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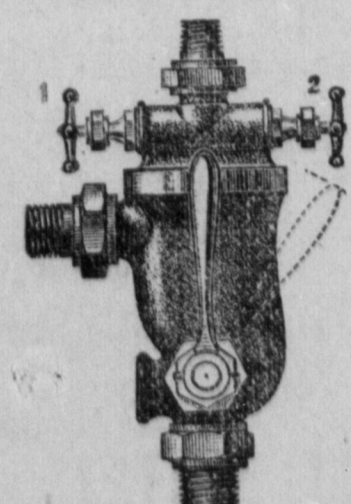
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LEGENDS OF THE DELUGE.

They are Found in the Lore of all Nations

One of the most powerful and vivid descriptive portions of the book of Genesis is that devoted to the wonderful story of the deluge. Together with the accounts of Adam's fall, the slaying of Abel, and the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, every one remembers from childhood how Noah was warned of the doom impending over the children of men, and how he constructed a huge ark in which he did live, himself and his family, and two of every beast of the field and fowl of the air, for the space of 190 days, or until the waters subsided and the dry land appeared. But the biblical recital of this terrible visitation of divine wrath is by no means the only one. In fact, the most sceptically inclined must believe that something of the sort actually occurred long ago, for it has been perpetuated not only in the Talmud and Koran, but in the legends of almost every nation and race that ever lived on the face of the earth, including the Chinese, the ancient Aztecs of Mexico, the Indian tribes of North and South America and even the savages of Africa.

The story, of course, varies materially in the multitudinous traditions, but the gist of it remains substantially the same, namely, that the earth was once visited by a great flood, in which nearly every living thing was overwhelmed and lost. Thus in the Koran we read that Noah constructed the ark with divine assistance and was railed at for his pains by the wicked. When the time prescribed for the punishment of mankind arrived water was seen to flow from the burning oven of Noah's wife, and immediately all the veins and the arteries of the earth broke and spouted out water. Noah was then admonished in these words: "Take and bring into the ark two couples of every kind of animal, except him who has been condemned by your mouth, and receive the faithful, and even the unbelieving; but few only will enter." The Koran also says that the ark was built in two years, and that it contained three stories, the upper one for the birds, the middle one for the men and the provisions, and the lower one for the beasts. Canaan, the son of Ham, refused to be saved; therefore Noah cursed him, and his posterity became black and were enslaved. The Persians assert that Ham incurred his father's malediction as well. When six months had passed, the ark rested on the top of Mount Djondi (Ararat), after having made the circuit of the world. Tabari says that two sorts of animals left the ark which had not entered it—the pig and the cat. Concerning the latter we have this interesting piece of information: When the rats began to make trouble, the voyagers complained to Noah. Whereupon the patriarch "passed his hand down the back of the lion, who sneezed, and the cat leaped out of its nose. And the cat ate the rats."

According to the Talmud Noah and his family and one pair of each kind of beast were to be saved in the ark, but of every clean beast seven were to enter in. The rhinoceros, however, had to be left out, for the simple but sufficient reason that its neck alone was three miles long. Nevertheless all the Rabbinic writers agree that the rhinoceros survived the flood; hence it is reasonable to suppose that the huge beast was taken in tow by a rope attached to its horn. Some authorities likewise declare that Noah extended his hospitality to another outsider in the shape of Og, the giant, who climbed on the roof of the ark and received his daily food through a hole bored in the side of the vessel. Ararat has been known under this name for 3,000 years, and an Armenian writer declares that an entire country was so called after Arat, the Fair, an ancient Armenian king who lived about 1750 B. C. He fell in a bloody battle with the Babylonians, and the scene of his death was henceforth known as Arat-Aarat, or the Fall of Arat. Josephus refers to the mountain as Naxuana, and declares that the remains of the ark were there to be seen carefully preserved.

Almost all the Asiatic traditions closely resemble the biblical account. Berossus in his Chaldean history (B. C. 270) speaks of ten kings who appear to correspond to the ten patriarchs in Genesis before the flood. The last of these kings was called Xisuthrus. Berossus relates that "Kronos appeared to Pisuthrus in a dream, and warned him that all men would be destroyed by a deluge on the 15th of the month Daesios, and commanded him to write down all the learning and science of men, and to hide it in the sun-city Siparis, and then to build a ship and enter it along with his family and relatives and friends, and to take into it food and drink, and beasts and winged fowl. When he was asked whether he was about to sail he was bidden to reply: "To the gods, to pray them that men may prosper." Xisuthrus did as he was commanded, and when the flood showed signs of abating he sent out three birds in succession: the first and second came back, the latter with mud on its feet, but the third returned not. Soon after this the ship was stranded on a mountain, and Xisuthrus disembarked with his family, offered thanks to the gods and vanished. Subsequently the remaining survivors heard his voice in the heavens, bidding them fear God and to take

his writings out of Siparis, and from them instruct men.

