratorical arms to bear on the princes at Neustadt,' he says. 'There will be an amphitheatre put up where there shall be Circensian games, surpassing those of Caesar and Pompey. I do not know whether all the beasts will be those native to Germany, or whether *ferae naturae* will be brought from other countries; but this land is well stocked with many different kinds of wild animals, and, perchance, Bohemia will provide the Beast of the Apocalypse. You can employ the Sword of your Mouth. On the most moderate forecast you will make a full bag, and every kind of animal will be in it. And, should you come triumphant out of the fray, having succeeded in vanquishing our vermin

at home, we shall be at liberty to attack those abroad.'<sup>1</sup> Æneas did not like the emotional methods of Capistrano, but the letter shows the friar to have been familiar with affairs and capable of appreciating witty satire.

The Diet met. Everybody professed to be enthusiastic for a crusade; everybody would be quite ready when everybody else was, but no one was willing to begin. The Archbishop of Trier then drew up a scheme designed to frighten Frederick into submission to the Electors. The Pope had promised a Council, and he had failed to keep his word; a new Council must be insisted on; Frederick must summon it, as the Pope would not.<sup>2</sup> The Emperor found himself on the horns of a dilemma. If he were to accede, he would yield the last vestige of his authority to the Electors; if he were to refuse, they would withdraw their sanction to a crusade, and his impotence would be manifest to all Europe. But, in March 1455, Nicholas died, and the Emperor was provided with a plausible excuse for delaying his reply. The Archbishop of Trier, too, saw, in the election of a new Pope, the possibility of vindicating the liberties of the ecclesiastical Electors, of attaining his own ends, and, possibly, of reforming the Church. Therefore, there was temporary truce.

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Opera Omnia*. Ed. Basil. *Ep.* 403. See also Wadding, *loc. cit.*, pp. 137-8.

<sup>2</sup> Creighton, M., *History of the Papacy*, iii. 153, ed. 1897.



## CHAPTER XI

## ÆNEAS AT ROME: ÆNEAS AS MAN OF LETTERS

THE new Pope, Alfonso de Borja (Italianised into Borgia), who took the title of Calixtus III., was an old man of seventy-seven years. A Catalan, he came of a haughty, full-blooded, vigorous stock. He was grown feeble now, but he bore in his breast an hereditary hatred of the Mahommedans; and the cardinals who elected him were little aware of how fiery and impetuous the aged can become who have only a few days left to fulfil their purposes. He registered, with his own hand, a solemn oath to pursue the Turk to his destruction, and he hung it in his bedchamber, that sleeping or waking, it might be with him. He tore the gold and silver from the altars of Rome, and melted them down to raise funds for a crusade. It may be judged that such an enthusiast did not spare his own possessions. The last silver salt-cellar went: 'Away with it,' said he, 'take it for the crusade; earthenware will do for me.' Such enthusiasm for a cause that was very close to his own heart had no little attraction for Æneas.

Jacob of Trier called on Frederick to obtain the removal of all the grievances of the German Church before he rendered obedience to the new Pope. Æneas took occasion to tell his master Frederick

that it was idle for any prince to truckle in an attempt to please his people, for it is fickle and must not be allowed to take the reins. He and John Hinderbach, an eager reformer, were nominated as Imperial Ambassadors to Rome. They were detained at Venice, and reached the Apostolic city four months after the papal election. Voigt, with his usual venom, accuses Piccolomini of having sacrificed the interests of Germany to his own personal ambition. Undoubtedly he did not consider that the true interests of Germany lay in the success of the Electors; he wished for its unity, and believed in a central authority, both for secular and ecclesiastical polity. But Calixtus refused to consider any requests until Frederick had yielded his obedience. Æneas gives a perfectly straightforward account of what happened in a letter which he and Hinderbach sent, in their conjoint names, to the Emperor. 'We found ourselves,' he says, 'placed in some perplexity by the Pope's reply. To depart without giving our obedience would set up a grievous scandal in Christendom; so we decided to yield our obedience and then proceed in doing what otherwise were impossible, that is, to present your petition.'<sup>1</sup>

At a public consistory, Æneas earnestly urged a crusade against the Turk, but he wisely said nothing about the requirements of Germany. The reason of the omission was that he and Hinderbach were negotiating privately with the Pope; they found their pleadings unavailing, however, and probably Æneas's were only half-hearted. The Emperor was discredited

<sup>1</sup> Enea Silvio and J. Hinderbach to Frederick III., September 8, 1455, in Cugnoni, *Æ. S. Piccolomini Opera inedita*, 121 sq. 1883.

and no longer of much service to Calixtus, and, moreover, he was too closely bound to the Papacy to withdraw from the alliance.

Hinderbach returned to Germany, but Æneas remained at Rome. Frederick knew that Æneas could do him more service there than in Germany, especially as the Caesar could get him raised to the cardinalate. The Red Hat was now the object of Æneas's ambition. The Emperor plied the Pope with requests for his promotion, but Calixtus was bent on advancing his own nephews to the Curia.

To Piccolomini, more than to any one, is due the honour of having carried the torch of Humanism to Germany.<sup>1</sup> He found the scholars of that country pursuing dull scholastic learning and dreary subtleties of civil and canon law. They were dead to all really liberal influences. 'I have to forsake the muse and stick to my desk and the coffers of the king,' he wrote, 'for kings are wholly ignorant of the muse, and the barbarian has nought to do with the turning of a line. All that is buried, whatever else is pursued here, and there is no pursuit of the humanities outside Italy. Do you know how they think of culture? They class our speeches and poems, which really have some Latinity, with all kinds of stuff.'<sup>2</sup> But his sympathetic nature and the breadth of his understanding enabled him to take a real interest in the rude physical exercises of the north, and he wrote a treatise on *The Nature and Care of Horses*, which

<sup>1</sup> See Weiss, A., *Æneas S. Piccolomini als Papst Pius II., sein Leben und Einfluss auf die literarische Cultur Deutschlands*. Graz, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Comitum Galeatum d'Archo*. November 15, 1443.

he sent in the form of a letter to Wilhelm von Stein (July 4, 1444). He encouraged the young nobles to try their hand at letters, and even after his arrival in Rome he did not forget them. 'You write very well,' he told Ludwig, Duke of Bavaria, 'and that is praiseworthy in a prince of your rank.'<sup>1</sup> In spite of the illiteracy, the ungainly manners, and semi-barbarous bearing of the Teuton, he perceived his high capacity for culture. Soon after his arrival at Vienna, he wrote to a German friend: 'I have hope for the future of Germany. Formerly she bore learned sons, and, even now, there are many skilled teachers of the newer learning, who are raising the seed.'<sup>2</sup> He told Heimburg that, 'even as Italy raised herself after the incursion of the barbarians, so Germany may achieve art and learning.'<sup>3</sup> Germany was a singularly rich country, as we learn from a work that Æneas wrote at a later date.<sup>4</sup> The material conditions were therefore favourable to her development. He carried on a large correspondence with many Germans, and this did much to arouse an enthusiasm for letters; but, although there is a freshness, a vast amount of observation, much penetrative insight, and a wealth of broad human sympathy displayed in Æneas's writings,—characteristics very unusual with the humanists of his period—his education had been defective, and his prolonged residence in a country where pure literature was so little pursued and elegant Latin so little cultivated did much to corrupt his style. Such, at

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* dated July 15, 1457.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Gug. de Stein*, June 1, 1444.

<sup>3</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Greg. Heimburg*, January 13, 1449.

<sup>4</sup> *Æn. Sil., De ritibus, situ et conditionibus theutonicis descriptio*. Lyptaick, 1496.

least, was the judgment of a friend and contemporary.<sup>1</sup> It fails, indeed, to be as faithfully Ciceronian as Æneas desired it to be, but it usually secures the interest of the reader, and often it is as full of life and directness as the most brilliant and animated conversation; it is marked by breadth of thought and ripeness of judgement, and dominated by the personality of the man.

In 1449, soon after the death of Schlick, he had a dream so vivid that he wrote to Carvajal giving him an account of it.<sup>2</sup> The dead Chancellor appeared to him, and, conducting him to heaven (where he saw Eugenius, the Emperor Albert, and many of the illustrious dead), expatiated on the vanity of earthly life. The impression of this dream was so deep and lasting, that, in 1453, it suggested a work full of poetic fancy and reminiscences of Dante and Petrarch. It is called *The Dialogue*.<sup>3</sup> He is conducted by St. Bernardino of Siena to the kingdom of the dead, and Piero de Noceto joins the twain. They meet St. John the Evangelist and the prophet Elijah, Constantine the Great, Vegio the poet, Valla the humanist, and the Almighty Himself appears. Dreams and the Chase, Free Will and Predestination, Heaven and History are among the subjects discussed. In fact a series of short essays are strung together in a poetic form. He also wrote a work 'In Praise of Homer' (of whom his learned contemporaries knew but little and Æneas still less). His interest in northern nations induced him to epitomise Jordanes's *History of the*

<sup>1</sup> Campanus, *Vita Pii II.*, apud Muratori, III. part. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Card. Carvajal*, November 13, 1449.

<sup>3</sup> Enee Silvii Piccolominei qui et Pius Secundus fuit: *Dialog.* Rome, 1475.

*Goths*, which he had come across in a German monastery,<sup>1</sup> and later, when he became Pope, he recast the *Decades* of Flavio Biondo for popular use.<sup>2</sup> It is a work that deals with Roman antiquities, in which he was deeply interested. Busily employed as he was by Frederick, numerous as were the toilsome legations on which he was sent, he found time to write a history of the reign of that monarch, which he began in 1452, and continued to work at for three years.<sup>3</sup> From time to time he added a new study to his *Biographies of Illustrious Men*, a remarkable series of character-sketches of the foremost people of his time.<sup>4</sup> A letter to the Chancellor of Hungary gives an account of the Diet of Ratisbon, written three months after its close.<sup>5</sup> And he wrote a second account of the Council of Basel from his changed position in relation to it in 1446.<sup>6</sup> All these works exhibit such encyclopædic interest and such diversity of talent as almost to justify the eulogium of his friend Campano, who exclaims that 'Nature gathered up the distinctions of very many different men in this one personality.'<sup>6</sup> No man of his time was more brilliant as an orator; he prepared his speeches carefully, held his audience spell-bound, and however earnest in his exhortations, never failed to appreciate the effect he produced; he repeatedly records the delight he ex-

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Silvius, *Historia Gothorum*, apud Duellium, *Biga librorum rariorum*. 1730.

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Opera Omnia*. Basel, 1551. P. 144, et seq. The work was written after Biondo's death, which took place in 1463.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Geschichte Kaiser Friedrichs III. von Æneas Silvius: Uebersetzt von T. Ilgen*, 1889-90.

<sup>4</sup> Æn. Silvius, *De Viris Ætate sua Claris Opusculum*, in *Literarischer Verein-Bibliothek*, etc., Bd. 1. Stuttgart, 1843, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Mansi, *loc. cit.*, p. 1, et seq.

<sup>6</sup> Campano, *Ep.* l. 1.

perienced at his later successes in a work—*The Commentaries*—that he intended to be a record for posterity of his pontificate. Certainly no man of his age made so many speeches on such important subjects before such distinguished audiences, and, surely, no man was ever so chatty, so friendly, and so singularly incautious a correspondent; no man could count so many intimate friends; certainly no wise man ever confided in them so completely. Many of them were Germans, and he never lost his interest in the progress of German letters. As Pope he had much to do with the foundation of the Universities of Basel and Ingoldstadt, as well as with those of Nantes and Rome.

A year after his arrival in Rome, Æneas went, for the second time, on an embassy to the Court of Naples. There was comparative peace in Italy, for the more important states had found out the advantages of balance of power. Siena, Florence, and Milan were in alliance, and Jacopo Piccinino, the son of that Niccolò Piccinino, to whom Æneas had been sent by the Bishop of Novara, twenty-one years before, found himself and his mercenary band unemployed. Piccinino led his condottieri into Sienese territory and occupied Ortobello: It was generally believed that he contemplated reducing the whole state and constituting himself its ruler. It was further suspected, not without good reason, that he was supported by Alfonso, King of Naples. Italian history yielded many examples of mercenary captains who had thus overthrown the liberty of wealthy but unwarlike states, and the government of Siena, a body of traders, by no means peaceful, but quite

unskilled in scientific warfare, sent to their bishop, asking him to plead with Alfonso for the withdrawal of Piccinino.

The bishop and other ambassadors set out for Naples early in 1456, where the king detained them four months, during which Æneas took the opportunity to visit Baiae and Cumae, Salerno and Amalfi, the reputed tomb of Virgil, and all the places in the neighbourhood that bear classic memories or preserve actual relics of antiquity. When not so occupied or when not in what seemed a hopeless attendance at the Court, he was busy writing his commentaries on Antonio Panormita, a collection of apophthegms and anecdotes, many of which he attributed to Alfonso.<sup>1</sup> It is a piece of delicate court-flattery, but if it was intended to get that royal favour which Panormita (Beccadelli) had enjoyed, or to incline the royal ear favourably to the prayer of Siena, it failed. Æneas was handicapped in that from the beginning, for Calixtus was unwilling to let him go at all.<sup>2</sup> At last Alfonso consented to recall Piccinino and employ him in the Turkish war, but only on the payment by the Republic of forty thousand ducats, to be divided between himself and the Pope. Alfonso was an extremely sagacious ruler, and quite the equal of Æneas in diplomacy; if not a scholar himself, he was a dilettante in scholarship and a great patron of men of letters. Both men showed their best sides to one another and interchanged agreeable compliments. The intercourse resulted, not merely in the commentaries on Beccadelli, but in a remark-

<sup>1</sup> *Commentarii in Libros Antonii Panormitae poetae de dictis et factis Alfonsi regis.*

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1, p. 26.



able *History of Bohemia*, which Æneas wrote for Alfonso, a work giving an animated and even exciting account of the onslaught of the troops of united Europe on the Bohemian heretics and the heroic resistance they encountered. It was first printed at Rome in 1475, and since then there have been repeated editions. Here, as in the *History of Frederick*, Æneas Silvius differs from the chroniclers of his time by his keen perception of historical causes, thus forestalling, in some measure, the scientific methods of Machiavelli and Guicciardini.

All the works mentioned are rich in those pregnant phrases in the making of which Æneas was hardly less happy than Bacon. The following are from the commentaries on Beccadelli :—

‘Nothing is ever so well said that it could not be still better put.’<sup>1</sup>

‘It is a trifle more difficult for kings to become philosophers than for those in a private station.’<sup>1</sup>

‘The wise, if they get ever so small a reward, withdraw from the perils of the court and are content. For courtiers are like sows that are fattened to provide a feast for their master . . . he who, having become rich, remains, does not do so out of gratitude; either he cannot leave or he is still greedy.’<sup>1</sup>

‘An unlettered king is a crowned ass.’<sup>1</sup>

‘It is all-important that a war should begin well, for the end of a war often lies in its beginning.’<sup>1</sup>

‘He is a poor ruler who cannot dissimulate.’<sup>1</sup>

[A remark very characteristic of the fifteenth century].

<sup>1</sup> Æneas Silvius, *Comment. in Panorm.*, l. 1.

‘A miracle should always be regarded with mistrust.’<sup>1</sup>

‘Men, who deem themselves reasonable beings, will often bow down before princes that are stupider than beasts.’<sup>1</sup>

‘Princes slay their foes when they spare them : give them a post and they are converted into friends.’<sup>2</sup>

‘Life is a play, with death for the last act.’<sup>2</sup>

‘The elected ruler has no worthy successor.’<sup>2</sup>

‘Kingcraft and self-indulgence cannot occupy the same throne.’<sup>2</sup>

The apophthegms spread through his voluminous writings are often remarkable and very profuse. The following are a few, taken at random :—

‘Act so that God may approve or that you could repeat what you do in the sight of men.’

‘No boldness is ever quite safe, and no injury lasts for ever.’

‘Laws are not everlasting.’

‘Nothing more wobbling than a lie.’

‘As you go on living, so will you die.’

‘The mob always prefers utility to honour : honour requires a pecuniary prop.’

‘Not the morning nor the evening star is more beautiful than the wisdom one can garner from books.’

‘Patience is the best remedy.’

‘Fortune blunders along with blinded eyes ; she gives most of her gifts to the least worthy.’

‘Time rectifies and judges all things.’

<sup>1</sup> *Æneas Silvius, Comment. in Panorm.*, l. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*, l. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*, l. 4.

'You cannot plunder virtue.'

'When the guilty man is condemned without trial, the innocent man is not safe.'

'The king is given to the nation, not the nation to the king.'

'Men complain of the burden of power, but do not relinquish it.'

'Judgement in belief follows desire.'

'The Majesty of God does nothing at random, nothing in haste. We are stumblers in the dark; our discernment is infinitely small.'

'In the direction of men, the transformation of states, the jurisdiction of empire, how feeble is human effort, how overwhelming the divine appointment.'

'God himself cannot escape censure.'

'Every age is blind if it is without literature.'

'No book is so stupid that one cannot draw something out it.'

'That is no state wherein there is civil discord.'

'Rarely do pious men have pious heirs.'

'Human affairs have small beginnings, but, once afoot, they run.'

'Woman is an indomitable creature; no reins will hold her back.'

'Every delight is dull without wine.'

'It is not wise to scribble about those that can proscribe.'

'You must not go to courts for holiness.'

'We must deal with men according to their natures.'

'Truth may go under with men, but not with God.'

'You cannot tell the whole truth either to a tyrant or the people.'

'Man is so desirous of fame that he would sooner part with riches or a kingdom.'

[Another characteristic fifteenth-century sentiment.]

'Men and their laws are on the side of the successful.'

'Oftimes, in aiding another, one contrives one's own ruin.'

'A gentleman (*generosus spiritus*) cannot do a mean action.'

'It is human to sin, angelic to reform, and devilish to persist.'

In conversation, also, Æneas exhibited similar sparkling wit and shrewdness: Platina gives a long list of more or less original proverbs with which he was wont to point his remarks.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Creighton has translated these in his *History of the Papacy*, vol. iii. p. 328, ed. of 1897. The originals, as well as a collection of *Gnomologise*, will be found in the Basel edition of Pius's works (1551). See *Enee Silvii Senensis Poete Proverbia*: Köln, 1475, part of which is preserved in the British Museum.

## CHAPTER XII

## ÆNEAS AS CARDINAL

THE Emperor and King Ladislas of Hungary had petitioned that Æneas should be raised to the purple. Fame was his, but he remained necessitous, and power belonged to rank. Men of powerful intelligence who are also good-natured and good-tempered are rare, and Piccolomini possessed all these qualities. He skilfully steered clear of party, took care to offend no one, and spared no pains to make himself agreeable—a task which, to him, was not difficult. Under ordinary circumstances, admission to the Sacred College would soon have been granted to so able a diplomatist and one likely to prove so agreeable a colleague. And Calixtus was inclined to favour the man so eager for a crusade. But nepotism was the Pope's besetting weakness, and, instead of more worthy candidates, he raised two of his nephews to the purple, to the indignation of the Sacred College. They organised a stubborn resistance to all the Pope's projects; but, at last, December 18, 1456, Piccolomini's name was among those of six new cardinals. The list also contained the name of Castiglione. Æneas took the title of Cardinal-Presbyter of S. Sabina. 'Never have you been in such a conflict and issued victor from it,' he wrote to Carvajal. 'The hinges



ÆNEAS SILVIUS IS CREATED A CARDINAL BY CALLOTUS III.  
*Pinturicchio, Siena.*

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(*cardines*) were so rusted that they would not turn, and Calixtus had to use battering rams and every sort of military engine to force the portal.<sup>1</sup> He also wrote a letter of thanks to the Emperor for his services. 'I will show all men,' he said, 'that I am a Cardinal of Germany rather than Italy. I shall work for you as before, with no abatement of zeal. For I shall spare no effort, no pains, on behalf of your Majesty, the Sacred Imperial rule, the distinguished House of Hapsburg, and all that lies nearest your heart. So far as my efforts may serve you, your interests will never be overlooked.'<sup>2</sup> For Æneas the true interest of Germany was the support of the power of its king. The Church in Germany needed reform, but it clamoured for more than he conceived to be justly due to it; he knew how personal and wholly secular were the ambitions that its demands disguised, and he did not believe that practical and desirable reforms could be effected by ways that would derogate from the authority, as yet incompletely established, of the Roman See.

Soon after his election secret information reached the Curia that the German princes were preparing to follow the example of France and establish a national church. Jacob of Trier had died in May 1456, and the Pfalzgraf, in league with the Archbishop-Electors of Mainz and Köln, strove to put one of their partisans in the vacant chair. A great victory, gained over the Turk at Belgrade, had released Germany from immediate danger, and the demand of Calixtus for tenths to finance a crusade

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Johan. Card. Pav*; *Ep.* 196, ed. Basil, 1551.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep.*, December 22, 1457.



was resisted, and enabled the princes to pursue their personal interests under the rallying cries of Papal extortion and Church reform. The defence of the Church was entrusted to Æneas.

He knew German politics thoroughly well, and that disunion among the princes was only a question of time. The one thing necessary in Papal and Imperial interests was delay.

Before long, he received two letters from a personal friend, one Martin Mayr, who was Chancellor of the Archbishopric of Mainz. One of these, unhappily lost, held a private offer of Mayr to serve Æneas and procure certain sums for him, which he drew from the diocese.<sup>1</sup> The other was an official letter, inspired by the Archbishop. It congratulated Piccolomini on his accession to the cardinalate, but proceeded to indict the Papacy for bad faith. Tenthhs were arbitrarily demanded; the decrees of the Councils were ignored. The Pope had treated Germany as a slave; he had laid capitular elections aside; there were extortions at Rome, and benefices were reserved for the cardinals and secretaries of the Curia. 'You yourself,' added Mayr, 'hold a general reservation in the dioceses of Köln, Mainz, and Trier, amounting to two thousand ducats a year<sup>2</sup>—a monstrous and wholly unprecedented grant.' Æneas furnished his answer to this charge in a letter that he sent to the Dean of Worms.<sup>3</sup> 'We served more than twenty-four years in Germany, and never ceased to strive with all our might to uphold the honour of that

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Mat. Mayr*, August 8 (?), 1457.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. of August 21* (?), 1457.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep.*, dated July 22, 1457.

nation ; and now that we, though unworthy, are called to the Sacred College, we still strive for the honour, and in the service of that country. Therefore we opine that we do not deserve the hatred of the German nation if we take two thousand ducats as an annual acknowledgement.'

Cardinal Piccolomini knew Germany well enough to perceive that Mayr's letter covered some private scheme of the Archbishop. Mayr had made a dexterous party attack and Æneas met it with an equally skilful parry,<sup>1</sup> which he afterwards expanded into a work, *De ritu, situ, conditione et moribus Germaniae*.<sup>2</sup> The general purport of these two retorts was as follows: Let those that have grievances submit them to the Pope. The Pontiff was blamed for doing what the princes had requested him to do, in order that he might raise funds for the Turkish war. He had interfered with capitular elections when rapacious and ambitious men were chosen, and, in fact, every election brought before the Curia during the past two years had been annulled. True, the Pope received money for indulgences, but it was for the Turkish war and was of the nature of a free gift. Germany had grown rich through its connection with the Papacy and complained of having to pay its dues: let Germans remember that the Bohemians made the same complaint against the complainers. In fact it is a weakness of human nature that everybody objects when he is called upon to pay, and the grievance is as ancient as it is

<sup>1</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Mayr*, August 8 (?), 1457.

<sup>2</sup> Dated February 1, 1458. It is given in *Archiv. für Kunde Österreich. Geschichtsquellen*, xvi. 420 et seq.

universal. Corruption exists among the officials of the Curia as well as elsewhere; but if they took money they did so without the Papal sanction, and those whose ambition led them to give it were no less to blame.

Æneas's penetration into motives had not failed him. In September 1457, the Archbishop sent an envoy to him to say that he was prepared to forsake the Electors if he were granted the right of confirming bishoprics throughout Germany. The Cardinal's reply was courteous but sarcastic. He was delighted to find that the Archbishop had come over to the Pope's point of view. But he was asking for quite a new privilege. The subjects of Christ's Vicar should obey, not haggle. He was sure, however, there must be some misunderstanding: the Archbishop was too modest a man to have made such a request. Anyhow, he could not lay it before so wise, upright, and incorruptible a Pontiff as Calixtus.<sup>1</sup>

Danger was imminent. Piccolomini exerted his utmost powers to divert it. He wrote a conciliatory letter to Mayr, promising that the Pope would grant all smaller requests, and that he, Æneas, would do him all the service in his power. He wrote to Frederick, to Ladislas, to the German archbishops, to Cusa and Carvajal, who were in Germany, and to all his friends there. He pointed out to the princes that capitular elections rarely gave a benefice to the scions of great houses, and to the bishops, that striking at the Head of the Church was the way to undermine their own authority. He procured delay, and delay was as fatal to princely intrigue

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. 338, ed. Basil. 1551.*

as to the hope of the German reformers. Ladislas died soon afterwards, and the dominions of Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia, were thrown into dispute; everybody's attention was directed, now, to the question of succession and to what advantages he could secure for himself.

The Italy of the fifteenth century was a seething, struggling mass of warring states, factions, and families, where personal force and personal craft alone obtained that power without which there was no security. As Burckhardt has so fully demonstrated, these were the conditions that allowed Man as an Individual to emerge. The long residence of the Papacy at Avignon, the growing worldliness of the Church, repeated schisms, and the decay of Papal authority, carrying that of the clergy with it, had left little restraining force in religion. There were many men and women that were devout; there were not a few that led saintly lives; there was much revivalism at work, that moved the masses in spasms of emotion; but to most men the Catholic Faith had become little more than an unquestioned tradition, a mere polity. Religious observance was carried out with ceremonious exactitude, but it rarely stimulated any natural turn for virtue, and it restrained no natural predilection for vice. All 'armies of angels that soar, legions of devils that lurk' in the human soul were set loose. There was no social synthesis, no general bond of common obligation. The rulers of states were insecure, especially the petty despots of small communities, and they threw off all ethical restraint in order to exist. Their example

spread throughout society. Men's consciences were enfranchised; every man tried to satisfy the requirements of his own nature in his own way. Never was there a time when the will of the individual was so emancipated, when the ability of the individual was so little circumscribed by convention.

Such was the environment in which Æneas found himself during the impressionable years of youth, nor had he found the moral atmosphere of Germany a great improvement on that of his native land; he only breathed a cruder air there. He returned to Italy and was now a Cardinal of the Catholic Church. But the occupant of the Apostolic Chair was also the ruler of an Italian state, and Rome was the centre of the tangled web of Italian politics and intrigue. The Papacy was on its way to secularisation; the Pope and his Curia, as secular princes, had to exercise the same kind of wily device and cunning stratagem as other temporal princes; they had to plot or disappear; the Church reflected the world around her; there was much intrigue and personal ambition among her servants, and no one thought the worse of an ecclesiastic who schemed for his own personal success. The guileless days had not then arrived when Church and Senate became unaffected by 'self-regarding virtues.' We must judge all Æneas's motives and actions by comparison with the other ecclesiastics and laymen of his time; we must take an imperfect moral ideal as the standard by which we may condone or condemn.

He was the poorest of the cardinals and found it difficult to maintain his position among them. When he wrote to thank the Emperor for recommending

him to Calixtus, he added, 'But I am poor and on the verge of real destitution. Your Highness can provide for my neediness without any scruple, should you have any vacant benefice in your dominion to spare.'<sup>1</sup> He wrote to Sforza, now become Duke of Milan, giving him a similar hint. He may have manoeuvred to obtain the Bishopric of Ermland, that lay on the dreary shores of the Baltic;<sup>2</sup> he may have interwoven personal aims with his schemes for the complete restoration of Papal authority in Germany. He took the world as he found it.

