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### WHENCE CAME THE AMERICAN INDIANS?

WE may assume that there is a region which was the home of the first man, or the primordial species. Where was this home; and by what route did the aboriginal inhabitants of this continent find their way from that pristine region?

Ethnology is the science of aboriginal peoples. Researches in ethnology are investigations to discover the origin or derivation of peoples. What, then, does the science of ethnology teach of the origin or derivation of the American Indian?

When the New World was discovered, a great number of tribes were found dispersed through all the habitable regions of the continent, thinly scattered in every district. The total number was comparatively small, possibly but a few millions. Nowhere in America was there found a nation, as that term is used by ethnologists—that is, a people organized into a government on a territorial basis. Everywhere the people were organized into governments as tribes and confederacies on a basis of kinship; but this kinship was often a legal fiction.

When people are organized there must be some method of grouping or regimenting them. Among the American Indians this was by kinship. Consanguineal kinship was reckoned usually in the female line. It was necessary that men who belonged to the same clan should trace their kinship through mothers: such a group of consanguineal relations is called a clan. But there were a few tribes that reckoned kinship through the male, as did the Greeks and Romans: when groups are organized in this manner they are now called gentes. A clan is a group of people who reckon consanguineal kinship through the female line: a gens is a group of people who reckon kinship through the male line. Clan organization seems to have preceded gentile organization. Most of the tribes of North America have clan organization: a few have gentile organization. One system always precludes the other. A family group, composed of two parents with their children, is again regimented with other such families into a group of consanguineal kindred as a clan or a gens. The consanguineal group is again regimented into a higher group, which we now call the tribe; that is, all