

or string plated, broad at the middle, and having a loop at one end, by which it was fixed upon and firmly held by the hand. The other extremity terminated in a lash, which escaped from the fingers when the stone was thrown. (Kitto). Against this weapon the size and strength of Goliath were of no avail. The Benjamites were especially expert in the use of it (Judges 20: 16; 1 Chr. 12: 2). "It has been commonly supposed that in laying aside Saul's armour, and preferring his own sling David was giving up every advantage, and that the chances of his success were materially lessened by the fact that he was thus, comparatively speaking, defenceless. But this is a mistake. The genius of David was made manifest in the choice of his weapons, and so soon as he had determined to use the sling the issue was not doubtful. The giant was open to attack only on the forehead; but then he was cased in such heavy armour that he could not move with swiftness, and so he could prove a formidable foe only when he was fighting at close quarters. David, on the other hand, was free, and could run with swiftness and agility. While using the sling he could begin the attack from a distance, and out of the range of his adversary's weapons. So far, therefore, as weapons were considered, the advantage was clearly on David's side, provided only he could preserve his precision of aim and steadiness of hand. He was like one armed with a rifle, while his enemy had only a spear and a sword; and if only he could take sure aim, the result was absolutely certain." (W. M. Taylor). Goliath (*Splendor*), so called from his shining armour). He was probably descended from the old Rephaim, of whom a scattered remnant took refuge among the Philistines after their dispersion by the Ammonites (Deut. 2: 20, 21; 2 Sam. 21: 22). (Smith). He was from Gath where descendants of the Anakim were found (Josh. 11: 22; Num. 13: 32, 33). Here, then, we may picture to ourselves the two hosts, covering the low, rocky hills opposite to each other, and half hidden amongst the lentisk bushes. Between them was the rich expanse of ripening barley, and the red banks of the torrent, with its white shingly bed. Behind all were the distant blue hill-walls of Judaea, where Saul had just come down. The mail-clad champion advanced from the west through the low corn, with his mighty lance perhaps tufted with feathers, his brazen helmet shining in the sun. From the east a ruddy boy in his white shirt and sandals, armed with a goat's-hair sling, came down to the brook, and, according to the poetic fancy of the rabbis, the pebbles were given voices, and cried, "By us shalt thou overcome the giant." (Conder).

II. THE CHALLENGE. 41. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David—The words describe, with graphic vigor, his nearer and nearer approach. The man that bare the shield—In the Assyrian sculptures there are representations of warriors

fighting in this manner, with men before them holding the large shields, with the bottom resting on the ground, thus forming moveable breastworks. The great shields of the Philistines seem to have been of circular shape. (Freeman).

42. Looked about—As if he scanned the intervening space to discover his antagonist and only when no one else was visible could he believe his eyes, that this shepherd lad had the audacity to answer his challenge. He disdained him—Felt contempt for him. His appearance was almost girlish (ch. 16: 12). His person and equipment were an insult to a man of war. There is a legend among the Jews that when Goliath cast his eyes upon David, the sight seemed so ridiculous that he threw back his head and laughed out loud. But this action disarranged his helmet and bared his forehead for David's stone (Prov. 16: 18; 1 Cor. 1: 27, 28).

43. Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves—The plural is used in contemptuous exaggeration of the armour of David which appeared so thoroughly unfit for the occasion. (K. and D.) The septuagint version reads "Am I as a dog, that thou comest against me with staff and stones? and David said, Nay, but worse than a dog." This is evidently an attempt to "improve" upon the simple dignity of the narrative. Very likely Goliath did not notice the sling, and David may have purposely concealed it so as to get in his shot before the giant could guard himself behind his great shield (2 Sam. 3: 8; 2 Kings 8: 13; 18: 36). By his gods—The Hebrew is singular "by his gods." Some understand that he blasphemed David's God "i. e. making use of the name of Jehovah in his cursing, and thus defying, not David only, but the God of Israel also." (K. and D.) Others take the words to mean "his own god," "i. e. the deity whom he had selected to be his especial patron." (Payne Smith). "He invoked curses upon him, from his idol-gods." (Green). These were such as Dagon, Baal and Astarte, whom he thus deliberately pitted against Jehovah.

44. And the Philistine said to David—This toploftical style of abuse was characteristic of those spectacular duels on which in ancient and mediæval times the fate of so many armies hung. Homer is full of such boasts and threats, and such may to-day be heard among the Bedouins. To have one's body thus dishonored after death, and left a prey to carrion birds and beasts, was a fate from which the sturdy warrior would shrink with horror. (Illustrative Notes). (1 Kings 20: 10, 11; Prov. 18: 12; Ecc. 9: 11, 12).

45. A shield—R. V. "a javelin." Relying upon your weapons of war. He does not deign to refer to his false gods. The calm faith of David is in marked contrast to the blustering boastfulness of Goliath. In the name of the Lord of hosts, \* \* \* whom thou hast defied—Resting, not upon his personal prowess, but upon the covenant God