

TACITUS
A TREATISE ON THE SITUATION, MANNERS AND INHABITANTS OF
GERMANY.

Germany is separated from Gaul, Rhaetia, and Pannonia, by the rivers Rhine and Danube; from Sarmatia and Dacia, by mountains and mutual dread. The rest is surrounded by an ocean, embracing broad promontories and vast insular tracts, in which our military expeditions have lately discovered various nations and kingdoms. The Rhine, issuing from the inaccessible and precipitous summit of the Rhaetic Alps, bends gently to the west, and falls into the Northern Ocean. The Danube, poured from the easy and gently raised ridge of Mount Abnoba, visits several nations in its course, till at length it bursts out by six channels [11] into the Pontic sea; a seventh is lost in marshes.

The people of Germany appear to me indigenou, and free from inter mixture with foreigners, either as settlers or casual visitants. For the emigrants of former ages performed their expeditions not by land, but by water; and that immense, and, if I may so call it, hostile ocean, is rarely navigated by ships from our world. Then, besides the danger of a boisterous and unknown sea, who would relinquish Asia, Africa, or Italy, for Germany, a land rude in its surface, rigorous in its climate, cheerless to every beholder and cultivator, except a native? In their ancient songs, which are their only records or annals, they celebrate the god Tuisto, sprung from the earth, and his son Mannus, as the fathers and founders of their race. To Mannus they ascribe three sons, from whose names the people bordering on the ocean are called Ingaevones; those inhabiting the central parts, Herminones; the rest, Istaevones. Some, however, assuming the licence of antiquity, affirm that there were more descendants of the god, from whom more appellations were derived; as those of the Marsi, Gambrivii, Suevi, and Vandali; and that these are the genuine and original names. That of Germany, on the other hand, they assert to be a modern addition; for that the people who first crossed the Rhine, and expelled the Gauls, and are now called Tungri, were then named Germans; which appellation of a particular tribe, not of a whole people, gradually prevailed; so that the title of Germans, first assumed by the victors in order to excite terror, was afterwards adopted by the nation in general. They have likewise the tradition of a Hercules of their country, whose praises they sing before those of all other heroes as they advance to battle.

A peculiar kind of verses is also current among them, by the recital of which, termed "barding," they stimulate their courage; while the sound itself serves as an augury of the event of the impending combat. For, according to the nature of the cry proceeding from the line, terror is inspired or felt: nor does it seem so much an articulate song, as the wild chorus of valour. A harsh, piercing note, and a broken roar, are the favourite tones; which they render more full and sonorous by applying their mouths to their shields. Some conjecture that Ulysses, in the course of his long and fabulous wanderings, was driven into this ocean, and landed in Germany; and that Asciburgium, a place situated on the Rhine, and at this day inhabited, was founded by him, and named Askipurzion. They pretend that an altar was formerly discovered here, consecrated to Ulysses, with the name of his father Laertes subjoined; and that certain monuments and tombs, inscribed with Greek characters, are still extant upon the confines of Germany and Rhaetia. These allegations I shall neither attempt to confirm nor to refute: let every one believe concerning them as he is disposed.

I concur in opinion with those who deem the Germans never to have intermarried with other nations; but to be a race, pure, unmixed, and stamped with a distinct character. Hence a family likeness pervades the whole, though their numbers are so great: eyes stern and blue; ruddy hair; large bodies, powerful in sudden exertions, but impatient of toil and labour, least of all capable of sustaining thirst and heat. Cold and hunger they are accustomed by their climate and soil to endure.

The land, though varied to a considerable extent in its aspect, is yet universally shagged with forests, or deformed by marshes: moister on the side of Gaul, more bleak on the side of Norieum and Pannonia. It is productive of grain, but unkindly to fruit-trees. It abounds in flocks and herds, but in general of a small breed. Even the beef kind are destitute of their usual stateliness and dignity of head: they are, however, numerous, and form the most esteemed, and, indeed, the only species of wealth. Silver and gold the gods, I know not whether in their favour or anger, have denied to this country. Not that I would assert that no veins of these metals are generated in Germany; for who has made the search? The possession of them is not coveted by these people as it is by us. Vessels of silver are indeed to be seen among them, which have been presented to their ambassadors and chiefs; but they are held in no higher estimation than earthenware. The borderers, however, set a value on gold and silver for the purpose of commerce, and have learned to distinguish several kinds of our coin, some of which they prefer to others: the remoter inhabitants continue the more simple and ancient usage of bartering commodities. The money preferred by the Germans is the old and well-known species, such as the Serrati and Bigati. They are also better pleased with silver than gold; not on account of any fondness for that metal, but because the smaller money is more convenient in their common and petty merchandise.

