

32 GERMANY AND THE GERMANS

ity of Rome, and absorbed and renewed them. The Roman Empire, tottering on a foundation of, it is said, as many as fifty million slaves — even a poor man would have ten slaves, a rich man ten or twenty thousand — and overrun with the mongrel races from Syria, Greece, and Africa, and hiding away the remnants of its power in the Orient, became in a few centuries an easy prey to our ancestors “of the stern blue eyes, the ruddy hair, the large and robust bodies.”

“*Caerula quis stupuit lumina? flavam
Caesariem, et madido torquentem cornua cirro?
Nempe quod haec illis natura est omnibus una,*”

writes Juvnal of their resemblance to one another.

By the year 1411 long strides had been made toward other forms of social, political, religious, and commercial life, due to the German grip upon Europe. Dante, whose grandmother was a Goth, was not only a poet but a fighter for freedom, taking a leading part in the struggle of the Bianchi against the Neri and Pope Boniface, was born in 1265 and died in 1321; Francis of Assisi, born in 1182, not only represented a democratic influence in the church, but led the earliest revolt against the despotism of money; the movement to found cities and to league cities to-