It had been the practice of Popes to strengthen their position by advancing their family to important posts in the Church and Papal States. Calixtus carried this principle to its extremest limits. Cardinal Roderigo Borgia, one of his nephews, was a young man of great energy and ability, and he had not yet exhibited to the world the unconquerable sensuality of his character. He asked Cardinal Piccolomini to attend to his interests while he was away. Æneas does not appear to have disapproved of the Papal policy; a Pope must strengthen himself against opposition in his own Curia and State; especially when there is the grave task of a Turkish war before him, and the majority of the Cardinals were bitterly opposed to Calixtus. The great strength of Æneas's affection for his own family, too, would render him exceptionally indulgent.<sup>3</sup> He replied to Borgia, 'I will keep a sharp look-out as regards benefices, both for you and for myself. But much news that we get turns out to be

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Caesarem*, March 8, 1457.

<sup>2</sup> Voigt, *loc. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 223 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> See *Noms Adami-Porteguerri*. Siena, 1901.

false. We heard of the demise of a certain person at Nürnberg, but he was here the other day and dined with me. They said that the Bishop of Toul expired at Neustadt, but he is back in Burgundy again, hale and hearty. I will, however, keep my eyes open ; but the best watcher for your interests will be the Pope himself.'

But diplomacy and place-hunting did not occupy all Piccolomini's time and energy. In the spring of 1458, when he was laid up with gout, a German bookseller, who had settled in Rome, waited on the literary Cardinal and suggested that he should write a book for him. Æneas had many intellectual interests, but his natural bent, says Campano,<sup>1</sup> was towards poetry ; yet in middle life he was more attracted by geography and history. The suggestion of the bookseller led to the commencement of a description of the whole world as known to us in space and time, and he began the part of it called 'Europa.' He continued, too, his voluminous correspondence with private friends. It should be noted that, though he attempted to make his letters correspond with the dignity of his new station, this was unsuccessful with his familiar friends. He has not written many lines before he resumes the old, chatty tone : he is as frank and unreserved and natural as ever.<sup>2</sup> He was, however, feeling the effects of an exceptionally arduous life and of almost incessant travel in days when travel was an undertaking of no little difficulty, labour, and peril ; he had aged prematurely, and he suffered from repeated severe attacks of gout with its concomitants gravel and asthma.

<sup>1</sup> Campanus, *Vita Pii II.* apud Muratori, *R. I. S.*, vol. III. part ii. p. 967.

<sup>2</sup> Æn. Sil., *Ep. ad Petrum de Nozetum*, November 7, 1456.

He had been almost bald, with a little fringe of grey hair at forty.<sup>1</sup> He was seeking relief from pain at the baths of Viterbo and prosecuting his literary relaxations there when news reached him of the death of Calixtus III. His old master, Cardinal Capranica, whom men expected to become the next Pope, had died two days before Calixtus.<sup>2</sup> Although Piccolomini was frail and diseased in body, he was still young in mind and heart. Training had converted him into an able diplomatist; he had dwelt for years in the very centre of European politics; no one in the Curia had a more intimate knowledge of affairs; no one had such close personal acquaintance with the enemies of the Papacy, such insight into their designs, such experience of their methods; no one was so familiar with all sorts of men and all kinds of nations and their requirements; Germany was the chief source of Papal wealth, and, therefore, the chief sustainer of Papal power, and who knew so well how to deal with the menacing attitude of the princes as he? He was a moving speaker, a scholar, and a forcible and elegant writer. But he was much more—he had graduated in the school of life; he had atoned for his former opposition to the Papacy by becoming its ablest defender; he was the only man likely to take up the Crusade with any warmth, for his was almost the only eye that perceived the real magnitude and nearness of the danger; there were but very few men that he had offended, and he was more than acceptable to most. Ambition, duty, a sense of personal fitness, called him to candidature for the Tiara. The news of Calixtus's

<sup>1</sup> *Æn. Sil., Ep. ad Petrum de Nozetum*, November 7, 1456.

<sup>2</sup> Capranica died on August 4, 1458, and Calixtus on August 6.



death was brought to Piccolomini in the dead of night. He left the baths in the morning, and took horse for Rome. Calandrini, a popular cardinal, who was also in men's minds as having some chance of succeeding to Calixtus, had also been taking the baths, and accompanied him.

## CHAPTER XIII

THE ELECTION TO THE PAPACY—THE CORONATION  
OF PIUS II.

RARELY did an election to the Papacy present more perplexing problems or had been attended with greater anxiety. The political situation was unsatisfactory. Alfonso of Naples died in the June of this year, leaving an illegitimate son, Ferrante, to succeed to the throne, but considerable doubt existed as to whether Ferrante was Alfonso's son at all. Calixtus claimed the kingdom as a lapsed fief. Jean of Anjou revived the pretensions of his house, and urged the discontented among the nobles of the kingdom to rebel. The French party in the Sacred College, headed by Cardinal D'Estouteville, Archbishop of Rouen, was strong, and the Cardinal stood a chance of being elected to the Tiara. Sforza of Milan and some of the Italian powers dreaded, with reason, the preponderance of France in Italy, and the more far-sighted among the cardinals feared lest the election of a French cardinal to the Papacy should lead to its transference to Avignon, a city which belonged to it, or, at the very least, to French predominance in the Church. If a French cardinal became Pope, it might well happen that the Papacy would be under the heel of the French king. Again, Piccinino, the

condottiere, acting ostensibly for Ferrante, had advanced into the Papal States. Assisi, Gualdo, and Nocera were in his power, and he was credited with the design of carving a state for himself out of the patrimony of St. Peter. And, although the monarchs of the West despised the Turkish danger, believing that the Moslem had entirely overcome degenerate peoples only, and that more vigorous races would prove their ability to withstand him, his advance was rapid. Isle after isle in the Levantine Archipelago, kingdom after kingdom of Eastern Europe, that had once owned allegiance to Rome, had, within a few years, been compelled to accept the Crescent for their standard. In June Athens had fallen, now it was the turn of Corinth to succumb, and the Moslem had obtained a foothold in Servia. Everywhere the Pontifical authority was lowered; national churches had been proclaimed, and these diverted all revenues to themselves; wealthy Germany was ready to revolt. The Roman mob, anxious and armed, narrowly watched the conclave, for Piccinino and his army were very near at hand.

The envoys at Rome of the Italian States strove to influence the various cardinals. Sforza was especially anxious about the forthcoming election, for if Calixtus's policy in favour of the House of Anjou were continued by the new Pope, and a Frenchman reigned in South Italy, the French claim to Milan would probably be revived and the duchy laid open to attack on two sides. But Venice was for the French, since she wished her powerful neighbour, Sforza, to be weakened, and Florence had always held close relations with the Angevin dynasty in

## THE ELECTION TO THE PAPACY 237

Naples and derived too much commercial profit from France to change sides.

Cardinal Piccolomini, with his usual good nature, had done his best to get Frederick to acknowledge the Milanese usurper,<sup>1</sup> who established a strong and just government. Sforza's ambassador at Rome wrote to his master: 'I am not without hope for Cardinal Colonna, but it would be easier to carry the Cardinal of Siena, for all parties like him and he stands well with the envoys sent by the King of Naples.'<sup>2</sup> And the Neapolitan ambassador wrote to his master that he had succeeded in bringing about peace between the houses of Colonna and Orsini (houses that headed the two rival factions in Rome and were almost always in active warfare with one another), and that he was trying to get votes for Piccolomini; 'thank God, Cardinal Orsini has consented'; he continues, Cardinals Torquemada (a Spaniard), Barbo, and Calandrini were aspirants as well as Piccolomini. But the most formidable candidate was Guillaume d'Estouteville, the Frenchman.

Eight Italians, five Spaniards, two Frenchmen, one Portuguese, and two Greeks—eighteen in all, assembled in conclave. Each slept in a separate chamber leading out of a large hall in the Vatican. They dined together in the hall, but their deliberations and the voting took place in a smaller room.<sup>3</sup>

The proceedings were opened by Domenico de' Domenichi, Bishop of Torcello, who preached a sermon that is still preserved in the archives of the Vatican.

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *Pius II.*, iii. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Otto da Caretto, given by Pastor, *History of the Papacy*, English trans., iii. 378.

<sup>3</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

He did not mince his words. After pointing out the magnitude and imminence of the Turkish peril, the disturbed state of Europe, the sad condition of the Church, and the exceptional gravity of the decision they were called upon to make, he continued: 'The Christian princes are at variance, and those who should war against the infidel rend one another, and no one can persuade them to peace. The clergy are morally corrupt; they cause the laity to blaspheme and bring them to eternal perdition; all ecclesiastical discipline has disappeared. Day after day the authority of the Church becomes more despised; nay, the force of her censure has almost ceased to be felt. Who shall restore it? All these matters require the wisest and ablest of Heads to the Church. The Roman Curia is degenerate. Who shall reform it?'<sup>1</sup>

Before proceeding to the election, every cardinal was called upon to sign a declaration, that if choice fell on him, he would observe the rights of the College. We learn many details concerning the election from Æneas, for he gives the fullest description we possess of any such event.<sup>2</sup> It would appear that a golden chalice, the receptacle of the Blessed Sacrament, was placed on the altar, and three guardians were appointed from among the cardinals to watch it. Each cardinal, having written down the name of his candidate, and sealed his voting paper with his signet-ring, advanced in an order determined by rank, and placed it in the chalice. When all had voted the three guardians read out the votes.

The first scrutiny took place on the third day,

<sup>1</sup> *Codex Vaticanus*. 3875.

<sup>2</sup> See *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

and, as was usually the case, it yielded no result. But it gave a basis for discussion. Calandrini and Piccolomini headed the list with five votes each. An interchange of views then took place in a series of private conversations. D'Estouteville, Cardinal of Rouen, was related on his mother's side to the royal house of France; he was one of those princely, magnificent prelates that commanded so much power and had so much to bestow. He let it be understood that his adherents would be well rewarded. 'Can you be going to choose Æneas?' he asked. 'He is too poor to succour the impoverished Church; too gouty and infirm to undertake the healing of her infirmities. He has but recently come from Germany; we do not know him sufficiently, and it is quite probable that he will transfer the Sacred College to the country he has such an affection for. And, again, shall we put a poet into the chair of the Apostle? Shall we raise a man who worships the heathen muses, and have the Church governed on Pagan lines? As for Calandrini, he cannot even govern himself. Now, I am senior in the Sacred College to both these men. I am of the royal blood of France. I am wealthy and have many friends. When I am elected the many benefices I now hold will be for you.'

Such is Æneas's account of what the Cardinal of Rouen said to those who might be induced to support him. It would be interesting could we read an account of what occurred from D'Estouteville's pen as well as Æneas's. However, we shall see, a little later on, D'Estouteville offered definite bribes, and probably Æneas's account gives what any intelligent man might read between the lines of the Cardinal's

actual words. But very worthy men were, nevertheless, on his side. Of such was Bessarion, the Greek, who remained in Italy after the Congress at Florence. Probably Bessarion, who was a dull but conscientious man, burning with zeal against the Turk, was attracted to D'Estouteville by the hope that the French throne would renew its ancient traditions and lead a crusade. Perhaps, too, he felt the repulsion that a man of slow intelligence so often experiences from one of witty, ready mind.

The French party, eleven in number, met together in the dead of night, and six of them bound themselves by oath to vote for the Cardinal of Rouen. Calandrini got to know of this secret meeting, and went at once to Piccolomini's chamber and aroused him. 'Æneas, what are you doing?' he exclaimed. 'Do you not know that D'Estouteville is as good as chosen? His adherents are closeted together and only await to-morrow. Go and give him your vote, for I know, from my experience with Calixtus, that it is impolitic to have a Pope against you.' Calandrini wanted to get Æneas's vote for himself.

Æneas replied that it would go against his conscience to do as Calandrini suggested; but he passed a restless night. Early next morning he went to Borgia, and asked him straight out what D'Estouteville had promised him. The Spaniard answered that it was the Vice-Chancellorship. 'Will you trust a Frenchman, the enemy of Spain?' asked Æneas; 'D'Estouteville has already promised that appointment to the Cardinal of Aragon. To which of you will he give it?' Then he went to Castiglione, and discovered that he also had promised his vote to the

Cardinal of Rouen for a similar reason to the one Calandrini had urged. Æneas took higher ground with Castiglione, and pointed out the grave danger that a French Papacy might be to the Church and Italy. Next, he went on to Barbo, and discovered that he had given up all hope of his own election, and was ready to throw all his energy into the Italian cause. Barbo got six of the Italian cardinals to meet, and urged that they should put public duty above private considerations, and vote for Æneas. Colonna was not present at this meeting; he was a scholar, a skilled diplomatist and a man of penetrating intellect, but Barbo had favoured the Orsini, the enemies of his house, in the internal quarrels of Rome, and Æneas himself had rather inclined to them. All that were at the meeting agreed with Barbo. Æneas told them that he felt himself to be unworthy of the great office. It is what any man might be expected to say on such an occasion, but a sincere sense of personal imperfection and frailty could hardly have failed to mingle with many other thoughts and feelings in a mind of such subtle complexity as Piccolomini's.

By this time day was advancing. Mass was said, and then proceedings began. D'Estouteville was appointed to be one of the guardians of the chalice, and he stood by it, white and trembling; when Æneas went up to deposit his vote he whispered in his ear, 'I commend myself to you, Æneas.' 'Do you rely on such a poor worm as I am?' replied Piccolomini. When all had recorded their votes the chalice was emptied, and D'Estouteville announced that he had six votes and Æneas eight. 'Count again,' said Æneas, and D'Estouteville confessed that



he had made a mistake: there were nine. But three votes were wanting to the two-thirds clear majority required for the election of a Pope. One method had failed; that of *accessus* remained to be tried.

'All sat in their places, pale and silent,' wrote Æneas, 'as if they were rapt by the Holy Spirit. Not a word was spoken by any one; no one moved his lips, no one stirred a limb—only eyes shifting around; ever this prolonged silence. There was no change; not a sound, not a movement.'<sup>1</sup>

Gregorovius, commenting on this passage, remarks that if envy and ambition be the marks of the Holy Spirit, these were there. Pastor has shown us, from the reports of ambassadors, how much influenced by worldly motives many of the cardinals were. But Gregorovius's sneer would seem to cast a doubt on the sincerity of Æneas in penning the passage. It must be remembered that never, for one moment, did he question the doctrine of the Catholic Church that it is guided by the Holy Ghost. He tells us, with the utmost candour, about the intrigues that preceded the election. We have seen how the Bishop of Torcello charged the assembled cardinals, to their faces, with corruption. We shall presently learn what Æneas's own emotions were when he was chosen Pope. But grave questions hung on the decision, and these may well have weighed most in the minds of the Curia at this supreme moment. For, if some of the Sacred College were self-seekers, and others owed their presence there to favouritism, some had been raised to the purple for their statesmanlike ability,

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

and many for their sincere and unaffected piety. Even D'Estouteville counted holy men among his supporters; and there were those who were quite single-minded in their desire to secure the powerful support of France for the Church and the Turkish war, or to preserve the freedom of Italy and that of the Church.

At last the silence was broken by Roderigo Borgia. 'I vote for the Cardinal of Siena,' he said. There was a second and still longer silence. Then an attempt was made to adjourn the election; Isidore of Russia and Torquemada left the chamber, but soon returned. Then Cardinal Tebaldo rose from his seat, and said, 'I, also, accede to the Cardinal of Siena.' At last Colonna rose: his sense of a higher duty had overcome his loyalty to a party. D'Estouteville and Bessarion seized him and tried to lead him out of the room. But, as they dragged him, he declared his vote in a loud voice, 'I also accede to the Cardinal of Siena, and I make him Pope.'

He had uttered the final, irrevocable word. All rose from their seats to kneel to Æneas and congratulate him. Then, 'the burden of the future fell on the Pope's soul,' he tells us, 'he comprehended the height of his calling.' He had achieved his ambition, but there was no exultation in his heart. Any element of joy at success was merged in the realisation of his responsibility. The heaviest of tasks lay before him: to heal the discords of Christendom, to reunite the divided nations under his paternal care, to check the fierce onslaught of the Moslem, confident in the strength of an irresistible soldiery, exultant with victory, and burning with

religious zeal. Æneas burst into tears, and it was some time before he could regain self-command. And then he exhibited the deep moral feeling that such an occasion might indeed bring forth. 'You,' said he to those who congratulated him, 'You see only the honour and dignity to which I am raised: I perceive the toil and danger. For what I have demanded of others has fallen to me to perform.'<sup>1</sup> Henceforward he was, in many respects, a very different being from the necessitous man of aforetime, struggling for position and means; he was sufficiently, if not abundantly, supplied with funds to maintain his high position; he was called to the most responsible office in Christendom. No one ever enjoyed more thoroughly the dignity that attaches to the Apostolic Throne; but few called to the Papacy have ever been filled with a wider, completer sense of all the duties that are demanded of the Father of Christian peoples. His accession brought out all the noblest elements in his character.

Bessarion advanced to the newly elected Pope, and, as representative of what had been the opposition, spoke. He said: 'We accept your election, and do not doubt that it is the work of God. We believe you to be worthy of your high office, nor have we ever doubted it. But we were afraid of your bodily infirmities. Your feet are crippled by gout, and bodily activity may be needed for the Moslem peril. Hence we preferred the Cardinal of Rouen. Had you been strong of body, we had willingly accepted you. But God has ordered, and we obey. He will not allow your infirmity to interfere, nor impute our

<sup>1</sup> Campanus, apud Muratori, *R. I. S.*, III. ii. 947.

reluctance to us. Now that you are Pope, we will proffer you true service and obedience.'

'You think better of Us,' the Pope replied, 'than We do of Ourselves. You speak only of Our feet: We know full well that other failings might have kept Us from the Pontificate. We know of no service that renders Us worthy. On the contrary, We should judge Ourselves to be wholly unworthy, but that two-thirds of the Sacred College have chosen Us, and so the Holy Spirit has declared His Will. Therefore, We obey the summons of God. And you, that held Us to be unworthy, did as you thought right, and will be dear to Us. For We ascribe Our election, not to this one or that one, but to the Sacred College as a whole, and to God, whence cometh every good and perfect gift.'

When the Pope had been invested with the white mantle, he was asked what name he would take. His friends, remembering Virgil's Hexameter,

Sum Pius Æneas, fama super æthera notus,<sup>1</sup>

had been wont to call him Pius Æneas in joke.<sup>2</sup> Piccolomini said that he would take the title of Pius II. He probably desired a standing reminder of the great duty to which he was called. Later, he earnestly entreated that Æneas might be forgotten; Pius alone remembered—'Follow what We say now; listen to the old man, not the youth. A Gentile name was given Us by our parents; We assumed a new name on Our accession. Cast Æneas from you; accept Pius.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Æneid*, i. 378.

<sup>2</sup> See Voigt, *Die Briefe des Æneus Silvius. Ep. of Campisio*, May 8, 1445, S. 361.

<sup>3</sup> *Fœa*, loc. cit., p. 3.

At the request of the Sacred College, he renewed the oath that related to its rights, but he added the proviso, 'as far as God enables me, and as may agree with the honour and rights of the Apostolic Chair.'<sup>1</sup>

Pius had not to wait long before he received evidence of the unruly character of his subjects in Rome. To seize on the personal possessions of a new Pope was a custom. The very cell he occupied was sacked. The mob rushed to his house and tore even the marble from its walls; they pretended to mistake the cry of 'Il Sanese' for 'Il Genovese,' and pillaged the palace of the Cardinal of Genoa, one of the richest members of the Sacred College. Campano gives us a vivid description of the state of the city. He says that any merit, there, must be ascribed to the priesthood only; 'the inhabitants are more like savages than Romans, repulsive people, ignorant boors, speaking several dialects. And it is not to be wondered at, for men are herded together from all parts of the world, like slaves. Few citizens have retained any vestige of ancient nobleness. The glory of arms, the greatness of empire, simplicity and uprightness of life lie far away in the past, and are alien to them. They are luxurious, effeminate, poor, proud, and sensual. . . . Such are the men you see in the Capitol.'<sup>2</sup>

The fear of a translation of the Papacy to Avignon was over. The Romans threw down their arms, lighted bonfires, illuminated the city, and blew

<sup>1</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad ann.* 1458.

<sup>2</sup> Graf, A., *Roma nella memoria.* *Letter of Campano to Matteo Ubaldi*, i. 54.



ÆNEAS SILVIUS, CROWNED AS PIUS II, BESTOWS HIS BLESSING.  
*Pinturicchio, Siena.*



trumpets and horns to their heart's content. Next day, a great procession of the nobles and chief men of the city came on horseback to do honour to their new sovereign. Congratulations poured in from all sides. But Pius was depressed, and neither salutations nor festivities removed his depression. For he knew that France would resent the rejection of her candidate, and that it would be necessary to do what would increase her hostility. Piccinino, employed by Ferrante, occupied a part of the States of the Church; Catalan governors ruled certain Papal towns. It was desirable to reverse Calixtus's policy and recognise Ferrante. The question of his right to the throne might be left undetermined, but his actual sovereignty must be acknowledged, at the expense of alienating France. The German princes, too, would assuredly give trouble, and the commencement of the Turkish war was likely to be postponed through these dissensions.

Pius was crowned on September 3, 1458, at the Lateran. He rode through the streets in a magnificent and solemn procession, but, according to ancient privilege, the Roman mob claimed his horse, and they seized it before he had dismounted. A fray ensued, during which Pius was in grave danger, for swords were drawn, and he was too crippled to move quickly. In the evening he gave a banquet to all the great people in Rome.<sup>1</sup>

The astrologers, guided perhaps as much by the grey, worn face and crippled body of the Pope, as by the stars, prophesied a sickly and short Pontificate for him.

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.



## CHAPTER XIV

## THE JOURNEY TO MANTUA

ON October 7th Antonino, Bishop of Florence, and other Florentine envoys arrived at Rome, to congratulate the new Pope. Antonino was one of the few truly saintly men of his time. His memory is still held in grateful remembrance by Florentines, and many charities that he founded still maintain their noble service. St. Antoninus (for he was canonised a little later) was now very old, and he nearly fainted at the audience, but, by a strong effort of will, he recovered himself and spoke for an hour, dwelling on the project of a crusade. 'Why do you ask nothing for your archbishop?' Pius demanded of the envoys. 'Because he himself is his own best recommendation,' was their reply. Milan also sent an embassy and professed to be eager for a crusade.

Pius summoned the Sacred College and proposed that a congress of the rulers of Europe should be called together to consider the Turkish war. The majority of the cardinals opposed the proposition. Rulers, they urged, could hardly come so far as Rome, especially as the succession to the kingdom of Naples remained unsettled. There was disorder, too, in the Papal States. And, if the Congress were held across the Alps, the princes would turn it into

a second Council of Basel. Pius replied that these objections could be met. Let some place in Italy be chosen; the state of his health would furnish an excuse for his not crossing the Alps, while the effort of crossing the Apennines, especially as he was aged in body, if not in years, and sickly, would demonstrate his zeal. Such a place as Udine, or Mantua, would be convenient for the majority. On October 12, he called the cardinals, the envoys, and the prelates in Rome into his presence, and unfolded his project: crippled as he was, he was willing to undertake the journey to defend Christendom from the ruin that hung over it. The proposal was listened to with attention, but everybody remained silent. Then Bessarion added his own entreaties, and the envoys replied, one after another. All applauded the project and praised Pius for his zeal, except the ambassadors of Venice and Florence, who confined themselves to answers that avoided committal to the undertaking.<sup>1</sup> Next day, in public Consistory, a bull was read inviting the princes of Christendom to a congress to be held at Mantua.

The bull, worded by Pius himself, occasionally seems a little grotesque to the modern mind. An invitation to the princes of Europe to war against 'the hosts of that false prophet and venomous dragon Mahomet,' is quite in the approved mediæval style. Pius proceeds to say that 'God has sent this punishment on Christian peoples, but none the less has afforded them the difficult, but not insuperable, task of delivering the world from its peril.' Then he rises to a noble strain: 'The ship of the Church is rocked

<sup>1</sup> Oribellus apud Muratori, *R. I. S.*, xxiii.; *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

to and fro; but it remains unshaken; it is buffeted about, but it is not broken; it is attacked, but it is not overwhelmed. God ordains that His own shall be tried indeed, but they shall not be overcome.<sup>1</sup> The bull was followed by letters of personal entreaty, sent to the various princes.<sup>2</sup>

But grave obstacles, caused by political difficulties, called for removal before the Congress should assemble. The French party in the Sacred College bitterly opposed any recognition of Ferrante. The envoys of France tried to frighten Pius by pointing out how serious it would be to his hopes if he were to offend their powerful master. But Pius silenced them with a practical question, which he put to them suddenly and to which it was impossible for them to find an answer. 'Is Anjou prepared to drive Piccinino from his strongholds in the States of the Church?' he demanded. 'We must have a king in Naples who is able to hold his own and defend us.' Meanwhile Ferrante was trying to bargain and get all he could for himself, but Pius sent him word that he should remember he was dealing with no merchant accustomed to haggling.<sup>3</sup> However, by October 17, everything was arranged. Pius issued a bull that removed all the censures Calixtus had imposed on Ferrante, and granted him the crown 'without prejudice to the right of another,' and, soon after, Cardinal Orsini, being sent to Naples as Papal legate, crowned him there. On his side the monarch *de facto* promised to pay an annual tribute, to recall Piccinino (who only

<sup>1</sup> Bull *Vocabit nos Pius*, October 13, 1458.

<sup>2</sup> Cribellus, *loc. cit.*; Pius, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

retired on the receipt of thirty thousand ducats), to restore Benevento at once, and evacuate Terracina (a fortified city that guarded the natural frontier of the Papal States) at the expiration of ten years.

Pius had next to deal with the reluctance of the Romans to let him leave the city. Rome, having no commerce, existed on its visitors and pilgrims, and the departure of the Pope and his Court involved considerable pecuniary loss to the citizens. Reports were set afloat that Pius intended to transfer his court to Siena, and even to Germany. Strong representations were made of the disorders that would arise in Rome and the Papal States if the Pope were to leave. The States were surrounded by 'ravaging wolves,' but Pius replied that the Papal possessions had been lost before and won back again, but that Mahomet menacing the Christian Church was a far greater danger.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately the Colonna and Orsini happened to be at peace, and Pius appointed one of the Colonna, who represented the more powerful of the two families, to the Prefecture of Rome. He confirmed certain Papal towns in their privileges, remitted a part of the taxes for three years, made the Barons take oath to preserve peace during his absence, and appointed Cardinal Nicolas von Cues, a German and therefore unaffected by local prejudice or feud, to be his Vicar-General. Certain of the cardinals were to remain in Rome, and, if Pius died away from the city, the next election was to be held there.

The Teutonic Knights of St. Mary in Jerusalem, crusading Germans of noble birth, a body that dated from the twelfth century, applied their energies,

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 1.

defeated in the East, to establish Christianity and dominate the lands of the barbarian nearer home. They occupied and ruled the shores of the Baltic, and were at present at war with their own converted subjects and the kingdom of Poland. Pius proposed peace; he desired to restore them to their original purpose and send them as warriors against the Turk. He also tried to found a military order of Our Lady of Bethlehem, but both of these projects failed.

News came to Rome that the Crescent had triumphed in Servia. Pius had been ill, but he was 'better,' wrote the Mantuan envoy, 'and full of the greatest zeal for the Turkish exploit.'<sup>1</sup> He prepared to leave Rome at once, and arranged to take six cardinals with him.

The cares of state bore heavily on him, and gave him no small anxiety, but we shall see, more than once, that he had the happy faculty of being able to cast off worry. He thoroughly enjoyed his journey, and he tells us, with simple and not unpleasing vanity, how gratified he was with the honour his subjects showed him. They built a wooden bridge across the Tiber for him, and he found it 'adorned with ivy and green boughs.' Wherever he went an enthusiastic people welcomed him: priests bearing sacred things prayed that he might have a fortunate life; lads and maidens, crowned with laurel and bearing olive branches, came to greet him and wish him health and happiness, and they deemed themselves lucky if they could but touch the fringe of his robe. The ways were crowded with people and strewn with green; the streets of cities and towns were hung with costly

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *loc. cit.*, iii. 45, 46.

cloth, and the houses of the cities and the churches were decorated.<sup>1</sup> Very few, outside Rome, had ever seen a Pope, and the farther he went the greater the novelty was a Pontifical progress to the people. But, at Narni, the crowd rushed to tear away the baldacchino held over him, and swords had to be drawn. Pius remembered the adventure of Frederick and his own recent experience in Rome. Henceforward he ceased to ride, and had himself borne about in a litter; it was of purple trimmed with gold, as he is careful to tell us, and he entered cities in full pontifical attire and wearing a mitre. His record of these splendours tells us how near we are to the Renaissance in fullest flood.