Even iron is not plentiful among them; as may be inferred from the nature of their weapons. Swords or broad lances are seldom used; but they generally carry a spear, (called in their language *framea*,) which has an iron blade, short and narrow, but so sharp and manageable, that, as occasion requires, they employ it either in close or distant fighting. This spear and a shield are all the armour of the cavalry. The foot have, besides, missile weapons, several to each man, which they hurl to an immense distance. They are either naked, or lightly covered with a small mantle; and have no pride in equipage: their shields only are ornamented with the choicest colours. Few are provided with a coat of mail; and scarcely here and there one with a casque or helmet. Their horses are neither remarkable for beauty nor swiftness, nor are they taught the various evolutions practised with us. The cavalry either bear down straight forwards, or wheel once to the right, in so compact a body that none is left behind the rest. Their principal strength, on the whole, consists in their infantry: hence in an engagement these are intermixed with the cavalry; so well accordant with the nature of equestrian combats is the agility of those foot soldiers, whom they select from the whole body of their youth, and place in the front of the line. Their number, too, is determined; a hundred from each canton: and they are distinguished at home by a name expressive of this circumstance; so that what at first was only an appellation of number, becomes thenceforth a title of honour. Their line of battle is disposed in wedges. To give ground, provided they rally again, is considered rather as a prudent stratagem, than cowardice. They carry off their slain even while the battle remains undecided. The greatest disgrace that can befall them is to have abandoned their shields. A person branded with this ignominy is not permitted to join in their religious

rites, or enter their assemblies; so that many, after escaping from battle, have put an end to their infamy by the halter.

In the election of kings they have regard to birth; in that of generals, to valour. Their kings have not an absolute or unlimited power; and their generals command less through the force of authority, than of example. If they are daring, adventurous, and conspicuous in action, they procure obedience from the admiration they inspire. None, however, but the priests are permitted to judge offenders, to inflict bonds or stripes; so that chastisement appears not as an act of military discipline, but as the instigation of the god whom they suppose present with warriors. They also carry with them to battle certain images and standards taken from the sacred groves. It is a principal incentive to their courage, that their squadrons and battalions are not formed by men fortuitously collected, but by the assemblage of families and clans. Their pledges also are near at hand; they have within hearing the yells of their women, and the cries of their children. These, too, are the most revered witnesses of each man's conduct, these his most liberal applauders. To their mothers and their wives they bring their wounds for relief, nor do these dread to count or to search out the gashes. The women also administer food and encouragement to those who are fighting.

Tradition relates, that armies beginning to give way have been rallied by the females, through the earnestness of their supplications, the interposition of their bodies, and the pictures they have drawn of impending slavery, a calamity which these people bear with more impatience for their women than themselves; so that those states who have been obliged to give among their hostages the daughters of noble families, are the most effectually bound to fidelity. They even suppose somewhat of sanctity and prescience to be inherent in the female sex; and therefore neither despise their counsels, nor disregard their responses. We have beheld, in the reign of Vespasian, Veleda, long revered by many as a deity. Aurima, moreover, and several others, were formerly held in equal veneration, but not with a servile flattery, nor as though they made them goddesses.

Of the gods, Mercury is the principal object of their adoration; whom, on certain days, they think it lawful to propitiate even with human victims. To Hercules and Mars they offer the animals usually allotted for sacrifice. Some of the Suevi also perform sacred rites to Isis. What was the cause and origin of this foreign worship, I have not been able to discover; further than that her being represented with the symbol of a galley, seems to indicate an imported religion. They conceive it unworthy the grandeur of celestial beings to confine their deities within walls, or to represent them under a human similitude: woods and groves are their temples; and they affix names of divinity to that secret power, which they behold with the eye of adoration alone.

No people are more addicted to divination by omens and lots. The latter is performed in the following simple manner. They cut a twig from a fruit-tree, and divide it into small pieces, which, distinguished by certain marks, are thrown promiscuously upon a white garment. Then, the priest of the canton, if the occasion be public; if private, the master of the family; after an invocation of the gods, with his eyes lifted up to heaven, thrice takes out each piece, and, as they come up, interprets their signification according to the marks fixed upon them. If the result prove unfavourable, there is no more consultation on the same affair that day; if propitious, a confirmation by omens is still required. In common with other nations, the Germans are acquainted with the practice of auguring from the notes and flight of birds; but it is

peculiar to them to derive admonitions and presages from horses also. Certain of these animals, milk-white, and untouched by earthly labour, are pastured at the public expense in the sacred woods and groves. These, yoked to a consecrated chariot, are accompanied by the priest, and king, or chief person of the community, who attentively observe their manner of neighing and snorting; and no kind of augury is more credited, not only among the populace, but among the nobles and priests. For the latter consider themselves as the ministers of the gods, and the horses, as privy to the divine will. Another kind of divination, by which they explore the event of momentous wars, is to oblige a prisoner, taken by any means whatsoever from the nation with whom they are at variance, to fight with a picked man of their own, each with his own country's arms; and, according as the victory falls, they presage success to the one or to the other party.

On affairs of smaller moment, the chiefs consult; on those of greater importance, the whole community; yet with this circumstance, that what is referred to the decision of the people, is first maturely discussed by the chiefs. They assemble, unless upon some sudden emergency, on stated days, either at the new or full moon, which they account the most auspicious season for beginning any enterprise. Nor do they, in their computation of time, reckon, like us, by the number of days, but of nights. In this way they arrange their business; in this way they fix their appointments; so that, with them, the night seems to lead the day. An inconvenience produced by their liberty is, that they do not all assemble at a stated time, as if it were in obedience to a command; but two or three days are lost in the delays of convening. When they all think fit, they sit down armed. Silence is proclaimed by the priests, who have on this occasion a coercive power. Then the king, or chief, and such others as are conspicuous for age, birth, military renown, or eloquence, are heard; and gain attention rather from their ability to persuade, than their authority to command. If a proposal displease, the assembly reject it by an inarticulate murmur; if it prove agreeable, they clash their javelins; for the most honourable expression of assent among them is the sound of arms.

