

CHAPTER IV.—THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE OASIS-WORLD.

In considering the observed data of the earliest of the Anau cultures in their ethnographic relations, one must be struck by a singular fact: *They had none of the usual weapons of stone for offense and defense*; the cores from which they made the abundant flakes of flint, probably for sickles, arouse our wonderment at the absence of the arrow-points, spear-heads, and celts found in almost all advanced stone-age and æneolithic settlements. Now axes, spear-points, and arrow-points of stone are, throughout the rest of the world, abundant where primitive man has existed; and in the improvement in the manner of their fashioning they serve to mark off the long stages in the slow development of primitive human culture. The evolution of these implements, from the almost natural shape to highly finished forms specialized for different uses, was exceedingly slow. This has been proved at several points in Europe, where they have been found in deposits of different epochs of the glacial period, and intimately associated with undoubtedly contemporaneous animals of those epochs; and the progress in time is paralleled by the improvement in workmanship. So true is this considered to be that in studying in Europe successive stages, glacial and interglacial, of the glacial period, the evolution of forms and of workmanship in the stone implements, when such are found, is only second in value to the bones of those animals with which the implements are associated, and which mark the long oscillations between subtropical and arctic climates. The early use of stone as a tool, and the slowly developing inventive faculty, at last rendered possible during interglacial time the manufacture of finely formed axes and spear- and arrow-points. These were acquisitions that stood causally and first in human development, in the same order with the discovery of the use of metals, powder, and steam. It is not conceivable that a people who had once possessed this acquisition, and had used axes and arrow-points and spear-points of stone, could have lost the advantage these offered. This would be still more remarkable in the case of our Anau-li, who, though settled in communities, still hunted wild animals, and who had quartzite close at hand, as well as access to the flint of which are found the flakes in such abundance, and the cores from which they were flaked. I see no way of accounting for the absence of these forms of implements and weapons except on the hypothesis that the ancestors of this people had become absolutely isolated from the rest of mankind at a period so remote as to be before the invention of these forms, and they must have remained without contact with peoples using these implements and weapons.

The next and necessary deduction under this hypothesis is that the whole of their culture is autochthonous in the sense that it received no impulses from outside the people, or circle of peoples, so isolated. It presupposes an early separation of a great inner-continental region from the rest of the inhabited world.

I imagine that the cause of this separation is to be sought in one of the stages of the glacial period, when the region, considered as a whole, became isolated, as far as human intercourse was concerned. Moreover, after this it probably took a long time for the reaction from the conditions induced by the ice-epoch to make