

the story may represent only the last stage of a geologic subsidence which had long been going on, and the beginning of a new emergence above the waters, which continued for a considerable time after man had found a dry place on the higher ground. The Bible itself furnishes some hints to that effect. It represents the earliest man as being driven from Eden long centuries before the deluge. If Eden was situated somewhere near the head of the Persian Gulf, as most believe, it may well be that this expulsion was caused by the waters of the gulf already beginning to encroach on the land. Then again, it was apparently only at a considerable interval after the deluge that the Babylonian plain was occupied anew by man (Gen. xi., 2), perhaps because the lower Euphrates valley was so much later in becoming high enough for human occupation. The deluge as described in Genesis, may have been simply the crisis which marked the somewhat sudden termination of the movement of subsidence and the beginning of the re-emergence. That the catastrophe was not without premonitory sign of some kind for those who had eyes to see it is indicated by the fact that Noah is represented as warning his generation of coming danger long years before it occurred. When the crisis at length came the steadily rising waters, even though lashed by the storm of rain from above, may not have presented any greater danger to the safety of a vessel borne upon their bosom than would the inundation of Holland to-day by a slight breach in the dykes that keep out the sea. It is worthy of note that on both sides of the Euphrates valley there are considerable regions even now below the sea-level. If the Caspian Sea on the one hand, and the Dead Sea on the other, were not protected from the ocean by mountain ranges, large areas of what is now dry land would at once be flooded. Ever so slight a rift by earthquake in the continuity of these mountain ranges would cause them to be speedily submerged. Even if there were no positive evidence that the region between these two inland seas, the Euphrates valley, which happens to connect with the ocean by way of the Persian Gulf, had once been