Before this council, it is likewise allowed to exhibit accusations, and to prosecute capital offences. Punishments are varied according to the nature of the crime. Traitors and deserters are hung upon trees: cowards, dastards, and those guilty of unnatural practices, are suffocated in mud under a hurdle. This difference of punishment has in view the principle, that villainy should be exposed while it is punished, but turpitude concealed. The penalties annexed to slighter offences are also proportioned to the delinquency. The convicts are fined in horses and cattle: part of the mulct goes to the king or state; part to the injured person, or his relations. In the same assemblies chiefs are also elected, to administer justice through the cantons and districts. A hundred companions, chosen from the people, attended upon each of them, to assist them as well with their advice as their authority.

The Germans transact no business, public or private, without being armed: but it is not customary for any person to assume arms till the state has approved his ability to use them. Then, in the midst of the assembly, either one of the chiefs, or the father, or a relation, equips the youth with a shield and javelin. These are to them the manly gown; this is the first honour conferred on youth: before this they are considered as part of a household; afterwards, of the state. The dignity of chieftain is bestowed even on mere lads, whose descent is eminently illustrious, or whose fathers have performed signal services to the public; they are associated, however, with those of mature strength, who have already been declared capable of service; nor do they blush to be

seen in the rank of companions. For the state of companionship itself has its several degrees, determined by the judgement of him whom they follow; and there is a great emulation among the companions, which shall possess the highest place in the favour of their chief; and among the chiefs, which shall excel in the number and valour of his companions. It is their dignity, their strength, to be always surrounded with a large body of select youth, an ornament in peace, a bulwark in war. And not in his own country alone, but among the neighbouring states, the fame and glory of each chief consists in being distinguished for the number and bravery of his companions. Such chiefs are courted by embassies; distinguished by presents; and often by their reputation alone decide a war.

In the field of battle, it is disgraceful for the chief to be surpassed in valour; it is disgraceful for the companions not to equal their chief; but it is reproach and infamy during a whole succeeding life to retreat from the field surviving him. To aid, to protect him; to place their own gallant actions to the account of his glory, is their first and most sacred engagement. The chiefs fight for victory; the companions for their chief. If their native country be long sunk in peace and inaction, many of the young nobles repair to some other state then engaged in war. For, besides that repose is unwelcome to their race, and toils and perils afford them a better opportunity of distinguishing themselves; they are unable, without war and violence, to maintain a large train of followers. The companion requires from the liberality of his chief, the warlike steed, the bloody and conquering spear: and in place of pay, he expects to be supplied with a table, homely indeed, but plentiful. The funds for this munificence must be found in war and rapine; nor are they so easily persuaded to cultivate the earth, and await the produce of the seasons, as to challenge the foe, and expose themselves to wounds; nay, they even think it base and spiritless to earn by sweat what they might purchase with blood.

During the intervals of war, they pass their time less in hunting than in a sluggish repose, divided between sleep and the table. All the bravest of the warriors, committing the care of the house, the family affairs, and the lands, to the women, old men, and weaker part of the domestics, stupefy themselves in inaction: so wonderful is the contrast presented by nature, that the same persons love indolence, and hate tranquillity! It is customary for the several states to present, by voluntary and individual contributions, cattle or grain to their chiefs; which are accepted as honorary gifts, while they serve as necessary supplies. They are peculiarly pleased with presents from neighbouring nations, offered not only by individuals, but by the community at large; such as fine horses, heavy armour, rich housings, and gold chains. We have now taught them also to accept of money.

It is well known that none of the German nations inhabit cities; or even admit of contiguous settlements. They dwell scattered and separate, as a spring, a meadow, or a grove may chance to invite them. Their villages are laid out, not like ours in rows of adjoining buildings; but every one surrounds his house with a vacant space, either by way of security against fire, or through ignorance of the art of building. For, indeed, they are unacquainted with the use of mortar and tiles; and for every purpose employ rude un-shaped timber, fashioned with no regard to pleasing the eye. They bestow more than ordinary pains in coating certain parts of their buildings with a kind of earth, so pure and shining that it gives the appearance of painting. They also dig subterranean caves, and cover them over with a great quantity of dung. These they use as winter-retreats, and granaries; for they preserve a moderate temperature; and upon an invasion, when the open country is plundered, these recesses remain un-violated,

either because the enemy is ignorant of them, or because he will not trouble himself with the search.

The clothing common to all is a sagum fastened by a clasp, or, in want of that, a thorn. With no other covering, they pass whole days on the hearth, before the fire. The more wealthy are distinguished by a vest, not flowing loose, like those of the Sarmatians and Parthians, but girt close, and exhibiting the shape of every limb. They also wear the skins of beasts, which the people near the borders are less curious in selecting or preparing than the more remote inhabitants, who cannot by commerce procure other clothing. These make choice of particular skins, which they variegate with spots, and strips of the furs of marine animals, the produce of the exterior ocean, and seas to us unknown. The dress of the women does not differ from that of the men; except that they more frequently wear linen, which they stain with purple; and do not lengthen their upper garment into sleeves, but leave exposed the whole arm, and part of the breast.

