

‘the Negro and Caucasian physiognomies were portrayed as faithfully, and in as strong contrast, as if the likenesses of these races had been taken yesterday.’ In relation to the same subject, I dwelt on the slight modification which the Negro has undergone, after having been transported from the tropics, and settled for more than two centuries in the temperate climate of Virginia. I therefore concluded that, ‘if the various races were all descended from a single pair, we must allow for a vast series of antecedent ages, in the course of which the long-continued influence of external circumstances gave rise to peculiarities increased in many successive generations, and at length fixed by hereditary transmission.’

So long as physiologists continued to believe that Man had not existed on the earth above six thousand years, they might, with good reason, withhold their assent from the doctrine of a unity of origin of so many distinct races; but the difficulty becomes less and less, exactly in proportion as we enlarge our ideas of the lapse of time during which different communities may have spread slowly, and become isolated, each exposed for ages to a peculiar set of conditions, whether of temperature, or food, or danger, or ways of living. The law of the geometrical rate of the increase of population which causes it always to press hard on the means of subsistence, would ensure the migration, in various directions, of offshoots from the society first formed abandoning the area where they had multiplied. But when they had gradually penetrated to remote regions by land or water, — drifted sometimes by storms and currents in canoes to an unknown shore, — barriers of mountains, deserts, or seas, which oppose no obstacle to mutual intercourse between civilised nations, would ensure the complete isolation for tens or thousands of centuries of tribes in a primitive state of barbarism.

Some modern ethnologists, in accordance with the philosophers of antiquity, have assumed that men at first fed on the