

CHAPTER XII

THE TIBETAN PEOPLE—POLYANDRY AND MONASTICISM

AT the foundation of Tibetan character there is probably the Mongol nature; an East Indian strain has come in from the rough watershed and flat valleys of the trans-Himalayan world. To measure the relative value of these ethnic elements is impossible. Nor is this greatly important in view of a diminishing confidence in our ability to sharply define the traits distinguishing those various stems which constitute the early Eurasian family. The lessons taught us by embryology indicate that the differences must be less as we approach the beginning of things, and we look more and more to long-continued geographical and climatic effects for explanation of existing divergences.

Even in adopting the highly probable theory of multiple origins for our race, we are yet bound to a recognition of the wide range and enormous force of earth-environment lying between the pole and the equator, between sea-level plain and mountain-top, between rain-sodden swamps and arid desert. So restless has man been, that history records not a single example of a social body known to have been subjected to *but one type* of physical environment during the period of its development from the