The matrimonial bond is, nevertheless, strict and severe among them; nor is there anything in their manners more commendable than this. Almost singly among the barbarians, they content themselves with one wife; a very few of them excepted, who, not through incontinence, but because their alliance is solicited on account of their rank, practise polygamy. The wife does not bring a dowry to her husband, but receives one from him. The parents and relations assemble, and pass their approbation on the presents, presents not adapted to please a female taste, or decorate the bride; but oxen, a caparisoned steed, a shield, spear, and sword. By virtue of these, the wife is espoused; and she in her turn makes a present of some arms to her husband. This they consider as the firmest bond of union; these, the sacred mysteries, the conjugal deities. That the woman may not think herself excused from exertions of fortitude, or exempt from the casualties of war, she is admonished by the very ceremonial of her marriage, that she comes to her husband as a partner in toils and dangers; to suffer and to dare equally with him, in peace and in war: this is indicated by the yoked oxen, the harnessed steed, the offered arms. Thus she is to live; thus to die. She receives what she is to return inviolate and honoured to her children; what her daughters-in-law are to receive, and again transmit to her grandchildren.

They live, therefore, fenced around with chastity; corrupted by no seductive spectacles, no convivial incitements. Men and women are alike unacquainted with clandestine correspondence. Adultery is extremely rare among so numerous a people. Its punishment is instant, and at the pleasure of the husband. He cuts off the hair of the offender, strips her, and in presence of her relations expels her from his house, and pursues her with stripes through the whole village. Nor is any indulgence shown to a prostitute. Neither beauty, youth, nor riches can procure her a husband: for none there looks on vice with a smile, or calls mutual seduction the way of the world. Still more exemplary is the practice of those states in which none but virgins marry, and the expectations and wishes of a wife are at once brought to a period. Thus, they take one husband as one body and one life; that no thought, no desire, may extend beyond him; and he may be loved not only as their husband, but as their marriage. To limit the increase of children, or put to death any of the later progeny is accounted infamous: and good habits have there more influence than good laws elsewhere.

In every house the children grow up, thinly and meanly clad, to that bulk of body and limb which we behold with wonder. Every mother suckles her own children, and does not deliver them into the hands of servants and nurses. No indulgence

distinguishes the young master from the slave. They lie together amidst the same cattle, upon the same ground, till age separates, and valour marks out, the free-born. The youths partake late of the pleasures of love, and hence pass the age of puberty unexhausted: nor are the virgins hurried into marriage; the same maturity, the same full growth is required: the sexes unite equally matched and robust; and the children inherit the vigour of their parents. Children are regarded with equal affection by their maternal uncles as by their fathers: some even consider this as the more sacred bond of consanguinity, and prefer it in the requisition of hostages, as if it held the mind by a firmer tie, and the family by a more extensive obligation. A person's own children, however, are his heirs and successors; and no wills are made. If there be no children, the next in order of inheritance are brothers, paternal and maternal uncles. The more numerous are a man's relations and kinsmen, the more comfortable is his old age; nor is it here any advantage to be childless.

It is an indispensable duty to adopt the enmities of a father or relation, as well as their friendships: these, however, are not irreconcilable or perpetual. Even homicide is atoned by a certain fine in cattle and sheep; and the whole family accepts the satisfaction, to the advantage of the public weal, since quarrels are most dangerous in a free state. No people are more addicted to social entertainments, or more liberal in the exercise of hospitality. To refuse any person whatever admittance under their roof, is accounted outrageous. Every one according to his ability feasts his guest: when his provisions are exhausted, he who was late the host, is now the guide and companion to another hospitable board. They enter the next house uninvited, and are received with equal cordiality. No one makes a distinction with respect to the rights of hospitality, between a stranger and an acquaintance. The departing guest is presented with whatever he may ask for; and with the same freedom a boon is desired in return. They are pleased with presents; but think no obligation incurred either when they give or receive.

Their manner of living with their guest is easy and affable. As soon as they arise from sleep, which they generally protract till late in the day, they bathe, usually in warm water, as cold weather chiefly prevails there. After bathing they take their meal, each on a distinct seat, and a separate table. Then they proceed, armed, to business, and not less frequently to convivial parties, in which it is no disgrace to pass days and nights, without intermission, in drinking. The frequent quarrels that arise amongst them, when intoxicated, seldom terminate in abusive language, but more frequently in blood. In their feasts, they generally deliberate on the reconciling of enemies, on family alliances, on the appointment of chiefs, and finally on peace and war; conceiving that at no time the soul is more opened to sincerity, or warmed to heroism. These people, naturally void of artifice or disguise, disclose the most secret emotions of their hearts in the freedom of festivity. The minds of all being thus displayed without reserve, the subjects of their deliberation are again canvassed the next day; and each time has its advantages. They consult when unable to dissemble; they determine when not liable to mistake.

Their drink is a liquor prepared from barley or wheat brought by fermentation to a certain resemblance of wine. Those who border on the Rhine also purchase wine. Their food is simple; wild fruits, fresh venison, or coagulated milk. They satisfy hunger without seeking the elegances and delicacies of the table. Their thirst for liquor is not quenched with equal moderation. If their propensity to drunkenness be gratified to the extent of their wishes, intemperance proves as effectual in subduing them as the force of arms.

