

most of the two is Little Hermon, and the other on the south is the celebrated mountain of Gilboa. The valley of Jezreel of course lies right in between these two mountains; and the general course of the whole is south-east in the same line with the Carmel hills.

The city of Jezreel—never large—is situated on elevated ground on the northwest corner of mount Gilboa, at the entrance of the valley, and commands a vastly extensive prospect, as charming as the eye has ever rested on. In the valley directly under Jezreel there is a considerable fountain of fine water, and about a mile farther down the valley there is another much larger where the water gushes out from under the mountain, and called by the Arabs Ain Jalud. This fountain is greatly celebrated. From time immemorial it has been the gathering place of armies and marauding nomades. Attracted by its copious and refreshing streams, they have gathered round it and pitched their tents in that luxuriant and capacious plain. Endor, the residence of the necromancer, was situated in the other plain on the north of Little Hermon. Shunem, the residence of Elijah's Shunamite, is situated in the great plain on the west of Little Hermon, and about five or six miles from Jezreel. And Aphek, where the Philistines encamped during the night before the fatal battle on mount Gilboa, was probably about half way between these two cities.

The region thus delineated has been to some extent the great battle-field of nations, and the scene where the destinies of Palestine have several times been decided. The decisive battle that proved so disastrous to Saul and his family, and opened up so clear a path for David's accession to the throne of Israel, was fought on mount Gilboa. The simultaneous mustering of large hostile armies in those parts would presage a dreadful conflict. In the last chapters of 1 Sam. we are informed that the Israelites took up what would be considered a highly advantageous position on mount Gilboa, by the fountain of Ain Jalud, and that the Philistines pitched in Shunem, by a similar fountain there. In those positions the armies were not more than six or seven miles apart. Coming by the highway of travel from their country across the Carmel hills right past Megiddo, the Philistines would first muster their forces at Shunem, for it lies in the direct line of march. On the day before the battle the Philistines moved a few lines nearer the scene of action in the direction of Jezreel, and took up a position at Aphek. In this movement they marched right past the opening of the valley of Jezreel fair in view of the Israelitish host posted high on the summit of Gilboa. It would be principally during this movement that the army of the Philistines would strike such terror into the heart of Saul, as the columns defiled before his eyes not more than three miles distant. And it was during the same movement that David and his men were challenged and sternly discarded by the haughty lords of the Philistines. "Make this fellow return, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself to his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?"—(The happiest illustration the Bible affords of the real nature of the Scriptural doctrine of reconciliation.) This was a highly fortunate interposition of Divine Providence in David's favour, extricating him completely out of the perplexing dilemma into which he had been drawn by the connexion with the generous Achish. It relieved his hand too and sent him home at the precise moment of time to avenge the outrageous assault on Ziklag and to recover the captives.

Whilst the Philistines slumbered in peace at Aphek, unhappy Saul spent that dismal night in anguish and great horror of mind, With sad dismay