

contained this other section, and so he decided that it ought to be in the text in that place.

Ought it? How well I remember as a boy the difficulties which this story presented to me as it stands in our English Bible! Has it not often seemed strange to you, reader? Just before, we are told how David was introduced to the court of Saul, and became a prime favourite with the king, and was made his armour-bearer. Yet here he is represented as back amongst the sheep-folds, sent by his father to his brethren, treated by these brethren with a sharpness such as kings' favourites are certainly not often subjected to. Nay, we find that he is altogether unknown at court. The king has to inquire of Abner, who is unable to answer him, "Whose son is this youth?"

All this is very puzzling. Strike out the passages omitted by the Septuagint and all follows smoothly. Ver. 32 follows quite naturally after ver. 11, and xviii. 6 after xvii. 54. The story is then perfectly consistent. Nay, more. The Hebrew text shows some traces of having been pieced together at ver. 12, and it will be seen, too, that the omitted passages when put together form in themselves a complete story. It looks very like, indeed, as if the Septuagint were right, and that these passages had become inserted in the Hebrew text out of some other written account of the story, or else that they have got out of their proper place in the book.

And yet it may well be retorted, as it often has been, that the Septuagint translators, not feeling their