They have only one kind of public spectacle, which is exhibited in every company. Young men, who make it their diversion, dance naked amidst drawn swords and presented spears. Practice has conferred skill at this exercise; and skill has given grace; but they do not exhibit for hire or gain: the only reward of this pastime, though a hazardous one, is the pleasure of the spectators. What is extraordinary, they play at dice, when sober, as a serious business: and that with such a desperate venture of gain or loss, that, when everything else is gone, they set their liberties and persons on the last throw. The loser goes into voluntary servitude; and, though the youngest and strongest, patiently suffers himself to be bound and sold. Such is their obstinacy in a bad practice, they themselves call it honour. The slaves thus acquired are exchanged away in commerce, that the winner may get rid of the scandal of his victory.

The rest of their slaves have not, like ours, particular employments in the family allotted them. Each is the master of a habitation and household of his own. The lord requires from him a certain quantity of grain, cattle, or cloth, as from a tenant; and so far only the subjection of the slave extends. His domestic offices are performed by his own wife and children. It is usual to scourge a slave, or punish him with chains or hard labour. They are sometimes killed by their masters; not through severity of chastisement, but in the heat of passion, like an enemy; with this difference, that it is done with impunity. Freedmen are little superior to slaves; seldom filling any important office in the family; never in the state, except in those tribes which are under regal government. There, they rise above the free-born, and even the nobles: in the rest, the subordinate condition of the freedmen is a proof of freedom.

Lending money upon interest, and increasing it by usury, is unknown amongst them: and this ignorance more effectually prevents the practice than a prohibition would do. The lands are occupied by townships, in allotments proportional to the number of cultivators; and are afterwards parcelled out among the individuals of the district, in shares according to the rank and condition of each person. The wide extent of plain facilitates this partition. The arable lands are annually changed, and a part left fallow; nor do they attempt to make the most of the fertility and plenty of the soil, by their own industry in planting orchards, enclosing meadows, and watering gardens. Corn is the only product required from the earth: hence their year is not divided into so many seasons as ours; for, while they know and distinguish by name Winter, Spring, and Summer, they are unacquainted equally with the appellation and bounty of Autumn.

Their funerals are without parade. The only circumstance to which they attend, is to burn the bodies of eminent persons with some particular kinds of wood. Neither vestments nor perfumes are heaped upon the pile: the arms of the deceased, and sometimes his horse, are given to the flames. The tomb is a mound of turf. They condemn the elaborate and costly honours of monumental structures, as mere burdens to the dead. They soon dismiss tears and lamentations; slowly, sorrow and regret. They think it the women's part to bewail their friends, the men's to remember them.

This is the sum of what I have been able to learn concerning the origin and manners of the Germans in general. I now proceed to mention those particulars in which they differ from each other; and likewise to relate what nations have migrated from Germany into Gaul. That great writer, the deified Julius, asserts that the Gauls were formerly the superior people; whence it is probable that some Gallic colonies passed over into Germany: for how small an obstacle would a river be to prevent any

nation, as it increased in strength, from occupying or changing settlements as yet lying in common, and unappropriated by the power of monarchies! Accordingly, the tract betwixt the Hercynian forest and the rivers Rhine and Mayne was possessed by the Helvetii: and that beyond, by the Boii; both Gallic tribes. The name of Boiemum still remains, a memorial of the ancient settlement, though its inhabitants are now changed. But whether the Aravisci migrated into Pannonia from the Osi, a German nation; or the Osi into Germany from the Aravisci; the language, institutions, and manners of both being still the same, is a matter of uncertainty; for, in their pristine state of equal indigence and equal liberty, the same advantages and disadvantages were common to both sides of the river. The Treveri and Nervii are ambitious of being thought of German origin; as if the reputation of this descent would distinguish them from the Gauls, whom they resemble in person and effeminacy. The Vangiones, Triboci, and Nemetes, who inhabit the bank of the Rhine, are without doubt German tribes. Nor do the Ubii, although they have been thought worthy of being made a Roman colony, and are pleased in bearing the name of Agrippinenses from their founder, blush to acknowledge their origin from Germany; from whence they formerly migrated, and for their approved fidelity were settled on the bank of the Rhine, not that they might be guarded themselves, but that they might serve as a guard against invaders.

Of all these people, the most famed for valor are the **Batavi**; whose territories comprise but a small part of the banks of the Rhine, but consist chiefly of an island within it. These were formerly a tribe of the Catti, who, on account of an intestine division, removed to their present settlements, in order to become a part of the Roman empire. They still retain this honour, together with a memorial of their ancient alliance; for they are neither insulted by taxes, nor oppressed by farmers of the revenue. Exempt from fiscal burdens and extraordinary contributions, and kept apart for military use alone, they are reserved, like a magazine of arms, for the purposes of war. The nation of the Mattiaci is under a degree of subjection of the same kind: for the greatness of the Roman people has carried a reverence for the empire beyond the Rhine and the ancient limits. The Mattiaci, therefore, though occupying a settlement and borders on the opposite side of the river, from sentiment and attachment act with us; resembling the **Batavi** in every respect, except that they are animated with a more vigorous spirit by the soil and air of their own country. I do not reckon among the people of Germany those who occupy the Decumate lands, although inhabiting between the Rhine and Danube. Some of the most fickle of the Gauls, rendered daring through indigence, seized upon this district of uncertain property. Afterwards, our boundary line being advanced, and a chain of fortified posts established, it became a skirt of the empire, and part of the Roman province.

