

and painful forebodings he beheld the storm of war fast approaching, with the certain prospect of a very unequal contest. Firm trust in the God of Israel could still have saved him. But in the palmy days of his prosperity he had lived without God, and made his own will the rule of his life; and now in the hour of sore trial he is hopelessly abandoned to his fate. In a moment of despair he rushes to a necromancer in the hope of being able by her arts, according to the prevailing superstition of the times, to call up Samuel from his rest, in the expectation of obtaining some counsel in the hour of his calamity. Under the cloud of night he fled across the valley of Jezreel and over the eastern and lower ridge of Little Hermon to Endor, a distance of eight or nine miles. His strange expectations of an interview with Samuel were not disappointed. Samuel arose, not by the arts of the necromancer, but by the will and power of the Almighty; for it was Samuel *himself* (an important word dropt by the translators) that spoke. At the dismal tidings he communicated Saul's spirit died within him, and he fell supine on the earth. His crimes and his godless life began now in reality to bear their natural fruit. The burdens of old sins pressed heavy on his soul. The blood of God's slaughtered priests cries not to heaven in vain. Samuel's counsel was rejected when it would have been of any avail; but now it is given only to aggravate his misery, and to rebuke his sin and folly in forsaking God and seeking to familiar spirits. He returned to the camp more dead than alive, in the worst possible condition to fight a battle.

The issue of the battle, which was fought next day, is told in a few words. David rose early in the morning and went away home with his men; and the Philistines went up to Jezreel with the evident design of ascending the mountain on the slope above Jezreel, and of going forward to attack the Israelites in their elevated position on the summit of the mountains. Saul and his army, deserted by the Strength of Israel, became an easy prey to the Philistines. Israel was completely discomfited and Saul and his sons were slain. Next day the Philistines carried off their bodies and had them gibbeted on the walls of Bethshan, a town still in existence, situated at the lower end of the valley of Jezreel, near the river Jordan. But the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, gratefully remembering Saul's seasonable interposition in their behalf forty years before—the first and only honourable achievement of Saul's long reign—crossed the Jordan by night, took their bodies away, and gave them honourable burial. The noble and generous Jonathau was among the slain on mount Gilboa, and David, in composing the touching and beautiful lamentation entitled the Song of the Bow, on receiving the tidings of their death, does equal honour to the sacred ties that bound the loving friends so closely together, and to the delicate susceptibility of his heart, that drew tears from his eyes at the death of a fallen rival.

This region was a place of great resort in the days of Ahab, King of Israel—a theatre of stirring and tragical transactions, that told, on the one hand, the sad degeneracy of Israel at that period; and, on the other, the certainty with which an evil work is followed with swift and dreadful retributions. Ahab was a very bad man, lost to all sense of religion, who not only rejected the salutary counsels of the prophets, but eagerly sought their extermination. He had besides married Jezebel, a noted idolater, wedded to the worship of Baal, and a dreadfully unprincipled woman. This woman was a great snare to the king. Although the ordinary residence of the kings of Israel at this period was in Samaria, yet Ahab had a palace in Jezreel also, where he and his family spent much of their time, doubtless on account of the unrivaled beauty of that charming spot. The king cast a covetous