

BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN IMPRECATIONS.

Translated by ROBERT FRANCIS HARPER,
The University of Chicago.

I. FROM THE EPILOGUE OF THE CODE OF HAMMURABI, KING OF BABYLON (ABOUT 2250 B. C.).¹

[HAMMURABI, the king of righteousness, whom Shamash has endowed with justice, am I. My words are weighty; my deeds are unrivaled . . .

.
If that man pay attention to my words which I have written upon my monument, do not efface my judgments, do not overrule my words, and do not alter my statutes, then will Shamash prolong that man's reign, as he has mine, who am king of righteousness, that he may rule his people in righteousness.]

If that man do not pay attention to my words which I have written upon my monument; if he forget my curse and do not fear the curse of god; if he abolish the judgments which I have formulated, overrule my words, alter my statutes, efface my name written thereon and write his own name; or on account of these curses, commission another to do so—as for that man, be he king or lord, or priest-king or commoner, whoever he may be, may the great god, the father of the gods, who has ordained my reign, take from him the glory of his sovereignty, may he break his scepter, and curse his fate!

May Bel, the lord, who determines destinies, whose command cannot be altered, who has enlarged my dominion, drive him out from his dwelling through a revolt which his hand cannot control and a curse destructive to him. May he determine as his fate a reign of sighs, days few in number, years of famine, darkness without light, death staring him in the face! The destruction of his city, the dispersion of his people, the wresting away of his dominion, the blotting out of his name and memory from the land, may Bel order with his potent command!

May Belit, the august mother, whose command is potent in E-kur, who looks with gracious favor upon my plans, in the place of judgment and decisions pervert his words in the presence of Bel! May she put into the mouth of Bel, the king, the ruin of his land, the destruction of his people and the pouring out of his life like water!

¹ This translation differs little from that in my edition of *The Code of Hammurabi*.

May Ea, the great prince whose decrees take precedence, the leader of the gods who knows everything, who prolongs the days of my life, deprive him of knowledge and wisdom! May he bring him to oblivion, and dam up his rivers at their sources! May he not permit corn, which is the life of the people, to grow in his land!

May Shamash, the great judge of heaven and earth, who rules all living creatures, the lord (inspiring) confidence, overthrow his dominion; may he not grant him his rights! May he make him to err in his path, may he destroy the mass (foundation) of his troops! May he bring to his view an evil omen of the uprooting of the foundation of his sovereignty, and the ruin of his land!

May the blighting curse of Shamash come upon him quickly! May he cut off his life above (upon the earth) Below, within the earth, may he deprive his spirit of water!

May Sin, the lord of heaven, my divine creator, whose scimeter shines among the gods, take away from him the crown and throne of sovereignty! May he lay upon him heavy guilt and great sin, which will not depart from him! May he bring to an end the days, months, and years of his reign with sighing and tears! May he multiply the burdens of his sovereignty! May he determine as his fate a life like unto death!

May Adad, the lord of abundance, the regent of heaven and earth, my helper, deprive him of the rain from heaven and the water-floods from the springs! May he bring his land to destruction through want and hunger! May he break loose furiously over his city and turn his land into a heap left by a whirlwind

May Za-má-má, the great warrior, the chief son of E-kur, who goes at my right hand, shatter his weapons on the field of battle! May he turn day into night for him, and place his enemy over him!

May Ishtar, the goddess of battle and conflict, who makes ready my weapons, the gracious protecting deity, who loves my reign, curse his dominion with great fury in her wrathful heart, and turn good into evil for him! May she shatter his weapons on the field of battle and conflict! May she create confusion and revolt for him! May she strike down his warriors, may their blood water the earth! May she cast the bodies of his warriors upon the field in heaps! May she not grant his warriors (burial(?))! May she deliver him into the hands of his enemies, and may they carry him away bound into a hostile land!

May Nergal, the mighty among the gods, the warrior without an equal, who grants me victory, in his great power, burn his people like a raging fire of swamp-reed. With his powerful weapon, may he cut him off and may he break his members like an earthen image!

May Nin-tu, the exalted mistress of the lands, the mother who bore me, deny him a son! May she not let him hold a name among his people, nor beget an heir!

May Nin-kar-ra-ak, the daughter of Anu, who commands favors for me in E-kur, cause to come upon his members until it overcomes his life, a grievous malady, an evil disease, a dangerous sore, which cannot be cured, which the physician cannot diagnose, which he cannot allay with bandages, and which, like the bite of death, cannot be removed! May he lament the loss of his vigor!

May the great gods of heaven and earth, the Anunnaki in their assembly, curse with blighting curses the wall of the temple, the construction of this E-babbarra, his seed, his land, his army, his people, and his troops!

May Bel with his command which cannot be altered curse him with a powerful curse and may it come upon him speedily!