Beyond these dwell the Catti, whose settlements, beginning from the Hercynian forest, are in a tract of country less open and marshy than those which overspread the other states of Germany; for it consists of a continued range of hills, which gradually become more scattered; and the Hercynian forest both accompanies and leaves behind, its Catti. This nation is distinguished by hardier frames, compactness of limb, fierceness of countenance, and superior vigour of mind. For Germans, they have a considerable share of understanding and sagacity; they choose able persons to command, and obey them when chosen; keep their ranks; seize opportunities; restrain impetuous motions; distribute properly the business of the day; entrench themselves against the night; account fortune dubious, and valour only certain; and, what is extremely rare, and only a consequence of discipline, depend more upon the general than the army. Their force consists entirely in infantry; who, besides their arms, are

obliged to carry tools and provisions. Other nations appear to go to a battle; the Catti, to war. Excursions and casual encounters are rare amongst them. It is, indeed, peculiar to cavalry soon to obtain, and soon to yield, the victory. Speed borders upon timidity; slow movements are more akin to steady valour.

A custom followed among the other German nations only by a few individuals, of more daring spirit than the rest, is adopted by general consent among the Catti. From the time they arrive at years of maturity they let their hair and beard grow; and do not divest themselves of this votive badge, the promise of valour, till they have slain an enemy. Over blood and spoils they unveil the countenance, and proclaim that they have at length paid the debt of existence, and have proved themselves worthy of their country and parents. The cowardly and effeminate continue in their squalid disguise. The bravest among them wear also an iron ring (a mark of ignominy in that nation) as a kind of chain, till they have released themselves by the slaughter of a foe. Many of the Catti assume this distinction, and grow hoary under the mark, conspicuous both to foes and friends. By these, in every engagement, the attack is begun: they compose the front line, presenting a new spectacle of terror. Even in peace they do not relax the sternness of their aspect. They have no house, land, or domestic cares: they are maintained by whomsoever they visit: lavish of another's property, regardless of their own; till the debility of age renders them unequal to such a rigid course of military virtue.

Next to the Catti, on the banks of the Rhine, where, now settled in its channel, it is become a sufficient boundary, dwell the Usipii and Tencteri. The latter people, in addition to the usual military reputation, are famed for the discipline of their cavalry; nor is the infantry of the Catti in higher estimation than the horse of the Tencteri. Their ancestors established it, and are imitated by posterity. Horsemanship is the sport of their children, the point of emulation of their youth, and the exercise in which they persevere to old age. Horses are bequeathed along with the domestics, the household gods, and the rights of inheritance: they do not, however, like other things, go to the eldest son, but to the bravest and most warlike.

Contiguous to the Tencteri were formerly the Bructeri; but report now says that the Chamavi and **Angrivarii**, migrating into their country, have expelled and entirely extirpated them, with the concurrence of the neighbouring nations, induced either by hatred of their arrogance, love of plunder, or the favour of the gods towards the Romans. For they even gratified us with the spectacle of a battle, in which above sixty thousand Germans were slain, not by Roman arms, but, what was still grander, by mutual hostilities, as it were for our pleasure and entertainment. May the nations retain and perpetuate, if not an affection for us, at least an animosity against each other! since, while the fate of the empire is thus urgent, fortune can bestow no higher benefit upon us, than the discord of our enemies.

Contiguous to the **Angrivarii** and Chamavi backwards lie the Dulgibini, Chasauri, and other nations less known. In front, the **Frisii** succeed; who are distinguished by the appellations of Greater and Lesser, from their proportional power. The settlements of both stretch along the border of the Rhine to the ocean; and include, besides, vast lakes, which have been navigated by Roman fleets. We have even explored the ocean itself on that side; and fame reports that columns of Hercules are still remaining on that coast; whether it be that Hercules was ever there in reality, or that whatever great and magnificent is anywhere met with is, by common consent, ascribed to his renowned name. The attempt of Drusus Germanicus to make discoveries in these

parts was sufficiently daring; but the ocean opposed any further inquiry into itself and Hercules. After a while no one renewed the attempt; and it was thought more pious and reverential to believe the actions of the gods, than to investigate them.

Hitherto we have traced the western side of Germany. It turns from thence with a vast sweep to the north: and first occurs the country of the Chauci, which, though it begins immediately from **Frisia**, and occupies part of the seashore, yet stretches so far as to border on all the nations before mentioned, till it winds round so as to meet the territories of the Catti. This immense tract is not only possessed, but filled by the Chauci; a people the noblest of the Germans, who choose to maintain their greatness by justice rather than violence. Without ambition, without ungoverned desires, quiet and retired, they provoke no wars, they are guilty of no rapine or plunder; and it is a principal proof of their power and bravery, that the superiority they possess has not been acquired by unjust means. Yet all have arms in readiness; and, if necessary, an army is soon raised: for they abound in men and horses, and maintain their military reputation even in inaction.

Bordering on the Chauci and Catti are the Cherusci; who, for want of an enemy, long cherished a too lasting and enfeebling peace: a state more flattering than secure; since the repose enjoyed amidst ambitious and powerful neighbours is treacherous; and when an appeal is made to the sword, moderation and probity are names appropriated by the victors. Thus, the Cherusci, who formerly bore the titles of just and upright, are now charged with cowardice and folly; and the good fortune of the Catti, who subdued them, has grown into wisdom. The ruin of the Cherusci involved that of the Fosi, a neighbouring tribe, equal partakers of their adversity, although they had enjoyed an inferior share of their prosperity.

