

wards across the plain till they reached the foot of Gilboa, where the tug of war began. Notwithstanding the favourable position of the Hebrews, they were completely defeated. The archers appear to have done deadly execution; as they advanced nearer to the host of Israel, the latter would move backward to get out of range; while the Philistines, gaining confidence, would press them more and more, till the orderly retreat became a terrible rout. So utterly routed was the Israelite army that they do not appear to have tried a single rally, which, as they had to retreat over Mount Gilboa, it would have been so natural for them to do. Panic and consternation seem to have seized them very early in the battle; that they would be defeated was probably a foregone conclusion, but the attitude of a retreating army seems to have been assumed more quickly and suddenly than could have been supposed. If the Philistine army, seeing the early confusion of the Israelites, had the courage to pour themselves along the valleys on each side of Gilboa, no way of retreat would be left to their enemy except over the top of the hill. And when that was reached, and the Israelites began to descend, the arrows of the pursuing Philistines would fall on them with more deadly effect than ever, and the slaughter would be tremendous.

Saul seems never to have been deficient in personal courage, and in the course of the battle he and his staff were evidently in the very thickest of the fight. "The Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, the sons of Saul." Saul himself was greatly distressed in his flight by reason of the archers. Finding himself wounded, and being provided with neither chariot nor other means of escape, a horror