His sister, Caterina, was dwelling at Spoleto, and he stayed four days with her. He put up also at Assisi, a place that impressed him deeply, as it does every reverent or artistic spirit. 'The holy Francis,' he says, 'the begetter of the order of Minors, a man who found himself rich in being poor, gave sanctity to this city. Here, in a noble church, lie his bones. The church is of two stories, whereof the upper one is adorned by the paintings of Giotto, the Florentine, who was esteemed in his day as the chief of all painters. The adjoining monastery is the head-one of the order founded by the blessed saint, nor, in the whole world, may one find anything more noble belonging to that fraternity.'<sup>2</sup> Pius was anxious for the protection of the place, and ordered its fortifications to be strengthened. No Pope had visited Perugia for three generations; he remained there three weeks, and gives us a vast amount of historical

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* l. 2.

digression concerning that most beautiful, yet most tragic, of hill-towns. He did his best to compose the embittered factions of the blood-stained city. Thence he came to Lago Trasimeno, and visited an island where certain Franciscans had built themselves a monastery. The cardinals that accompanied him were often highly disgusted at the wretched monasteries which he chose to dine and sleep in. Pius had been too great a traveller to care much for dainty fare or even for comfortable shelter. Here, he thought of all that had happened on the memorable eastern shore of the lake. There came a fierce tempest, but, when it had abated a little, he crossed the lake, and found that he had undertaken a somewhat perilous enterprise, but he was pleased to discover that those who dwelt around and knew what manner of waters these were, held it for a bold adventure and admired his courage.<sup>1</sup>

He was 'Pius Æneas'; a man full of devotion in the Virgilian sense. Both his parents were dead; his mother had survived his father, but she had been dead four years, yet he felt he would like to look once again on the scenes of his boyhood and revive the memories of family life. He turned aside to Corsignano, and the First Prince in the Christian world visited the lowly house where he had been born. He tells us his birthplace is 'built on a hill that rises from the valley watered by the Urcio. It occupies the summit, which is level, about one thousand paces in length, but not nearly so broad. There lies this insignificant town, but it enjoys a fine air and produces the best of wine and eatables. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.

Once the greater part of it belonged to the Piccolomini; and Silvio, the father of Pius, had a property here. Here, indeed, was Pius born; here he learned the rudiments. With how much pleasure did he look forward to the delight it would be to him to behold the familiar scenes of his birthplace once again. But, alas! he found that the greater number of those whom he remembered had departed this life, and those that were left of the companions of his youth were mostly confined to their homes by infirmity, while such as came forth to greet him he could scarcely recognise, so sorely were they changed. Their strength was spent, their bodies were bent, those whom he had left as boys had become grey-headed old men.<sup>1</sup> One of them came forward and knelt at his feet. He was that Father Peter, a young man then, who had taught him his letters.

The little town fêted its illustrious citizen, and he said Mass in the humble church on Sunday. He ordered a cathedral to be built, as well as palaces for the Piccolomini, to serve as lasting memorials that Corsignano was his birthplace, and he renamed it Pienza, after himself. He tells us that he gave the architect, one Bernardo (probably Bernardo Rossellino of Florence) and the workpeople liberal wages, and promised plenary indulgence to such as should visit his cathedral on the festival of the Finding of the Cross.

Pienza is a scene of decay, but it must be even more beautiful now in adversity than it was in its pride. The palaces, the cathedral are mouldering; the loose soil of their foundations is crumbling away;

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.



Nature is quietly reclaiming her own. There is, indeed, but little sense of transition as one passes from a palace to the colonnades of its garden and looks forth on the landscape beyond. And the silence of four centuries dwells within the little square. Time and man, the only foes of what is beautiful, have dealt very gently with this masterpiece of architecture. The vestments of the Pope, faded indeed, but still beautiful, and many lovely things that were his are there: they bear evidence to his perfect taste; they seem to bring him very near to us. Pienza is a gem of the Early Renaissance, of that graceful architecture that includes the ideality of Gothic art and the purity and simplicity of Greek. The genius of Rossellino blends with that of Pius, for the Pope introduced much that he had admired in northern countries into the design.

On February 24, Pius reached Siena, and here he abode two months. Embassies came hither to offer him congratulations from Bohemia, Castile, Germany, Hungary, and Portugal. The envoys of Frederick declined to appear, and remained in Florence for a time, for Matthias Corvinus had been raised to the throne of Hungary, and the Emperor claimed it. At last they were induced to come and offer obedience. They were men of inferior rank, led by Hinderbach, the German jurist. Frederick had sent a humanist to a humanist: how could Pius complain? The Pope would only be amused at the slight so far as it was personal; so far as his office was concerned he swallowed his resentment, and was at pains to point out that he only followed precedent in recognising a king *de facto*, without prejudice to

the question of right ; he also thought it wise to confirm the secret agreement with the Papacy which he himself had negotiated when he was in Frederick's service.

The presence of the Bohemian envoys presented him with a perplexing problem. Podiebrad, of whom he once thought so lightly, had proved to be one of the shrewdest statesmen of his age. He had commended himself to the moderate party in Bohemia, overthrown the extremists, restored order, rendered Bohemia a very powerful state, and been rewarded with its crown. He had acquired the support of his Bohemian subjects and had entered into a secret compact with the late Pope, promising him to root out heresy and re-establish Catholicism in Bohemia. But he evaded his obligations, which he had taken care should be couched in general terms. Pius required his aid, for Podiebrad had promised Calixtus to war against the Turk, and contrived that Frederick should rely on him as his chief supporter. But Breslau still held out against Podiebrad, and sent her own envoys to Siena. Pius, then, found himself in much perplexity. He was compelled to compromise. He received the obedience of Podiebrad, but denied him the title of king until such time as might see his promises fulfilled. The wily, diplomatic Pope sent the new ruler a summons to attend the Congress through the Emperor, his overlord, and then awaited events, for he hoped to induce the Congress to force Podiebrad into complete submission. And he promised the envoys from Breslau that they might rely on him to find a way to put an end to their grievances. Both Pius and Podiebrad were content, especially the king, for time was gained : it might not fulfil Pius's hopes, but

it would assuredly enable himself to strengthen his position in Bohemia and Germany.

Pius was far from being happy at Siena. The populace had driven their nobles into exile, and the middle class governed. They had restored the Piccolomini, indeed, for without this concession the Pope refused to visit the city. He regarded the communes of Italy with distrust. They were unrestful, and there was perpetual, bloody warfare, waged as for 'liberty,' between the various parties that struggled for power. He favoured strong, just government. Before he became Pope he wrote to his friend, Mariano de' Sozzini of Siena: 'I had rather Italy attained peace under Alfonso's rule than that of the free cities, for kingly generosity rewards every kind of excellence.' But now, when certain nobles urged him to employ force, he refused, saying he 'would do no violence to his native city; at the worst he would only withhold benefits which it had been his intention to confer.' He waited a while, and then presented the chief prior of Siena with the Golden Rose. Then he asked for the readmission of the nobles, for he had little confidence in the wisdom and capacity for government of the party in power, since it adopted the short-sighted policy of considering its own petty trading interests only. After much discussion, consent was given to the nobles to occupy a quarter of some of the offices of state and an eighth of the remainder.<sup>1</sup> Pius was far from being satisfied, and said he hoped, later on, the city would agree to grant him all that he had requested.

<sup>1</sup> Paoli, O., article 'Siena,' *Enc. Brit.*, 1887; Malvolti, O., *Historia de fatti e guerre dei Senesi*, Venezia, 1599.

On April 23 the Pope left the city, accompanied by Galeazzo Sforza, the youthful heir of Sforza of Milan, then a bright, intelligent, and well-instructed lad, but who, ascending the ducal throne too early in life, played the tyrant, indulged in reckless dissipation, and came to an untimely tragic end. On reaching the Certosa near Florence, Pius was received by notable men of the city, and they and the cardinals bore his litter, 'none too willingly,'<sup>1</sup> to the monastery of Santa Maria Novella. There he stayed a week, but Cosimo de' Medici, the uncrowned merchant-king of the city, avoided political discussion by pretending to be too ill to leave his bed.

Pius cannot mention any family without telling us all about their forebears; he cannot mention any place without all kinds of digression. He seizes this visit to Florence as an excuse for literary criticism. He speaks of Dante, 'who truly is the greatest of them all, and makes Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell almost as vivid as reality can be.' Is there a sly hit when he adds, 'and he gives us minute doctrine enough to be a complete guide to life'? 'Francesco Petrarca stands next, who has scarcely an equal, for in the use of Latin and Tuscan he is unapproachable. The third place I may, without injustice, give to Giovanni Boccaccio, although he is often lascivious in matter and diffuse in style.'<sup>2</sup> Then he goes on to give us a long list of Florentine authors. More than once he mentions Giotto in his writings, and shows that he was aware of the relation of artistic to literary development. The Florentines, however, seem to have been of opinion that a living dog is

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

worth more than a dead lion. Among the spectacular displays with which they regaled the Pope, both on his journey to Mantua and on his return, was a real menagerie: they turned all kinds of wild beasts into the Piazza de' Signoria—bulls, lions, boars, dogs, and a giraffe. Pius notes that the lions lay down and nothing would make them budge. Nothing was trivial in the Renaissance.

It was clear that, though he was warmly welcomed at Florence, his visit was, politically, a failure. So he went on to Bologna, a city that nominally belonged to the Papacy, and at this time lodged a Papal Legate; but Pius tells us that 'while the city accepted a *legate* that dignitary might with more truth be called *ligatus*.'<sup>1</sup> Sixteen city-fathers of Bologna professed to govern the state and uphold its freedom, but they were not free themselves, for the Bentivogli, representing wealth that came of trade, were the real directors of policy. The Bentivogli and their party disliked the visit of the Pope, for they dreaded lest the masses, always opposed to their masters in Italian cities, might seize the occasion to rebel. But if they were to refuse Pius admission the exiles might be encouraged to attack the city, and these were numerous; for in Bologna, as in every Italian state, the dominant political party proscribed its opponents. When Pius entered the city, he found the streets lined with mercenary troops, and the orator who welcomed him took occasion to give vent to popular grievances. The government exiled this too fluent person, but the Pope succeeded in getting the ban rescinded.<sup>2</sup> He was glad to leave the suspicious

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.    <sup>2</sup> Campanus apud Muratori, *R. I. S.*, III. ii. 976.

city, and on the 16th May he set out for Ferrara. He tells that Borso of Este, a bastard himself, accompanied by six other bastard-princes of his house, rode forth to meet him. But the Pope is mistaken: *one* of the six was of legitimate birth.

'Borso,' he says, 'was a man of remarkable build, though only somewhat above middle height. He had a magnificent head of hair and a taking face. He was a pleasing speaker, sumptuous in his way of living, and liberal. He entertained Frederick right royally when the Emperor returned from his coronation, hoping to be rewarded with the title of duke. He never married, and it is said that his reason was excellent and truly Christian, for there were boys that were legitimate heirs to the sovereignty, and he wished them to succeed to it. He was sagacious and a lover of peace, and he executed justice with severity. They erected a statue to him in the public square, where he is to be seen seated, declaring the law. The inscription stated him to be heroic and illustrious, but the virtue of economy was not mentioned, nor is it often found in such an association. He cared more for a few valuable things than for a quantity of goods. He always appeared in public set off by gems, and his palace was filled with precious things, while, even in the country, he used vessels of silver and gold.'<sup>1</sup> Pius deals justly with Borso's character, though the Marquis had become his enemy, for reasons which he tells us. The Bastard's mother was a Sienese lady of the house of the Tolomei, and akin to the Piccolomini, and her son tried every means to induce him to grant the title of duke and remit the

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.

tribute due to the Papacy. Borso even offered a bribe of 300,000 ducats, 'to outshine the rest,' says the Pope. Pius was willing to grant the former but by no means the latter of the two requests, and at this Borso took great umbrage. From Ferrara the Pope proceeded by boat to Mantua, where he arrived (June 1) three days before the appointed time.

He describes all the pomp and pageantry that attended his entry into the city of Virgil, even to the banners that were borne; flags that would be priceless now, for they were, doubtless, painted by great artists, paid a workman's usual wage; he describes the golden box that contained the Host and how a white horse bore It on its back; he counts the number of white horses with gilded saddles and reins; he rejoices in his own vestments and the splendid jewels that enriched them, and he is proud of nobles bearing him in his litter; there was a golden crucifix, too, in the procession, and the keys of the church, and the arms of the Piccolomini borne aloft, and carpets were spread along the roadway that could hardly be seen for flowers, and the streets resounded with 'evvivas' from the people. He luxuriated in all this outward splendour, for he was a true son of the Renaissance. Life was far more uncertain then than now, and men were more eager to get all the enjoyment they could out of their little hour.

Next day Hippolyta, daughter of Sforza of Milan, half-child, half-woman, who had arrived at Mantua, with her mother, made an elegant little speech in Latin to the Pope, which he answered in his usual flowing style. Both speeches are preserved in

Mansi's orations of Pius II.<sup>1</sup> The Pope tells us that the little lady commanded admiration, and adds, in a sly parenthesis, that she was remarkably pretty and had a pleasing address.<sup>2</sup> Hippolyta became one of the learned ladies to whom Masaccio and Pulci and other literati dedicated works that are remarkable for their indelicacy. Masaccio's tales, all of which are dedicated to Hippolyta, are novels with a purpose: they are intended to exhibit the cunning and falseness of women, but he tells Hippolyta he hopes she will be pleased, because she is such an illustrious exception to her sex. Besides Bianca, the mother of Hippolyta, there were the ladies of the house of Gonzaga to add their grace and beauty to the Pope's court.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mansi, ii. 192.

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See Masaccio, especially his dedication.



## CHAPTER XV

## THE CONGRESS OF MANTUA

ON the appointed day (June 1, 1459) the Congress was opened at the Duomo, and the Pope delivered an address. But no envoys were present, for none had arrived. 'I will stay on and wait,' said Pius; 'if no one comes, I must accept the will of God.' Week after week passed, but no one came. The cardinals got weary and restless; most of them protested against remaining on, but Pius gave no heed to their murmurs. They complained that Mantua was unhealthy; that many of the retinue were sick and some had died; that the food and wine were poor; the dullness of life there was broken only by the croaking of frogs in the marshes; the Pope had done enough and could retire with honour. Cardinal Scarampo went away, and poured scorn and derision on the unsuccessful project. Time continued to drag on slowly, and still nobody came. It was evident that the European powers aimed at tiring out the Pope. But his resolve remained unshaken, and he had the support of two cardinals, Torquemada, the Spaniard, and Bessarion, the Greek.

Then embassies came, indeed, but it was to implore aid, not to proffer it. Albania, Epirus, Illyria, the larger of the islands of the Levant, sent begging for

succour. Palæologus, despot of the Morea, also sent envoys. There were sixteen Turkish captives with them, to show what he could do, if only he had more men; give him but a handful, he said, and he would expel the Turk. Pius let him have three hundred troops, who added to the woes of the Morea by plundering it.

At last, after three weary months, the Duke of Cleves and the Lord of Croye arrived from Burgundy. The Pope asked his cardinals to ride forth and welcome them. They declined. Cardinals, they said, were the equals of kings; they would do nothing to diminish their dignity; but, at last, Cardinals Colonna and Orsini offered to go. The envoys told Pius that the Duke of Burgundy found himself too old to undertake the journey. It was clear that his fit of hot zeal had passed away. The Duke of Cleves lost no time in bringing forward a personal grievance. The town of Soest had rebelled against the Archbishop of Köln, and the Pope had ordered it to return to its allegiance; it had placed itself under the protection of the Duke of Cleves, who now requested Pius to rescind his command. The Pope saw that all possibility of holding a congress would be lost if he began by quarrelling with the Duke. On the other hand, he could not afford to offend the Archbishop. It was one of those dilemmas in which Popes as well as temporal rulers find themselves from time to time. Pius extricated himself by complying with Cleves's request, and writing to the Archbishop to the effect that he had only withdrawn his support until he should be able to renew it.

Such dissimulation was an every-day proceeding

in the diplomacy of the age. Similar tricks had been practised by the Papacy before on many occasions. 'States are not governed by Paternosters' was a favourite saying of Cosimo de' Medici's. No authority, spiritual or temporal, could be maintained without guile, and, on the whole, the Papacy will be found to have acted far more honourably than any other contemporary government. Pius relates the circumstances with the utmost candour, and we must remember that he wrote his memoirs for posterity to judge. He disguises nothing, but we can see that he was troubled by scruple. He tells us how he reconciled his action with his conscience: 'If justice cannot be done without entailing results that would be shameful and injurious, it has been the rule with the Holy See to cloak its intention until a fit season arrives for declaring it. And this principle is admitted by those that lay down laws for conduct, on the ground that one ought to chose the smaller of two evils.'<sup>1</sup> It is a confession freely given, and reminds one of a similar excuse that he had thought it necessary to provide Schlick with, in the affair of the Bishopricks of Freising.

When this matter was settled the Pope was informed that the Duke of Burgundy thought Europe in too unsettled a condition for anything to be done. Pius replied that there would be unending delay if everybody waited for pacification, and meanwhile Hungary would go under. If each state sent a contingent the relative strength of the Powers would be unaffected. The Burgundian ambassadors then promised a contingent, but refused to stay.

Summons after summons had been sent to Sforza,

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.

and at last, in September, he came. Filelfo spoke for him and flattered his former pupil, hoping for reward, and Pius replied in a similar strain. Sforza's presence was not due to any Christian zeal, but to a hope that he might strengthen the Pope in his decision to support Ferrante. For, if René of Anjou were at home, trifling with the Muse, his son, Jean, was on his way to attack Naples; and the barons of that ill-ruled land, who had been in the habit of rebelling for generations past, were ready to take up arms in his name. By no means did loyal feeling towards the house of Anjou actuate them, but they saw an opportunity of aggrandising themselves under the French banner. The success of the Angevin party would mean the renewal of the French claim to Milan. And since Sforza had received no investiture from the Emperor, he wished, not merely to keep the Pope on Ferrante's side, but also to secure the good offices of Pius II. with his old master, Frederick. So he threw himself into the scheme of a crusade. He told his wife he was kept very busy; he had no time to eat his meals.<sup>1</sup> The Pope says that he was now sixty years of age, but he was really fifty-eight. Pius gives a vivid portrait of this condottiere who became a prince. 'On horseback,' he says, 'he gave one the impression of being still quite a young man. He was tall and of commanding bearing; his expression was grave, and he was quiet and courteous in conversation. He was quite the prince. In bodily and mental power no one, in our day, was his equal; in battle he was invincible. Such was the man that rose from a humble position to sovereign power. His

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, English trans., iii. 86.

wife was beautiful and virtuous, his children like angels. He was scarcely ever ill, and whatever he strove for he achieved. And yet he was not without his troubles. Troilo and Brunoro, his old friends and fellow-campaigners, forsook him to serve King Alfonso. He was obliged to hang another, Ciarpolline, for treason; he had the vexation of seeing his own brother, Alessandro, setting the French against him; one of his sons also conspired against him and had to be put into confinement; he conquered the Marches of Ancona with his sword only to lose them. Who is there among mortals that enjoys only the smiles of Fortune and never sees her frown? We may count that man happy who has only a few sorrows.<sup>1</sup> Such is the final judgment on life of the man who had achieved the highest dignity the world could offer, and had enjoyed a fuller and more varied experience than any one of his age.

The conferences of Sforza with the Pope induced the jealous Italian States to send envoys, and the King of Poland also sent delegates. Venice was the last Italian state to despatch her representatives. Pius had already told the Ten that they were only thinking of their trade. The Venetian ambassadors said that when Christianity was at one their state would not be found wanting.<sup>2</sup> The Pope replied that there would be no end to that excuse; Venice lay very near to Mantua, yet the Venetian envoys had been longest on the way.<sup>3</sup>

Four months had passed, and at last there were enough ambassadors assembled to begin business.

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 3.    <sup>2</sup> Malpiero, *Ann. Venet., Arch. Stor. It.*, vii. i. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 3

On September 26, Mass was said in the Cathedral and Pius held his hearers for three hours. He was suffering from a gouty cough, but the excitement removed every trace of his ailment, nor did it once interrupt him.<sup>1</sup> He began with a prayer, and then drew a vivid picture of the desecration of the land that had witnessed the birth, life, sufferings, and sacrifice of the Redeemer. And now, while the nations that professed His name were sunk in sloth or turning their arms against each other, the Infidel had taken the royal city that Constantine founded, defiled the great Church of Justinian, and were pressing on into the heart of Europe. They had torn down the sacred images, had given the bones of the holy saints to swine to eat, had ravished wives and deflowered virgins, even the maidens vowed to Christ. The Sultan had given a banquet whereto the Holy Image of the Redeemer was brought and spat upon while the guests shouted in derision. The beating of a slave is sufficient to arouse kings to warfare, but they remain unmoved when God is blasphemed. Are you so simple as to think that the Moslem will lay down his arms? His character is such that he must either be wholly victor or wholly vanquished. Piece by piece, you are allowing Europe to become his prey, and it will be no long time before the False Prophet rules the world.

The Pope then passed on to show that the danger could be overcome. Hitherto, the Turk had triumphed over degenerate peoples only. The troops led by Hunyadi and Scanderbeg had shown what vigorous races could do. And one has not to rely solely on

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, 1. 3.

human strength, for ours is God's side. After demonstrating Christ's divinity, Pius proceeded to point out what worldly advantages would accrue. There were states and wealth to be won. (It shows his historical insight and his knowledge of men, that he knew how largely hunger for land and wealth had excited the enthusiasm of the Crusaders.) Yet, after all, they might not acquire much earthly profit, but there was an eternal prize awaiting them, the reward of those heavenly joys which made the blessed martyrs accept death with gladness in their hearts. Then the Pope rose to the highest strain of passionate eloquence. 'Oh, that Godfrey were here,' he exclaimed, 'and the heroes that rescued Jerusalem in the days that are gone! There were souls that had not required such a torrent of words to inspire them! Could they listen they would rise as one man and shout with one voice, "God wills it, God wills it!"'

'You are silent. We fail to move you. You wait for the conclusion of what We have to say. Very likely some of you are thinking, "The Pope is a priest: priests are ready enough in laying burdens on others which they will not stretch forth their own finger to raise. It is well for them to call us to draw the sword." If you think so, you are mistaken. Neither in your time, nor in that of your fathers, has there been one readier than We. We are weak, yet We have come hither at the risk of Our life and to the emptying of an impoverished purse; We have left Our states naked to danger, for we deemed the defence of the faith of higher importance. Do not think that We take credit to Ourselves for doing so. Alas! it is all We can do. Had we the necessary vigour left, no



PIUS II PRESIDES AT THE CONGRESS OF MANTUA.  
*Pinturicchio, Siena.*





battle, no peril, should affright Us. We would assume the Cross, We would hurl Ourselves on the Infidel, bearing the banner of the Lord ; We would accept death for the sake of the Faith and account Ourselves blessed. And, even now, though Our body is feeble and Our soul weary, We are ready to vow Ourselves to the holy enterprise. If you agree, We will go forth with a high, light heart. We can be borne in Our litter to the camp, ay, into the very thick of battle. Take counsel together as to what is wise. Our heart, at least, does not quail, nor do We cover up fear with big words. Lay on us what burden you choose. We shall not shrink from whatever task you may appoint.'<sup>1</sup>

Bessarion followed the Pope. He made a long, dull speech ; but he became eloquent when he described what his own eyes had seen, and he awoke the keen interest of his audience when he declared that the Turks were incapable of bringing more than 70,000 men into the field.<sup>2</sup> Sforza followed : he spoke in Italian with the directness and practicality of the soldier. Then the Hungarian envoys complained that the Emperor had increased their peril, at a time when they were engaged in a mortal struggle with the Turk, by claiming the crown of their country. Pius told them that the Congress had met to discuss a crusade, not European politics ; he knew the excellent qualities of both the Emperor and their King, and had sent a legate to compose their quarrel.

The Congress affected an agreement. But practical ways of carrying out its decision remained to be

<sup>1</sup> Mansi, *Pii II. Orationes*, ii. 9, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Contarini, *Anecdota Veneta*, 276-83.

discussed, and this gave the envoys abundant opportunities for obstruction. Sforza suggested that those nations that were neighbours to the Turk should be subsidised, for they had experience of his tactics and were, therefore, best qualified to fight him. Sigismondo Malatesta, lord of Rimini, a vassal of the Pope, then put in a word for himself. This extraordinary being was one of the most notable products of a remarkable age. He was at once a mercenary captain, a sensualist, a scholar, and an enthusiast for art: one equally ready for the vilest crime or the most magnanimous deed; one full of high conceptions and lusts that would degrade a beast. Malatesta saw, in the crusade, the possibility of getting big pay as a condottiere. He suggested the employment of Italian troops. But Italian troops were all mercenaries; they chose their battle-field with care, and levelled it before they ventured their heavily armed persons and steeds upon it; almost always, the worst that befel them was to have to yield and pay ransom; they made battle a game of tactical skill, and well-nigh as bloodless as chess. Pius saw through Malatesta's design at once. He adroitly complimented Italian troops on their well-known courage, and then cut the ground from under the condottiere's feet, not without indulging in some covert sarcasm: 'I also should be in favour of Italian troops,' he said, 'for what soldiery is more brave? but what other nation than Italy could furnish them with their pay? Let, therefore, other nations provide the army and fleet, so that one back may not have to bear all the burden. And it would be no easy matter to induce our generals to take service abroad. For, in Italy, the trade of war is

pursued with no great loss of blood and with much replenishing of the purse. But, yonder, deadly work awaits us, and the main reward is not of an earthly nature. We advise the imposition of a war-tax for three years. Let the clergy pay a tenth, the laity a thirtieth, and the Jews a twentieth of their income.'<sup>1</sup>

The Florentine envoys gave distinct evidence of how opposed their state was to the project; for Florentine merchants did not wish to hazard their lucrative Eastern trade. Venice, so said her representatives, would be ready if sixty galleys, instead of the thirty proposed, were sent, if she were paid for her services, and were put into possession of all conquests that might be made. This aroused the wrath of the Pope. He told them they were a degenerate people. Their ancestors made no difficulty about providing a fleet; *they* were ready enough to fight with all their might against their rivals, Genoa and Pisa; but the present race of Venetians would not use arms even if they were given them. They were employing every stratagem they could think of to stop the Holy War. They forgot that they would be the first to fall before the Turkish advance. But his words fell on deaf ears.

In the middle of October envoys arrived from the Duke of Savoy, and a little later, from Albert of Austria. Gregory Heimburg, the old foe of the Pope, was the chief spokesman of the German embassy, and he also represented the Duke of Saxony and Sigismund, Duke of the Tyrol. Heimburg was one of those honest sincere people who

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.

indulge in rude behaviour in order to emphasise their integrity. He kept his hat on in the Pope's presence, and took small pains to veil his contempt for him. Sigismund, who also came, was not on good terms with the Papacy, for Nicholas of Cusa had been appointed Bishop of Brixen by the late Pope, in violation of the compact made with Frederick. This would have mattered little, but Cusa was bent on reforming the monastic houses, and he proceeded to do so with a high hand. He was a man who had risen from a low rank of life by acquiring a just reputation for vast learning. He was zealous and intolerant; well-meaning but destitute of discretion. Meticulous legal considerations and scholastic pedantry are a poor equipment for dealing with men, and Cusa assumed the manners of a drill-sergeant, when tact and suavity were required. The difficulties that he encountered were due to the intricate involution of ecclesiastical with territorial rights, and all the ingenuity of Pius himself might have failed to reconcile them. A breach soon occurred between the Tyrolese and Sigismund, their duke, and Cusa. Nicholas had supported Cusa, and Pius had accepted his policy. Hence Sigismund bore the Pope anything but good-will, and Heimburg was emboldened to take his revenge. The reader has been told how he reminded Pius of the erotic writings he had sent, so many years ago, to Sigismund; his taunts covered a sneer at the Pope's sincerity.<sup>1</sup> Pius retained a dignified silence, but inwardly he was smarting with shame. He records

<sup>1</sup> This speech is preserved in the Munich Archives. See Voigt, *Pius II.*, vol. iii. pp. 99-101, and note, p. 100.

the incident<sup>1</sup> for posterity to read; he tell us that the charge was true; indeed, he did so; but he wishes us to know that it was before he took orders, and he adds another excuse which enfolds a quiet sarcasm on the culture of German princes, 'perhaps Sigismund did not really read what he had written.'<sup>2</sup> It was in Latin.

