

and facilitated a very pleasant acquaintance with many of the people whom we met.

Wherever I have found the Khirghiz living unrestrictedly under their normal nomadic conditions among the mountains, whether north, west, or south of the Lop basin, they appear to have essentially the same habits and character. So far as I can learn, the Indo-European nomads to the west of the Lop basin in Wakkan and Sarikol, and the Mongol nomads of Buddhist faith to the east in northern Tibet and eastern Tian Shan, all of whom live under physical conditions similar to those of the Turanian Khirghiz, have very similar habits and character in spite of differences in race and religion. This suggests that environment is in this case more potent than either race or religion in determining habits and even character, provided, of course, that the environment is operative long enough. In the following chapters it will be interesting to inquire how far the specific habits and characteristics mentioned are best explained as the product of physical environment, according to the hypothesis of this book, and how far they are the result of other and less easily defined causes not here considered.

The typical part of the Tian Shan plateau which I visited in 1903 lies between Andizhan on the west, Issik Kul (Warm Lake) on the north, and Kashgar on the south. The main physiographic feature of this western Tian Shan region, as of the Karakorum, is that the so-called mountain system is in reality an area of low relief which has been uplifted to a great height, forming a broad plateau. The uplift was accompanied by warping, which has divided the plateau into a series of basins and rolling ridges or