II. FROM AN INSCRIPTION OF ADAD-NIRARI, KING OF ASSYRIA
(ABOUT 1325 B. C.).²

[When the muḫlala of the Temple of Ashur, my lord—which is [opposite] the gate (called) “The invocation of the god of the land” and the gate (called) “The god of judges,” which had been built in former days—had fallen into decay, had collapsed and was in ruins, I strengthened that place, I reached its base, I rebuilt it with granite and earth from Ubase, I restored (it) to its place and I set up my tablet. In future days, let a future prince, when that place shall have grown old and fallen into decay, repair its ruins; my tablet, the record of my name, let him restore to its place, that Ashur may hearken to his prayers. But whosoever blots out the record of my name and inscribes his own name, or conceals my tablet, or consigns it to destruction, or casts it into the stream, or burns it in the fire, or throws it into the water, or covers it with earth, or brings and places it in a dark (?) house, where it can not be seen; or if (any one) because of these curses, a foreign foe, an evil enemy, a (man of) hostile tongue, or any other man send and cause (him) to seize it, or if he make any scheme and carry it out:]

May Ashur, the exalted god, who dwells in Eharsagkurkura, Anu, Bel, Ea, and Ishtar, the great gods, the Igigi of heaven, the Anunnaki of earth, all of them, look upon him in anger!

May they curse him with an evil curse in wrath!

May they destroy his name, his seed, his relatives, and his family in the land!

² The translations of II–V differ little from those in my *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (Appleton).

May the ruin of his land, the destruction of his people and of his territory at their weighty command be decreed!

May Adad with a terrible rainstorm overwhelm him!

May flood, destructive wind, rebellion, revolution, tempest, want (and) famine, drought (and) hunger be continuous in his land!

May he (Adad) come down upon his land like a flood!

May he turn (it) into mounds and ruins!

May Adad strike his land with a destructive bolt!

III. FROM AN INSCRIPTION OF NEBUCHADREZZAR I., KING OF BABYLON
(ABOUT 1140 B. C.).

[Whenever in after-time, be it by the sons of Habban, or any one else who is placed in the governorship of Namar, be it the mayors of Namar, small or great, as many as there are of them, of the cities of the house of Karziyabku, which the king has freed from the dominion of Namar, there is one who does not reverence the king or his gods and turns and establishes a dominion, and obliterates the name of the god and the king, as it stands written, and writes in another (name), or employs a fool, a deaf man, a blind man, or a knave to destroy this tablet with a stone, or to burn it in the fire, or to cast it into the river, or to hide it in a field where it can not be found:]

May the great gods, as many as are mentioned in heaven and earth, curse that man with fury; may god and king cover him with deep disgrace!

May Ninib, the king of heaven and earth, and Gula, the mistress of E-sharra, destroy his boundaries and blot out his seed!

May Adad, the chief one in heaven and earth, the lord of canals and rains, fill his rivers with obstructions, bring upon him hunger and want, and bind upon him distress, frailty and mischief!

May frailty fasten its grip (?) upon the inhabitants of his city!

May Shumalia, the mistress of the snow-capped mountains, who dwells upon the summits and traverses the peaks; may Adad, Nergal, and Nana, the gods of Namar; may Shir, Shubu, the son of the temple of Der, Sin, and the Lady of Akkad, the gods of the house of Habban—may these great gods in the anger of their heart meditate evil against him!

May another acquire the house which he has built!

With a dagger in his neck and a . . . in his eyes, may he cast himself upon his face before his captor, and may he, unmindful of his pleading, cut off his life!

In the overturning of his house may his hands roll in mire!

As long as he lives may he drag sorrow after him, and as long as heaven and earth stand may his seed be blotted out!

IV. FROM AN INSCRIPTION OF NABUPALIDDIN, KING OF BABYLON
(883-852 B. C.).

Whoever in the future enters this palace as ruler and renders null the gift of the King Nabupaliddin, or presents it to another, or cuts down the allowance or reckons it as belonging to the prefect, or appropriates it to himself, or by some evil act destroys this tablet, as for that man, by the command of Shamash, A, and Bunene, lords of fates, the great gods, may his name pass away! may his seed perish! in distress and want may his life go out! may his corpse be cast out! and may he not be granted burial!

V. FROM AN INSCRIPTION (BERLIN STONE) OF MERODACHBALADAN, KING
OF BABYLON (721-710 B. C.).

Whoever in the future, whether king, or king's son, or prefect, or governor, or director, or city officer, whose name the great lord Marduk may proclaim and who may exercise authority over Akkad, directs his attention to destroy this tablet, in any way whatever practises deceit, urges and orders any one, an enemy, a deaf person, a fool, a blockhead, a short-sighted (?) ignorant (person), a knave, who does not fear the great gods, with wicked intentions sends, and changes its position, throws it in the water, hides it in the ground, burns it with fire, erases (it) with a stone, sets it in a secret place, places it where it can not be seen, obliterates the signature, directs his attention to take away the ground-plot, the gift, which Merodachbaladan, King of Babylon, presented to Belaherba, mayor of Babylon—that man, may Anu, Ea, and Bel, the great gods, present with a curse which can not be undone, with blindness, deafness, paralysis of the muscles!

May he suffer misery!

May Marduk, Çarpanit, the lords, who decide fates, cause him to undergo heavy punishment!

May they afflict him with dropsy!

May his life (skin) come to an end with bloated flesh (?)!

May the great gods, as many as have their names mentioned on this tablet, destroy his name, his seed, his progeny, in the mouth of the people!

May they cut off his future!