

ACCADIAN PROVERBS AND SONGS.

TRANSLATED BY
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THE following is a selection from an interesting collection of Accadian songs and proverbs, given in a mutilated reading-book of the ancient language which was compiled for the use of Assyrian (or rather Semitic Babylonian) students. These sentences were drawn up at a time when it was necessary for the scribes to be familiar with the old language of Accad, and to be able to translate it into Assyrian, and hence these phrases are of very great philological value, since they indicate often analogous words and various verbal forms. The Assyrian translation and the

Accadian texts are arranged in parallel columns. Some of the proverbs must be taken from an agricultural treatise of the same nature as the *Works and Days* of Hesiod. Copies of the texts will be found in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. II., 15, 16.



ACCADIAN PROVERBS.

- 1 Door and bolt are made fast.
 2 Oracle to oracle : to the oracle it is brought.¹
 3 The cut beam he strikes: the strong beam he shapes.
 4 The resting-place of the field which (is) in the house he will establish.
 5 Within the court of the house he feels himself small.
 6 A heap of witnesses² as his foundation he has made strong.
 7 Once and twice he has made gains;³ yet he is not content.
 8 By himself he dug and wrought.⁴
 9 For silver his resting-place he shall buy.
 10 On his heap of bricks a building he builds not, a beam he set not up.
 11 A house like his own house one man to another consigns.
 12 If the house he contracts for he does not complete, 10 shekels of silver he pays.
 13 The joists of his wall he plasters.
 14 In the month Marchesvan,⁵ the 30th day (let him choose) for removal.
 15 (Let him choose it, too,) for the burning of weeds.
 16 The tenant of the farm two-thirds of the produce on his own head to the master of the orchard pays out.

¹ That is, "compared."

² Accadian *ixzi ribanna*, Assyrian *igar kasritu*, "heap of covenant," like the Hebrew Galeed, Aramaic Yegar-sahadutha (Gen. xxxi. 47).

³ That is, "the more a man has the more he wants."

⁴ That is, "if you want a thing done, do it yourself."

⁵ October.

No. 16.—ACCADIAN SONGS.

- 26 (If) evil
 thou hast done,
 (to) the sea for ever
¹ thou goest.
-
- 23 My *city* bless :
 among my men
 fully prosper me.
-
- 26 Bless everything ;
 and to (my) dress be favourable.
-
- 28 Before the oxen as they march
 in the grain thou liest down.
-
- 30 My knees are marching,
 my feet are not resting :
 with no wealth of thine own,
 grain thou begettest for me.
-
- 34 A heifer am I ;
 to the cow I am yoked :
 the plough-handle is strong ;
 lift it up, lift it up !
-
- 53 May he perform vengeance :
 may he return also
 (to him) who gives.
-

¹ Lacuna.

55 The marsh as though it were not he passes ;¹
 the slain as though they were not² he makes good.

57 To the waters their god³
 has returned :
 to the house of bright things
 he descended (as) an icicle :
 (on) a seat of snow
 he grew not old in wisdom.
²

10 Like an oven
 (which is) old
 against thy foes
 be hard.

15 Thou wentest, thou spoiledst
 the land of the foe ;
 (for) he went, he spoiled
 thy land, (even) the foe.

18 Kingship
 in its going forth
 (is) like a *royal robe*(?)

19 Into the river thou plungest, and
 thy water (is) swollen

¹ I have translated this line from the Accadian, the Assyrian text being wanting, and the words "a recent lacuna" being written instead. This makes it clear that the scribe who copied the tablet for Assur-bani-pal's library did not understand Accadian, and could not therefore supply the translation.

² Lacunæ.

³ This seems to be quoted from a hymn describing the return of Oannes to the Persian Gulf.

at the time :¹
into the orchard thou plungest, and
thy fruit
(is) bitter.

- 34 The corn (is) high,
it is flourishing ;
how
is it known ?
The corn (is) bearded,
it is flourishing ;
how
is it known ?
-

- 42 The fruit of death
may the man eat,
(and yet) the fruit of life
may he achieve.

¹ See *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. I., 25, 10.



END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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