

ANCIENT BABYLONIAN CHARMS.

TRANSLATED BY

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THE following are specimens of the imprecatory charms with which the ancient Babylonian literature abounded, and which were supposed to be the most potent means in the world for producing mischief. Some examples are given in the first volume of the *Records of the Past*, pp. 131-135 of the exorcisms used to avert the consequences of such enchantments. The original Accadian text is preserved in the first column with an interlinear Assyrian translation: the short paragraphs in Col. iii. also give the Accadian original; but elsewhere the Assyrian scribe has contented himself with the Assyrian rendering alone. The charms are rhythmic, and illustrate the rude parallelism of Accadian poetry. The Assyrian trans-

lations were probably made for the library of Sargon of Aganè, an ancient Babylonian monarch who reigned not later than the 16th century B.C. ; but the copy we possess was made from the old tablets by the scribes of Assur-bani-pal. The larger part of the first column has already been translated by M. François Lenormant in *La Magie chez les Chaldéens*, p. 59. The tablet on which the inscription occurs is marked K 65, in the British Museum Collection and will be published in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. iv., pl. 7, 8.



ANCIENT BABYLONIAN CHARMS.

COLUMN I.

- 1 The beginning¹—The baneful charm² like an evil demon acts against³ the man.
- 2 The voice *that defiles* acts upon him.
- 3 The maleficent voice acts upon him.
- 4 The baneful charm is a spell that originates sickness.⁴
- 5 This man the baneful charm strangles like a lamb.
- 6 His god in his flesh makes the wound.
- 7 His goddess mutual enmity brings down.
- 8 The voice *that defiles* like a hyæna covers him and subjugates him.
- 9 MERODACH⁵ favors him ; and
- 10 to his father HEA into the house he enters and cries :
- 11 “ O my father, the baneful charm like an evil demon acts against the man.”
- 12 To the injured (man) he (HEA) speaks thus :
- 13 “ (A number) make : this man is unwitting : by means of the number he enslaves thee.”
- 14 (To) his son MERODACH he replies⁶

¹ The Accadian word is translated by the Assyrian *siptu* “lip” and may be translated “beginning” or “fresh paragraph.”

² In the Assyrian version “curse.”

³ In the Assyrian “goes against.”

⁴ In the Assyrian “(is) the cause of sickness.”

⁵ The Accadian god identified with Merodach by the Assyrian translator was *Silik-mulu-ki* “the protector of the city who benefits mankind.” He was regarded as the son of Hea.

⁶ The verbs throughout are in the aorist, but the sense of the original is better expressed in English by the present than the past tense.

- 15 "My son, the number thou knowest not ; the number
let me fix for thee.
- 16 MERODACH, the number thou knowest not ; the number
let me fix for thee.
- 17 What I know thou knowest.
- 18 Go, my son MERODACH.
- 19 with noble hand seize him, and
- 20 his enchantment explain and his enchantment make
known.
- 21 Evil (is to) the substance of his body,¹
- 22 whether (it be) the curse of his father,
- 23 or the curse of his mother,
- 24 or the curse of his elder brother,
- 25 or the bewitching curse of an unknown man."
- 26 Spoken (is) the enchantment by the lips of HEA.
- 27 Like a signet may he² be brought near.
- 28 Like garden-herbs may he be destroyed.
- 29 Like a weed may he be gathered-for-sale.
- 30 (This) enchantment may the spirit of heaven remember,
may the spirit of earth remember.

FRESH PARAGRAPH.

- 31 Like this signet he³ shall be cut, and the sorcerer
- 32 the consuming fire-god shall consume.
- 33 By written-spells he shall not be *delivered*.
- 34 By curses and poisons he shall not be *moved*.
- 35 His property (and) ground he shall not take.
- 36 His corn shall not be high and the sun shall not re-
member (him).

¹ That is, the sorcerer's.

² The sorcerer.

³ The sorcerer.

COLUMN II.

- 1 On the festival of the god, the king unconquerable,
 2 may the man (by) the enchantment, (with) *eldest* son
 (and) wife,
 3 (by) sickness, the loss of the bliss of prosperity, of joy
 (and) of gladness,
 4 (by) the sickness which exists in a man's skin, a man's
 flesh (and) a man's entrails,
 5 like this signet be brought near and
 6 on that day may the consuming fire-god consume ;
 7 may the enchantment go forth and to (its) dwelling-
 place betake itself.
-

FRESH PARAGRAPH.

- 8 Like this vineyard he shall be cut off, and the sorcerer
 9 the consuming fire-god shall consume.
 10 Despite the *holidays* of a *plague* that returns not,
 11 despite the shrine of the god, the king unconquerable,
 12 may the man, (by) the enchantment, (with) *eldest* son
 (and) wife,
 13 (by) sickness, the loss of the bliss of prosperity of joy
 (and) of gladness,
 14 (by) the sickness which exists in a man's skin, a man's
 flesh, a man's *entrails*,
 15 like this garden-stuff be rooted out, and
 16 on that day may the consuming fire-god consume.
 17 May the enchantment go forth and to (its) dwelling-
 place betake itself.
-

FRESH PARAGRAPH.