The King of France also sent ambassadors to Mantua, but only to raise the Neapolitan question. They began by praising their country and their king, speaking of him as 'an obedient son,' so as to exclude any notion of Papal overlordship.<sup>3</sup> They requested the Pope to rescind his recognition of Ferrante and acknowledge the Angevin claim. Pius commenced his reply by echoing the praise of France and her monarch; then, turning to the ambassador's demand, he said that, in recognising Ferrante, he had acted after consultation with the Sacred College, and must consult with it again before giving his answer. Immediately after this audience he was taken very ill with cholic, and the French declared that he pretended to be sick to avoid giving them a definite reply. They busied themselves in reducing their demands to writing. Word of this was borne to Pius. 'If I die in the effort, they shall have their answer,' said he. He rose and summoned them into his presence. He was very pale and trembled in every limb; but, as had happened in the Mantuan Duomo, he became himself directly he began to speak, and he continued to harangue the ambassadors for three hours. He refused to give his decision straight away. Let the

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Monarch, called, by universal consent, the Most Christian King, submit suitable propositions. Meanwhile Charles of France was imperilling the souls of his subjects by defending and enforcing that Pragmatic Sanction which placed the Church in the hands of the laity to deal with as they listed. All its powers existed on sufferance in France. If this were allowed to continue, the Church would be transformed into a nameless, many-headed beast. But his Most Christian Majesty is blind to this, and he must be cured of his blindness that he may amend his ways.

The envoys replied that they must repel all reflections on the honour of their sovereign. Pius answered that he would receive them when, and as often as they desired, and, so, dismissed them. Then the Cardinals crowded round the Pope and expressed their delight that he had maintained the rights of Rome so stoutly.

Next day the ambassadors told the Pope that it would be impossible for their master to take any part in a crusade while there was war between him and England. The Pope replied that, if both countries sent an equal number of soldiers, their relative strength would remain unimpaired. To this the ambassadors replied that they had no power to accept such a proposition, but they were willing to agree to a conference for peace. Probably this was a hint at a Council, for, with a little intrigue, such a conference might be turned into one.

The kings of Europe could not get on without the Papal system, so we find ambassadors arriving from King René and bringing his obedience. They found Pius not too suave, for he was indignant that a fleet,

prepared for a crusade by the energy of ecclesiastics in Provence, had been captured by Jean of Anjou to transport him to Naples. He met the envoys with a frown, and listened to them with impatience. Menaces were interchanged. The embassy threatened to publish a manifesto against the Pope for his recognition of Ferrante, and he replied that, in that case, he would deal with them as heretics. Ambassadors also came from England, but more to seek some remedy for the wretched condition of their land, torn by the Wars of the Roses, than to do anything for the Christian Commonwealth.<sup>1</sup> Pius complains that 'the credentials they bore were irregular and unwitnessed; the King had merely written "I, Henry, have witnessed this myself," and appended his seal. The Pontiff scorned such a contemptible embassy.'<sup>2</sup> It is true that only two priests came, though the Earl of Worcester had been appointed as chief ambassador, but Pius was unaware that the credentials were in the wonted English form.<sup>3</sup>

Heimburg was active in exciting his countrymen against the Pope, and, when the crusade was agreed to, they relegated all details affecting Germany to the decision of a Diet. Pius knew only too well how incapable and ineffective German Diets were. He nominated the Emperor Frederick to be Commander, and the Caesar delegated his office to another prince, Albert of Brandenburg, who took advantage of it to curtail the power of bishops, and establish his own position in Germany.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, ed. of 1897, vol. iii. pp. 232, 233.

<sup>4</sup> Voigt, *Pius II.*, iii. 105; Pastor, *Eng. trans.*, vol. iii. p. 97.



By November Pius had come to perceive that the Congress was a failure. He wrote to Carvajal: 'There is, to be frank, nothing of the zeal that We had expected. Very few have come out of regard for the public welfare; all seek what they can get for themselves. But We have given the lie to the slander cast against the Apostolic See; We have shown that those who blame Us are alone blameworthy. At least, however, the Italian powers have committed themselves, by signature, to this service of God. Yet We hear that Genoa is sending a fleet to carry the French to Naples, and we fear that this will not merely mean the loss of all help, but drag everybody away into the contest. If God do not help, all will be lost in the miseries that will befall Christian peoples.'<sup>1</sup>

However, on January 14, 1460, the Pope declared war against the Turk. On the 19th, he made a speech in which he said: 'All has not been done that we hoped for, yet not every thing has been ignored. The Christian Princes have neither promised all that they might have done, nor utterly repudiated the subject.'<sup>2</sup> The ambassadors knelt before him and repeated their promises, and then the Pope knelt before the altar and offered up a prayer. Pius had spent more than half a year in Mantua.

Little had he to hope from the forthcoming Diet; war had broken out between Anjou and Ferrante, and it threatened to spread elsewhere; he could neither expect to win Podiebrad, nor quiet Sigismund, nor triumph over France. His enemies were threaten-

<sup>1</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad ann.* 1459.

<sup>2</sup> Mansi, *Orationes Pii II.*, ii. 79.

ing to summon a council. He met the threat by a master-stroke of policy. Before he left Mantua, he called the Cardinals together, and with the prescience of the true statesman, issued the famous Bull 'Execrabilis.' All appeal to a future Council the Bull declares to be useless, illegal, and wholly detestable, nothing but a screen for mischief. For a Council is non-existent, and, indeed, may never come into being. Let him that makes such an appeal, or even consents to it, be, in the very fact of so doing, excommunicate.

Princes disobeyed; they still threatened to summon a Council, but never did so. As Creighton says, the Bull 'worked itself into the ecclesiastical system, and became one of the pillars on which the Papal authority rests.'<sup>1</sup> Pius quitted Mantua with many forebodings. Yet he had not wholly failed. He had taken what he deemed to be his rightful position as the Head of Italian powers and the Princes of Europe.

Pius retained throughout his life the wonderful power of detaching himself from all the excitement and anxieties and responsibilities attached to his office: he could enjoy leisure hours in the beauty of sunshine and the society of friends. He lived to gather around him a few men that he found entirely congenial, though they were neither of rank nor of very remarkable mental power. He chose, above all, associates before whom he could lay aside all assumption of dignity and position, those with whom he could unbend and be companionable and relapse into the Æneas Silvius of yore. There were two that he

<sup>1</sup> Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, ed. 1897, vol. iii. p. 397.

especially loved. One of these true friends was Jacopo Ammanati, a Tuscan of lowly birth, whose scholarship recommended him to the notice of Nicholas v. Ammanati became secretary to Calixtus and retained the office under the new Pope. So little of aristocratic pride was there in Pius, that he adopted Ammanati into his own ancient family. He made him, first Bishop of Pavia, and then a cardinal : but, at this time, he was only a secretary. Ammanati never abused the Pope's friendship or sought riches for himself. He took Pius for his model, and, indeed in many respects, the smaller man's nature resembled that of the greater man. Both were humanists ; both were a little vain ; both were sympathetic of heart and had winning manners ; both had a weakness for *belles lettres* ; both delighted in life ; but Ammanati was especially given to the pleasures of hunting.

Another companion was Gianantonio Campano, who took his name from the Roman Campagna where he had been a shepherd boy. Campano became an orphan at a very early age, but a good priest took him into his domestic service, and, being struck by the child's brightness, taught him what he himself knew. Indeed, he was so well instructed that, as a mere lad, he became tutor to a family in Naples, attended the courses of Lorenzo Valla in that city, and, at the age of twenty, lectured at Perugia. Like Pius, he had written love-poems, and he was at the service of others to write what they wanted. He was sent with the Perugian embassy to congratulate the Pope on his accession, took the fancy of Ammanati, and, through him, acquired the Pontiff's favour. Ulti-

mately Pius made him Bishop of Croton. He still preserved the marks of his peasant origin, and could play the buffoon on occasion. He gives us a portrait of himself. 'What is Campano like?' he asks. 'Well, he snores all the night through, a-bed and naked, he is a more appalling sight than any wild beast of the forest. His feet are like hooks, his hands are gnarled and hairy, his nose is flat, with great gaping nostrils, his brow overhangs his eyes, his belly is swollen with food and wind, he is short of limb, fat and round as a ball.'<sup>1</sup> If, sometimes, he became a little coarse, he could write clearly, speak cleverly, and sometimes bitingly; like Pius, while he was a master of epigram, his disposition was truly amiable, and he loved the Pope not less than Ammanati. It charmed the author one day when he was engaged at the Vatican in examining dull, dreary letters to bishops and other people of importance concerning ecclesiastical affairs to come across an evidence of the affectionate sympathy that existed between the two men of letters—Pope and Court Poet. It was a dictated letter of Pius, of little consequence, indeed, but addressed to 'our dearest son, Campano, the well-beloved child of Propertius.'

One day, at Mantua, the trio of friends took boat and were rowed down the river to a monastery. Ammanati began to read a number of congratulatory poems that needy bards had sent the Pope on his accession, with requests, or at least hints, that they should be rewarded for their flattery. The verses stimulated the three men of letters to amuse themselves and exercise their wit. Campano reeled off

<sup>1</sup> Campani, *Ep.* iii. 47.

some impromptu lines to the effect that those should be rewarded who had not asked; therefore, since he had not asked, he deserved a reward. The Pope replied :—

If gifts, Campano, should not then be sought,  
You pray the deaf : *your* gain will be but nought.<sup>1</sup>

Presently he said, 'Here is something for your poets' :—

If poets wish but verse for verse to gain,  
Learn that we'll mend, but will not buy their strain.

Ammanati took the epigram up and altered it :—

Rhymesters who reel off their numbers for gold  
In dealing with Pius will find themselves sold.

But Pius was too good-natured and too fond of letters to allow this to stand : he varied his own and Ammanati's lines once more :—

Learn, rhymesters, who offer your verses for gold,  
From Pius great gifts you may hope to behold.

Unfortunately the impromptu containing the statement 'We'll mend but will not buy their strain,' got repeated in literary circles. Great was the dudgeon of scholarly sycophants, and many epigrammatic

<sup>1</sup> The incident is given by Ammanati. See *Card. Jac. Picolom. Ep.* 49. In the original the epigrams run thus :—

- (1) Munera, Campane, si non sunt danda petenti,  
Jure tuas surda currimus aure preces.
- (2) Discite pro numeris numeros sperare, poetas !  
Mutare est animus carmina, non emere.
- (3) Discite pro numeris nummos tractare, poetas !  
Expectata dabit munera nulla Pius.
- (4) Discite pro numeris nummos sperare, poetas !  
Expectata dabit munera magna Pius.

replies were circulated, none of them too complimentary. The most biting was,

If verse for verse were fortune's fee, I trow  
No such a diadem had decked *thy* brow.<sup>1</sup>

The scholars at Rome became the Pope's bitter enemies. The worst of these foes was his old master Filelfo. Filelfo said the Pope did nothing for him, but this was a lie: Pius gave him a pension of two hundred ducats a year. Filelfo rewarded his benefactor by anonymous libels, and attributed all the most shameful vices of antiquity to him. When Pius died he composed a poem of jubilation, and did everything he could to cast obloquy on his memory.<sup>2</sup> Filelfo was a specimen of his class, and one cannot wonder that Pius was sparing in the encouragement he gave to literary sycophants. It is always dangerous to lend one's ear to eulogy or detraction written by scholars of the Renaissance. Such writings were, for the most part, the productions of hungry or greedy men who bespattered their patrons with fulsome praise when they got what they wanted, and tried to befoul their names when they were disappointed; they were a jealous tribe too, and dealt each other low insults and petty vengeance that recall a cage of enraged apes rather than the serene behaviour which one expects on Parnassus. Pius knew them well. He liked to get at the truth of everything, even of himself, and he had little liking for the affectations of the voluble style that became fashion-

<sup>1</sup> 'Si tibi pro numeris fortuna dedisset,  
Non esset capiti tanta corona tuo.

See Voigt, *Pius II.*, vol. iii. p. 628 as to the authorship of this.

<sup>2</sup> See Voigt, vol. iii. p. 635, *et seq.*

able in his later years. He was wont to say to Campano that a poet, to be worth anything, must be original. And there was another reason, also, for his neglect of the humanists. He repented of his own erotic writings; he had vainly endeavoured to recall them, but they were more widely circulated than ever, now that he had become Pope. He was always possessed by a strong sense of duty, and it would be inconsistent with his sacred office to encourage literary aspirants who lived depraved lives and put great abilities to base uses. His own library was chiefly composed of Christian authors.<sup>1</sup>

In the intervals of grave and anxious business at Mantua, then, we see the Pope delighting in pleasant companionship and a country life. He made many little excursions from the city, and his interest in archæology led him to visit the so-called villa of Virgil.

<sup>1</sup> Muntz, *La Bibliothèque du Vatican au xv. Siècle*, p. 132.

## CHAPTER XVI

## THE RETURN FROM MANTUA—TROUBLES AT ROME

WHILE the Pope was at Mantua he was entreated by Sigismondo Malatesta to mediate between him and two foes who were in league against him, Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, and Piccinino. There was perpetual war among the petty rulers of Romagna, and Pius spoke very sharply on the subject. He made Malatesta promise to pay 60,000 ducats which he owed Ferrante, in order to supply the King with those sinews of war he so sorely lacked, and he took Fano and Sinigaglia, places under the rule of Malatesta, in pledge. Piccinino, angered at being balked a second time by the Pope, and obliged to withdraw from the States of the Church, prepared to march towards Naples to fight for the Angevins, and, though the Duke of Urbino was on the watch and hoped to intercept his band, he succeeded in evading that famous condottiere and reached the kingdom. The most formidable among the Neapolitan lords, ever on the watch to weaken the power of the Crown, declared for the French side and it seemed as if the cause of Ferrante would be lost. When Pius reached Ferrara on his return journey from Mantua, Borso of Este, with the crafty duplicity so characteristic of the diplomacy of the age, offered to deal with Piccinino



on the Pope's behalf; but Pius perceived that the Marquis meditated treachery and gave him a refusal. When the Pope arrived at Florence he saw Cosimo de' Medici, the man who, though a simple merchant in his mode of life, really controlled the destiny of the state. Pius tried to induce Cosimo to espouse the cause of Ferrante, as did Cosimo's friend Sforza, but the Florentines always held the commerce of the kingdom in their hands when it was under the Angevins, and Medici refused. But the city, like every city he visited, did due honour to the Head of Christendom. Everywhere, in honour of his coming, spectacular displays were prepared which combined the fine taste of the Renaissance with a child-like and even vulgar ostentation. And Pius, like everybody else, without exception, enjoyed whatever was presented with a most catholic and healthy gusto.

Instead of leading a crusade, Pius now found himself and his Milanese allies at war with the Angevin party; and he was laid up for a time with a depressing attack of the gout. On January 31, 1460, he was sufficiently recovered to enter Siena, and 'was received after the fashion of a triumph . . . especially by the women, whose nature it is to be more religious than men, and who bear kindlier feelings towards the priesthood.'<sup>1</sup> In July news came that the troops of Ferrante were thoroughly routed, and that the King himself had escaped from the battle-field with great difficulty. The only hope left lay with Naples itself, for that city maintained unshaken loyalty to Ferrante. René of Provence tried to detach the

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 4.

Pope by exciting an insurrection in Avignon, but his design failed. Then he threatened to appeal to a General Council. The French party in the Curia insulted the Pope directly they heard the news. They lit bonfires in the public places of Siena, and behaved rudely to his servants. Pius, like most gouty men, was subject to fits of depression. For a time he fell into doubt as to whether, for the good of the Church, and the forwarding of the Crusade, it might not be well to abandon Ferrante, whose cause seemed so hopeless. Simonetta says he became thoroughly frightened.<sup>1</sup> He certainly wrote to the Duke of Urbino, entreating him not to risk a battle, 'for,' said he, 'if you should suffer defeat Our states would be thrown open to the enemy.'<sup>2</sup> But the Pope and Sforza were in constant communication, and gave one another heart, for they knew that there were dissensions in the hostile camp; moreover, in the wars of Italy, conducted, as they were, by mercenaries, victory ultimately fell to the longest purse. Pius spoke boldly and firmly to the envoys sent by René, and takes credit to himself for having preserved an unshaken mind. No doubt he took care to appear unmoved.

He strengthened the States of the Church by getting Ferrante to cede Castiglione della Pescaia in Tuscany, and the island of Guglio, which he placed under the government of his nephew Andrea, and also Terracina, a strong position at the natural boundary of the Kingdom and the Papal States, which he put in the hands of Antonio Piccolomini.

<sup>1</sup> Simonetta, in Muratori, *R. I. S.*, xxi. 713.

<sup>2</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad. ann.* 1460, 1463.

A party in Terracina had petitioned the Pope to take their town over, and he was careful to confirm the commune in its rights of municipal self-government. The presence of Jews in a city was so advantageous that the citizens further asked Pius to allow them to settle there. He granted their request, and had such unusual consideration for natural family rights, that he forbade any Jew to be admitted to baptism under the age of twelve.

In order to strengthen his authority in Siena, establish his own political views there, and do honour to the land of his forefathers and the place so full to him of youthful memories, he advanced the city to the dignity of an archbishopric, and appointed his nephew, Francesco de Todeschini, a young man of twenty-three, to the see. His enemies charged him with nepotism and too much devotion to the Sienese, but nepotism was necessary to a Pope surrounded by foes in his own curia, and, while it gratified Pius to advance his relatives and fellow-countrymen, he never did so at the expense of the States of the Church. Francesco was a talented man who attained the Papacy himself forty years later. Pius further strengthened his position by nominating six cardinals (March 1460). He tells us it was arranged that only one of these should be a nephew, and that he refused to permit even this unless the Cardinals should supplicate him earnestly to do so.<sup>1</sup> No doubt he affected reluctance, knowing very well that he was liked by every one, that he had increased his popularity by his zeal for the Faith, and that he would get his own way. He nominated the new Archbishop

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 4.



CARDINAL PICCOLOMINI, NEPHEW OF PIUS II, IS CROWNED POPE  
AS PIUS III.

THE FAMOUS FRESCOES WERE PAINTED AT HIS COMMAND.

*Pinturicchio, Siena.*



of Siena, and also Niccolo de' Forteguerra, a relative on his mother's side, a man experienced in warfare, and therefore able to give sound military advice. Now, he thought it desirable to assert his authority, and, when the Bishops of Reati and Spoleto, excellent statesmen, and Burchard, Provost of Salzburg, were agreed to, he insisted on choosing a sixth without submitting his name. He was a man, said Pius, that they would all welcome. The Sacred College murmured, but gave way, and the Pope named Alessandro Oliva, an Augustinian, famous for his piety and learning. Five of the new Cardinals were Italians, but, to prevent the jealousy of other nations, and in conformity with precedent, the announcement of the German nomination was deferred until a new batch of Cardinals should be created.

Pius hung about his beloved Tuscan land, reviving youthful memories, and, when his gout compelled him to take the baths at Macerata and Petrioli, he revelled in the delights of the countryside. 'It was the joyous spring-time, when the valleys smile in their garment of green leafage and flowers, and the fields are luxuriant with young growing crops. . . . The Pope passed through the country with happiness in his heart, and found the baths no less delightful. The river Mersa refreshes the land, a stream full of eels, small indeed, but they are delicious eating. You enter the valley through cultivated fields, and pass many castles and villas. As one approaches the baths the scenery becomes wilder and is shut in by a massive bridge of stone and by cliffs and woods. To the right the steeps are clothed with evergreen ilex; to the left are forests of oak and ash, and round the

baths are little lodging-houses. Here the Pope stayed a month, bathing twice a day. He never neglected his duties, however, but, two hours before sunset, he was wont to go down to the meads by the river and choose the most vernal spot for receiving embassies and petitions. Thither peasant-women would come with flowers to strew along his pathway to the bath, looking for the reward of kissing his foot, which filled them with joy.'<sup>1</sup>

While he was taking these simple pleasures, Cardinal Roderigo Borgia, afterwards Pope Alexander VI., was at Siena, also enjoying himself, but in quite another way. Word came that he had been dancing, none too decently, with certain fair ladies of the city; indeed, 'no incitements of passion were wanting.'<sup>2</sup> The Pope wrote him a severe but forbearing letter, tempering his censure by a reference to Borgia's youth, though he was twenty-nine years of age. 'Beloved son,' said the Pope, 'We have learned that your Worthiness, forgetful of the high place wherein you are installed, was present, four days ago, from the sixteenth to the twenty-second hour, in the gardens of Giovanni de' Bichi, with several women-triflers of Siena. You had with you one of your colleagues, whom years, if not the dignity of his office, might have reminded of his duty. We are informed that there was dissolute dancing, wanting in none of the enticements of sense, and that you conducted yourself in a wholly worldly vein. Shame forbids the recounting of all that took place, for the very names given to these things are unworthy of your position. In order that you might have greater licence, the fathers,

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad ann.* 1480, N. 31.

brothers, and kinsmen of these young women and girls were not invited. You and a few servants organised and led the orgy. It is said that all the talk of Siena is about your folly, which makes you a general laughing-stock. Here, at the baths, where there are many churchmen as well as laymen, be sure you are sufficiently talked about. No words can express Our displeasure, for you have brought disgrace on the holy state and office. Folk will be ready to say that they make us rich and important to live blameless lives, but that we occupy ourselves in the gratification of our lusts. This is the reason why princes and rulers hold us in contempt and the peoples gibe at us. Scorn falls on the Vicar of Christ, for he would seem to permit such things. Remember, beloved son, that you are responsible as Bishop of Valencia, the most important see in Spain; you are Chancellor of the Church; nay, more, and this makes your conduct still worse, you are a cardinal, sitting with the Pope as one of his counsellors. We will leave it to your own judgement whether it befits your dignity to play the lover to girls and send fruit and wine to your mistresses and think of nothing but the flesh throughout the livelong day. Folk blame Us and the blessed memory of your uncle, Calixtus, and there are many who charge him with wrongdoing in having advanced you. If you excuse yourself on the ground of youth, We reply that you are no longer so young as to be ignorant of the duties your office imposes on you. A cardinal should be above reproach and an example to all. If that were so, we could be justly indignant when princes revile us, claim what is ours, and force us to do their will.



But we cause our own sufferings, for, by such conduct as yours, we lower the authority of the Church day by day. Our punishment is dishonour in this life and will be deserved anguish in that which is to come. Therefore, let your good sense prevail over frivolity; never again allow yourself to forget your dignity; never let people speak of you again as a frivolous gallant. If you repeat the offence, We shall be compelled to show that you have disregarded warning, that We have been much distressed, and We shall censure you in such a way that you will blush. We have always loved you and thought you deserved Our defence as an earnest, modest man. Therefore, conduct yourself from now so as to keep Our good opinion of you and Our thought of your life as well-ordered. We admonish you as a father, because your years still admit of reform. Petrioli, June 11, 1460.<sup>1</sup> Borgia was a man with blinking eyes,<sup>2</sup> but of good manners, considerable ability, and irresistible attraction for women. The admonition of the Pope had no effect. In this very year all men knew Vanozza de Cataneis to be his mistress, and he did not take priest's orders during Pius's lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

But the scandal caused by Borgia was a comparatively small vexation. The Pope was troubled by serious news from Rome. He had left Nicholas of Cusa in charge there, and Cusa had appointed a Vicar-General who was a weak man. Rome, like other Italian cities, was full of factions, and the Republican party was powerful and energetic. Another party held treasonable correspondence with Anjou and

<sup>1</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad ann.* 1460, N. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Sigismondo de' Conti, ii. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. v. p. 262.

Piccinino. Two bands of lawless youths murdered, robbed, and raped at will, and the authorities did nothing, hoping the disorders would force the Pope to return; for the Papal presence made a great difference to the prosperity of the city. Pius sent a military force to support the magistrates, and told them it was their duty to preserve order; obedience would bring him back, but not turbulence; if they thought to force him they were vastly mistaken.<sup>1</sup> The disorders did not diminish. One band of aristocratic ruffians carried off a girl on her way to be married. Another band fortified themselves in the Pantheon; others took and occupied Capranica's palace, and only left the city at the humble request of the authorities that it might please them to do so. They were accompanied to the gates by a guard of honour. Others sacked convents and violated the nuns.<sup>2</sup> At last Pius felt obliged to return to Rome, and his journey was hastened by news that Piccinino had invaded the Papal States and, aided by some of the barons of the Campagna, was marching on the city itself. Further, a conspiracy to take the life of the Pope's nephew, Antonio, and capture the city was discovered.

Pius was ill; nothing was ready for the journey, but he started at once, though Piccinino was threatening Rome and many cardinals were against taking the risk. At Viterbo, a Roman deputation met him and entreated him to pardon the turbulent youth of the city. 'What town is so free as yours?' he replied. 'You pay no taxes; you bear no burdens; you occupy

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 4.

the most honourable communal positions; you fix your own prices; you get good rents. And who is your ruler? Is he a count, a marquis, a duke, a king, an emperor? Nay, but the greatest among them all, the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ, one whose very feet all men desire to kiss. You show but wisdom when you do reverence to such a ruler; your prosperity comes through him, for he attracts wealth from the whole world to your city. You supply the Roman Curia, too, and it brings you wealth from every country.'<sup>1</sup> An escort of five hundred horse, sent by Sforza, came to guard the Pope. Outside Rome, a deputation, followed by many of the revolutionaries, met him. They wanted to carry his litter, and discovered him eating a humble meal, procured with some difficulty; he was seated by a well, enjoying it with quiet content. Cardinals and attendants prayed him to act with caution. 'I will walk on the asp and basilisk,' he replied, 'and trample on the lion and basilisk.' He meant what he said; he also loved to produce an effect.

Hardly had he entered Rome when fresh conspiracies were hatched. Some of the conspirators were captured. One Tiburzio, the nephew of Porcaro, the republican conspirator of a previous generation, believed his brother to be among the prisoners, and, accompanied by a small band, rushed into the city to release him. He shouted to the mob to arm themselves, but was seized, and, with some other offenders, executed. Pius refused to allow them to be tortured.

But Piccinino still threatened Rome, aided by some of the barons, and Sforza and Ferrante were luke-

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 4.

warm friends to the Pope, for both were annoyed with him for strengthening the Papal States by the acquisition of Terracina. The Italian States had discovered how the principle of a balance of powers can maintain comparative peace, and each was anxious not to let any neighbour grow too strong. Sigismondo Malatesta, too, was giving trouble, and Pius could not raise troops, for he was little more than nominal overlord of the Papal States, and the best troops came from his unsettled fiefs that were held by Malatesta and other petty despots of Romagna. But, as usual, the real protection of the Papacy lay in the dissensions that existed among its foes. At last Piccinino went into winter quarters.

By the beginning of next year (1461) things looked more hopeful. Rome was quiet and many of the Neapolitan barons were going over to Ferrante, while the Genoese, aided by Sforza, drove the French out of their city. The Pope's nephew, Antonio, commanded the Papal forces, but he did not prove a very competent general. This is shown by the Pope's letters, though they are filled with love and solicitude.<sup>1</sup> Pius arranged a marriage between Antonio and Maria, the illegitimate daughter of Ferrante, who was to bring the Duchy of Amalfi as a dowry. He entrusted the arrangement to a legate.<sup>2</sup> When this was brought against him by the French as an objectionable and crafty policy, he defended the scheme by the curious remark that Antonio liked the maid and he had left the pair perfectly free. Such an apology

<sup>1</sup> See Ratti, *Studi e documenti della Società Storica Lombardia*, 1903, Ep. 15, 16, 20, 41.

