

the reindeer, as well as the elk, and the wild bull, was a native of the Hercynian forest, which then over-shadowed a great part of Germany and Poland. . . .

“It is difficult to ascertain, and easy to exaggerate, the influence of the climate of ancient Germany over the minds and bodies of the natives. Many writers have supposed, and must have allowed, though, as it would seem, without any adequate proof, that the rigorous cold of the north was favorable to long life and generative vigour, that the women were more fruitful, and the human species more prolific, than in warmer and more temperate climes. We may assert with greater confidence, that the keen air of Germany formed the large and masculine limbs of the natives, who were, in general, of a more lofty stature than the people of the south, gave them a kind of strength better adapted to violent exertions than to patient labour, and inspired them with constitutional bravery, which is the result of nerves and spirits. The severity of a winter campaign, that chilled the courage of the Roman troops, was scarcely felt by these hardy children of the north, who in their turn were unable to resist the summer heats, and dissolved away in languor and sickness under the beams of an Italian sun.”

Gibbon goes on to enlarge upon the low state of civilization among the ancient Germans, and upon the scarcity of the population. “In the most inclement weather,” he says, “the hardy German was satisfied with a scanty garment made of the skin of some animal. The nations who dwelt toward the north, clothed themselves in furs, and the women manufactured for their own use a coarse kind of linen. The game of various sorts, with which the forests of