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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed July 29, 1930.

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A CLOUDBURST FLOOD

The danger of cloudburst floods to motorists and campers in the arid and semi-arid mountainous regions of the western United States needs to be reiterated from time to time. Paradoxically, the danger is greatest in a land where rainfall is rare. Scarcity of rain precludes the growth of the vegetative mantle that, if it existed, would check the rapid surface runoff from occasional heavy thundershowers. Hence when a so-called cloudburst occurs, the water, concentrated by the slope of the land, rushes in a sudden torrent down the ravines.

Prof. E.W. Shuler, of Dallas, writes in the current Scientific Monthly of a case he witnessed last summer near Fort Davis. News of the "rise" was received by telephone and a party set off down the canyon in automobiles to watch the coming of the water. Meanwhile, says the writer, "runners had been sent to warn campers, for despite repeated warning, the shade of the cottonwood trees and the grassy bottoms along the canyons prove at times irresistible to the transient motorist. Natives of the region, too, who have seen the phenomenon over and over again are never quite convinced that they cannot 'beat the rise' -- most often to their sorrow."

The dip in the road where it crosses the canyon was dry when the party arrived. Soon after a hissing tongue of water crossed the road.

"Then followed the rising flood, filling the canyon bottom, downward, tumbling and frothing, now arching up in the middle, then leaping in great bounds, the yellow tiger waters rushed down the canyon and over the road with a mighty roar and pounding of rocks as the waters dragged them along the canyon bottom. \*\*\*  
Three hours later the road and dip were dry."

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