<sup>2</sup> Ratti, *loc. cit.*, letter 20 (May 17, 1461).

was far from common in an age when marriages among folk of importance were determined by any motive but that of mutual affection. Here, again, it would seem as if the Pope were not quite at ease with his own conscience. Such meticulous scruples strike a very modern note; but it can hardly be questioned that Pius at least *mentioned* mutual willingness as a condition of the bargain.

The latest Roman peace did not last long. The palaces of the cardinals had to be fortified and filled with troops.<sup>1</sup> In July, the Savelli came into Rome. They had taken the Angevin side, but peace was granted to them on the terms they chose to ask, for they were connected with the most powerful clan in Rome—the Colonna.<sup>2</sup> Pius ordered strong fortifications to be built at once, to command the city and repel the foe. The Milanese ambassador wrote: 'The Sicilian vespers will be repeated here,' and Pius said to Caretto that 'the mere theft of an ox set all the people in an uproar.'<sup>3</sup> The Pope was ill, and Rome was by no means a very safe place; so, in June 1462, when the summer heats had begun, he moved on to Tivoli, while the work of fortification was being pushed on with.

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 5; Cugnoni, J., *Pii II. op. ined.*, Romae, 1863, p. 209 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Pastor, *loc. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 115.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PAPACY AND FOREIGN POWERS

THE Neapolitan struggle, and the attitude taken by France and Germany towards the Papacy meant the postponing, perhaps the abandoning, of a crusade.

We have seen that at Bourges, in 1438, a 'Pragmatic Sanction' was declared, which Pius defines as 'a rescript of the ruler, a supreme sanction of affairs.' A 'pragmatic rescript,' according to St. Augustine, overrides an imperial mandate. This French Pragmatic Sanction was entirely hateful to the Papacy, for it acknowledged the Council of Basel and demanded that a General Council should assemble every ten years; it denied the Pope annates and firstfruits; neither he nor the Curia was to enjoy reservations and expectancies, and thus the revenues of Rome were seriously curtailed. Though the Sanction attempted very moderate reform in the French Church, such as punishing a priest who kept a concubine with three months' suspension, it was entirely hateful to Rome, not only on account of its recognition of the conciliar principle, but also because it founded a national Church, an *imperium in imperio*, in opposition to the theory of the universal Church, and placed French ecclesiastics under lay jurisdiction. In practice it transferred power from

the Roman Ecclesiastical Government to the king and his nobles, for they filled up benefices, or, oftener, kept them vacant to enjoy the revenues; they lowered the standard of qualification required for priesthood, subjected churchmen to the civil magistracy, referred questions of faith to the judgement of the French Parliament, and practically annulled all Papal authority.<sup>1</sup> But most Frenchmen supported their national Church, since the University of Paris held the gift of one-third of the benefices. Moreover, the Sanction flattered the growing national feeling. A third and very important reason why Frenchmen supported it was that gold no longer flowed out of the country to Rome. But many French clergy were bitterly opposed to the Pragmatic Sanction.

The Sanction had the strong support of King Charles VII. But he died, July 22, 1461, and the dauphin, Louis, who succeeded him, had been on very bad terms with his father. Louis XI. was a refugee in Burgundy when news was brought him of the death of Charles, and he resolved to be friendly with the Papacy, since he dreaded that his accession to the crown might be contested.

When he found himself firmly established, his first care was to curtail the power of the nobles and increase his own importance and authority. But he was also anxious to support the Angevin claim to Naples. The personal government of France by the Crown was his ideal, and the way to it was smoothed by the weakening of the French nobility owing to the Anglo-French wars. He knew that he would have the support of the masses that groaned under the

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 6.

## THE PAPACY AND FOREIGN POWERS 299

oppressions of feudalism, but he determined to stop the evolution of anything like a constitution. He refused requests made in favour of the Parliament and University. 'By the pain of God,' he said, 'I will do nothing of the kind. You are evil folk, and live scandalous lives, and you breed scoffers. Away with you, you are not such as I would mix with.'<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that Pius believed in government by a strong, central power, and he was ready to support Louis's designs against his nobility. He negotiated with him through Jean Jouffroy, Bishop of Arras, 'a man of eloquent discourse and great projects; a schemer, but not tenacious; very lustful of gain, one who never took up anything out of which he could not gain something for himself.'<sup>2</sup> Pius had afterwards to suffer for trusting this clerical diplomatist. The Pope also wrote an autograph letter to Louis, in which he said, 'if your prelates or the University want anything from Us, let them ask it through you, for We, of all Popes, will be first in honouring and loving your race and nation, nor will We oppose your requests if they are consistent with honour.'<sup>3</sup> This was consummate diplomacy. Pius's object was to purchase the annulment of the Pragmatic Sanction by seconding Louis's attempts to exalt the throne. If the King made the Church subservient to himself, little harm could ensue so long as he remained subservient to the Pope. But directly he failed to do so, or his rule over the clergy

<sup>1</sup> Chastellain, *Œuvres Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 1864, iv. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *Du Clercq*, quoted by Pastor, Eng. trans., vol. iii. p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Pius II., *Ep. ad Ludov. Reg. Fr.*, Oct. 26, 1461.



became obnoxious, the Papacy could annul its sanction, and the Church in France, helpless, since the Pragmatic Sanction would be annulled, would find its deliverer in the Pope.

On his side Louis wanted two things—a voice in the Curia, and the withdrawal of Papal support from Ferrante. In November he rescinded the Pragmatic Sanction. Pius was unable to keep back tears of joy. He was proud of his diplomacy, too, and wrote to Gregorio Lolli, his secretary at Siena, saying it was ‘long since a Sienese had won such a victory.’ And, not without much opposition from his cardinals, he conferred cardinals’ hats on the Bishop of Arras and Prince Louis D’Albret, to please the French King. For political reasons, Don Jayme de Cardona, a relative of the King of Aragon, and Francesco Gonzaga, a lad of seventeen, belonging to the house ruling at Mantua, also received the purple, as did Bartolomeo Rovarella, Bishop of Ravenna, as the reward of much official work for the Curia, and Jacopo Ammanati, the Pope’s dear friend. Louis said he was really pleased, ‘for he had obtained two cardinals from one litter.’

The mind of the Pope was bent on the help that the French King could give in a crusade, and he sent him a consecrated sword on which were engraved Latin verses of his own composition to this effect: ‘Draw me forth, Louis, with your right hand against the furious Turk. I will avenge the blood of the Greeks. The empire of Mohammed will fall, and the far-famed valour of the French will rise to the stars when you shall lead.’

But Pius did not know King Louis. The monarch

was playing for the recognition of the Angevins; his revocation of the Pragmatic Sanction was nothing but a trick; he was by no means anxious for a crusade. When he found that Pius would not acknowledge the House of Anjou he turned against him. Jouffroy, too, had got what he wanted, and, directly he took his seat among the Cardinals, he informed the Pope that the Pragmatic Sanction was only repealed in name: all would be in abeyance until the King's wish in regard to Naples was complied with.<sup>1</sup>

Pius was greatly troubled. Above all things he desired peace in Europe, for without it a crusade were impossible. Ferrante had no money, the Pope but little, and they depended on mercenary troops. Florence and Venice wished to see the Pope weakened, as did his ally, Sforza. Savoy, Montferrat and Modena were against Sforza, because he was their neighbour. Sigismondo Malatesta of Rimini was in revolt, and other rulers in the Papal States were ready to cast off their allegiance. And Sforza lay ill in Milan, and the city was disaffected. The German Princes and Bohemia were hostile to the Papacy. Burgundy and Spain followed the leadership of France, and a council was threatened on all sides. The Pope doubted whether it would not be wise to declare neutrality in the Neapolitan question, and he consulted Caretto, Sforza's envoy in Rome.<sup>2</sup> Caretto told him that his master would not abandon Ferrante, and advised the Pope to gain time by saying smooth things to the French envoys; for Venice would never consent to French predominance if it became imminent,

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. pp. 142, 143.

and Louis would never undertake a long, perilous expedition. But, if the Pope gave way, the French would dominate all Italy, and the next Pope would be a Frenchman. The French cardinals were only eager for their own personal reasons, yet the situation was too grave for any zeal for a crusade to be allowed to interfere. Jouffroy, on the other side, also tried to influence the Pope and Curia. Pius was in a state of absolute fear, but he resolved to stand by Ferrante, and put on a bold face, though Louis promised to send 40,000 horse and 30,000 men for a crusade if the Pope would come over to him, 'speaking,' says Pius, 'with great swelling words and patent guile.'<sup>1</sup> Riverio, a Milanese envoy, says that 'his Holiness replied with so much gentle dignity, so sonorously, and with such persuasive words, that the entire public consistory remained dumb. He was, indeed, so eloquent that there was perfect silence as if nobody at all was in the hall.'<sup>2</sup> Pius pretended that he could not believe the King could possibly change his mind and forgo his pledged word.

Private negotiations followed. France sent menaces, but Pius remained firm. Louis replied angrily and sent ignorant, blustering envoys that knew no language but their own. He called on the Pope to confirm a favourite of his in a benefice, and told him he had better do so, as if he refused, he, Louis, would see that his man kept it. The Pope refused, and asked Louis if he would suffer an address after this style: 'Give me this castle of your own free-will; if you deny

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Riverius; Pastor, *Hist. of the Papacy*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. p. 150, note 1.

me I will take it.'<sup>1</sup> He was emboldened to make a firm stand because he had private information that Louis was not prepared to follow up his bluster with deeds. The craft of the French King was measureless, but he was timid at heart, like Filippo Maria Visconti of Milan. He allowed the working of the Pragmatic Sanction to continue so far as it strengthened his own hand and enabled him to replace the anarchical government of territorial lords by the autocracy of the crown. But he had received a check through the quiet persistency of the Papacy that awaited events to choose its own time and give effect to its theocratic demands.

The Neapolitan war and the attempts of Piccinino to seize Papal territory for himself gave the insubordinate, unruly feudatories of the Pope an opportunity to take up arms against him. The people of Romagna were a turbulent breed of men; very small states were controlled by despots, who exercised cruel and vindictive authority, because they were weak and insecure. Among the worst of these tyrants was Sigismondo Malatesta. He now reoccupied places of which he had been deprived at the Mantuan Congress, and entered into a league with Piccinino. In December 1460, Pius was obliged to excommunicate him and declare that he had forfeited his fee; whereupon Malatesta was anxious to know whether excommunication deprived wine of its flavour or interfered with the pleasures of the table. He scoffed at the Pope and filled up the holy-water basins with ink. Pius

<sup>1</sup> Cugnoni, J., *Æneae Sylvii Piccolomini Senensis, Pii II., opera inedita*, Romae, 1883, pp. 144, 145.

ordered that his portrait should be painted and copies hung up throughout the states of the Church<sup>1</sup> (probably upside down, for that was the custom of the times), with an inscription: 'This is Sigismondo Malatesta, the enemy of God and man, condemned to fire by the Sacred College.' After exhibition the portraits were solemnly burned.<sup>2</sup> 'He was of a noble family,' says the Pope, 'born out of wedlock. He was robust both of body and mind, eloquent, with a knowledge of artistic matters as well as of warfare, and not a little learned in history and philosophy. In whatever he took up his great natural gifts were manifest; but he delighted in doing evil; he oppressed the poor and robbed the rich, and did not even spare widows and orphans. No one lived safely under his rule. . . . He hated priests, and believed that the mind perishes with the body. Yet he built a noble church at Rimini in honour of St. Francis, but it is so filled with art of a pagan character as to seem less fitted for Christian worship than for the adoration of the heathen gods.' This is precisely the judgement of our own age on the beautiful yet anything but Christian dream of Leon Battista Alberti; and it is remarkable to find Pius making a remark so in accordance with modern feeling in the century when a vital classical revival dwelt side by side with Catholicism without clash or arousing the slightest sense of incongruity. 'There,' continues the Pope, 'he built a tomb for himself and his concubine, beautiful alike in execution and the quality of the marble; and, after the heathen fashion, he dedicated it to the

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. iv. p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 7.

divine Isotta.' The fiercer side of this typical tyrant of the Renaissance is well exhibited by his answer to one of his subject who prayed for peace, and pointed out to Malatesta that he was destroying what was his own country by rapine. The despot replied with a cheery air, as if he were giving pleasure to others as well as to himself, 'Never shall you have peace so long as I am alive.' It would seem that Pius, the born writer, who was never so happy as when employing his fluent pen, wrote epigrams on Malatesta; for the despot sent a letter to the Duke of Milan: 'I am informed that His Holiness has composed certain verses casting ignominy on me, and has sent them to Florence to be circulated. Therefore I have resolved to act according to the maxim, "Do honour to thine enemy." It is my pleasure to inform His Illustrious Holiness, as my overlord, that he may rest assured I will not brook such things, albeit His Holiness is my lord and I his vicar and servant. When such things are spread abroad I will answer, so far as I can put out my full powers. If the pen offends me, I shall retaliate by the pen: let the sword be drawn and I will defend myself to the death, for, however insignificant a person I may be, trust me, I shall remember what has been said, "A brave death ennobles a whole life."'<sup>1</sup> Malatesta fought like 'a furious bear,' says Pius, but the Pope persisted in his efforts to subjugate him, though Sforza desired all available forces to be directed against the Angevins.<sup>2</sup> So determined was Pius to bring his own states under discipline that when, in 1463, a French embassy proposed a truce in

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. Appendix, No. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 119.

Naples, it fell through because he would not include Malatesta in it. The despot invaded the lands of the Pope's nephew, Antonio, but, at last his power was broken, at Senigaglia, by his neighbour and rival, the Condottiere-ruler, Federigo of Urbino. Florence, Milan, and Venice, unwilling to see the Papacy too strong, intervened on his behalf, and Pius pardoned him. He had to humble himself before the Pope, but remained ready to rebel if Papal promises were not kept. Pius allowed him and his brother to retain a much-reduced territory, and insisted on an annual tribute (1463).

It was a relief to Pius to forget all about these troubles beneath the shade of a tree or in the presence of a landscape viewed from 'a merciful height,' or listening to the murmur of a brook and that soft music of the woods to which silence itself seems unpeaceful, or watching the deft pen of his secretaries as he dictated to them and indulged in what was the least repressible of all his impulses—his passion for authorship. And, on August 18, 1463, an event happened which relieved him of much anxiety and set him free for the execution of his great project. Ferrante of Naples won a decisive victory over Piccinino at Troja; and, as Genoa had ejected the French from their city, many Neapolitan barons that had fought for the Angevins forsook their colours and made terms for themselves, though they remained ready to give Ferrante trouble on every occasion and prevent him from acquiring too much power. The Pope in the course of his description of these events throws a valuable light on the character of warfare and Italy and the mercenary captains in the fifteenth century.

## THE PAPACY AND FOREIGN POWERS 307

After Troja, Alessandro Sforza, a condottiere, offered battle to Piccinino, but the latter declined to fight. Piccinino, however, visited Sforza in his camp and asked his brother condottiere what he could possibly gain by conquering him. By breaking the peace of Italy he, Piccinino, had done Sforza a great service, for he had given him occupation and the spoils that come of warfare; no one is anxious for peace, except priests and traders; did he, or any other soldier, want to lose his importance and go back to the plough? What is a soldier out of employment to do? Now, if war goes on there is a chance of winning dukedoms, like Francesco Sforza; therefore it would be to their mutual interest to keep the war going as long as possible. Sforza told him that his fear about war coming to an end was quite uncalled for—that would never happen until Italy should be under one rule, and that event was far enough off. Piccinino replied that he had fought for the French for pay, he had changed sides for pay, and he was ready to change sides again if it were made worth his while.<sup>1</sup>

Germany gave the Pope much concern throughout his Pontificate. All the Teutonic powers—cities and princes alike—were at war with each other. Pius tried to mediate, but met with little success. In the depth of winter 1459 he sent Cardinal Bessarion to see what he could do, though that worthy Greek was sixty-five years of age. Pius tells that though Bessarion repeated the commands of Christ, and pointed out how the Turk was profiting by the weakness of their land, his exhortations were listened

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 10.



to as if they had been idle tales.<sup>1</sup> Bessarion asked repeatedly to be recalled, but Pius refused, first urging him to bear all things with brotherly love, and then—this was Pius's favourite maxim—if two courses, both evil, were before him, to choose the one that he deemed likely to do least harm.<sup>2</sup> Pius's large experience of life had taught him that doing what is right almost invariably carries a wrong with it, and that the path of duty is not always plain. Bessarion still entreated to be allowed to return, and Pius rebuked him somewhat more sternly. He wrote: 'If others leave the plough, it is not fitting for us to do so. Evil men are often turned from their course by those who persevere in doing what is right: sometimes bad hearts are changed. . . . If you left you would give the advantage to our foes. . . . We should appear to be feeble and vacillating, for We have often declared We would surrender the work of the Diet with Our life only.'<sup>3</sup> The Diet referred to was one held at Nürnberg after the Congress of Mantua. At last Bessarion proved that his mission was hopeless, and he returned, to his relief, from 'a barbarous land where no one cared for Latin and Greek.'

One reason why the Germans would not listen to Bessarion was that he was perpetually advocating a Turkish war, and the Chronicle of Spires tells us 'they had too many quarrels among themselves to want another with the Turk.'<sup>4</sup>

It was customary in Germany to fill important sees with warlike ecclesiastics. These were chosen from

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. p. 168, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> Mailáth, *Geschichte der Magyaren*, 3. Band, App. 143 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. p. 168.

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## THE PAPACY AND FOREIGN POWERS 309

powerful families that, none the less, only preserved their position by the exhibition of military qualities. Such a man of the sword was Diether, elected to the Archbishopric of Mainz. The new prelate was a strong partisan, but he was uneducated, and Pius ordered him to appear personally before him for confirmation. Diether refused, and appealed to a future council. Pius excommunicated him; but he defied the Pope and continued to fulfil his office. Heimburg at once gave him trenchant support, and a long war of words was waged, until, ultimately, Adolf of Nassau, for personal reasons, took up the Pope's cause, captured the city of Mainz, and set it on fire. George Podiebrad, who was intriguing to depose Frederick the Emperor and take his place, aided by some German princes, supported Diether, but there were many Teutonic rulers who stood by Pope and Emperor. Belonging to the league against the Two Swords was Duke Sigismund of the Tyrol, for he was incensed against the Papacy owing to his quarrel with Cusa the Papal legate. Sigismund had tried violent means against Cusa, and, in consequence, was excommunicated. The excommunication, however, was not effective, for the Duke was supported by his subjects. It was evident that Papal authority was no longer respected among the peoples beyond the Alps, as of yore: schisms and councils and the rising national sentiment of the northern peoples had undermined ancient theories concerning the unity, under Pope and Emperor, of all Catholic peoples. But Pius, with the traditional persistency of the Papacy in never abating one jot of its high claim, summoned Sigismund to appear before him in person. The Duke appealed

to his father-in-law, the King of Scotland, and other rulers, and was ably backed by Heimburg, the most incisive debater and most powerful pamphleteer of his time. Heimburg drew up an appeal to a future Pope and council, and care was taken that copies should be sent to Italy and nailed up to the church doors. Cusa had chosen to attack Sigismund's character, and Heimburg retaliated by recalling the Pope's sayings and doings at Basel. Pius was restrained by his dignity from replying directly, though it must have galled so ready a writer to withhold his pen, but he so far surrendered his judgement to his temper as to issue a futile order to the magistrates of Germany. He directed them to seize Heimburg and his goods, and couched the bull in the vigorous language so freely used by the mediæval Papacy; among other opprobrious epithets he called Heimburg that 'child of the devil.' The only effect was to give his enemy another and better excuse for virulent personal attack. After defining the principle of an appeal to a council not yet in existence, and showing that an appeal quite analogous to such an one is quite lawful to a Pope, not yet elected, during a vacancy in the Chair of St. Peter, Heimburg proceeded to charge the Pope, falsely, with getting money under the specious pretence that it was for the Turkish war, and sending it to Ferrante. Pius shudders, he proceeds, at a perfectly legitimate congress as if it were of bastard birth, yet the Pope is a favourer of bastards and is fond of them (Ferrante was a bastard). This Pope is a greater chatterer than a magpie. He is an ignoramus about law, for he has never smelt at it, whether of the civil or canon kind, whereas he, Heimburg, knows what he is talking

about, for he, at least, has not neglected his legal studies, nor can he be persuaded into the Pope's delusion that everything can be glossed over by rhetorical artifice.<sup>1</sup>

Teodoro de' Lolli, one of the Papal secretaries, replied to Heimburg in a letter which is not less remarkable for coarse vituperation than was Heimburg's reply to it. The sturdy German speaks of the secretary as the Pope's stalking-horse, content to receive blows if he can get a cardinal's hat in payment; the Pope and Curia are so many leeches. All the Pope cares for is leisured ease, and to spend money on his buildings at Corsignano. All allegiance to the Pope should be thrown off.

It is evident that Heimburg took the same unsympathetic view of Pius's character that the painstaking biographer, Professor George Voigt, has done; he could see nothing in him but a 'wily Italian' and a 'shifty adventurer.' Pius could afford to ignore the personal attack, but the challenge to Papal authority must be met. He pronounced the greater excommunication against Sigismund and Heimburg, and classed them with pirates, Saracens, and Wicklyfites. Thereupon the Princes summoned a Diet to meet at Frankfort, and Frederick wrote to Pius, 'See how defiant the factions have become; they presume to dictate to us. It is of the highest importance that we should unite to oppose their designs.'<sup>2</sup> The Emperor forbade the Diet, and the citizens of Frankfort shut their gates on the Princes when they rode up. Meanwhile, in perfect secrecy, envoys were set

<sup>1</sup> See Voigt, Georg, *Enea Silvio*, iii. pp. 303-421.

<sup>2</sup> Birk, *Archiv. für Oesterr. Gesch.*, xi. 158-160.

to work to detach this and that prince from the League—no difficult matter, for, as Nicholas of Cusa said, the Holy Roman Empire was suffering from mortal disease. Ultimately, in the Emperor's hour of direst need, when he was at the point of surrendering to his brother, Albert of Austria, he was extricated from the toils set by his enemies. George Podiebrad, King of Bohemia, found it convenient to take Frederick's side. He marched his army to release his liege lord from the forces that invested Vienna. Diether, at a sacrifice of territory to his opponents, got his numerous debts paid and came to seek Papal absolution on his knees, and, through the Emperor's intercession, Sigismund was absolved. But Heimburg remained under the ban.

The turbulent rulers of Europe resembled the base mob of Rome in this respect: they could neither endure the Papal yoke nor do without it. The divinely appointed Pope legitimated the European princes by acknowledging them, and gave them no little support against the pretensions of rivals. Moreover, strange mutterings of new doctrines were heard. For, even in the fifteenth century, there were remarkable theories afloat, and discontent gave birth to marvellous inventions.

The Bohemian question remained, and gave grave anxiety to the Papacy. George Podiebrad, by uniting the moderates, had rendered Bohemia the strongest power in transalpine Europe. He had got out of coming to Mantua by urging the unsettled state of his kingdom. But, directly he had succeeded in inducing Pius to quell the murmurs of rebellious

Breslau, he solemnly accepted the doctrines of the Bohemian Church, in order to bind the Calixtines, who were in a majority, to him, though, by so doing, he could not fail to alienate his Catholic and German subjects and incur the opposition of both Emperor and Pope. Pius retorted by threatening both to annul the truce he had secured from Breslau and to effect a coalition against Bohemia.<sup>1</sup> George became alarmed, and sent envoys to Rome (March 1462) offering his obedience. Pius replied that he required that of the kingdom as well as that of the King. Thereupon Wenzel Korada, the type of the blustering, militant dissenter of the fifteenth century, demanded a recognition of the compacts. Pius replied in a brilliant speech that took him two hours to deliver. He endeavoured to prove that heresy in Bohemia had destroyed its prosperity, that the compacts had never been formally recognised, and that they were inconsistent with genuine Catholic reunion. Yet, he would consult with his Curia out of respect for the King. No one knew the difficulties of rule in Bohemia so well as Pius, and he must have been fully aware of the enormous obstacles Podiebrad had surmounted, as well as the delicate statesmanship that still lay before him. But the claims of Rome must be maintained, in the interests of the Papacy, for the sake of the undivided Church, to the realisation of the great vision of a Commonwealth of Christian peoples, and for a theological reason which he gave in a few days when he again received the Bohemian envoys. At this audience, he finally refused their request. There was danger, he said, of spilling the

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. p. 223, 224.

precious Blood of Our Lord if the cup were entrusted to the laity, and they might rest satisfied that the entire Body of the Saviour was in every part of the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>1</sup> After this announcement, he invited the envoys to a private audience in the garden of the Vatican. They asked him to send an envoy to Bohemia, and he acceded, naming one Fantino de Valle, a Catholic indeed, but Podiebrad's proctor at Rome.

Podiebrad's sole object in dallying with the Papacy was to gain time. He had listened to a certain Antoine Marini, a Frenchman, who was going about Europe proposing a coalition between Bohemia, Burgundy, France, Hungary, Poland, and Venice to start the Turkish war and strike at Papal prestige and authority by keeping Pius from sharing in the exploit. These powers could call a General Council to depose Pius and settle the disputes of Europe.<sup>2</sup> Louis of France also inclined his ear to the proposal, but only to frighten Pius into doing his bidding.

It happened that Podiebrad had not been pleased with Fantino's conduct as his proctor at Rome. When Fantino came into the King's presence he found him livid with rage; he was glared at, and it seemed as if the King would like to strike him down. When the envoy spoke, Podiebrad interrupted him again and again. But Fantino was a courageous Dalmatian, one not easily daunted by regal displeasure. He first renounced his proctorship, and then, as the Pope's envoy, suspended all supporters of the com-

<sup>1</sup> Mansi, *Pii II. Orationes*, ii. 93-100.

<sup>2</sup> Markgraf, *Hist. Zeitschr.*, xxi. 245 *et seq.*; Voigt, *loc. cit.*, iii. 487 *et seq.*

pacts and warned the King that he was incurring grave peril. George retained self-command with difficulty. Turning to the Bohemian nobles, 'My Lords,' said he, 'you have elected me of your own free-will, and you must stand by me.' He left the Council Chamber inveighing against the Papacy and saying that the union of Christian people was the true Church, and not the Roman hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> He ordered Fantino to be cast into prison, but, finding that his Catholic subjects refused their support, he set him free, though he was ungenerous enough to refuse the envoy his horse or allow his servants to accompany him.<sup>2</sup> Then, perceiving that his conduct was causing grave opposition among his Catholic subjects, Podiebrad wrote to the Pope as his 'obedient son.' He tried all the wiles of that statecraft of which he was past-master to get the compacts recognised. This Pius was resolutely determined not to do. He tried to force Podiebrad's hand by releasing Breslau from the truce; but Frederick, whom the Bohemian King had just released from his perilous position at Vienna, entreated Pius to deal gently with his preserver. The Pope was too consummate a statesman not to perceive the unwisdom of trying for a premature triumph when he knew it must come in time, and he acceded to Frederick's request. 'It was an ancient and abiding principle with Rome,' says Pastor, the Catholic historian, 'to neglect nothing but to hurry nothing.' And, on June 6, 1464, directly Pius had got his crusading project accepted by the Powers,

<sup>1</sup> *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte Böhmens*: 'Fontes rerum Austriacarum.' Abtheil. xx. 272 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. p. 236.



he cited the Bohemian King to appear personally before him, within a reasonable but fixed time, at Rome.

So strong was the opposition against the Papacy in Northern Europe, that, in 1463, when there was a quarrel between the burghers of Liège and their bishop, and the Pope supported the latter, the University of Köln issued an appeal to a better instructed Pope. Pius enlarged the retractation, written when he was Bishop of Trieste, into the Bull *In minoribus agentibus*. He conceals the fact, of which, perhaps, he was barely conscious, that, at least in some measure, he had acted at Basel and Vienna as a professional writer working up a case for his employers, and that his own advancement in life was no small spur to these exhibitions of zeal. He certainly believed that his convictions were real, though we can see that they were not very profound nor uninfluenced by self-interest. He pleads his own cause and puts it as persuasively as is consistent with facts. Yet both the Epistle and the Bull strike a note of earnest sincerity. Speaking of the order given to the Church, and the supremacy of the successors of St. Peter, Pius says: 'If you find anything contrary to Our doctrine in Our earlier writings (for We wrote a good deal), cast it away with scorn. Follow what We teach now, believe in the old man, not in the young. Accept Pius; cast away Æneas.'<sup>1</sup>

It is curious that he ascribes his conversion to Thomas of Sarzana, who became Nicholas v., though we know from his other writings that Carvajal and Cesarini had much more to do with it.