In the same quarter of Germany, adjacent to the ocean, dwell the Cimbri; a small state at present, but great in renown. Of their past grandeur extensive vestiges still remain, in encampments and lines on either shore, from the compass of which the strength and numbers of the nation may still be computed, and credit derived to the account of so prodigious an army. It was in the 640th year of Rome that the arms of the Cimbri were first heard of, under the consulate of Caecilius Metellus and Papirius Carbo; from which era to the second consulate of the emperor Trajan is a period of nearly 210 years. So long has Germany withstood the arms of Rome. During this long interval many mutual wounds have been inflicted. Not the Samnite, the Carthaginian, Spain, Gaul, or Parthia, have given more frequent alarms; for the liberty of the Germans is more vigorous than the monarchy of the Arsacidae. What has the East, which has itself lost Pacorus, and suffered an overthrow from Ventidius, to boast against us, but the slaughter of Crassus? But the Germans, by the defeat or capture of Carbo, Cassius, Scaurus Aurelius, Servilius Caepio, and Cneius Manlius, deprived the Roman people of five consular armies; and afterwards took from Augustus himself Varus with three legions. Nor did Caius Marius in Italy, the deified Julius in Gaul, or Drusus, Nero, or Germanicus in their own country, defeat them without loss. The subsequent mighty threats of Caligula terminated in ridicule. Then succeeded tranquillity; till, seizing the occasion of our discords and civil wars, they forced the winter-quarters of the legions, and even aimed at the possession of Gaul; and, again expelled thence, they have in latter times been rather triumphed over than vanquished.

We have now to speak of the Suevi; who do not compose a single state, like the Catti or Tencteri, but occupy the greatest part of Germany, and are still distributed

into different names and nations, although all hearing the common appellation of Suevi. It is a characteristic of this people to turn their hair sideways, and tie it beneath the poll in a knot. By this mark the Suevi are distinguished from the rest of the Germans; and the freemen of the Suevi from the slaves. Among other nations, this mode, either on account of some relationship with the Suevi, or from the usual propensity to imitation, is sometimes adopted; but rarely, and only during the period of youth. The Suevi, even till they are hoary, continue to have their hair growing stiffly backwards, and often it is fastened on the very crown of the head. The chiefs dress it with still greater care: and in this respect they study ornament, though of a non-debasing kind. For their design is not to make love, or inspire it; they decorate themselves in this manner as they proceed to war, in order to seem taller and more terrible; and dress for the eyes of their enemies.

The Semnonese assert themselves to be the most ancient and noble of the Suevi; and their pretensions are confirmed by religion. At a stated time, all the people of the same lineage assemble by their delegates in a wood, consecrated by the auguries of their forefathers and ancient terror, and there by the public slaughter of a human victim celebrate the horrid origin of their barbarous rites. Another kind of reverence is paid to the grove. No person enters it without being bound with a chain, as an acknowledgement of his inferior nature, and the power of the deity residing there. If he accidentally fall, it is not lawful for him to be lifted or to rise up; they roll themselves out along the ground. The whole of their superstition has this import: that from this spot the nation derives its origin; that here is the residence of the Deity, the Governor of all, and that everything else is subject and subordinate to him. These opinions receive additional authority from the power of the Semnonese, who inhabit a hundred cantons, and, from the great body they compose, consider themselves as the head of the Suevi.

The Langobardi, on the other hand, are ennobled by the smallness of their numbers; since though surrounded by many powerful nations, they derive security, not from obsequiousness, but from their martial enterprise. The neighboring Reudigni, and the Avions, **Angli**, Varini, Eudoses, Suardones, and Nuithones, are defended by rivers or forests. Nothing remarkable occurs in any of these; except that they unite in the worship of Hertha, or Mother Earth; and suppose her to interfere in the affairs of men, and to visit the different nations. In an island of the ocean stands a sacred and unviolated grove, in which is a consecrated chariot, covered with a veil, which the priest alone is permitted to touch. He becomes conscious of the entrance of the goddess into this secret recess; and with profound veneration attends the vehicle, which is drawn by yoked cows. At this season, all is joy; and every place which the goddess deigns to visit is a scene of festivity. No wars are undertaken; arms are untouched; and every hostile weapon is shut up. Peace abroad and at home are then only known; then only loved; till at length the same priest re-conducts the goddess, satiated with mortal intercourse, to her temple. The chariot, with its curtain, and, if we may believe it, the goddess herself, then undergo ablution in a secret lake. This office is performed by slaves, whom the same lake instantly swallows up. Hence proceeds a mysterious horror; and a holy ignorance of what that can be, which is beheld only by those who are about to perish. This part of the Suevian nation extends to the most remote recesses of Germany.

If we now follow the course of the Danube, as we before did that of the Rhine, we first meet with the Hermunduri; a people faithful to the Romans, and on that account the only Germans who are admitted to commerce, not on the bank alone, but within

our territories, and in the flourishing colony established in the province of Rhaetia. They pass and re pass at pleasure, without being attended by a guard; and while we exhibit to other nations our arms and camps alone, to these we lay open our houses and country seats, which they behold without coveting. In the country of the Hermunduri rises the Elbe; a river formerly celebrated and known among us, now only heard of by name.

