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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed September 20, 1930.

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WHAT CAUSED THE DELUGE ?

A sensational archaeological event of last year was the discovery at the site of Ur of the Chaldees of a deeply buried horizontal layer of mud eight feet thick, underlying the previously excavated remains of the ancient city, and, in turn, underlain by remains of an earlier settlement. This deposit was evidently laid down by a great flood and may have been contemporary in origin with a similar but thinner deposit found last year at the site of Kish, much farther up the Euphrates valley.

Harold Peake, the well-known British anthropologist, in his recently published book "The Flood," sets forth the view that the mud layers at both places were left by the deluge that figures in biblical and Babylonian narratives, and he places the date of the event at about 4,200 B.C.

Floods are common in Mesopotamia. Early in May, 1929, the Tigris rose and burst its banks at several points; a little later the Euphrates rose abnormally, and thus the whole Mesopotamian plain was converted into a vast inland sea. Probably the ancient flood that impressed itself so strongly on the memory of mankind was the greatest that has happened in this region since its earliest settlement but it was not necessarily so extensive as some that have occurred in other parts of the world, including the Mississippi valley.

Peake quotes the opinion of Professor Sollas, of Oxford, that the rainfall of a slow-moving low combined with water from melting mountain snows would account for this deluge; while Peake himself suggests as an additional possible cause the bursting of an ice dam, such as occurred in August, 1929, in the Shyok valley, causing an immense flood in that part of India.

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