

ark a ship, and furnishes it with a pilot, and it gives a local coloring by making Hasisadra a citizen of Sipparu in Babylonia, and by making the ark ground on the mountain of Nisir, supposed to be one of the hills east of the lower Tigris. It also reduces the duration of the flood to seven days. It may thus be characterized as an imaginative, poetical production, founded on fact but embellished with many fanciful accessories, and especially with a multitude of contending divinities, reminding one of the Olympian gods in the Iliad of Homer. These properties of the Babylonian epic of the deluge will be at once apparent to any one who will take the trouble to consult Mr. Pinches' translation. It is the best account that we have outside of Genesis, and though the extant copies belong to the age of the Hebrew kings, the originals were probably much older than the time of Moses. Nevertheless its characters stamp it as a less primitive history than that accessible to the author of Genesis, and there is thus no probability whatever in the assumption of some writers that the latter was indebted for his facts to the Babylonian poem. It would be as reasonable to suppose that the current histories of England and Scotland have been derived from Scott's novels.

Before entering on the study of the Hebrew history of the deluge, it is necessary to carry ourselves back in imagination to the conditions, physical and anthropological, of the antediluvian world. In reference to physical nature, we have already seen that this age was a "continental period," in which the land of the northern hemisphere at least, had attained to its maximum extension. There were then extensive plains around the Mediterranean which are now submerged. The Euphratean plain was higher, drier, and more wooded than at present, and probably extended over the shallower parts of the Persian Gulf.* In the west there was a border of land now under the Atlantic, girdling the coasts of Spain and France, and connecting England with the mainland and Europe. The climate was warm and dry in the lower latitudes, and any agriculture of the period was probably carried on in irrigated alluvial plains, while there were vast steppes and forest-clad districts inviting to a nomadic and hunting life. There was also a much greater number and variety of wild animals than after the deluge. It is likely, however, that for some time before the diluvial submergence, subsidence of a gradual nature was in progress. The lower lands were becoming swampy and finally sinking under the sea, and at the same time the summers were more wet and cold, so that the conditions of life for simple people with few arts were becoming more unfavorable, more especially in the north. These changes were

* According to the British Admiralty charts, the Persian Gulf is very shallow with indications of a slight depression along the centre. It is probable therefore that in the early human or antediluvian period it was a broad valley with the continuation of the present Ghat-al-Arab running through it, and on its banks forests of date palms and other fruit-bearing trees. This was undoubtedly the geographical condition before the mind of the writer of the description of Eden in Genesis, tho this condition had disappeared, and was not restored after the deluge.