

CHAPTER XIV

INDUSTRY AND ART—TIBETAN ARCHITECTS— CARAVAN *VS.* RAILWAY

AMONG the notable achievements of our mountain folk must be accounted their progress as builders. Such structures as the great monasteries and the kingly residences would be remarked in any country, at least for their magnitude. In China are pagodas high enough, in India are magnificent mosques, of one clear spring from floor to dome-top; but neither in China nor in India are to be seen such many-storied, myriad-roomed buildings as in Tibet. Yet from China and from India have come the seeds of all development beyond the tent and the hut. Special influences have caused the extraordinary growth of the building art among a people whose souls are not mechanical. Analysis of such a result, in the absence of full historical data, is hazardous, hence somewhat tempting.

Three conditions have seemed to me chiefly responsible for a superiority, which, in comparing all other characteristics with those of their neighbours, may be considered as almost an eccentricity of the Tibetans: An abundance of stone, steep roughness of building sites, and the communal life of the monks,—these three conditions conspire to produce the sky-scraping masses, in which are hived the