preceded the cosmos, as the darkness the light, thus the *night* precedes the day, and Sin being 'he who governs the night,' must necessarily precede Shamash, who governs the day. This is also the reason why, in early times, the 'day' consisted of '*night* and day'—accepted even by P.: 'there was evening and there was morning, the . . . day.' This latter, no doubt, is a relic of the Sumerian conception of the day—for among the Sumerians Sin was the *father of Shamash*. . . . But if the day began with the evening or night, then the *year* must have begun with the *winter*, and the *beginning* of the year could not have been the 21st of March (the 1st Nisan), but must have been the 21st of September (the 1st Tishri). . . . The present Jewish New Year's month thus goes back to the most ancient times: to the time of the Sumerians."

Whether his conclusions be always soundly based or not, Dr. Radau's book is a most noteworthy monograph, and deserves the special attention of all students of ancient Semitic religious beliefs, which have had such enormous influence in shaping the creeds of the white races of the earth.

T. G. PINCHES.

LA MAGIE ASSYRIENNE, étude suivie de Textes Magiques, transcrits, traduits, et commentés, par C. FOSSEY, Docteur ès-Lettres. (Paris: Leroux, 1902.)

This work consists of 141 pages of matter bearing upon the subject of Babylonian magic (for such it is, rather than Assyrian), followed by 333 pages of translations of the tablets, with notes.

The study of magic (not with the intention of practising it) is one which offers many attractions to the student of Assyro-Babylonian life, manners, and customs. How this superstitious practice entered into the life of all, even the most intelligent, in those days, is well shown by the short letter from an Assyrian king (Aššur-banî-âpli) which M. Fossey quotes, and which, being short, I reproduce here:—

"To the king my lord, thy servant Ištar-šum-êreš. May there be peace to the king my lord. May Nebo and Merodach bless the king my lord. Concerning that of which the king my lord wrote to me thus: 'Is there some curse written therein?' I have made research. No, there is no curse written."

Indeed, the life of the people must have been full of apprehension on account of the different omens attached to the various actions and circumstances of life, not seldom giving them considerable anxiety, and this, when the fates seemed to be entirely adverse, must not unfrequently have led to despair, sometimes leading, as at the present day, to death. To us it seems often strange and unreasonable, this extreme superstition which caused Nineveh to be called "the mother of witchcrafts," but it is not so very many centuries since such things were officially recognized in both Europe and America. In this connection it is interesting to note that sorcery and witchcraft are recognized in the laws of Hammurabi, the very first enactments of his code referring to such practices. This, however, is only natural among a people firmly rooted in such superstitions, and has considerable appropriateness, for the enactments in question are against thwarting the ends of justice by such means.

In his essay upon the subject of Babylonian magic which precedes the translation, M. Fossey treats of the sources of his information—the Babylonian and Assyrian tablets; of demons, sorcerers and sorceresses, ill-luck and sickness; divination and the rites attending purification; the rites which destroy; those which transmit; the pharmacopia of magic; oral rites, incantations, and imprecations; preventative rites, amulets, and talismans; the gods and magic; and the position of magic between religion and science. It is naturally a great advance on the late François Lenormant's "Chaldean Magic," which attracted so much attention twenty-six years ago, and may be regarded as the latest word upon the subject.

The translations are in every case accompanied by transliterations of the original texts, and, when bilingual, both

languages are given. They are in the main renderings of inscriptions in the British Museum, and the original texts are mostly given in the second, fourth, and fifth volumes of the "Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia," a work which was prepared for publication by E. Norris, G. Smith, and myself, under the editorship of Sir Henry Rawlinson, one of this Society's most illustrious members.

It is naturally a matter for regret that all the duplicates of Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions known are not yet published, but this is necessarily a matter of time. The effect, however, is that no edition can at present be complete, and improvement in the not altogether distant future is in many cases almost a certainty. Thus, for instance, on pp. 154-155, ll. 3-5 are completed by a duplicate (Sumerian only), as follows: *Imma* (written *ka*) *hula*, *imma già*, *hulahha zae nam-bee* (instead of *zi nam-bea*), *ig nu-halammaene*, *zi anna he-pa*, *zi kia he-pa*. Semitic Babylonian, *šumu limnu* [*šumu tãru*?], *gilittu*, *niš mûtu*, *ša lâ . . .*, *niš šamê lû-tamât*, *niš êrsiti lû-tamât*, suggesting the translation: "The evil thirst, [the recurrent thirst], terror, the spirit of death which doth not [depart?], spirit of heaven, mayest thou exorcise, spirit of earth, mayest thou exorcise."

For such things as these, however, M. Fossey is not responsible. Moreover, his translations seem to be good, and he has not shrunk from giving renderings of texts in Sumerian only. It is an excellent exposition of the subject, and can be recommended.

T. G. PINCHES.

In the *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes*, vol. xxv, Professor Naville has published a very interesting description of the Stone of Palermo ("La Pierre de Palerme"), with translation. This monument, he says, was of Heliopolitan origin, and it gives a list of festivals, the height of the Nile inundation (apparently), and many historical events. Among the things worthy of notice is the fact that two different kinds of year are referred to, and that there was a chronological system

which was independent of the reign of the ruling sovereign. The festivals are themselves often of great interest, those of the union of the North and the South, the foundation of Memphis, the destruction of the Anu, the foundation of Heracleopolis, etc., being mentioned among them. The paper is accompanied by a facsimile and a pen and ink copy of the two sides of the stone.