The ancient Persian account is very brief: "Tashter (the spirit ruling the waters) poured water for thirty days and thirty nights upon the earth. Every water-drop was as big as a bowl. The earth was covered with water the height of a man. All idolaters on earth died through the rain; it penetrated all openings. Afterwards a wind from heaven divided the water and carried it away in clouds, as souls bear bodies; then Ormuzd collected all the water together and placed it as a boundary to the earth, and thus was the great earth formed."

The Brahminical legend is both interesting and picturesque. The general yralaya or destruction is the subject of the first Purana or sacred poem, which is found in the eighth book of the Bhagavata. From this we learn that the demon Hayagriva, having purloined the Vedas from Brahma while he was reposing, the whole race of man became corrupt, except the seven Rishis and the sun-born monarch Satyawrata. One day while the pious prince was performing his ablutions in the river Critamala, Vishnu appeared to him in the shape of a small fish and thus spoke: "In seven days all creatures who have offended me shall be destroyed by a deluge; but thou shalt be secured in a capacious vessel miraculously formed. Take, therefore, all kinds of medicinal herbs and esculent grain for food, and together with the seven holy men, your respective wives and pairs of all animals, enter the ark without fear; and thou shalt know God face to face, and all thy questions shall be answered." Satyawrata did as he was commanded and was saved, and when the deluge had ceased, Vishnu slew the demon and recovered the Vedas. (See "Asiatic Researches," by Sir W. Jones.)

The Chinese have several traditions relating to the flood. One tells how Kung-Kung, a bad spirit, enraged at having been overcome in war, gave a blow with his head against one of the pillars of the sky, that the vault of heaven fell in and a tremendous flood overwhelmed the earth. But Niu-Noa made a boat of wood where-with he saved himself. In the Hellenic traditions, according to Lucian, the Biblical account is closely followed. Deucalion, the Scythian, is mentioned as the progenitor of the second race of men, the earlier generation having been drowned because of their wickedness. Ovid gives a slightly different version of the catastrophe, in which he asserts that Deucalion and his wife sought refuge in a small boat and were finally stranded on the summit of Mount Parnassus.

When we come to study the lore of the primitive tribes of northern Europe, the Scandinavians and the Celts, we find curious and highly-colored versions of the flood legend, which are still not unlike the myths of the more cultivated nations of the Orient.

But it is in America, strangely enough, that we discover the most abundant crop of traditions. Referring to the ancient tribes of Mexico, Alexander von Humboldt says: "The following had paintings resembling the deluge of Coxcox (Noah), namely, the Aztecs, Mixtecs, Zapotecs, Tlascaltecs and Mechocans." These crude representations were undoubtedly inspired by the legend that has lived through forty centuries, the substance of which is that long ago when the wicked people of the earth were destroyed by a great flood, Coxcox, or Tezpi the good, with his wife Xoehiquetzal, his immediate family, and pairs of every beast, was saved in a bark or raft, which eventually landed the survivors on the peak of Colhuacan. Tezpi sent forth a vulture first, which fell to eating carcasses and never returned. Afterwards he sent out a humming bird, which soon came back bearing a branch in its beak. The fantastic tales enshrined in the lore of the aborigines of North America, such as the Iroquois, Appalachian, and Pawnee Indian tribes of our own land, as well as the stolid natives of bleak Alaska, might be studied to advantage.

Mathematicians have estimated the cubic contents of the biblical ark to have been 3,600,000 feet. If nine-tenths of this space were devoted to fodder, 6,686 pairs could be stowed with 54 cubic feet for each pair. Sir Walter Raleigh calculated storage room "for eighty-nine distinct species of beasts, or, lest any should be omitted, for 100 different kinds. * * All the beasts might be kept in one story or room of the ark, in their several cabins their meat in the second, the birds and their provisions in a third, with space to spare for Noah and his family and all their necessaries." According to modern measurement, the ark was 325 feet long, 57 feet wide and 52 feet deep.

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