<sup>1</sup> Fea, *Pius II., a calumn. vindic.: Bulla Retract.*

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE POPE

PIUS was always glad to escape from his Roman Court. Taking a cardinal or two and his friends with him, he would seek for health in those quiet country scenes he loved so well. But he had to carry the heavy burden of his Pontificate with him; and he never neglected his duties for a single day, except on those occasions, by no means infrequent, when he lay on a bed of torture. He had, however, some compensation for his sufferings in the rare gift of being able to discharge all care from his mind, and enjoy some brief hour of peace.

In the summer of 1461 he set out for Tivoli, for Rome was fairly quiet again, and Piccinino had retreated; but it was considered necessary that Federigo of Urbino, the Pope's condottiere, and ten squadrons of horse should escort him. He tells us how he 'enjoyed the martial splendour of the men and their steeds; for shield and breastplate and nodding crest and a forest of spears flashed in the sunlight. The young men galloped hither and thither, and wheeled their horses round; they brandished their swords, lowered their spears, and engaged in mimic fight. Federigo was pretty well read, and he asked the Pope if the great heroes of

antiquity bore the same kinds of armour as we. The Pope replied that all the arms now in use are mentioned by Homer and Virgil, as well as many that have been abandoned. Then their talk drifted on to the Trojan war, which Federigo wished to belittle, but the Pope argued that if the contest had been unimportant it would hardly have left such an imperishable record. Then this topic brought up *Asia Minor*, and they differed as to its boundaries. So the Pope, having a little leisure at Tivoli, occupied it by compiling a book to describe that region, drawing from Ptolemy, Strabo, Pliny, the two Curtii, Solinus, Pomponius, and other ancient authors.'

Pius thought it needful to defend himself for occupying leisure moments in historical work. In the introduction to his *Asia*, the work suggested by this conversation with the Duke, he says: 'There will be ill-conditioned folk who will charge Us with defrauding Christendom of Our time, and misusing it by devoting Ourselves to frivolous things. But Our reply is, read Our works before you blame them, and then do as you will. Perhaps, if elegant style does not please them, they will be glad of information. We have not cut Our duties short, but We have, indeed, robbed Our old age of rest to hand down noteworthy things to posterity, and have given to writing hours that have been stolen from sleep. But there will be those who will say We might have used Our wakefulness to better purpose. We grant that some of Our predecessors have done so; yet Our labours cannot be unproductive, for out of knowledge comes practical wisdom, and that is the guide of life.'

In truth Pius is the born writer. He cannot keep

his pen from recording all that he sees, and thinks and imagines, and he takes the same delight in words and their manipulation as a musician does in the harmonies that he creates. He added the force of graceful oratory to consummate statesmanship, and drew, from his wide personal experience, all kinds of material for wise reflection or artistic treatment. There are always those who affect to belittle the combination of gifts of such diverse nature in one personality. And, indeed, it is rare that the adaptability of the artistic temperament is found united with steadfast purpose and unbending will in the conduct of public affairs. As a statesman Pius was inflexible in his aims, but wise to bend before forces that it would have been impolitic at the moment to oppose.

It was the Pope's habit to dictate the doings of his Pontificate to his secretaries at short intervals. He desired that his memoirs should be his monument for posterity. The first book of these *Commentaries* covers his life from his birth to his accession, and it is in terse and polished Latin. Then follow eleven books, more desultory in treatment and of less finished style. He directed Campano to polish them,<sup>1</sup> for he seldom spared more than two hours at a time in the composition of what is only the first draught of a species of diary. But Campano thought it needed no improvement, and we are the happier for his judgement. All he did was to divide the work into twelve books, but he mentions the commencement of a thirteenth, which has been published by Voigt in his biography of Pius II. This fragment brings the history of the Pontificate up to the April

<sup>1</sup> Campanus, *Opera*, Ep. I. Romae, 1495.

of the year in which Pius died. Twelve books were published by Francesco Bandini de' Piccolomini, Archbishop of Siena, in the next century. He, since they are written in the third person, and were transcribed by a German cleric, one Johannes Gobellinus (who, according to wont, subscribed his name), attributed them to that person. But internal and external evidence leave no doubt that they are by Pius himself.

He crowds things great and small together, and the *Commentaries* are as full of digressions as the History of Herodotus. The Pope is so full of information, and so eager to impart it, that he no sooner has occasion to mention the name of a person or a place, than all that he knows about that person and his family, or that place and its environs, flows from his pen. He describes scenery with the power of painting in words and the sentiment of the modern writer. Nothing is without interest for him; when at Chiusi, he sets out searching for the labyrinth of Clusium mentioned by Pliny; when at Hadrian's villa, he investigates the ruins with a view to a mental reconstruction of the apartments, and the uses to which they were put. He shows himself the practised writer on every page. If he turns his own portrait to the most favourable light, so that posterity may see him at his best, he is careful to record his defects, and not Augustine or Rousseau has been more frank than Æneas Silvius in his letters, and certainly not so devoid of self-consciousness. Even his little attempts to gloss, reveal far more than they conceal. The Pope delights in recalling the pleasure he felt at the reverence that was paid to him, and

and the splendid pomp with which he was everywhere received. His work is full of a simple, childlike vanity that is delightful, and his foibles are of the kind that are often more endearing than great virtues. In reading the *Commentaries*, we often experience a similar charm to that which holds us when we sit by a cheerful fireside and listen to the outpourings of some gifted, sympathetic friend who unfolds himself without reserve or *arrière-pensée*. He will not allow his sufferings to interfere with his cheerfulness, he will not convey any shadow of his own pain to his friends. We almost forget that we are with a Pope; we are barely conscious that we are listening to a scholar, a graduate of Siena, but we are aware that a man compels our attention who has a rich nature matured by a large experience of life. We listen to a trained observer with sharp ears and eyes, whom little escapes.

There is nothing of the zealot, nothing of the saint about Pius, but he is devout. He is sensitive to the heroic side of character without losing sympathy with all that humanity thinks and feels and does. The warm heart and kindly disposition, the absence of prejudice, the natural refinement that characterise Æneas Silvius are to be found in Pius too. He remains a man open to all that may act on humanity, but he has become mellowed by age; he deems it only consonant with his priestly office to use the language of the pulpit very freely, but it is not a garb to be put on and off; it is a serious obligation. He no longer has to make his way or subdue himself to other circumstances than those associated with his high office; he has achieved and attained; he has become

earnest and takes a profounder view of life and its responsibilities than of yore, and his evening on earth is not without serenity.

He has not lost his passion for travel, or his eye, as of a painter, for all that is beautiful in nature, while he has a more catholic taste than is usual with the professional artist. Old ruins and all that recalls the past excite both his imagination and his powers of investigation, and he views current events as a thoughtful man must, who stands in the very centre of world-politics, and has been in the inmost counsels of those who have made world-history. His estimate of character is profound and unerring; he gets at the core of a man at once. He is almost with Bacon in 'taking all knowledge to be his province'—except law, and to this may be added the occult arts. He pursues etymological inquiries, he sees the importance of monuments to historical reconstruction, and in all that he tells us there is art, for he always endows the tale with grace and vivacity. But he becomes a little garrulous, a trifle vainer as Pope, and spares us not a single speech that he can get into his *Commentaries*, though, when he has to reprimand the cardinals we only know that he did so from Mansi's collection of his orations—he is careful to leave that part of the speech out. Besides the *Commentaries* and the *Asia* he wrote several Latin hymns after he became Pope. He wrote almost up to the end of his days. The last line of his *Commentaries* was dictated on the last day of the year before he died.

Pope Pius II. remained what Æneas Silvius had been—a firm friend. 'I do not make friends lightly,' he had said. 'There must be some excellent quality

## THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE POPE 323

to serve as a basis for friendship. I am somewhat proud and nice. A man must be my superior to count me among his friends. I do not now dislike a single soul to whom I have once given my love.'<sup>1</sup> But his friendship was more easily won than he thought, and of his genial, approachable nature there is ample evidence. Pulci wrote a novella about him, which he dedicated to Madonna Ippolita, daughter of the Duke of Milan, when she was Duchess of Calabria—she who, as a young girl, had harangued Pius in Latin at Mantua. 'He was indeed a most worthy and lofty minded Pope,' says Pulci, 'nor unworthy of the famous Trojan race.' Pulci's tale may not be strictly a true one, but if it is founded on no actual fact, even, it is good evidence to the Pope's approachableness and good humour. Pulci tells us of a certain man who, in his youth, had been a favourite servant of Æneas. The Pope, being at Corsignano, this domestic desired to visit him, but was perplexed as to what present he should take. He thought of a tortoise, of which he had many. But a Messer Goro, an officer of the Pope, coming to Siena, he went to consult him. 'And how goes it with that little image of a saint, Messer Enea?' he asked. 'Has he indeed become Pope? We have drunk a hundred wine cups together. I want to go and see him and remind him of the cuff that I dealt him at Fontegaia when I knocked his cap off. He stood it as if he was the sweetest sugar in the world.' Master Goro was invited to supper and a grave discussion took place as to whether peacocks with feathers on should be presented—a customary offering in Florence and Rome. But, not finding any peacocks,

<sup>1</sup> *Piè II. Opera Omnia*, Basel ed., 1654, Ep. xxii., p. 53.



wild geese were selected as the nearest thing, and their beaks cut off. Then the whilom domestic obtained a green woodpecker, under the impression it was a parrot, put it in a cage, which he got beautifully painted with the Papal arms, and left it at the artist's shop for two or three days so that everybody might admire it. And though there was a little doubt expressed, most Sieneſe believed it to be really a parrot. The bird was ſent to Corsignano, where the Pope and his court were much amused at the donor's ſimplicity. After a few days the man came himſelf, and the Pope ſaw him very willingly and kept him by his ſide for ſome little time, much to the gueſt's delight. And he recalled the memory of ſo many wine cups and ſo many buffetings and ſaid ſuch ſtupid things that there were repeated roars of laughter at the Papal Court, and the worthy man retired very happy and with the Papal benediction.

Pius would have viſited Siena oftener had he been on better terms with its government. He loved Southern Tuscany beyond any part of Italy, for the ſake of youthful memories, but he enjoyed the romance that clings to beautiful Tivoli. When he viſited the villa of the Emperor Hadrian he heaved a ſentimental ſigh there as he thought of what it had once been. He tried 'to interpret the fragments of the walls and, in imagination, to reſtore what they were.' 'Time has here defaced everything. The walls which were once adorned by tapeſtries of bright colours and gold and by embroidered hangings are now covered with ivy. Thorns and briars flouriſh where Tribunes were wont to ſit in their purple robes, and ſnakes now inhabit what was once the bower of a queen. So

passes the glory of all the things of time.'<sup>1</sup> From Tivoli, he went to Subiaco, following the romantic course of the Anio, enjoying its gleeful leapings, and taking a simple wayside meal by some fresh spring, while the peasants would fish the river and shout aloud to let the Pope know they had secured a gift for him. He visited the first house of the mighty order founded by St. Benedict at Subiaco and the convents around it that nestle in the picturesque chasm of the mountain, and then he went on to Palestrina, returning to Rome in the autumn.

Next June (1462) the Pope visited his birthplace to see what progress his buildings had made and then went to the monastery of Santo Salvatore, situated half way up the lofty Monte Amiata. He speaks with enthusiasm of 'the splendid chestnuts, and, higher up, the oaks that clothe the mountain up to the edge of the precipice,' of the wide prospect spread out below, of fields and woods and meadows and the proud works of man; he tells us how the library of the convent delighted him, and of a precious illuminated New Testament that he found there. 'Often he received missions and transacted Papal business and gave audience to ambassadors beneath some grand old chestnut or in the shadow of an olive or on the green sward by some murmuring brooklet.'<sup>2</sup>

Equally charming is his description of a visit to Monte Oliveto Maggiore, a Benedictine convent, not then adorned with its famous frescoes, but rendered, by the industry of the monks, a smiling oasis in a bare and horrid land. Happy, says he, are the monks who dwell in such a pleasant place, 'though happier are

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 8.

they who, having seen it, are free to go away.' Here he took a melancholy pleasure in searching for the tombs of his ancestors, many of whom, he found, lay buried there.

Scattered throughout the *Commentaries* are records of what the man may see who has a quick eye for natural effect, and who delights in the human form and its graceful movements. Pius watches all manifestations of life; his heart beats as he watches the struggle of oarsmen in the water-race; his ear is taken by 'the song of thrushes that fill the evergreen oaks with life.'

In May 1463 he became the guest of his former rival for the Pontificate, Cardinal D'Estouteville, who had a small palazzo at Ostia. He rambled about the remains of that ancient Roman port and was not insensitive to the desolate beauty of the landscape. But a terrible storm came on and the wind carried away the tents of his attendants, and even in the palace they trembled, fearing the roof would be blown in. So Pius was wrapped up in a blanket, but just as they were going to carry him into the open for safety the wind abated, 'as if it were unwilling to put the Pope to inconvenience,' he remarks in that spirit of dry, sly, insidious humour to which we have grown so accustomed. Not very long afterwards he made an excursion to Albano and Castel Gandolfo, the clear waters of Nemi, 'mirror of Diana,' and the summit that looks down on the broad Campagna and across it, on one side, to immortal Rome and the mountains, and, westwards, to an immemorial sea. Returning to Rome along the Appian Way he noticed the destruction of the monuments of antiquity for building

purposes, and at once issued a Bull to protect them. In May 1462 he was at Viterbo, taking the baths, and, being too crippled by gout to walk, he was carried into the pastures 'to enjoy the breeze and admire the growing green, and the flax-flowers that are like heaven for blueness and fill the beholders' hearts with joy.'

But if he delighted in the records that time has spared us, and the beauty of wood and meadow and stream that is for ever transforming itself into some fresh joy, like a true child of the Renaissance he rejoiced in all kinds of spectacular display. There is, to us, something a little childish, something a little vulgar, something a little pathetic about this side of the life of the age. On Corpus Christi Day the Pope passed from a splendid tent that had been erected for him in one of the open spaces of Viterbo, a city of 'beautiful fountains and lovely women.' He bore the Blessed Sacrament in his hands and proceeded to the old Romanesque basilica of S. Lorenzo. At different points along the route various cardinals had prepared a surprise. One of these was a dramatic representation of the Last Supper. A little farther on a dragon, accompanied by a herd of devils, came forth to attack the Pope, but St. Michael descended from the heavens and cut off the dragon's head, and the demons fell down powerless, except that they barked. A little farther on, again, two angels advanced and knelt before the Pope, singing, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, that King Pius, lord of the world, may come in.' Five kings with their warriors tried to block the way, asking who this King Pius might be; whereupon, 'the lord strong and mighty,'

choired the angels, and they and all fell before the Pope, singing hymns in his honour to a sweet accompaniment of instrumental music. Next a savage led a lion and wrestled with him; this was intended to symbolise the force of Papal authority. Then the Pope came to an array of columns whereon stood angels singing, and there before him was the Holy Sepulchre, guarded by sleeping soldiers. An angel descended, a gun was fired, the soldiers awoke and rubbed their eyes, and one that represented the Redeemer arose to heaven reciting Italian verse and telling the crowd that their salvation was achieved. Next came a representation of heaven with all its stars and angels and the Almighty Himself. And after Mass was said at S. Francesco, and the Pope had given his benediction, when the procession came out of the Cathedral, a tomb opened and Our Lady ascended to heaven, dropping Her girdle on the way, and the Son, who is also the Father, advanced to receive Her and kissed Her brow and led Her to Her throne. 'Those who beheld these marvels,' says the Pope, 'thought they had entered the glorious world above, and that, being still in the flesh, they saw their heavenly home.'<sup>1</sup>

Such was the life of Pius II., when, for a short time, he found himself unencumbered by the cares of the Church and his States. In the performance of the duties of a sovereign he was often long in coming to a decision, but, his mind once made up, he rarely vacillated; and, if there were occasions when he was afraid, he did not easily betray himself. He was not elated by power and dignity, though he enjoyed both.

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 8.

## THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE POPE 329

Often he was in agony from gout and renal colic, but he suppressed all controllable evidence of suffering, so that only the pallor of his face betrayed him. He still rose with the sun, and, after divine service, transacted the public business of the day. Then he was carried into the garden, and ate a scanty breakfast. After this he would talk for an hour with his attendants, and then be carried back to his room, and rest and pray for a while. Then he would resume business, and use what leisure remained before dinner in reading and writing. Except in winter or wet weather he always took his dinner out of doors, and then read or dictated, and this he often did in the night, for he never slept more than five or six hours. Want of exercise caused him to grow a little fleshy in his later years, but, in spite of almost constant illness, he made light of toil or thirst or hunger or physical discomfort. It was easy to gain access to him, and he was unwilling to refuse requests. Campano tells us that when a servant tried to stop the garrulity of an old man the Pope rebuked him, saying, 'You forget that I am Pope and have to live for others, not for myself'; then turning gently to the old man, he asked him to go on. He desired that people should be allowed to say what they liked concerning him. He hated luxury and was wont to say that books were his jewels. He confessed and received the Blessed Sacrament frequently. He was prone to anger, and his eyes would flash with wrath when the Church was treated disrespectfully, but he never resented personal affronts.<sup>1</sup> He had the broad judge-

<sup>1</sup> Campanus, *Vita Pii II.*; Platina, *Vita Pii II.* apud Muratori, *R. I. S.*, xxiii. para. ii.

ment and took the impersonal view that usually characterises the man of many interests and high mental cultivation. 'He was true, upright, and candid,' says Platina; 'there was no deceit or dissimulation about him.' His household expenses, according to Gregorovius, were ridiculously small—smaller than those of any other Pope<sup>1</sup>—yet, owing to the costliness of war, he was frequently in debt. And, although he was economical in small things, he would sometimes indulge in great expenses, and money seemed to go as it came.

He built palaces for the Piccolomini in Siena as well as at Corsignano, and adorned Rome with a few lovely works that bear the impress of his refined taste and still remain to give us pure delight. One day the author was taking a short cut through the labyrinthine Vatican to the Archives. His way lay through an arch bearing the name of Pius II. and adorned with beautiful *putti*. A palæographer who was with him took off his hat, and, with the unaffected simplicity of the true scholar, observed, 'I pass through that gate every day of my life, yet I cannot forbear raising my hat each time I do so: it is so beautiful a thing.' Authors, architects, painters, goldsmiths were employed by Pius, though far more sparingly than by Nicholas; for his taste was very nice; he cared for quality more than quantity, and his mind was chiefly bent on the restoration of Papal authority and on a crusade. Love of his family and the need of partisans led him to give office and extend friendship to relatives and Sieneſe, much to the disgust of other

<sup>1</sup> Gregorovius, *Sybel's Hist. Zeitschr.*, 'Das Römische Staatsarchiv,' vol. xxxvi. pp. 168-180.

## THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE POPE 331

disappointed people. His special friends, besides Ammanati and Campano, were Francesco Piccolomini, a nephew ; Erolì, Bishop of Spoleto, an erudite, upright and even austere man ; Gregorio Lolli ; Niccolò Forteguerri of Pistoja, and Giacomo di Luca.



## CHAPTER XIX

THE CARDINALS—RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND  
GOVERNMENT

PIUS had much trouble with his cardinals. Not merely were many of them opposed to a crusade, not merely did Scarampo throw contempt on the idea, but there were those of the Sacred College who were sunk in worldliness and lived heedless, scandalous lives. The Papacy was on the way to secularisation, the Pope was, almost above all things, a temporal prince, with an insubordinate, badly organised state to control and with many ill-wishers for neighbours, and the Curia began to exhibit the vices and frivolity of other worldly courts. Pius could do nothing towards the furthering of his projects without the goodwill of the Curia, and though his letter to Borgia shows his feeling on the matter, he was practically powerless to effect any real reform.

Several remarkable events took place during his Pontificate. Thomas Palæologus, despot of the Morea, a prince of handsome features and grave deportment, had broken a treaty with the Sultan, and was driven out of Greece by the enraged Mussulman. He sought an asylum in Italy, and brought the head of St. Andrew with him. The relic was at least no recent fraud, its authenticity was supported by tradition.

Pius, sceptical as he was, had no doubt of its being genuine. Here lay at his hand an opportunity of arousing enthusiasm for his Eastern project. A genuine relic of the first class had been saved by the piety of Palæologus from the impious Turk. He determined that Rome should have the glory of possessing the relic, and he proclaimed an indulgence to all that should visit Rome at its reception. But, when Palæologus arrived in Italy in May 1461, the sons of the she-wolf were riotous, and the Pope had to wait until their turbulence wore itself out. By 1462 things were fairly quiet, and he was able to organise a magnificent procession to receive the head of the Saint. The night before Palm Sunday—the appointed day—it rained heavily, and Pius tells us that he made the impromptu :—

‘Nocte pluit tota, redeunt spectacula mane.  
Divisum imperium cum Jove Caesar habet.’

‘It rains all night, the spectacles recommence to-morrow. Caesar holds divided rule with Jove.’

But Campano thought the lines might be improved if they were given a more Christian turn, and he altered them to

‘Nocte pluit tota, redierunt tempora nostra.  
Nox fuit acta hostis, lux erit ista Deus.’

‘It rains all night but our favourable season has returned. The night was hostile ; the light will be sent of God.’<sup>1</sup>

Pius’s impromptu is one of the innumerable instances we possess of how pagan forms and Christian belief lay side by side in men’s minds, during the Renaissance, with scarcely any conflict. Thus did a Pope,

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 8.

with almost childlike vanity, record the not very brilliant lines he had made, and with frank simplicity accept and tell us of his friend's reproof.

Next day, as is so often the case in the changeable Italian spring, was brilliantly fine. The sacred head was received at the Ponte Molle by the Pope and all the clergy of Rome, who filled a huge platform. Cardinal Bessarion, the aged Greek exile, took the relic in his hands, and the tears ran down his face and dropped on his long, white beard as he handed it reverently to Pius, who advanced to meet it with his clergy, bearing palms. The Pope was pallid and overcome by emotion at receiving such a precious relic. He recalled the occasion of its coming to Rome. His voice trembled as he prayed; he placed it on the altar, and then exposed it to the gaze of the populace. Then a hymn in sapphics was sung, and the procession moved along the historic Flaminian Way. The road was crowded with Italians and foreigners from beyond the Alps as far as Santa Maria del Popolo, where the relic was deposited. There the Pope passed the night. Next day it was carried to the basilica of St. Peter's. Certain portly cardinals wanted to ride on horseback, but Pius commanded them to walk. There is a dry, subacid humour in his account of 'many men brought up in luxury, who could scarcely endure riding a horse above a hundred paces, walking a couple of miles through the mire quite easily, and carrying the weight of their vestments too. Devotion enabled them to carry their burden; it was love that did it; a transport of enthusiasm will overcome all difficulties.'<sup>1</sup> On Easter Sunday the Pope exhibited

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 8.

the head again to the reverent gaze of a vast crowd, but mechanical means had to be contrived for his support when he said Mass, so crippled had he become.

It was an ancient dispute among theologians whether the Blood shed during the Passion of Our Lord ceased to be of the substance of the Godhead. A Franciscan friar, preaching at Brescia on Easter Sunday, 1462, asserted that, since It was separated from the Divine Body, It was no object of worship; but the Dominicans, rivals of the Franciscans, at once saw the opportunity of obtaining a victory, and a furious battle of words ensued. Pius strove, in vain, to suppress a strife that had become venomous, but was obliged at last to summon both sides to argue the matter before him<sup>1</sup> (Christmas, 1462). He had small interest in theological hair-splitting, and it is clear that the natural man was somewhat amused, though he tried to batter himself into the belief that the question was important. But he thoroughly enjoyed the debate. 'It was a treat,' he says, 'to follow the contention of acute and trained intellects, and to mark now this one, now that one making a point. Though they argued with a measure of self-restraint and some of the awe befitting the Papal presence, so hot did they wax and so eager for victory did they become that, though it was mid-winter and the earth hard with frost, they sweated profusely.'<sup>2</sup> When they had done Pius told them he would confer

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *Pius II.*, iii. 592; Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, English trans., vol. iii. p. 280, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 9.

with his cardinals. He found that most of these espoused the Dominican view, but he says he delayed giving a decision so as not to damp the ardour of the Franciscans for a crusade. The strife continued, however, and, just at the end of his life, the Pope was obliged to forbid any further disputation on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

Pius was chary of pronouncing censure, but in 1459 he felt compelled to issue a Bull against Reginald Peacock, former Bishop of Chichester, for heresy;<sup>1</sup> and he tried to put down certain communistic sects that had arisen out of the Franciscan movement; sects that tended, in his judgement, to subvert social order. He had no small contempt for the mischievous necromancy and astrology so much credited in his time, and he took the severe measure of imprisoning a man of Bergamo, for life, who taught that the Church was controlled by the stars.<sup>2</sup>

It was probably the happiest moment in his Pontificate when he canonised Santa Caterina of Siena. She was a Dominican, and the canonisation had been delayed, owing to Franciscan jealousy and opposition. But now it fell to the most illustrious of all the eminent sons of Siena to do justice to the noblest and ablest of her daughters and to confer a new distinction on their common city. He wrote the Bull raising her to the rank of sainthood with his own hand, June 1461. But he resolutely refused the Franciscans' prayer to canonise their candidate, Capistrano. Wonderful were the miracles said to have

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, English trans., vol. iii. p. 288, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Raynaldus, *Ad ann.* 1459.

<sup>3</sup> Pastor, *loc. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 163.



PIUS II CANONIZES ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA.  
*Pinturicchio, Siena.*

1

been done, but Pius had known him; he had seen nothing in him that indicated supernatural power, and he could find no sufficient proof of these alleged miracles; the King of Hungary entreated him to accede, but Pius remained firm. His disposition was too sceptical, his intelligence too highly trained, his experience of life too great to yield facile credence to any contemporary story that contradicted the general trend of happenings. He had learned the difficult lesson of reserving judgement. Even of Joan of Arc he says she was a wonder, who certainly restored the fallen fortunes of France; she was indubitably a modest maiden, but whether she was directed by God or man, he refuses to affirm. He thinks it possible that 'some man, wiser than the others, contrived a scheme whereby all might be induced to submit to the captaincy of a maiden who said she was heaven-directed,'<sup>1</sup> a view not so very different from the explanation, supported by our modern knowledge of the power of suggestion, that has been offered by a recent and not unsympathetic critic.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Anatole France, *Jeanne d'Arc*, 1908.



## CHAPTER XX

## PIUS AND THE CRUSADE

THE Neapolitan war and the quarrel with France, Germany, and Bohemia prevented the Pope from prosecuting his project for a crusade. He could not even support Hungary with any vigour in the noble defence she offered to the Turk; for there was war between the Emperor Frederick, who claimed the Hungarian Crown, and Corvinus, its actual possessor. Pius wrote to Bessarion, on May 2, 1461, that all he could do now was to try and make peace between the twain.<sup>1</sup> Papal authority was weakened throughout Europe, and men disbelieved in the sincerity of Pius, for his predecessor Nicholas had collected money for a Turkish war and spent it on the adornment of Rome,<sup>2</sup> while Calixtus had exhausted his resources on a war begun without due preparation.

