AN ACCADIAN LITURGY.

TRANSLATED BY

REV. A. H. SAYCE, M.A.

THE fragments given below form part of one of the most interesting of the religious hymns in the Liturgy of the early Babylonians. The mutilated condition of the tablet is greatly to be regretted since the general character of the hymn and its allusions to most of the primary articles of the old Accadian mythological faith mark it out as having been a special favourite for devotional purposes. M. François Lenormant believes that it was put into the mouth of the god Hea, and draws attention to the fact that the sword or disk which it celebrates, with its 50 external points and its 7 concentric rays, is analogous not only to the chakra of the Indian
heroes but also to the flaming sword that guarded
the entrance to Paradise. Besides this reference, the
hymn alludes also to the creation of heaven and
earth, to the flood and that "mountain of the world"
on which the ark rested, and to the seven-headed
serpent which reappears, as it would seem in a
borrowed form, in Hindu legend.

An interlinear Assyrian rendering is attached to
the Accadian original, which is divided into lines
and stanzas. These were chanted by the priests
during the performance of some religious ceremony.
The remote antiquity of the hymn, which goes back
beyond the second millenium B.C., enhances its
value.

The text is lithographed in the Cuneiform In-
scriptions of Western Asia, Vol. II, pl. 19, and a
translation of it has been given by M. Oppert in the
Journal Asiatique II. 46, 1, and by M. François
Lenormant in his Premières Civilisations II. pp.
194-196 and La Magie chez les Chaldéens pp.
151, 152.
AN ACCADIAN LITURGY.

(The beginning is lost. After a reference to "the gods" and to the flight of their enemies "like birds," the hymn proceeds as follows:)

1. Their strongholds they make for.
2. Against the overwhelming fear that I inspire, terrible as (that of) ANU, who (can) lift the head?
3. I am Lord. The beetling mountains of the earth shake (their) head to the foundations.
4. (With) the mountain of crystal,² of lapis lazuli,² and of marble,⁴ my hand I fill.
5. The spirits of earth, like a bird of prey on the sparrows, I cause to swoop.
6. In the mountain to my hand my mighty heroism I (commit).
7. In my right hand I bear my disk of fire.⁵
8. In my left I bear my sphere of carnage.⁵
9. The sun of 50 faces, the lofty weapon of my divinity, I bear.
10. The hero that striketh the mountains, the propitious sun of the morning,⁸ that is mine, I bear.
11. My mighty weapon, which like an orb smites in a circle the corpses of the fighters,⁹ I bear.

¹ Lit., "enclosed."
² Lit., "stone of the great light."
³ Lit., "blue stone."
⁴ Lit., "white stone."
⁵ Apparently this was a name given to the Moon-god of Elam.
⁶ This is also a name of the Moon in Elam.
⁷ In the Assyrian translation "the staff."
⁸ Lit., "not high (in heaven)."
⁹ The Assyrian renders this "that which is near."
The striker of mountains, my murderous weapon of ANU, I bear.

The striker of mountains, the fish with 7 tails that is mine, I bear.

The terror of battle, the destroyer of rebel lands that is mine, I bear.

(Obverse.)

The defender of conquests, the great sword, the falchion of my divinity, I bear.

That from whose hand the mountain escapes not, the hand of the hero of battle which is mine, I bear.

The delight of heroes, my spear of battle, (I bear.)

My crown which strikes against men, the bow of the lightning, (I bear.)

The crusher of the temples of rebel lands, my club and buckler of battle, (I bear.)

The lightning of battle, my weapon of 50 heads, (I bear.)

The thunderbolt of 7 heads like the huge serpent of 7 heads, (I bear.)

Like the serpent that beats the sea, (which attacks) the foe in the face,

the devastator of forceful battle, Lord over heaven and earth, the weapon of (seven) heads, (I bear.)

That which maketh the light come forth like day, the god of the east, my burning power, (I bear.)

The creator of heaven and earth, the fire-god, who has not his rival, (I bear.)

The weapon, which (fills) the world (with) overwhelming fear,

in my right hand mightily made to go; (the weapon that) of gold (and) marble

\[1\] Or more strictly "the establisher."
for admiration is wrought, my god who ministers to life, (I bear.)

The weapon, which like ...... combats the rebel land, the weapon of 50 heads, (I bear.)

(Here the panegyric of the lightning is broken off by a fracture of the tablet, which probably did not contain many lines more. It is possible that the following fragment, which has never been translated before, formed part of the same ritual. The numerous lacunæ will show how shockingly it is mutilated.)

1 Below in the abyss the forceful multitudes may they sacrifice.
2 The overwhelming fear of Anu in the midst of heaven encircles his path.
3 The spirits of earth, the mighty gods, withstand him not.
4 The King, like a lightning-flash, opened (the way).
5 Adar, the striker of the fortresses of the rebel land, opened (the way).
6 Like the streams in the circle of heaven I besprinkled the seed of men.
7 His marching in the fealty of Bel to the temple I directed.
8 (He is) the hero of the gods, the protector of mankind, far (and) near.
9 To the men of Nipur (he gives strength ?).
10 Nebo, the messenger of Bel ......
11 To my Lord Adar ......
12 O my Lord, life of Nebo, (breathe thy inspiration, incline) thine ear.
13 O Adar, hero, crown of light, (breathe) thy inspiration, (incline) thine ear.
The overwhelming fear of thee may the sea (know); and may (thy) sword lay low the fortresses.

(OVERSE.)

Thy setting (is) the herald of his rest from marching.

In thy marching Merodach (is) at his rest.

(The next two lines are obliterated.)

Thy father on his throne thou dost not smite.

Bel on his throne thou dost not smite.

The spirits of earth on their throne may he consume.

May thy father into the hands of thy valour cause (them) to go forth.

May Bel into the hands of thy valour cause (them) to go forth.

(The King, the proclaimed?) of Anu, the firstborn of the gods.

He that stands before Bel, the heart of the life of the House of the Beloved.

The hero of the mountain (for those that) die-in-multitudes.

. . . . . the one god, he will not urge.

(The hero for those who on the mountain) die-in-multitudes.

. . . . . the one god, he will not) urge.

(Here the tablet is finally broken off.)

1 The Assyrian version has here "the god of the Euphrates."
2 The Assyrian text seems to read here "(with) a snare may he snare for thee."
3 The Assyrian has simply "of the high places."
The Complete Text can be found on our CD: 
**Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature** 
which can be purchased on our Website: 
or 
by sending $64.95 in check or money order to: 
**Brainfly Inc.**  
5100 Garfield Ave. #46  
Sacramento  CA  95841-3839

**TEACHER’S DISCOUNT:**
If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher’s 
discount. Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website 
(www.Brainfly.net) or **Send us $55.95** and we will send you a full copy 
of **Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature AND our 5000 Classics CD (a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt)) plus our Wholesale price list.**

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see 
added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list 
please send us an email to: 
[webcomments@brainfly.net](mailto:webcomments@brainfly.net)