

actually crossed the Jordan, and the rich pastures of Gilead and Bashan, with the flocks and herds that swarmed upon them, became the prey of the uncircumcised. Thus the terror of the Philistines, hitherto confined to the western portion of the country, was spread, with all its attendant horrors, over the length and breadth of Israel. We get a vivid view of the state of the country when David was called to take charge of it. And we get a vivid view of the worse than embarrassment, the fatal crime, into which David would have been led if he had remained in the Philistine camp and taken any part in this campaign.

How utterly crushed the Philistines considered the Israelites to be, and how incapable of striking any blow in their own defence, is apparent from the humiliating treatment of the bodies of Saul and his sons, the details of which are given in this chapter and in the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles (chap. x.). If there had been any possibility of the Israelites being stung into a new effort by the dishonour done to their king and princes, that dishonour would not have been so terribly insulting. But there was no such possibility. The treatment was doubly insulting. Saul's head, severed from his body, was put in the temple of Dagon (1 Chron. x.); his armour was hung up in the house of Ashtaroth; and his body was fastened to the wall of Beth-shan. The same treatment seems to have been bestowed on his three sons. The other part of the insult arose from the idolatrous spirit in which all this was done. The tidings of the victory were ordered to be carried to the house of their idols as well as to their people (1 Sam. xxxi. 9). The trophies were displayed in the temples of these idols. The spirit of