- 18 Like this weed he shall be gathered for sale, and the
 sorcerer

- 19 the consuming fire-god shall consume.
 20 Before him, despite his blessedness that is not,
 21 despite the canopy of a covering that departs not,
 22 may the man (by) the enchantment, (with) *eldest* son
 (and) wife,
 23 (by) sickness, the loss of the bliss of prosperity, of joy
 (and) of gladness,
 24 (by) the sickness which exists in a man's skin, a man's
 flesh, a man's *entrails*,
 25 like this weed be plucked, and
 26 on that day may the consuming fire-god consume.
 27 May the enchantment go forth and to (its) dwelling-
 place betake itself.
-

FRESH PARAGRAPH.

- 28 Like this thread he shall be stretched, and the sorcerer
 29 the consuming fire-god shall consume.
 30 Despite his adoration that is not,
 31 despite the clothing of the god, the King unconquerable,
 32 may the man, (through) the enchantment, (with) *eldest*
 son (and) wife,
 33 (by) sickness, the loss of the bliss of prosperity, of joy
 (and) of gladness,
 34 (by) the sickness which exists in a man's skin, a man's
 flesh, a man's *entrails*,
 35 like this thread be stretched, and
 36 on that day may the consuming fire-god consume.
 37 May the enchantment go forth and to (its) dwelling-
 place betake itself.
-

FRESH PARAGRAPH.

- 38 Like this goat's-hair cloth he shall be stretched, and
 the sorcerer
 39 the consuming fire-god shall consume.

- 40 Despite the goat's-hair that is not,
 41 despite the canopy of the covering (that departs not),
 42 may the man (through) the enchantment, (with) *eldest*
 son (and) wife,
 43 (by) sickness, the loss of the bliss of prosperity, of joy
 (and) of gladness,
 44 (by) the sickness which exists in a man's skin, a man's
 flesh, a man's *entrails*,
 45 like this goat's-hair cloth be stretched, and
 46 on that day the man may the consuming fire-god
 consume.
 47 May the enchantment go forth and to (its) dwelling-
 place betake itself.
-

FRESH PARAGRAPH.

- 48 Like these *boards* he shall be stretched, and the sorcerer
 49 the consuming fire-god shall consume.
 50 O son of the macebearer, despite produce unproduced,
 51 despite the clothing of the god, the King uncon-
 querable,
 52 may the man (by) the enchantment, (with) *eldest* son
 and wife,
 53 (by) sickness, the loss of prosperity, of joy (and) of
 gladness,
 54 (by) the sickness which exists in a man's skin, a man's
 flesh, a man's *entrails*,
 55 like these *boards* be stretched, and
 56 on that day may the consuming fire-god consume.
 57 May the enchantment go forth and to (its) dwelling-
 place betake itself.

COLUMN III.

The first part of Column III. is mutilated. It becomes legible in the middle of a list of magical formulæ.

- 30 The chiefest talisman, the mighty talisman, the engraved talisman, the talisman is the binder, with enchantment.
-
- 31 The repetition of the enchantment (is) baneful to man.
-
- 32 The curses of the gods.
-
- 33 the binder with enchantment.
-
- 34 (With enchantment) his hands (and) his feet he binds.
-
- 35 MERODACH, the son of HEA, the prince, with his holy hands cuts the knots.
-
- 36 May the enchantment cause this talisman to the desert among the wild beasts to go forth.
-
- 37 May the baneful enchantment seize upon others.
-
- 38 May this man rest (and) open (his eyes).
-
- 39 To the blessed hand of his god may he be committed.
-
- 40 Conclusion of the formulæ for averting sorcery.
-

FRESH PARAGRAPH.

- 41 For the raising of the mighty foundation thus have I burned up straight,
 42 like fire have I burned up (and) have delivered the oracle.¹

¹ Or, "have laid the witchcraft."

COLUMN IV.

- 1 The noble *cupbearer* of HEA, the scribe of MERODACH
(am) I.
 2 Like fire have I blazed (and) I rejoice ;¹
 3 (like) fire have I burned (and) I grow ;
 4 the corn I purify and make heavy.
 5 Like fire have I blazed (and) will rejoice ;
 6 (like) fire have I burned (and) will grow ;
 7 the corn will I purify and make heavy.
 8 O nadir (and) zenith, the light of god and man,
 9 may the store he collected be delivered.
 10 May the store of (his) heart whoever he be, ye his god
and his goddess, be delivered.
 11 May his gate be *kept fast*. On that day
 12 may they enrich him, may they deliver him.

FRESH PARAGRAPH.

- 13 May the rejoicing² of the warrior fire-god
 14 rejoice with thee. May lands and rivers
 15 rejoice with thee. May Tigris and (Euphrates)
 16 rejoice with thee. May the seas and (the ocean)
 17 rejoice with thee. May the forest, the daughter of
the gods,
 18 rejoice with thee. May all the productions (of the
earth)
 19 rejoice with thee. May the hearts of my god and my
goddess, well-feasted,
 20 rejoice with thee. May the hearts of the god and the
goddess of the city, well-feasted, (rejoice with thee).

¹ Or, "rest."

² The words translated "rejoicing" and "rejoice" properly signify "rest," and that may be their meaning here.

- 21 On that day from the curse may my heart, O my god
and my goddess, be delivered,
22 and may the enchantment go forth from my body.
23 When the doom *comes upon* thee,
24 and from the fulfilment thou protectest thyself,
25 the doom when fulfilled cut thou off.
-

26 (The tablet) beginning :—

Colophon.

Tablet (copied from)
the old (tablets of Chaldea).
Country of (ASSUR-BANI-PAL)
King of (Assyria).



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