An Eastern embassy came in strange garb, and startled, not merely Italians, but all Europe, by the incredible quantities of meat they consumed. They told the Pope, after his return from Mantua, that they were sent by the Emperor of Trapezium, the King of Mesopotamia, the King of Persia, the Prince of Georgia, and other Eastern lords to arrange for

<sup>1</sup> Mailáth, *Geschichte der Magyaren*, iii. p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Creighton, *Hist. of the Papacy*, 1878, vol. ii. p. 457.

a united attack on the Turk by Asiatic and European powers. They had come a long and perilous journey through Scythia, and then on to Rome by way of Hungary and Germany, and all the Christian nations they passed through received them with warm welcome. These envoys promised the aid of 120,000 men. But they were led by one Fra Lodovico, a rascally monk of Bologna, who only wanted to get the title of Patriarch of the East. Pius soon saw enough to make him suspicious, and only suffered the monk to depart for his companions' sake. Lodovico contrived to beguile the Venetians, and Pius ordered his arrest, but the Venetians did not like Papal interference and smuggled him out of the city.<sup>1</sup>

Queen Charlotte of Cyprus, deprived of her kingdom by a usurper who had allied himself with the Turk, came to Rome, demanding aid of the Pope, in 1461. Pius was much taken by the young queen. 'He received her with incredible kindness,' says an ambassador.<sup>2</sup> Pius says, 'She seemed to be about twenty-four years of age, was of moderate height, her eyes full of vivacity, her complexion pale but somewhat dark, and, as is usual with the Greeks, her speech was voluble and of the quality to win favour. She was dressed in the French fashion, and her bearing was dignified.'<sup>3</sup> He paid her expenses to visit her father-in-law, the Duke of Savoy, hoping that he and other princes would take up her cause and that the urgency of a crusade would be made more manifest to them; but the unfortunate lady's journeys were fruitless.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, English trans., vol. iii. pp. 253-254.

<sup>3</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

A few months after the failure of the Congress of Mantua the Pope conceived an idea that could only have sprung from an imaginative and original mind. He resolved to try and convert Mohammed II. by force of argument. He lived in an age that trusted to an illusion: men believed in the sovereignty of reasonable propositions; they gilded the pill with persuasive language. There was much to make such a plan appear feasible to Pius. In the first place, he was a devout Christian, and believed that he held a divinely appointed office. The Holy Spirit might have chosen so successful an orator as himself to the very end now set before him. The heathen Franks, like the Turks, had conquered a portion of the Roman Empire and had been converted. Leo I. was reputed to have repelled Attila and his Huns by an eloquent appeal. The Barbarian conquerors of Italy accepted the Faith. The Turks were far more tolerant to Christians than Christians to Turks. Pius was acquainted with the Koran; and he may have known that Mohammed had ordered a statement of the tenets of Christianity to be drawn up for his perusal.<sup>1</sup> Mohammed had shown signs of departing from strict Mohammedan custom.<sup>2</sup>

The letter of Pius to the Sultan was probably written at the close of the year 1461. It is a work of consummate power and close argument. The Pope begins by drawing a picture of the horrors of warfare. Then he assures the Turk that he holds him in no implacable enmity, but is a sincere well-wisher. Can

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, English trans., vol. iii. p. 256, note.

<sup>2</sup> A little later, 1479, he sent to the Venetian Senate for an artist to paint his portrait. A pen-and-ink drawing of the Sultan and his mother exists in the British Museum, London.

the Sultan dream of overcoming warlike Europe as he has done servile Asia? If he is in pursuit of fame, the easiest and best way to obtain it would be to submit to the sprinkling of a little water in baptism, and literature and the arts will preserve his glory throughout the ages. Then the Pope would recognise him as Emperor of the East, and he would bring back once more the Golden Age of antiquity, and restore the world to a new obedience. There are historical precedents for this course: so acted Clovis and Stephen and Recared and Constantine himself, whom even Rome followed in the Christian path. If the Franks followed Clovis, and Rome Constantine, shall not the Turks follow their Sultan? But this is not the least blessing that would result: there is the heavenly promise. Then the Pope unfolds Christian doctrine and gives arguments for its truth. The letter is full of passionate passages, and so conspicuously sincere that it is marvellous how the *bona fides* of its writer can ever have been doubted.<sup>1</sup> It is a masterpiece of composition and even of close logic. How Mohammed received it, we do not know, but it was widely read throughout Europe and kept the fire of enthusiasm alive for a crusade.

A year later (1462) the discovery of alum at Tolfa, near Cività Vecchia, added greatly to the Papal revenue, for the commodity had hitherto only been found in Asia. It was worked by a company, and provided the Pope with additional funds for a crusade.

So far from being guilty of the charge levied against him by Voigt and Creighton, that he lost

<sup>1</sup> Let the reader judge for himself. It is given in the Basel edition of Pius's works, *Epistle*, No. 396.

sight of the crusade for a time, in March 1462 Pius summoned six cardinals to a private conference, and told them to observe that he had been silent about the crusade since Mantua and was giving the world a false impression. He lacked, not enthusiasm, but power. In truth the subject had given him many a sleepless night. 'Our bosom swells, Our old blood boils,' he said, 'Our legates are mocked, and a Council is threatened directly We wish to impose a Turkish tithe. Cowardice is imputed to Us, and all that We do is put down to bad motives. Folk measure Us by themselves. Now, We wish to go Ourselves. The noise of Our plan will be as startling as a thunder-bolt; it will arouse all Christian peoples to fight for the faith.'<sup>1</sup>

This announcement of his intention almost stunned the cardinals. They asked time for reflection. At last they agreed that the plan was one worthy of the Vicar of Christ. Pius urged Louis to action, but that Most Christian Monarch replied that he would treat of the Neapolitan and Turkish questions together. The Pope also sent a stirring appeal to the Duke of Burgundy. That monarch was sick and remembered the Oath by the Peacock; he made great promises, which he forgot all about directly he got well. But the internal troubles of his dukedom called for much of his attention. The Pope also wrote to Venice, and got a diplomatic reply.<sup>2</sup>

Month by month passed, and the Turk was still advancing; province after province, island after island of the Eastern Mediterranean fell under his sway.

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Pastor, Hist. of the Popes*, English trans., vol. iii. p. 310.

But, in September 1463, Venice allied herself with Hungary, and Burgundy promised to aid the Pope. A Congress met at Rome. The Pope tells us that his heart filled with hope and joy,<sup>1</sup> for Ferrante was triumphant, and the rebels of the Papal States were subdued: there were no longer quite unsurmountable obstacles blocking the path. The Pope spoke to the Congress and unfolded a plan to divide the Turkish Empire among the Christian powers. His eloquence failed; he was listened to with quiet contempt. 'The Pope spoke in his usual graceful style,' wrote the Mantuan envoy.<sup>2</sup> Then, as ever since, the mutual jealousy of the powers kept them all back. The Florentine envoy, who was opposed to a crusade, asked the Pope to grant him a private interview, and pointed out that if Venice triumphed she would conquer Italy and the Holy See would become her bond-slave. He advised Pius to let Venice and the Turk weaken one another. But the Pope replied that this would be an ignoble policy, and he would have none of it; the liberty of all Europe was in peril; speculation as to a merely possible future was futile; the future must be left to itself.<sup>3</sup>

On September 23, Pius called the cardinals together in secret conclave, for he knew that the French party would oppose him, as well as those that only loved pleasure. He made a long and eloquent speech, and his voice was often broken by tears. For six years he had reigned he said, and nothing had been done. Even he, the most zealous of them all,

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 12.

<sup>2</sup> B. Marasca, quoted by Pastor, *loc. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 12.

had been silenced by troubles at home and abroad. But he had never swerved from his purpose, and now, at last, there was peace. The hour had come. ' We have only 300,000 ducats a year, and half of that is swallowed up in necessary expenses, and the war will cost more than three times that amount. But we could raise the necessary sum if only we had the confidence of Christian peoples. They charge us with living for pleasure ; we pile up wealth ; we are puffed up with pride ; we ride the sleekest mules and the handsomest palfreys ; we flaunt our rich garments, show round red cheeks, keep our hounds, waste our income on actors and parasites, and spend nothing on the faith. This charge is not baseless ; it is true of many cardinals and officials of the curia. There is too much luxury and display among us. And so people loathe us and will not heed what we say, however wise our speech may be. How can we alter this unhappy state of affairs ? How can we restore confidence ? Solely by entering on a new path. We must examine the means by which our predecessors built up authority and made the Church venerated. We must follow their course, for only so can authority be preserved. What has raised the Roman Church to her pre-eminent rule but temperance, chastity, singleness of heart, zeal, contempt for death, the spirit of the martyr ? It is not enough to preach the truth, to denounce evil and extol virtue. We must be like those who were ready to give up life for Christ. We must suffer all things even to death for the flock entrusted to Our care. The Turks are overwhelming the Christian peoples, one by one, with fire and sword. What shall We do ? Shall We send

soldiers? Where is the money to come from? Shall We urge the princes to drive out the foe? We have done so, and in vain, for Our appeal has fallen on deaf ears. Now, it is possible that if We say, "Come with Us," We may succeed. Therefore We are resolved to go bodily against the Turk and, by actual deed no less than by word, to stir up all the rulers of Christendom to do likewise. It may be, that, when they see their Pastor and Father, the Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Christ, an old man, broken and ill, setting forth to the war, it will put them to shame and they will join Us. If this plan fail, We can think of no other. We know how infirm We are, and that We shall go forth to an almost certain death. But the issue is with God. Let His will be done and We shall die happy in doing it.

'But you, Cardinals, who counselled war against the Turk, you cannot remain at home in ease. The members of the body must follow the head. What We do is of stern necessity. Fighting is not for Us. Like Moses, praying on the mountain top, while the battle waged below between Israel and Amalek, so will We on some ship's prow or some height, with the Blessed Sacrament before Us, pray the Lord to guide the battle to deliverance and victory. God does not despise the contrite heart. You will be with Us to pray with Us, save those, only, that are too old. . . . So We commend Our grey hair and infirm body to the loving mercy of God. He will keep Us, and if He ordain that We do not return He will take Us to Himself, and keep the See of Rome and the Church, His bride, from harm.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Manzi, Pii II. Orationes*, ii. 168, *et seq.*



Cusa and Carvajal were the only cardinals who appear to have been affected by the noble resolve of Pius or his moving words. 'It is the voice of an angel,' the latter exclaimed. 'I will follow, for you are leading us to heaven.' Even Erolì, Pius's friend, whom he had made a cardinal, had no confidence in the scheme: he raised objections 'to show himself cleverer than anybody else,' says Pius, with the intolerance of the enthusiast. The French cardinals were silent, and Jouffroy went home. Pius, with that self-consciousness inseparable from the mobile, sensitive literary and artistic temperament, though under the impulse of a great emotion, and bitterly disappointed that his speech had not moved their hearts, knew it to be beautiful and recorded it in his *Commentaries*, but his kindness prevented him from including a censure of the cardinals it contained.<sup>1</sup>

On October 6, a general meeting of cardinals and ambassadors took place. Everybody assented to a Crusade, except the envoys of Venice: that Republic disliked to fight under the Ensign of the Church, for she had always asserted an unusual freedom from Papal control, and she objected to the distribution of spoils according to service done.<sup>2</sup> So Pius sent Bessarion to Venice to arouse enthusiasm there, and the people responded to his eloquence; in a single day he collected an enormous sum for the war. Meanwhile, the Pope was busy trying to excite not merely the generosity of Christian men but their fear; for no one was quite sure, at that time, that

<sup>1</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Milanese envoy, quoted by Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, English trans., vol. iii. p. 328.

the Turk was only formidable so long as he was conquering, and that his incapacity to consolidate conquests would restrict his dominion to lands occupied by the feebler races of the East.

On the 22nd the Papal Bull was published. 'O ye Christians, hard of heart and unmindful,' wrote the Pope, 'ye are unworthy to die for Him that died for you. Think on your wretched brothers, groaning in slavery, living in hourly dread. If ye be men, let human feeling arouse you to aid those that are trampled underfoot. If ye be Christians, obey the command to love your neighbours as yourself. Think of the horrors committed by the Turk—picture sons torn away from their fathers, babes from their mothers' bosoms, wives dishonoured before their husbands' eyes, youths replacing cattle at the yoke. If you cannot feel for others, feel for yourselves. The same fate hangs over you. If you forsake them that lie between you and the foe, you in your turn, will be forsaken . . . If Germany will not aid Hungary, can it hope for deliverance from France? If France will not help Germany, shall Spaniards avail in the hour of need? The East has already fallen to Mohammed: the West will follow and that quickly.'<sup>1</sup> The Pope tells us very frankly how pleased he was with his own heroism, and the beautiful composition of this appeal. 'The moving style,' he says, 'the novel proposal, the readiness of the Pope to give his life for his sheep, caused many tears to be shed.'<sup>2</sup> In a certain respect he is very modern in his introspective moments. Capable of fiery enthusiasm, of martyrdom to duty, he knows when he has risen to the full height of his

<sup>1</sup> Pius II., ed. Basel, 412.

<sup>2</sup> *Pii II. Comment.*, l. 12.

calling, when posterity will applaud, when he has written well, and he enjoys the supreme moment; but there is a simplicity and frankness in his admission of it to which our age is a stranger.

The common folk of Europe listened to the Bull with enthusiasm, but rulers stood aloof. Ornaments were taken from churches and sold: the officials of the Curia gave up one-tenth of their income. Pius tried to get Sforza to take the lead, hoping that other princes would follow. To an earnest entreaty,<sup>1</sup> the Duke replied that, though he was in full sympathy, he was ill; insufficient notice had been given, and such a grave enterprise required prolonged and careful preparation.<sup>2</sup> But, in spite of disappointment, many remained full of hope. 'The Pope,' wrote the Sienese envoy (October 12), 'is indefatigable in his efforts on behalf of a crusade. His Bull on the subject has been sent to all Christian countries and will, I believe, lead many to take part in it. God has indeed sent this Pope for the salvation of his people, whose Princes have forsaken them and left them a prey to the attacks of the Turks.'<sup>3</sup>

But the only success achieved by Pius was that he had taken his place as the Head of Catholic Christendom. He resolved to take up his abode in Rome, though plague raged there. It grew more virulent, and nearly everybody fled, but he remained. He told the Sienese envoys that he was obliged to lead the Crusade because the princes were lukewarm, for if the Turk were allowed to advance as he had done of late he would conquer Europe. 'I will do what

<sup>1</sup> Given in Mansi, iii. 103.    <sup>2</sup> Pius II., *Opera Omnia*, ed. Basel, 393.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Pastor, *English trans.*, vol. iii. p. 337.

lies in my power, and God will help me.'<sup>1</sup> He wrote to the Doge of Venice urging him to join the Duke of Burgundy and himself: 'We shall be three old men, and God rejoices in Trinity. Our trinity will be added to that of Heaven, and we shall trample our foes under our feet.'<sup>2</sup> The majority of the Venetian Senate were with the Pope, but not the Head of the State. Vittor Capello told the Doge that if he did not go of his own free will he would be compelled, for the honour of the State was of more importance than the person of its chief magistrate.<sup>3</sup>

The Romans were unwilling to let the Pope leave; nearly all the cardinals remained opposed to him. Everybody in power wanted to see the matter dropped. Italian States scented danger to themselves in an increased prestige of the Papacy. All the European Powers were busy, intriguing for their own aggrandisement at the expense of each other, and everybody was afraid of his neighbours. On Good Friday, 1464, news reached Pius that René of Provence would not allow tithes to be collected for the war, and that Burgundy, in spite of his Oath by the Peacock, would not go. He tells us that he felt the news congruous with that Day of Passion. He also heard that Marini and George Podiebrad of Bohemia were actively intriguing to forestall him in the Crusade and would call a congress of the Powers to secure the peace of Europe.

The action that the Pope took was the resultant of

<sup>1</sup> Letter of L. Bentivoglianti, Rome, November 5, 1463, quoted by Pastor, *loc. cit.*, pp. 337-338.

<sup>2</sup> Malpiero, *Archiv. Stor. It.*, S. I., vii. p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Marin Sanudo, quoted by Sisimondi, *Hist. des républiques italiennes*, c. 79.

many motives. Desire for immortal fame, so dear to the man of the Renaissance, anxiety to give the lie to the widespread disbelief in his sincerity, fear of losing the prestige he had already achieved, dread of what a congress might do to the Church, but, above all, a strong sense of duty, a design to restore to the Papacy the guardianship of Catholic Christianity and of European concord, and a prescient misgiving as to the trouble the Turks would become if not expelled from Europe—all these were motives urging Pius to immediate action.

He was lying ill at Siena—so ill as to be unable to meet his cardinals.<sup>1</sup> He was compelled to go on to Petrioli to take the baths, but he returned to Rome early in May. ‘Every day that passes seems a year to him; so anxious is he to go to Ancona and take ship,’ wrote the Milanese ambassador.<sup>2</sup> Diplomats intrigued against him; his cardinals tried to dissuade him; the Burgundian envoys found the poorest preparation they had ever seen, for only two ships were ready; the Milanese envoy wrote that he believed the Pope’s absence would be taken advantage of to call a General Council;<sup>3</sup> he was so ill that Caretto wrote to Sforza that men were already guessing at who would be the next Pope; he had a fresh attack of fever, too, but Caretto told Sforza that, in spite of all, he was resolved to die rather than break his word.<sup>4</sup> Crowds of would-be warriors were filling Rome, Venice, and Ancona. Many of them returned home in disgust

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, English trans., vol. iii. p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Pastor, *loc. cit.*, 347, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Pastor, *loc. cit.*, 351, note 3.

<sup>4</sup> Otto de Caretto to Sforza, given by Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, vol. iii., Appendix, No. 62.

when they found that an indulgence was the only pay they were likely to receive. But Pius held the promise of Venice to aid him. No time was to be lost. He knew now that the project was predoomed to failure; he was suffering cruel tortures from cough and gout and stone; he must have suspected that death was not far off, but he possessed that highest kind of courage, the courage that is ready to face failure and certain death in the fulfilment of duty. He would uphold the Papal dignity, proclaim the headship of Christ's Vicar, and set an example to a reluctant world. Æneas Silvius, the 'shifty adventurer,' had at last achieved the noblest manhood. Calmly but intrepidly he prepared to do as he had promised and 'lay down his life for his sheep.'

## CHAPTER XXI

## THE JOURNEY TO ANCONA—DEATH OF PIUS

ON June 18, 1464, Pius, accompanied by a nephew, his friend Cardinal Ammanati, three bishops, and a secretary, set out for Ancona, where he expected to find the Venetian fleet awaiting him. He took boat and was rowed up the Tiber as far as possible, for his condition required a careful choice of the easiest modes of travel. Every movement gave him intense pain. The Romans thronged to see him depart, and he stood on the prow of his barge, holding a banner with the motto, 'God arises and scatters His foe,' in his left hand while, raising his right hand, he blessed the crowd. He gave orders that his state of health should be concealed. When night came, he found himself too ill to land, and slept on the barge. Next day he received the painful intelligence that little preparation had been made for the war, and that there was mutiny among the hordes of would-be crusaders at Ancona. He ordered Carvajal, one of the few cardinals who shared his enthusiasm, to go on ahead and restore order. Carvajal was now aged and infirm, but he replied, 'Father, since you think me fit to deal with this issue, I will imitate you and go, for you risk your own life for the flock. You told me to come and I am here ; you order me to go, and I am going. How can



PIUS II IS BORNE TO ANCONA.  
*Pintoricchio, Siena.*



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I refuse to Christ our Lord the few poor days that remain to me?' Pius was greatly moved at this reply, for he and Carvajal had a great affection for one another, and were in close sympathy.

On June 21, an unfortunate oarsman fell into the Tiber and was drowned. The Pope was very much agitated by the accident; tears coursed down his cheeks, and he prayed, silently, for the soul of the dead man.<sup>1</sup> At Otricoli he left the barge, and was carried the rest of the long journey in a litter. The heat was intense; the Pope had fever, and was so feeble, that it was only possible to carry him six or seven miles a day. The Crusade had aroused such enthusiasm north of the Alps that, although Pius had asked for trained men only, bearing their own arms and at their own cost, to enlist for six months, bands of needy folk, filled with crusading zeal, or lust of gain, or love of excitement, but wholly incompetent to serve as soldiery, flocked to Ancona, and were now returning. The Pope's attendants made some pretext, and contrived by drawing the curtains of the litter to spare the Pope the sight of these ragged wayfarers. At Spoleto, Ammanati fell ill, and had to be left behind. The journey across the Apennines, in the glare and heat of an Italian summer, tried the strong: it was terrible for the sick Pope, but he bore up bravely. When he reached Loreto, where, two centuries before, angelic warders had deposited the lowly cottage of Our Lady, he offered Her a golden cup and bowl. He was hopelessly ill by the time he reached Ancona. Riots were going on there, for a report had spread through Italy that the Crusade was nothing but the Pope's pretext

<sup>1</sup> Ammanati, Jacobus, Card. Papiensis, *Epist. et Comment.*, Ep. 354.

for seizing the city. The crusading visitors also were more than inclined to mutiny. Many had given up the Crusade as hopeless, and had to sell their arms to the Jews of Ancona to get sufficient means for their return journey.<sup>1</sup> Pius took up his abode in the bishop's palace, which stood on a height: there he could breathe refreshing sea breezes that beat up the hill, and look down on the harbour that Trajan had built, and on the Adriatic shimmering beyond it, and watch for the fleet.

Only six Papal ships lay in the harbour; none from Venice. Alarming news came from Dalmatia that the Turkish army was advancing on Ragusa and threatening to destroy it unless the Pope surrendered his fleet at Ancona. Pius at once sent his own body-guard to defend Ragusa, and ordered food-supplies to be forwarded. Ammanati, who had recovered and was now in Ancona, tells us that Pius asked Carvajal what should be done if the siege was commenced. 'I will take the galleys out to-night,' answered the courageous old cardinal. 'And what should prevent me from sailing with you?' asked Pius. Only his mental energy, as is so often the case with men of high-strung temperament, now sustained the breaking Pope. He was convinced that the presence of the Vicar of Christ would be an overwhelming inspiration; but Ammanati, though he afterwards reproached himself for want of faith, foresaw nothing but terrible disaster.

Day after day passed, and there were no Venetian sails to be seen from the palace-windows. The Venetians did not like the Pope to possess a fleet, and they wished the money collected for the enterprise to be

<sup>1</sup> Peruzzi, Agostino, *Storia di Ancona*, ii. 362.

sent to Hungary, where a brave and protracted resistance was being made to the Turkish troops. They had promised forty triremes: two transports arrived on August 11,<sup>1</sup> when most of the crusaders had gone home. Ammanati says this disappointment killed the Pope. Certainly, anxiety as to whether Venice would send a fleet after all told on him,<sup>2</sup> and uncontrollable dysentery soon set in.<sup>3</sup> At last a wretched little fleet was observed making for the harbour, and Cristofero Moro, the reluctant Doge, arrived. Pius, summoning all the strength that was left to him, ordered his attendants to carry him to the window, and looked down on the ships. He groaned and said, 'Up till now there was no fleet for me, and now a fleet has come, but I shall not be here.' Happily he never heard of the death of Cardinal Cusa, his old friend of so many years, which occurred at Todi, two days before his own; yet everything that happened served to increase his gloom.

Next day, August 13, the Pope received the Sacrament and said a few solemn words to his friends. At vespers on the 14th, he felt the end approaching, and after the custom of Popes, he summoned the cardinals that were at Ancona to his room. They stood round his bed-side, and he bade them farewell. The sweet, flute-like voice was low and very broken now. 'Beloved brothers,' said Pius, 'the end is drawing near. God is calling me. I die, as I have lived, in the Catholic Faith. I have kept charge, and shrunk neither from labour nor peril. What I have begun I

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, English trans., vol. iii. pp. 364, 365.

<sup>2</sup> Pastor, *loc. cit.*, p. 367, and notes 5 and 6.

<sup>3</sup> Von Reumont, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom.*, III. i. 151.

leave for you to finish. Labour for God and the Faith, for such is your obligation. Bend your minds to your duty and towards the All-Seeing Redeemer, who will render you according to your service. Keep the States of the Church from all peril. Dear brothers, as Cardinal and Pope, I have done you much wrong. I have sinned against the Almighty and against Christian love. May God forgive my shortcomings, and I ask you, too, to forgive me, now that I am about to die. Look after my kindred and my servants, so long as they shall prove worthy. . . . Farewell, my brothers. God bless you, and give you His peace.'

No eye remained dry; no one dared trust himself to speak. At last Bessarion managed to utter a few words of farewell, and asked for a last blessing. All knelt and kissed the Pope's hand, and he said, 'May the All Merciful forgive you your sins and grant you His heavenly grace!' And then, sadly and quietly, one by one, they went out of the chamber, leaving his nephew, Andrea, Ammanati, and his secretary alone with Pius. The sun was setting over the hills and clothing the sea with glory. There was silence, but the dying man broke it. He asked Ammanati to look after his nephew. 'Do you wish your body to be taken to Rome?' asked Ammanati. Tears coursed down Pius's face: he wanted to know who would see to that. 'I will,' promised Ammanati; and it seemed to please him. Again there was silence for a time, and then he beckoned to Ammanati, 'Pray for me, I am a sinner,' he whispered. A third time there was silence, but, at last, the feeble voice was heard again. 'Urge my brothers to go on with the Crusade,' said Pius, 'and do you, yourself, all in your power. Woe

be to you if you draw back from God's work.' The Cardinal was choked with tears, and could not reply, and Pius, with great difficulty, managed to pass his arm round Ammanati's neck, and said, 'Do your duty, my son, and pray to God for me.'<sup>1</sup> They had anointed him before this; and now the usual prayers for the dying were read. It seemed as if he could hear and was following them. 'At the third hour of the night,' wrote his secretary, 'it pleased God to claim the blessed spirit of Pope Pius, who is now a happy memory' (August 14, 1464).<sup>2</sup>

Next day the body was carried to the Cathedral, and the Doge made a long oration, every word of it insincere. The Crusade was at an end. Cristoforo Moro set sail for Venice immediately afterwards, and the cardinals rode off to Rome to elect a new Pope.

The viscera were buried in the Cathedral of Ancona; the body of Pius lies in the crypt of St. Peter's; his monument was transferred to St. Andrea della Valle when the Cathedral was rebuilt.

But these were his mortal remains. The flashes of his lively wit even now burst through the heavy type of yellow, ancient pages; there that kindly heart still throbs; there Æneas Silvius still lives on in genial converse with his friends.

<sup>1</sup> Ammanati, Jacobus, Card. Papiensis, *Ep.* 41-57; et cf. Campanus, *Vita Pii*, apud Muratori, *R. I. S.*, xxiii. pars ii.

<sup>2</sup> Gregorio Lolli, quoted by Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, English trans., vol. iii. Appendix, No. 64.



