

vaunting, which had so roused David against Goliath because he defied the armies of the living God, appeared far more offensively than ever. Not only was Israel defeated, but in the view of the Philistines Israel's God as well. Dagon and Ashtaroath had triumphed over Jehovah. The humiliation suffered in the days when the ark of God brought such calamities to them and their gods was now amply avenged. The image of Dagon was not found lying on its face, all shattered save the stump, after the heads of Saul and his sons had been placed in his temple. Yes, and the nobles at least of the Philistines would boast that the slaughter of Goliath by David, and the placing of his head and his armour near Jerusalem—probably in the holy place of Israel—were amply avenged. Well was it for David, we may say again, that he had no share in this terrible battle! Henceforth undoubtedly there would be no more truce on his part towards the Philistines. Had they not dishonoured the person of his king? had they not insulted the dead body of Jonathan his noble friend? had they not hurled new defiance against the God of Israel? had they not spread robbery and devastation over the whole length and breadth of the country, and turned every happy family into a group of cowering slaves? Were this people to be any longer honoured with his friendship? "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!"

The only redeeming incident, in all this painful narrative, is the spirited enterprise of the men of Jabesh-gilead, coming to Beth-shan by night, removing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall, and burying them with all honour at Jabesh. Beth-shan was a considerable distance from Gilboa, where Saul