

6 GERMANY AND THE GERMANS

France, from England, or from Belgium; where did they settle, in New England, in New York, or in the South. We no longer accept ability as a miracle, but investigate it as an evolution. If the man be great enough, cities vie with each other to claim him as their child; he acquires an Homeric versatility in cradles.

Whatever one may think of William II of Germany, he is just now the predominating figure in Europe, if not in the world. This must be our excuse for a word or two concerning the race from which came his twenty-fifth lineal ancestor.

It is exactly five hundred years since his present empire was founded in the sandy plains about the Elbe, and a thousand years before that brings us to the dim dawn of any historical knowledge whatever about the Germans. When the Cimbrians and Teutonians came into contact with the Romans, in 113 B. C., is the beginning of all things for these people. In that year the inhabitants of the north of Italy awoke one morning to find a swarm of blue-eyed, light-haired, long-limbed strangers coming down from the Alps upon them. The younger and more light-hearted warriors came tobogganing down the snow-covered mountain-sides on their shields. They had been crowded out