## INDEX

- ABELARD, 30.**  
**Adamites, 39.**  
**Adolph of Nassau, 309.**  
**Æneas Silvius. See Piccolomini, Enea Silvio.**  
**Albano, 336.**  
**Albergati, Niccolò d', Cardinal, 52, 53, 54, 55, 67, 75, 90, 158, 163.**  
**Albert, Emperor, 97, 110, 216.**  
 — of Austria, 210, 273, 312.  
 — of Bavaria, 125.  
 — of Brandenburg, 199, 210, 277.  
 — of Hapsburg, 24.  
**Alberti, E. B., 304.**  
**Albigenses, 28.**  
**Albret, Prince Louis d', 300.**  
**Alfonso of Aragon, King of Naples, 177, 183, 185, 186, 195, 196, 197, 199, 218, 219, 220, 235, 258, 268.**  
**Allemand, Louis d', Cardinal, 75, 76, 85, 101, 104, 125, 129, 151, 168, 169.**  
**Alsace, 152.**  
**Amadeo VIII., Duke of Savoy. See Felix v.**  
**Amista, Monte, 3, 325.**  
**Ammanati, Jacopo, Cardinal, 20, 280, 281, 282, 300, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357.**  
**Ancona, 47, 350, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357.**  
**Andrew, St., head of, 333 sqq.**  
**Anjou, House of, 104, 153, 236, 267, 275, 285, 286, 296, 305, 306.**  
 — Jean d', 235, 267, 277, 278, 292.  
 — Louis d', 151.  
 — Margaret d', 151, 152.  
 — René d', 267, 277, 286.  
**Annates, 72.**  
**Anspach, 172.**  
**Antonino, St., Bishop of Florence, 248.**  
**Apostilicians, 38.**  
**Aragon, 75, 104, 133, 153, 207, 300.**  
 — Cardinal of, 240.  
**Armagnacs, 152.**  
**Arnold of Brescia, 30.**  
**Arras, Congress of, 53, 55, 56, 67.**  
**Aschaffenburg, 178.**  
**Aspel, Hermann, 174.**  
**Assalbach, Thomas, 130.**  
**Assisi, 236.**  
**Astrologers, 247.**  
**Aurispa, 14.**  
**Austria, 229.**  
**Austrians, the, 98, 196, 199.**  
**Avignon, 12, 25, 44, 77, 78, 80, 82, 235, 246, 287.**  
**BANK OF ST. GEORGE, 206.**  
**Barbo, Cardinal, 237, 241.**  
**Bartholomew, Bishop of Novara, 48, 50, 67, 97, 156, 218.**  
**Basel, 18, 20, 21, 22, 44, 45, 48, 53, 55, 67, 73, 74, 77, 95, 98, 100, 114, 151, 173.**  
 — Academy, 90.  
 — Council of, 22, 40, 41 sqq., 55, 69 sqq., 75 sqq., 81, 97, 104, 162, 167, 168, 169, 170, 182, 201, 216, 217, 249, 297, 310.  
 — — constitution of the, 42, 73 sqq., 84.  
 — — history of the, 95.  
 — — scenes at the, 82.  
 — university, 218.  
**Bavaria, 98, 215.**  
**Beaufort, Henry, of Winchester, Cardinal, 57.**  
**Beccadelli, 7, 112, 143 n., 219.**  
**Bedford, Duke of, 55.**



- Belgrade, victory of, 225.  
 Beneschau, 189.  
 Benevento, 251.  
 Bentivogli, the, 260.  
 Bernard, St., Pass of, 53.  
 Bernardino, St., of Siena, 9, 10, 13, 146, 187, 202, 216.  
 Bessarion, Bishop of Nicea, afterwards Cardinal, 86, 87, 240, 243, 244, 249, 264, 271, 306, 308, 338, 346, 356.  
 Bichi, Giovanni de', 290.  
 Biondo, Flavio, 217 and *n.* 2.  
 Bisticci, Vespasiano, 35, 177.  
 Bohemia, 36, 37, 43, 44, 46, 69, 71, 97, 187, 188, 189, 196, 207, 227, 229, 257, 301, 312 *sqq.*, 314, 338.  
 Bologna, 14, 67, 159, 260.  
 Bonifacio, Straits of, 19.  
 Boniface VIII., Pope, 24.  
 Borgia, Roderigo, Cardinal (afterwards Pope Alexander VI.), 231, 243, 290 *sqq.*  
 Bourges. *See* Pragmatic Sanction.  
 Bozen, 171.  
 Braccio, 16.  
 Brandenburg, Duke of, 110.  
 Breslau, 257, 258.  
 Brück, 122.  
 Bruges, 59.  
 Brunoro, Condottiere, 268.  
 Bull, Execrabilis, 279.  
 — Ezechielis, 347 *sqq.*  
 — of Retractation, 180, 181.  
 Burohard, provost of Salesburg, 289.  
 Burckhardt, historian, 229.  
 Burgundy, 210, 301.  
  
 CACCIA, STEFANO DE, 106, 107.  
 Calais, 57.  
 Calandrini, Cardinal, 234, 239, 240, 241.  
 Calixtines, 37, 69 *sqq.*, 187, 313.  
 Calixtus III. (Alfonso de Borja), 212, 213, 214, 219, 224, 225, 226, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 240, 247, 250, 257, 291, 338.  
 Campagna, the, 20.  
 Campano, Giantonio, vi, 217, 246, 280, 281, 282, 319, 333.  
 Campisio, Giovanni, 115, 126, 142, 147, 172, 201.  
 Canterbury, 57.  
 Capistrano, Fra Giovanni, 187, 209, 210, 211, 336, 337.  
 Capranica, Cardinal (Pantagale Domenico), 16, 17, 18, 19, 45, 47, 134, 202, 233, 293.  
 Cardona, Don Jayme de, 300.  
 Caretto, Otto de, 301, 350.  
 Carinthia, 119.  
 Carvajal, Cardinal, 129, 130, 162, 177, 188, 202, 204, 224, 228, 278, 316, 346, 352, 353.  
 Castel Gondolfo, 326.  
 Castiglione, Cardinal, 224.  
 Castiglione della Pescaia, 267.  
 Castille, 153, 182.  
 Catherine of Siena, St., canonisation of, 336 *sqq.*  
 Cervantes, Cardinal, 75, 85.  
 Cesarini, Guiliano de', Cardinal, 17, 34, 36, 39, 41 *sqq.*, 69, 73, 75, 85, 87, 91, 105, 129, 146, 152, 154, 157, 316.  
 Chancellery, the Imperial, 114 *sqq.*, 148.  
 Charlemagne, 23, 24.  
 Charles VII. of France, 88, 153, 182, 205, 275, 276.  
 Charlotte, Queen of Cyprus, 339.  
 Chiemsee, Bishop of. *See* Sylvester.  
 Chiusi, 320.  
 Christian of Denmark, 205.  
 Church and State, 29 *sqq.*  
 Cività Vecchia, 341.  
 Cleves, Duke of, 161, 265.  
 College, the Sacred. *See* Curia.  
 Colonna, the, 16, 17, 18, 32, 47, 237, 251, 296.  
 — Cardinal, 241.  
 Communism, 28.  
 Compacts, the four, 71.  
 Constance, 94.  
 — Council of, 31, 73, 167.  
 Constantinople, capture of, 201, 202.  
 Corsica, 19.  
 Corsignano, 23, 254, 311, 324, 330.  
 Corvinus of Hungary, 237, 336.

- Councils, General, 29, 42. *See under*  
 Basel, Constance, etc.
- Courcelles, T. de, 85.
- Creighton, Mandell, historian, v, 63,  
 233 n. 1, 279, 341.
- Croye, Lord of, 265.
- Cugnoni, J., historian, 296 n., 303 n.
- Curia, 17, 32, 33, 47, 77, 80, 81, 84,  
 91, 163, 169, 177, 186, 194, 196,  
 209, 214, 224, 225, 227, 228, 229,  
 231, 233, 235, 238, 239, 242, 245,  
 247, 248, 250, 275, 287, 288, 289,  
 294, 297, 299, 300, 301, 304, 332.
- Cusa, Cardinal (Nicholas von Cues),  
 17, 75, 85, 106, 107, 168, 178, 199,  
 202, 205, 228, 251, 292, 309, 310,  
 312, 346, 355.
- Cypricus, Carolus, 148, 173 n. 2.
- Czechs, 36, 37.
- DENMARK.** *See* Christian.
- Diether, Archbishop of Mainz, 309,  
 312.
- Domenichi, Domenico de', 237, 238,  
 243.
- Dominicans, the, 335, 336.
- Dover, 67.
- Durham, 66.
- EDINBURGH,** 60.
- Elba, isle of, 19.
- Electors. *See* German Princes.
- England, 38, 55, 56, 57, 64, 110, 182,  
 205, 207, 276, 277.
- Erichstadt, Bishop of, 199.
- Ermland, bishopric of, 231.
- Eroli, Bishop of Spoleto, 331.
- Eryx, 100.
- Este, Borso d', 261, 262, 285.
- Estouteville, Cardinal d', Archbishop  
 of Rouen, 235 *sqq.*, 244, 326.
- Eugenius iv., Pope (Gabriello Con-  
 dularo), 18, 33, 34, 41, 45, 46,  
 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 55, 67, 72, 73,  
 75, 76, 77, 80, 81, 84, 86, 87, 91,  
 97, 101, 105, 114, 126, 129, 133,  
 134, 147, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156,  
 158, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166,  
 167, 168, 169, 170, 173, 177, 216.
- FANO, 285.
- Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of  
 Urbino, 285, 287, 306, 317, 318.
- Felix v., Antipope, 53, 54, 101 *sqq.*,  
 104, 105, 107, 113, 123, 125, 154,  
 162.
- Ferrante of Naples, 150, 235, 236, 237,  
 247, 250, 275, 277, 278, 286, 287,  
 294, 301, 306, 310.
- Ferrara, 86, 191, 205, 261, 285.
- Filelfo, Francesco, 13, 14, 283.
- Florence, 13, 15, 28, 38, 42, 47, 67,  
 75, 77, 78, 86, 87, 104, 218, 236,  
 240, 248, 249, 259, 273, 286, 301,  
 306, 323, 343.
- Council of, 86-88.
- Forteguerra, Vittoria, 3, 5.
- France, 25, 26, 38, 55, 57, 80, 102,  
 110, 133, 186, 205, 207, 235, 236,  
 243, 247, 250, 275, 276, 278, 286,  
 297, 301, 305, 314, 337, 338, 343,  
 346.
- Franciscans, the, 28, 335, 336.
- Franconia, 173.
- Frankfort, 94, 112, 148, 151, 160, 162,  
 311.
- Frederick III., Emperor, appearance  
 and character, 111; crowns Æneas  
 as poet, 112, 113; invites Æneas  
 to Vienna, 114, 116, 123, 129, 130,  
 131, 133, 151, 152, 155, 161, 162  
*sqq.*, 168, 171, 172, 175, 181, 182,  
 183, 184, 186, 187, 189; descends  
 into Italy, 190 *sqq.*; coronation and  
 marriage, 193 *sqq.*; his abasement,  
 200, 201, 202, 208, 209, 210, 211,  
 212, 213, 216, 217, 224, 225, 228,  
 237, 253, 257, 267, 277, 309, 311,  
 312, 338.
- Freund, John, 147, 148, 149, 173 n. 2.
- Fullendorf, Michael von, 121.
- GENEVA, LAKE OF,** 53.
- Genoa, 19, 206, 207, 273, 278, 306.
- Gentiluomini of Siena, 2.
- German Church, 101, 212, 225, 231.
- manners, 117 *sqq.*, 197.
- princes, 39, 86, 88, 110, 112, 136,  
 163, 181, 204, 225, 247, 301, 311.
- women, 139.

- Germany, 36, 37, 42, 46, 102, 133, 154, 155, 156, 168, 175, 178, 186, 187, 205, 207, 208, 210, 213, 214, 215, 225, 227, 233, 258, 297, 307, 338, 339, 346.
- Gers, John, 121, 147.
- Giordano, Monte, 177.
- Gloucester, Duke of, 57.
- Gobellinus, Johannes, 320.
- Gonzaga, Francesco, 300.
- Gonzaga, the, 263.
- Graz, 122.
- Greek Church, 77.
- Greeks, the, 77, 86, 87, 88, 153, 202.
- Gregorovius, historian, v, 179, 180, 243.
- 'Greys,' the, 85.
- Gualdo, 236.
- Guarini, 14.
- Guazzalotti, Andrea, vi.
- Guglio, island of, 287.
- Guinoforto, 128.
- Gürck, Bishop of, 206, 209.
- HADRIAN'S VILLA**, 320, 324.
- Hapsburg, House of, 151, 162.
- Heimburg, Gregory, 150, 161, 162, 165, 168, 199, 215, 273, 274, 277, 310, 311.
- Heinrich of Görzitz, 118.
- Henry VI., King of England, 186, 277.
- Heresies, general character of, 27, 188, 199. *See* under Adamites, Albigenses, etc.
- Hildebrand, Pope Gregory VII., 24.
- Hinderbach, John, 213, 214.
- Hohenstauffen, House of, 25.
- Holy Roman Empire, 45, 57, 164.
- Hungary, 154, 196, 201, 216, 224, 229, 266, 271, 338, 339, 343, 346, 355.
- Chancellor of, 217.
- Hunyadi, 269.
- Hüs, John, 32, 35, 42.
- Hussites, 32, 35, 69 *sqq.*, 115.
- IMOLA, GIOVANNI DA**, 14.
- Ingoldstadt, University of, 218.
- Innocent III., Pope, 25.
- Ippolito of Milan, 148, 173 n. 2.
- Isidore of Russia, 202, 243.
- Isotta da Rimini, 305.
- Italy. *See* Separate Italian States.
- condition of, in the fifteenth century, 229 *sqq.*
- JACOB**, Archbishop of Trier, 110, 112, 161, 210, 211, 212, 225.
- James I. of Scotland, 60, 61, 63.
- Jews, the, 177, 288, 354.
- Joan of Arc, 337.
- John of Bavaria, 125.
- Jouffroy, Bishop of Arras, 300, 301, 302.
- KAUTSKY**, author, 37 n. 1.
- Köln, Archbishop of, 110, 161, 225, 265.
- diocese of, 226.
- University of, 89, 106, 178, 316.
- LADISLAS**, King of Poland, 129, 154.
- son of Emperor Albert, 129, 154, 187, 189, 199, 228, 229.
- Lake of the Four Cantons, 20.
- Lateran, St. John's, 177.
- Lefranc, Martin, 106, 107.
- Leghorn, 191.
- Leo III., Pope, 23.
- Leonora of Portugal, 185, 191 *sqq.*
- Liège, 316.
- Lodi, peace of, 203.
- Lodovico, Fra, 339.
- Lollards, 27, 35, 38.
- Lolli, Gregorio de', 300, 331.
- Niccolò de', 5.
- Teodoro de', 311.
- London, 57, 58, 59, 66, 67.
- Loreto, 353.
- Louis XI., King of France, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303.
- Lübeck, 66.
- Luca, Giacomo di, 331.
- Lucca, 14, 205.
- Ludwig, Duke of Bavaria, 29, 206, 215.
- Lysura, John of, 88, 168, 169, 170.
- MACERATA**, battle of, 289.

- Mains, Archbishop of, 110, 167, 169, 225, 226, 227, 228. *See also* Diether.  
 — dioc. of, 88.  
 — diocese of, 226.
- Malatesta, Sigismondo, 272, 285, 295, 301, 303, 304, 305, 306.
- Mansi, scholar, 262.
- Mantua, 150, 205, 249, 260, 264, 268, 278, 279, 281, 284, 285.  
 — Congress of, 264 *sqq.*, 303, 308, 340, 342.
- Marasca, B., Florentine envoy, 343.
- Marche, Oliver de la, 206.
- Marini, Antoine, 314, 349.
- Mario, Monte, 192.
- Marsiglio of Padua, 29.
- Martin v., Pope, 16, 32, 33.
- Martin, Cardinal St., 125, 126.
- Masaccio, novelist, 263.
- Mayr, Martin, 226, 227, 228, 229.
- Medici, Cosimo de', 50, 259, 266, 286.
- Mersa, river, 289.
- Meusel, Dr. A., jurist, 175.
- Milan, 3, 15, 19, 47, 48, 52, 53, 75, 93, 99, 182, 184, 191, 218, 231, 236, 248, 259, 267, 286, 302, 306.
- Modena, 301.
- Mohammed II., Sultan, 206, 340, 347.
- Montferrat, 301.
- Monticuli, Niccolò, 5.
- Morals, of the Church, 103; of the fifteenth century, 135; of the Scots, 62, 63.
- Moravia, 196.
- Morea. *See* Palseologus.
- Moro, Cristoforo, Doge of Venice, 349, 355, 357.
- Münster, 161.
- NANTES, UNIVERSITY OF, 218.
- Naples, 16, 153, 185, 195, 218, 219, 236, 248, 250, 277, 278, 285, 301, 303, 306, 338.
- Necromancy, 98, 99.
- Nemi, lake of, 326.
- Neustadt, 119, 210, 233.
- Newcastle, 65.
- Niccolò, Bishop of Palermo, 157.
- Nicholas v., Pope (Tommaso Parentucelli), 53, 54, 84, 158, 159, 162, 163, 168, 174; his coronation, 176; 177, 178, 181, 186, 190, 193, 194, 195, 196, 199, 200; and the Turkish war, 201 *sqq.*, 205, 210, 274, 316, 338.
- Nicholaus of Pistna, 36.
- Nicodemus, Bishop of Freising, 48, 131.
- Nocera, 236.
- Noceto, Piero da, 20, 53, 54, 67, 68, 90, 132, 139, 146.
- Norway, 60, 205.
- Novara, 48, 106.  
 — Bishop of. *See* Bartholomew.
- Nürnberg, 66, 117, 147, 152, 154, 308.
- Nursia, 100.
- OCCAM, WILLIAM OF, 29.
- Oliveto Maggiore, Benedictine monastery, 325, 326.
- Olivia, Alessandro, 289.
- Orleans, Duke of, 183.
- Orsini, Cardinal, 237, 250.  
 — The, 16, 17, 237, 241, 251.
- Ortobello, 218.
- Ostia, 326.
- Otricoli, 353.
- PADUA, UNIVERSITY OF, 34, 48.
- Palseologus, John, Emperor, 77, 86, 88.  
 — Thomas, despot of the Morea, 265, 332.
- Palgrave of the Rhine, 110, 152, 210, 225.
- Palomar, John, of, 70.
- Panormita. *See* Beccadelli.
- Pantagale, Domenico. *See* Capranica.
- Paolo di Giovanni, vi.
- Paris, 30.  
 — University of, 298, 299.
- Passau, Bishop of, 172.
- Pastor, historian, v, 147, 173, 243.
- Pauvres de Lyon, 27.
- Pavia, 77, 78, 80.  
 — Council of, 33.
- Peacock, Oath by the, 206, 342, 349.
- Peacock, Reginald, Bishop of Chichester, 336.

Pelago, 29.  
 Perugia, 1, 17, 253, 280.  
 Pesca, 20.  
 Peter's, St., Basilica of, 199, 202.  
 Petrioli, baths of, 289, 292, 350.  
 Philip of Burgundy, 57, 205, 206, 266, 342, 343.  
 Piave, river, 122.  
 Piccinino, Jacopo, 218, 219, 247, 285, 293, 295, 303, 305, 307, 317.  
 — Niccolò, 50, 51, 86, 100, 218.  
 Picciolpassi, Francesco di, 92, 129.  
 Piccolomini, the, 2, 258, 261, 262.  
 — Andrea, 287, 356.  
 — Antonio, 287, 293, 295, 306.  
 — Caterina, 5, 253.  
 — Enea Silvio, the elder,  
 — — Æneas Silvius, afterwards Pope Pius II., parentage and birth, 2 *sqq.*; childhood, 4 *sqq.*; at the University of Siena, 6 *sqq.*; under S. Bernardino's influence, 9 *sqq.*; goes to Florence, etc., 13; teaches at Siena, 14; journeys to Basel, 18 *sqq.*; involved in conspiracy, 50 *sqq.*; enters Albergati's service, 52; journeys to Ripaille, 53; to Arras, 55; to Britain, 57 *sqq.*; his ride through England, 64 *sqq.*; returns to Basel, 67; his work at the Council, 74 *sqq.*; pleads for Pavia, 77 *sqq.*; his oratory, 79 *sqq.*; is offered a provostship, 92, 93; preaches at Basel, 93; takes office under the Council, 94; is sent on missions, 94; ill of plague, 98 *sqq.*; loses the provostship, 99; defends Council, 100; presented to canonry at Trent, 101; revisits Ripaille, 101; refuses to take orders, 102 *sqq.*; at Felix's election, 103; becomes Papal Secretary, 104; sent on missions, 108 *sqq.*; crowned as Poet, 112, 113; invited to Imperial Chancellery, 113; accepts, 114; his position there, 116 *sqq.*; longs for Italy, 120; courts Schlick, 121 *sqq.*; veers towards Eugenius, 129 *sqq.*; inner struggle, 140; life at Vienna, 144;

takes orders, 147, 173; revisits Siena, 158; submits to Eugenius, 159 *sqq.*; sent to Rome, 162 *sqq.*; appointed pastor, 171 *sqq.*; bishop of Trieste, 174; at Nicholas's coronation, 176 *sqq.*; at Diets, 178; his retractation, 179; at Milan, 183; at Naples, 185; made bishop of Siena, 185; at Jubilee, 185; in Bohemia, 187 *sqq.*; meets Emperor's bride, 191 *sqq.*; accompanies Frederick to Rome, 192; at his coronation, 193 *sqq.*; at Vienna, 199; speech there, 199; his view of the Turkish danger, 201 *sqq.*; his policy, 203 *sqq.*; his means, 208 *sqq.*; quits Germany, 208; literary relations with Germany, 214 *sqq.*; is made cardinal, 214; controversy with Mayr, 226 *sqq.*; activity in German affairs, 228 *sqq.*; leaves baths for Rome, 235; is elected Pope, 235 *sqq.*; is crowned, 247; urges a Turkish war, 249 *sqq.*; journeys to Mantua, 252 *sqq.*; rebuilds Corsignano, 254; presides at the Congress, 264 *sqq.*; his private friends, 279 *sqq.*; admonishes Borgia, 290; finds Rome disturbed, 294; leaves Tivoli, 296; his relations with France, 297 *sqq.*; with Malatesta, 303 *sqq.*; with Germany, 307 *sqq.*; with Bohemia, 312 *sqq.*; issues the Bull *In minoribus agentibus*, 316; his life as Pope, 317 *sqq.*; his relations with the Curia, 332; receives St. Andrew's head, 332 *sqq.*; presides at a deputation, 335; measures against heresy, 336; canonizes St. Caterina of Siena, 336; receives an Eastern embassy, 338; aids Charlotte of Cyprus, 339; writes to the Sultan, 340; enriched by a mine, 341; resolves to lead a crusade, 342 *sqq.*; journeys to Ancona, 352 *sqq.*; his death, 355 *sqq.*; his character, 56, 89, 90, 98, 99, 127 *sqq.*, 320 *sqq.*, 337; his works, 49, 91, 95, 96, 97, 105 *sqq.*, 119, 131, 134, 136, 137,

- 138, 139, 148, 163, 172, 173, 186,  
214 *sqq.*, 227, 232, 318 *sqq.*  
Piccolomini, Francesco (de' Tode-  
schini), afterwards Pope Pius III.,  
288, 331.  
— Laodamia, 5, 140, 141.  
— Silvio, 2, 5.  
Pienza. *See* Corsignano.  
Pilsen, 70.  
Piombino, 19.  
Pisa, 273.  
— Council of, 31, 73.  
Pius II. *See* Piccolomini, Enea Silvio.  
Pius III. *See* Piccolomini, Francesco.  
Plague, 98, 189.  
Platina, 95.  
Podiebrad, George, 189, 257, 278, 309,  
312 *sqq.*, 349.  
Poland, 38, 205, 252, 268, 314.  
Pontano, Ludovico, 98, 157.  
Porcaro, 294.  
Porto Venere, 19, 100.  
Portugal, 186, 205.  
Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, 88,  
183, 199, 276, 279, 298, 299, 301.  
— of Germany, 101, 199.  
Procopius of Rabstein, 169, 177.  
Pulci, novelist, 323.
- RATISBON. *See* Regentburg.  
Reati, Bishop of, 289.  
Regensburg, 205, 217.  
Renaissance, 11, 12, 13, 260, 283, 286.  
Retraction, letter of, 179, 180.  
— bull of, 180, 181.  
Riccio, 50, 51.  
Rimini, 272, 304.  
Ripsaille, 53, 54, 55.  
Riverio, 302.  
Rodocofani, 4.  
Rokycana, Archbishop of Prague, 69.  
Romagna, 303.  
Rome, 1, 10, 11, 15, 17, 26, 47, 71, 77,  
156, 160, 162, 163, 169, 173, 176,  
185, 186, 187, 189, 190, 192, 193,  
212, 213, 214, 246, 248, 249, 251,  
252, 253, 292, 293, 294, 296, 316,  
323, 326, 334, 339, 350, 357.  
Rose, the Golden, 177, 195 *n.* 1, 258.
- SALVADORE, St., monastery of, 325.  
Savelli, the, 296.  
Savoy, 103, 273, 301.  
— Duke of, 339.  
Saxony, Duke of, 110, 273.  
Scala, della, the, 48.  
Scanderbeg, 269.  
Scarampo, Cardinal, 202, 264, 332.  
Schism, the Great, 26, 73.  
— at Basel, 60, 112, 131, 155.  
Schlick, Caspar, 114; his character,  
115, 116, 117, 121, 122, 131, 138,  
145, 155, 184, 218, 266.  
— Heinrich, 125.  
Scotland, 60 *sqq.*, 65, 182, 205.  
Segobia, Juan de, 76, 85, 169.  
Serbia, 252.  
Sforza, Alessandro, 307.  
— Bianca Maria, *née* Visconti, 183,  
263.  
— Francesco, Duke of Milan, 47,  
183, 184, 191, 203, 205, 231, 236,  
259, 266, 267, 268, 271, 286, 287,  
294, 301, 305, 348, 350.  
— Galeazzo, 259.  
— Ippolyta, 262, 263, 323.  
Siena, vi, vii, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10,  
13, 14, 28, 38, 46, 51, 89, 95, 112,  
156, 161, 169, 185, 190, 191, 192,  
205, 208, 209, 218, 219, 257, 258,  
266, 287, 323, 324, 330, 348, 350.  
— council of, 33.  
Sigismund, Emperor, 15, 31, 36, 45,  
46, 71, 72, 73, 112, 115.  
— Duke of Tyrol, 116, 125, 136,  
137, 273, 274, 275, 278, 309 *sqq.*,  
312.  
Simonetta, 287.  
Sinigaglia, 285.  
Sismondi, J. C. L., historian, 46.  
Sluys, 59.  
Soest, 265.  
Soldo, Cristoforo da, 185.  
Sozzini, Mariano de', 6, 7, 49, 95, 258.  
Spaniards, the, 76, 102, 301, 347.  
Spires, Chronicle of, 308.  
Spoleto, 253, 353.  
— Bishop of, 289.  
Stein, Wilhelm von, 215.  
Strassburg, 94.

- Strood, 58.  
 Styria, 119.  
 Subiaco, 325.  
 Switzerland, 151, 152.  
 Sylvester, C., of Chiemsee, 112, 113, 131.  
  
**TABOR**, 39, 188, 189.  
 Taborites, 39, 71, 188, 189.  
 Tag, Wilhelm, 117.  
 Taranto, Archbishop of, 81.  
 Terracina, 251, 288, 295.  
 Teutonic Knights, the, 205, 251, 252.  
 Thuscon, John, 134.  
 Tiber, river, 352.  
 Tiburzio, 294.  
 Ticino, valley of the, 19.  
 Tivoli, 296, 317, 318, 324, 325.  
 Tolfa, mines at, 341.  
 Tolomei, the, 261.  
 Torcello, Biah of. *See* Domenichi.  
 Torquemada, Cardinal, 75, 237, 243, 264.  
 Torriani, the, 183.  
 Toul, Bishop of, 232.  
 Trasimeno, Lago, 254.  
 Trient, 100, 171.  
 Trier, Archbishop of. *See* Jacob.  
 Trieste, 173, 177, 178, 184.  
 Trionfo, 29.  
 Troilo, condottiere, 268.  
 Troja, battle of, 306.  
 Turks, the, 86, 97, 115, 201, 209, 212, 225, 227, 236, 238, 247, 248, 269, 271, 278, 307, 310, 314, 332, 333, 338, 340, 342, 343, 348, 350.  
 Turrecremata, 75.  
  
**UDINE**, 249.  
  
 Universities, 29, 74, 75, 90, 104, 157.  
     *See* also under Padua, Paris, etc.  
 Urbino, Duke of. *See* Federigo da Montefeltro.  
  
**VALDO, PIERRE**, 27.  
 Valla, or Vallo, Lorenzo, 143 n., 280.  
 Valle, Fantino de, 314, 315.  
 Vatican, the, 237, 330.  
 Venice, 13, 42, 75, 78, 104, 191, 205, 213, 236, 249, 268, 273, 301, 306, 314, 342, 343, 348, 350, 351, 354.  
 Verona, 48.  
 Vienna, 114, 129, 148, 158, 161, 215.  
 Visconti, the, 183.  
     — Bianca Maria. *See* Sforza.  
     — Filippo Maria, 19, 47; his character, 48 *sqq.*, 50, 51, 72, 76, 78, 99, 102, 104, 123, 182, 303.  
     — Gian Galeazzo, 3.  
 Vitelleschi, Cardinal, 47, 153.  
 Viterbo, 192, 293.  
 Voigt, G., historian, 82, 95, 141, 150, 175, 213, 311, 319, 341.  
  
**WALDENSES**, the, 38, 199.  
 Wartenburg, Nicholas, 147, 173 n. 2.  
 Weiss, A., historian, v, and various notes.  
 Wenceslaus, Emperor, 36.  
 Worcester, Earl of, 277.  
 Worms, Dean of, 226.  
  
**YORK**, 66.  
  
**ZISKA**, John, 36, 39, 188.













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