Contiguous to the Hermunduri are the Narisci; and next to them, the Marcomanni and Quadi. Of these, the Marcomanni are the most powerful and renowned; and have even acquired the country which they inhabit, by their valour in expelling the Boii. Nor are the Narisci and Quadi inferior in bravery; and this is, as it were, the van of Germany as far as it is bordered by the Danube. Within our memory the Marcomanni and Quadi were governed by kings of their own nation, of the noble line of Maroboduus and Tudrus. They now submit even to foreigners; but all the power of their kings depends upon the authority of the Romans. We seldom assist them with our arms, but frequently with our money; nor are they the less potent on that account.

Behind these are the Marsigni, Gothini, Osi, and Burrii, who close the rear of the Marcomanni and Quadi. Of these, the Marsigni and Burrii in language and dress resemble the Suevi. The Gothini and Osi prove themselves not to be Germans; the first, by their use of the Gallic, the second, of the Pannonian tongue; and both, by their submitting to pay tribute: which is levied on them, as aliens, partly by the Sarmatians, partly by the Quadi. The Gothini, to their additional disgrace, work iron mines. All these people inhabit but a small proportion of champaign country; their settlements are chiefly amongst forests, and on the sides and summits of mountains; for a continued ridge of mountains separates Suevia from various remoter tribes. Of these, the Lygian is the most extensive, and diffuses its name through several communities. It will be sufficient to name the most powerful of them--the Arii, Helvecones, Manimi, Elysii, and Naharvali. In the country of the latter is a grove, consecrated to religious rites of great antiquity. A priest presides over them, dressed in woman's apparel; but the gods worshipped there are said, according to the Roman interpretation, to be Castor and Pollux. Their attributes are the same; their name, Alcis. No images, indeed, or vestiges of foreign superstition, appear in their worship; but they are revered under the character of young men and brothers. The Arii, fierce beyond the superiority of strength they possess over the other just enumerated people, improve their natural ferocity of aspect by artificial helps. Their shields are black; their bodies painted: they choose the darkest nights for an attack; and strike terror by the funereal gloom of their sable bands--no enemy being able to sustain their singular, and, as it were, infernal appearance; since in every combat the eyes are the first part subdued. Beyond the Lygii are the Gothones, who live under a monarchy, somewhat more strict than that of the other German nations, yet not to a degree incompatible with liberty. Adjoining to these are the Rugii and Lemovii, situated on the sea-coast--all these tribes are distinguished by round shields, short swords, and submission to regal authority.

Next occur the communities of the Suiones, seated in the very Ocean, who, besides their strength in men and arms, also possess a naval force. The form of their vessels differs from ours in having a prow at each end, so that they are always ready to advance. They make no use of sails, nor have regular benches of oars at the sides: they row, as is practised in some rivers, without order, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, as occasion requires. These people honour wealth; for which reason they are subject to monarchical government, without any limitations, or

precarious conditions of allegiance. Nor are arms allowed to be kept promiscuously, as among the other German nations: but are committed to the charge of a keeper, and he, too, a slave. The pretext is, that the Ocean defends them from any sudden incursions; and men unemployed, with arms in their hands, readily become licentious. In fact, it is for the king's interest not to entrust a noble, a freeman, or even an emancipated slave, with the custody of arms.

Beyond the Suiones is another sea, sluggish and almost stagnant, by which the whole globe is imagined to be girt and enclosed, from this circumstance, that the last light of the setting sun continues so vivid till its rising, as to obscure the stars. Popular belief adds, that the sound of his emerging from the ocean is also heard; and the forms of deities, with the rays beaming from his head, are beheld. Only thus far, report says truly, does nature extend. On the right shore of the Suevic sea dwell the tribes of the Aestii, whose dress and customs are the same with those of the Suevi, but their language more resembles the **British**. They worship the mother of the gods; and as the symbol of their superstition, they carry about them the figures of wild boars. This serves them in place of armour and every other defence: it renders the votary of the goddess safe even in the midst of foes. Their weapons are chiefly clubs, iron being little used among them. They cultivate corn and other fruits of the earth with more industry than German indolence commonly exerts. They even explore the sea; and are the only people who gather amber, which by them is called Glese, and is collected among the shallows and upon the shore. With the usual indifference of barbarians, they have not inquired or ascertained from what natural object or by what means it is produced. It long lay disregarded amidst other things thrown up by the sea, till our luxury gave it a name. Useless to them, they gather it in the rough; bring it unwrought; and wonder at the price they receive. It would appear, however, to be an exudation from certain trees; since reptiles, and even winged animals, are often seen shining through it, which, entangled in it while in a liquid state, became enclosed as it hardened. I should therefore imagine that, as the luxuriant woods and groves in the secret recesses of the East exude frankincense and balsam, so there are the same in the islands and continents of the West; which, acted upon by the near rays of the sun, drop their liquid juices into the adjacent sea, whence, by the force of tempests, they are thrown out upon the opposite coasts. If the nature of amber be examined by the application of fire, it kindles like a torch, with a thick and odorous flame; and presently resolves into a glutinous matter resembling pitch or resin. The several communities of the Sitones succeed those of the Suiones; to whom they are similar in other respects, but differ in submitting to a female reign; so far have they degenerated, not only from liberty, but even from slavery. Here Suevia terminates.

All our further accounts are intermixed with fable; as, that the Hellusii and Oxionae have human faces, with the bodies and limbs of wild beasts. These unauthenticated reports I shall leave untouched.