

ical character. "We do not know," says Wilhelm von Humboldt, in an unpublished work *On the Varieties of Languages and Nations*, "either from history or from authentic tradition, any period of time in which the human race has not been divided into social groups. Whether the gregarious condition was original, or of subsequent occurrence, we have no historic evidence to show. The separate mythical relations found to exist independently of one another in different parts of the earth, appear to refute the first hypothesis, and concur in ascribing the generation of the whole human race to the union of one pair. The general prevalence of this myth has caused it to be regarded as a traditionary record transmitted from the primitive man to his descendants. But this very circumstance seems rather to prove that it has no historical foundation, but has simply arisen from an identity in the mode of intellectual conception, which has every where led man to adopt the same conclusion regarding identical phenomena; in the same manner as many myths have doubtlessly arisen, not from any historical connection existing between them, but rather from an identity in human thought and imagination. Another evidence in favor of the purely mythical nature of this belief is afforded by the fact that the first origin of mankind—a phenomenon which is wholly beyond the sphere of experience—is explained in perfect conformity with existing views, being considered on the principle of the colonization of some desert island or remote mountainous valley at a period when mankind had already existed for thousands of years. It is in vain that we direct our thoughts to the solution of the great problem of the first origin, since man is too intimately associated with his own race and with the relations of time to conceive of the existence of an individual independently of a preceding generation and age. A solution of those difficult questions, which can not be determined by inductive reasoning or by experience—whether the belief in this presumed traditional condition be actually based on historical evidence, or whether mankind inhabited the earth in gregarious associations from the origin of the race—can not, therefore, be determined from philological data, and yet its elucidation ought not to be sought from other sources."

The distribution of mankind is therefore only a distribution into *varieties*, which are commonly designated by the somewhat indefinite term *races*. As in the vegetable kingdom, and in the natural history of birds and fishes, a classification into many small families is based on a surer foundation than